

Attention Deficit Disorders (ADD) and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders (ADHD) Documentation Guidelines

It is the responsibility of the student to provide the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth's Center for Access & Success the comprehensive documentation outlined below and, when requested, provide any additional information or clarification that conforms to the following guidelines. As stated in the 2009 amendments of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Center for Access & Success may also engage in an interactive process with the professional evaluator to determine how the student's clearly diagnosed disability and limitations to a major life activity (i.e. walking, seeing, hearing, or learning) relate to the higher education classroom.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 states that in order for a student to demonstrate the need for accommodations in their classrooms he/she must provide documentation that contains a specific diagnosis of a disability and specify how this disability **substantially limits** a major life activity. "Major life activities" include, but are not limited to, seeing, hearing, walking, breathing, and learning. The documentation must also specifically contain the disability's **current impact on academic performance**. Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis.

Manifestations of Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders are not limited to but include inattention, impulsivity, and/or hyperactivity existing since childhood and persisting for at least six months to a degree that is immature or maladaptive for required academic performance.

Documentation needs to be typed, current, and include the name and credentials of the evaluator. If the disability is progressive, or if the student experiences any change in severity that would affect academic accommodations, the students must provide updated documentation that reflects the change in status.

Qualified professionals include but are not limited to licensed evaluators who have experience with adolescents/adults with ADD or ADHD such as licensed/certified psychologists, psychiatrists, neurologists, developmental pediatricians, and licensed clinical social workers.

Evaluation Report Contents

1) The specific diagnosis of Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder must be based on DSM-IV criteria and must be substantiated with actual test scores and data. Standard scores of Behavior Rating Scales should be included. The possible assessment instruments listed below are not intended to be an exhaustive list. These tests are merely recommended due to their reliability and validity for use with adolescents/adults.

Behavior Rating Scales (Standard Scores)

- ADHD IV Rating Scale
- Brown ADD Scales
- College ADHD Response Evaluation (CARE)
- Conners' Adult ADHD Rating Scales (CAARS)

Checklists and/or symptom rating scales can provide supplemental assistance in the diagnostic process, but by themselves are not adequate to establish the diagnosis of ADD/ADHD.

2) Documentation must include a summary of relevant historical, academic, medical, and psychosocial information establishing symptoms exhibitivive of Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder throughout the student's life from childhood to the present that have significantly impaired functioning over time.

This report should indicate clear evidence of significant impairment in academic, social, or occupational functioning, and discuss present symptoms that do not occur exclusively during the course of a pervasive developmental disorder, schizophrenia, or other psychiatric disorder.

Relevant Assessments

Neuropsychological or psycho-educational testing provides information on how the disorder may impact the student's academic achievement and can assist in identifying the student's pattern of strengths and weaknesses. These test batteries may also demonstrate patterns supportive of attention problems. However, a comprehensive testing battery alone, without additional support of a pattern of real world functional impairment, will not be sufficient to establish an ADD /ADHD diagnosis or a disability.

Diagnostic Summary

Again, the report must specify the functional limitations related to the disability and its current impact on academic performance. A diagnostic summary must include specific recommendations for academic accommodations. **Accommodations must be based on significant functional limitations and must be supported by the diagnostic assessment.**

Once it is determined that a student is eligible to receive services, it is important to note that he/she still must follow the established policies and procedures of the Center for Access & Success as it pertains to the timeliness of requests and the completion of necessary request forms in order to properly coordinate accommodations.

Students must complete accommodation request forms each semester for the specific courses for which they are requesting accommodations. **Accommodations cannot be made retroactively.**

