



Accommodations and Resource Center (AARC) Documentation Guidelines

Physical/Chronic Illness

Introduction

The Accommodations and Resource Center (AARC) at Western University of Health Sciences is committed to providing accommodations and services to qualified students and employees with disabilities in order to eliminate any disadvantages that may occur as a result of an individual's disability. In determining reasonable accommodations, AARC is guided by the federal definition of disability, which describes an individual with a disability as someone who has:

A physical or mental impairment that **substantially** limits one or more major life activities of such individual, a record of such impairment or is regarded as having such an impairment.

Any student or employee may request accommodations from AARC. In order to establish disability status and eligibility for specific accommodations, academic adjustments, ergonomic furniture/equipment and or auxiliary aids/services, AARC requires **current** and **comprehensive** documentation of the student's or employee's impairment(s). Disability documentation is reviewed by the Assistant Director AARC, and the determination of accommodations is made on a case-by-case basis based on the functional limitations of the disability. It is the student's and employee's responsibility to obtain and provide this information. If a student or employee cannot present current and comprehensive documentation, the Assistant Director may refer him/her to a qualified professional for assessment.

Disability documentation is credible evidence from a qualified practitioner that attests to the existence of a disability, the impact of the alleged disability on academic and job performance, and related competencies and recommendations for accommodations.

Guidelines for Disability Documentation

A physical disability includes but is not limited to: Mobility Impairments, Multiple Sclerosis (MS), Cerebral Palsy, Chemical Sensitivities, Spinal Cord Injuries, Cancer, AIDS, Muscular Dystrophy, Spina Bifida. Any physical disability and chronic illness are considered to be in the medical domain and require the expertise of a physician; including a neurologist, psychiatrist or other medical specialist with experience and expertise in the area for which accommodations are being requested. The diagnostician should be an impartial individual who is not a family member of the student or employee

The following guidelines are provided to assist the service providers in collaborating with each student or employee to determine appropriate accommodations. Documentation serves as the foundation that legitimizes a student's or employee's request for appropriate accommodations; therefore the following should be included:

1. A clear statement of the medical diagnosis of the physical disability or chronic illness.
2. Documentation for eligibility must reflect the current impact the physical disability or chronic illness has on the student's or employee's functioning. Disabilities that are sporadic or degenerative may require more frequent evaluation.
3. A summary of assessment procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis; including evaluation results and standardized scores, if applicable.
4. A description of present symptoms which meet the criteria for diagnosis.
5. Medical information relating to the student or employee needs to include the impact of medication on the student's or employee's ability to meet the demands of the postsecondary environment.
6. Prior receipt of accommodations does not guarantee receipt of the same accommodations at Western University of Health Sciences.
7. Missing disability documentation information may result in a delay in reviewing a student's or employee's request for accommodations.
8. A statement of the functional impact or limitations of the disability on learning, working or other major life activity and the degree to which it impacts the individual in learning or working context for which accommodations are being requested.

Further assessment by an appropriate professional may be required if co-existing learning disabilities or other disabling conditions are indicated. The student or employee and the Assistant Director AARC collaborate regarding accommodations.