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Documentation Guidelines for Autism Spectrum Disorder

In order for Student Access and Accommodation (SAA) to evaluate requests for accommodations and/or auxiliary aids and to determine eligibility for services, appropriate disability related documentation is needed. The documentation submitted should include an evaluation by an appropriately licensed professional and should demonstrate the current impact of the disability as it relates to the accommodations requested. The documentation should also include a description of any and all relevant functional limitations.

In accordance with the DSM-5, the essential features of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are persistent impairment in reciprocal social communication and social interaction and restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities. These symptoms are present from early childhood and limit or impair everyday functioning. The stage at which functional impairment becomes obvious will vary according to characteristics of the individual and his or her environment. Core diagnostic features are evident in the developmental period, but intervention, compensation, and current supports may mask difficulties in at least some contexts. Manifestations of the disorder also vary greatly depending on the severity of the autistic condition, developmental level, and chronological age; hence, the term *spectrum*.

A qualified professional must conduct the evaluation.

Professionals conducting assessments and rendering diagnoses of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) must be qualified to do so. A professional who has comprehensive training in the field of ASD and direct experience working with adolescents and adults diagnosed with ASD such as a neuropsychologist, psychiatrist, clinical psychologist, or neurodevelopmental physician must perform the evaluation. Such documentation should be typewritten on letterhead and contain the professional's state license number, business location, contact information, and signature. The evaluator must be impartial and not related to the person being evaluated, their parents, or business partners.

Testing Should be Current.

For an evaluation to be considered current, the evaluation procedures should typically be administered within the last 3 years. The University reserves the right to request updated or augmented documentation in order to have a more accurate picture of the current level of **functioning**. Students may be asked to provide updated comprehensive information if their condition is subject to change and/or previous documentation does not include sufficient relevant information.

Comprehensive Documentation.

Comprehensive historical information regarding the individual's communication, social and academic history in elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education should be documented and provided.

- The evaluator should state a diagnosis based on the most current version of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*. In addition, the documentation should include any specific objective measures/evaluations used to help substantiate the diagnosis.
- A detailed description of the student's current functioning including:
 - social communication and social interactions across multiple contexts;
 - patterns of behavior, activities and sensory functioning;
 - sensitivity to environmental conditions;
 - motor planning;
 - executive functioning ability;
 - coping skills and adaptive behavior;
 - independent living skills.
- Relevant academic performance data may include results of 1) aptitude and achievement standardized tests, 2) standardized tests of language skills, 3) standardized scales of symptoms related to ASD, as well as 4) clinical observations, including level of severity.

Significant Functional Limitations.

A description of any and all functional limitations caused by the communication disorder and relative to the postsecondary academic course and housing environment, if such accommodations are needed.

Types of Documentation Could Include:

- Assessment and Rating Scales Related to ASD.
- Comprehensive Psychoeducational Evaluation.

Student Access and Accommodation will make the final determination as to whether appropriate and reasonable accommodations are warranted and can be provided to the individual. All documentation submitted to SAA is considered to be confidential under FERPA guidelines and as outlined by University policy.