ODS Process

The Office of Disability Services (ODS) collaborates with students with documented disabilities and faculty to provide reasonable accommodations, auxiliary aids, and support services that are individualized and based upon medical documentation, functional limitations, and a collaborative assessment of needs. In order to receive accommodations, students must complete the following process:

1. **Submit Intake Form** - Once a student has been admitted to the University, he/she should complete the Intake Form (available at [http://ods.gmu.edu/](http://ods.gmu.edu/) or the ODS office) and submit it to the Office of Disability Services along with their medical documentation. The student is encouraged to start preparing as early as possible as some accommodations may require significant planning in advance of the semester.

2. **Submit Documentation of Disability** - A student requesting reasonable accommodations must provide appropriate documentation. The documentation guidelines are available on the ODS website at [http://ods.gmu.edu/students/documentation.php](http://ods.gmu.edu/students/documentation.php). The guidelines will be helpful in working with the medical provider to ensure that evaluation reports are appropriate to document eligibility and support requests for reasonable accommodations. ODS staff is available to answer any questions regarding documentation guidelines. The University does not provide nor pay for services rendered to meet the above documentation requirements.

3. **Initial Intake Interview** – Once the Intake Form and Documentation of Disability is received and reviewed, an ODS staff member will contact the student to schedule an intake interview. At the intake interview, the ODS staff and the student will discuss the student's eligibility, individual needs and tentatively agree upon accommodations.

4. **Accommodations** - After the initial interview has been conducted, a Faculty Contact Sheet will be developed to identify the accommodations. Copies will be given to the student for distribution to faculty members.

5. **Student's Responsibilities** - It is the student's responsibility to distribute the accommodation sheets to the appropriate instructors as soon as possible. Failure to distribute accommodation sheets may cause delay in the provision of services. The student must also keep a copy of the accommodation sheet for his/her records.

6. **Continuing Needs** - A student must meet with an ODS staff member prior to the beginning of each semester to review accommodation needs for the upcoming course work. It is the student's responsibility to request this appointment and to do so early enough to allow for the processing of the accommodations.

7. **Grievance Procedure** - Students with disabilities who have any complaints, including, but not limited to, complaints regarding a request for accommodations are encouraged to use the student grievance procedure outlined on the ODS website at [http://ods.gmu.edu/students/grievance.php](http://ods.gmu.edu/students/grievance.php)
Documentation Guidelines

The Office for Disability Services (ODS) collaborates with students with documented disabilities to provide reasonable accommodations that are individualized and based upon disability documentation, functional limitations, and a collaborative assessment of needs.

To be eligible for services, a student must provide appropriate written documentation from a licensed professional in the field concerning the specific diagnosis. Documentation must validate the presence of a disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disability Act. The documentation should include an evaluation that clearly states what the impairment is, the current impact of the impairment on the student’s ability to participate in the university’s educational programs and services, functional limitations and the relationship between the functional limitations and the accommodation(s) requested. The submission of appropriate documentation is just one step in the process of registering for support services with ODS. Once ODS receives the documentation, it is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The student will then be contacted to schedule an intake interview to further discuss eligibility and accommodation needs.

The general and disability specific guidelines that are attached were developed to assist students in working with the treating/diagnosing professional(s) to prepare the information needed to evaluate the request(s). If, after reading these guidelines, there are any questions, students can call the office at 703.993.2474. These guidelines are based upon the Association on Higher Education and Disabilities (AHEAD) description of quality disability documentation.

Please note: information provided by public and private special education programs (i.e. IEP, Social History, Special Education Eligibility) may be helpful but may not fully meet the ODS needs in terms of adequacy of documentation. It is important to consult with ODS about the need for, and appropriateness of documentation. If there are any questions about documentation guidelines, individuals can call the office at (703) 993-2474.
General Guidelines

All documentation submitted to ODS must include the following information in addition to disability specific information listed on following pages.

1. **Credentials of the evaluator(s):** Documentation should be provided by a licensed or otherwise properly credentialed professional for the area being evaluated, who has undergone appropriate and comprehensive training, has relevant experience, and has no personal relationship with the individual being evaluated.

2. **A diagnostic statement identifying the disability:** Documentation should include a clear diagnostic statement that describes how the disability was diagnosed, provides information on the functional impact, and details the typical progression or prognosis of the condition. When appropriate, it should include International Classification of Diseases (ICD) or Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM) codes.

3. **A description of the diagnostic methodology used:** Documentation should include a description of the diagnostic criteria, evaluation methods, procedures, tests, and dates of administration as well as a clinical narrative, observation, and specific results. When appropriate, summary data and specific tests scores should be included.

