General Guidelines for Documentation of a Disability

Documentation is necessary to establish the presence of a disability and the need for accommodations. Documentation of a disability should include information regarding the current impact of the disability as it relates to the accommodation request(s). As appropriate to the disability, the documentation should include the following elements:

- A diagnostic statement identifying the current diagnosis, the date of the most recent diagnostic evaluation, and the date of the original diagnosis.
- A description of the diagnostic tests, methods, and/or criteria used including specific test results (including all standardized testing score) and the examiner’s narrative interpretation.
- A description of the current significant impairment of the diagnosed condition and how it impacts the student in living and learning in an academic environment. This may be in the form of an examiner’s narrative, and/or an interview, but must have a rational relationship to current diagnostic assessments.
- A statement indicating treatments, medications, or assistive devices/services currently prescribed or in use, with a description of the mediating effects and potential side effects from such treatments.
- A description of the expected duration and progression of the impact of the diagnosed condition over time, particularly the next five years.
- A history of previous accommodations and their impact.
- The credentials and signature of the diagnosing professional(s) must be included in the letterhead or other forms. Please note that diagnosing professionals shall not be family members or others with a close personal relationship with the individual being evaluated.
Additional considerations beyond these elements for documentation:

- Documentation prepared for specific, non-educational venues (e.g. Social Security Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, etc.) will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may not meet the criteria as set forth by SSD.
- Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plans will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Provider recommendations for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services, compensatory strategies, and/or collateral support services will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Nationally, most institutions of higher education, including Virginia Tech, utilize guidelines developed by the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) and the Educational Testing Services (ETS). More information about disability documentation at Virginia Tech can be obtained on the Services for Students with Disabilities webpage: Disability Documentation.

(revised November 2018)