

GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTATION OF A DISABILITY

Disability Resources

Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa

Phone: 641-269-3124; FAX 641-269-9083

Grinnell College is committed to meeting the needs of students with disabilities through the use of appropriate accommodations and assistive technology. The College engages in an interactive process with the student to identify an appropriate accommodation for a disability, which typically requires medical or other appropriate documentation. Grinnell College recognizes that the lived experiences of the individual student provide an important source of information which should be considered alongside other types of documentation to determine the impact of the disability in the Grinnell College residential and academic environments.

Reasonable accommodations are identified by considering the nature of the disability and the resulting impacts on the individual's daily life functions that occur within the specific environmental contexts of Grinnell College. These accommodations may also be informed by the specific physical and learning environments of the student's courses.

The following guidelines are intended to assist the student, their providers, and their families or educators in collecting documentation that will be helpful in assessing necessary and reasonable accommodations within at Grinnell.

General Recommendations

Students with disabilities are encouraged to submit their documentation as far in advance of their need for accommodation as possible to ensure that necessary adjustments can be made in a timely fashion. The College recognizes that certain circumstances or conditions make advanced notice impossible or impractical.

Students should consider providing documentation from any source they feel can provide relevant information regarding the impact of their disability. Reports from family members, educators, documentation or forms from previous education (e.g., IEPs, 504 plans, etc.), and other individualized learning documents can provide important context but may not provide sufficient information without accompanying documentation from a licensed medical or mental health provider.

Documentation should be recent enough to accurately reflect the current impact of the disability on the student's functioning. Some typical guidelines for specific disability categories are listed below, however, the age of the documentation is dependent on the specific disability characteristics, the student's requested accommodations, and the current functional impacts the student is experiencing. Therefore, disabilities that are intermittent, sporadic, or degenerative may require more frequent evaluation.

Students should also submit a completed Request for Accommodations form to the Coordinator of Student Disability Resources, which can be filled out by the student, or the student may complete it with the help of their medical provider(s).

If at any time a student would like to consult regarding the documentation process, has questions about the process, or is having difficulty gathering supplemental documentation, they should contact the Disability Resource Office at 641-269-3124 or access@grinnell.edu.

Specific Recommendations for Documentation from Medical or Mental Health Providers

Students are encouraged to inform their medical providers that the College would find the following information most helpful in its effort to accommodate a disability:

- 1) Diagnosis and co-morbid conditions that could be disabling in the Grinnell College residential, academic, or social environment.
 - a. If a diagnosis has not been reached but there is clear evidence of a condition that could be disabling, please describe the relevant medical history.
- 2) The current severity and the relative stability of the condition.
 - a. The extent to which this condition would be disabling in the Grinnell College context.
- 3) Any current or expected functional impacts.
- 4) Any current medication and side effects that could cause additional functional impacts.
- 5) Length of time that the provider has been treating the student and the date of the last appointment.
- 6) Any recommendations for accommodations that may mitigate these functional impacts.

All documentation should be provided on official letterhead that is signed by the provider and includes the providers' qualifications. The provider should be appropriately qualified to diagnose the primary condition (see below for specific requirements by category of disability). Documentation can be faxed to 641-269-9083, ATTN: Disability Resources.

Specific Recommendations by Disability Type

For students with ADD/ADHD—Documentation should be recent (preferably within the last 3 years at the time of the request for accommodations or should be well documented from childhood with a recent reevaluation) and should be provided by a qualified provider. Typically, documentation from a general practitioner or family doctor will not be sufficient. Documentation should include the names and findings of any neurological tests that were administered as well as what other learning differences or medical conditions were considered and how they were ruled out.

For students with Allergies or Asthma—Documentation should include the nature of the condition and description of specific identified allergens. If available, documentation should include a detailed allergists report.

For students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing—Documentation should include your most recent audiologist report or audiogram and a list of any technologies currently being used.

For students with Learning Disabilities—Documentation should be recent (preferably with the last 5 years at the time of the request for accommodations or should be well documented from childhood with a recent reevaluation). Typically, documentation from a general practitioner or family doctor will not be sufficient. Documentation should include the names and findings of any neurological tests that were administered as well as what other learning differences were considered and how they were ruled out.

For students with Psychiatric Disabilities – Psychiatric and any co-morbid disabilities should be documented by a licensed mental health provider. Typically, documentation from a general practitioner or family doctor will not be sufficient. Psychiatric documentation should be updated annually and should discuss the current impact of the diagnosis.

For students with a Temporary Disabling Condition—Documentation should indicate the date of the injury or illness and the duration of time for recovery. Examples of temporarily disabling conditions may include concussions, major break of dominant arm/hand, major surgery.

For students with Visual conditions or who are Blind — Documentation should include your current level of visual acuity and a list of any visual aids or technologies currently being used.

For students with any other disability—Documentation should include a medical diagnosis of your current condition, along with a description of any limitations caused by the condition.

Created using [AHEAD April 2012 Documentation Guidelines Standards](#) and adapting language from the University of Connecticut [Center for Students with Disabilities](#).

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