4. **A description of current functional limitations:** The current impact of the disability aids in establishing a disability and identifying accommodations. A combination of the results of formal evaluation procedures, clinical narrative, and self-report is the most comprehensive approach to fully document the impact of a disability. The report should address severity, frequency, and pervasiveness of the condition.

5. **The expected progression or stability of disability over time:** If possible, provide a description of the expected change in the functional impact of the condition(s) over time. If the condition is variable, describe the known triggers that may exacerbate the condition.

6. **A description of current and past accommodations, services, and/or medications:** Documentation should include a description of both current and past medications, auxiliary aids, assistive devices, support services, and accommodations including their effectiveness in minimizing the functional impact of the disability. There should be a discussion of significant side effects from current medications or services that may impact physical, perceptual, behavioral, or cognitive performance. This information may provide insight into making current accommodation decisions.

7. **Recommendations for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services, compensatory strategies, and/or collateral support services:** Recommended accommodations and strategies should be logically related to functional limitations or a clear explanation of that relationship is necessary to making current accommodation decisions. ODS will carefully consider accommodation recommendations but will make the final determination.
Disability Specific Guidelines

If you are requesting accommodations based on multiple disabilities, documentation for each disability is required.

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders

- Documentation must be in the form of a written report based on a psych-educational evaluation completed within the past 3 years and based on adult scores.
- The following criteria must be addressed:
  - Clear statement of the DSM-IV diagnosis, including pertinent history of ADHD symptoms demonstrated during childhood.
  - Description of current ADHD symptoms across multiple settings.
  - Psycho-educational evaluation must include standardized measures of cognitive development, academic achievement, information processing, and adaptive/emotional functioning. In addition to measures of attention (TOVA, IVA, TEA). Actual test scores must be provided.
  - Exclusion of differential diagnoses (i.e. LD or mental health disorders).
  - Treatment information including current medication.
  - Impact of condition in a college environment.
- Diagnosis must be made by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist.

Learning Disabilities

- Documentation must be in the form of a written report based on a psycho-educational or neuropsychological evaluation completed within the past 3 years and based on adult scores.
- A specific learning disability must be clearly diagnosed utilizing the DSM-IV codes.
- Psycho-educational evaluation must include standardized measures of cognitive development, academic achievement, information processing, and adaptive/emotional functioning. Actual test scores must be provided.
- Diagnosis must be made by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist.

Autism Spectrum Disorders

- Documentation must be in the form of a psycho-educational or neuropsychological evaluation completed within the past 3 years and based on adult scores.
- Evaluation must include standardized measures of cognitive development, academic achievement, information processing, and adaptive/emotional functioning. Actual test scores must be provided.
- Behavioral, social, and communication issues must be addressed.
- Diagnosis must be made by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist.

Traumatic Brain Injuries

- Documentation must be in the form of a neuropsychological evaluation.
- If injury is less than 3 years old, evaluation must have been performed within the past year. For older injuries, evaluation must have been performed within the past 3 years.
- Diagnosis must be made by a licensed psychologist or neuropsychologist.
Psychological Impairments
- Documentation must be in the form of a psychological, psychiatric, neuropsychological report, or using the Psychiatric Verification Form found at http://ods.gmu.edu/
- Evaluation must have been completed within the past year.
- Documentation must include all the criteria written above in General Guidelines.
- There must be a specific diagnosis which is consistent with the diagnostic criteria found in the DSM-IV.
- Diagnosis must be made by a licensed psychologist, psychiatrist, or other practitioner qualified to make this diagnosis.

Medical Impairments & Physical Impairments
- Documentation must be in the form of a medical report, practitioner’s letter or using the Medical Determination Form. http://ods.gmu.edu/Website%20Doc.%20Guidelines/Medical%20Determination%20Form.doc
- Documentation must be current.
- Documentation must include all criteria written above in General Guidelines.
- Doctor’s prescription pad notes will not be accepted.
- Diagnosis must be made by a practitioner qualified to make this diagnosis.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Documentation must be in the form of either a medical report or practitioner’s letter.
- An audiological report must be submitted.
- Documentation must include all criteria written above in General Guidelines.
- Diagnosis must be made by an audiologist or other practitioner qualified to make this diagnosis.

Visual Impairments & Blindness
- Documentation must be in the form of either a medical report or practitioner’s letter completed within the past year.
- Documentation must include all criteria written above in General Guidelines.
- Diagnosis must be made by an ophthalmologist, optometrist, or other practitioner qualified to make this diagnosis.

Speech Impairments
- Documentation must be in the form of either a medical report or practitioner’s letter completed within the past year.
- Documentation must include all criteria written above in General Guidelines.
- Diagnosis must be made by a speech pathologist or other practitioner qualified to make this diagnosis.