



AccessAbility Services Vision Impairment Documentation Guidelines

Overview:

In order to determine eligibility for accommodations and/or auxiliary aids, AccessAbility Services (AAS) requires documentation to establish the presence of a disability. Students who are seeking accommodations at Western Connecticut State University (WCSU) must submit comprehensive documentation and an Accommodation Intake Form to AAS. In order to respect a student's right to voluntarily disclose a disability, AAS initiates services only after the student submits an Accommodation Intake Form and documentation.

Documentation is used to verify eligibility for accommodations and/or auxiliary aids under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act 2008 (ADAAA), and is necessary to support student requests. In determining disability status, WCSU is guided by federal law which defines persons with disabilities as those who:

- have a physical or mental impairment that *significantly restricts* one or more major life activity, such as, caring for oneself, hearing, learning, reading, speaking, breathing, or working;
- have a record of such impairment; or
- are regarded as having such an impairment.

Comprehensive documentation should include a recent evaluation by an appropriate credentialed professional, *who is not a family member*, which makes evident the current academic impact of the disability as it relates to the accommodations and services requested. Accommodation decisions are made on a case-by-case basis based on the functional limitations of the disability. A Summary of Performance (SOP), Individualized Education Program (IEP) and/or a 504 Plan alone are *not* considered adequate documentation. Transfer students are encouraged to provide a letter from their previously attended college or university, in addition to their documentation, which includes the dates of services and the accommodations used. Students are required to obtain and provide disability documentation to AAS when seeking accommodations. The law requires that priority consideration be given to the specific accommodations requested by a student; however it does not require that a particular accommodation must be granted if it is deemed not reasonable or other suitable alternatives are available.

All information received is confidential and is used by AAS for the sole purpose of determining a student's eligibility for services and determining reasonable accommodations. Information is only shared within the institution if there is a compelling educational need to know.

If the documentation provided is incomplete or inadequate to determine whether the student qualifies as having a disability or is eligible for the accommodations requested, AAS has the right, in its discretion to require additional documentation. Any cost incurred in obtaining additional documentation is the responsibility of the student.

If after reading these guidelines you have any questions, feel free to contact AAS at (203) 837-8225 or obere@wcsu.edu.

Adapted from: Connecticut Association on Higher Education and Disability Revised Documentation Guidelines

Documentation Guidelines for Visual Impairments

Documentation should include an evaluation by an appropriate credentialed professional that makes evident the current academic impact of the disability as it relates to the accommodations and services requested. Reports must include the name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator along with the date(s) of evaluation. All reports must be printed on official letterhead, typed, dated, and signed. In order to determine eligibility for accommodations and services, documentation **must** contain the following:

Evidence of Impairment:

- Date and/or age of onset of visual impairment
- Date of last ocular assessment or evaluation from ophthalmologist (submit ocular assessment or evaluation from an ophthalmologist)
- Discussion of student's visual perception
- Information regarding the presenting issues that significantly restrict functioning in an educational setting
- Discussion of relevant background information including developmental, medical, psychosocial, family, academic, and employment concerns that significantly restrict functioning in an educational setting
- Identification of prior accommodations.

Summary that addresses the following:

- Statement of diagnosis or impairment
- Explanation of the substantial limitations to major life activities posed by the disability
- List of current medication(s) including dosage(s), frequency, and side effects (if applicable)
- Specific recommendations regarding accommodations, auxiliary aids and/or services with evidence from evaluation results
- Identification of Evaluator (name, title, and signature).

Students are encouraged to submit documentation at least three weeks prior to the start of the semester to:

Mail: AccessAbility Services, White Hall, Suite 005
Western Connecticut State University
181 White Street
Danbury, CT 06810

Email: obere@wcsu.edu

Fax: (203) 837-8848