

DISABILITY VERIFICATION GUIDELINES FOR ATTENTION DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDERS

Qualifications of the Evaluator

The name, title, and license/certification credentials of the evaluator should be stated in the report. The following professionals are considered qualified to evaluate ADHD: licensed psychologists, and other appropriately credentialed mental health professionals, and medical doctors who have expertise in evaluating the impact of ADHD on an individual's *educational* performance. A diagnosis of ADHD by someone whose training is not in these fields is not acceptable. All reports should be typed on letterhead, dated, and signed.

Current Documentation

Evaluation should be no more than three years old. Changes may have occurred in the student's performance since a previous diagnosis, or new medication may have been prescribed or discontinued since the initial diagnosis was made. Documentation should substantiate the need for services based on the student's *current* functioning.

Identification of ADHD

A comprehensive evaluation should include a clinical interview, assessment of attention difficulties, and a diagnosis of ADHD using DSM-IV criteria. An IEP, 504 Accommodation Plan, or notification that the student is currently taking medication for ADHD are insufficient documentation by themselves, but may be included as part of a more comprehensive report.

Clinical Interview – Because ADHD is, by definition in the DSM-IV, first exhibited in childhood and manifests itself in more than one setting, relevant historical information is essential. The student's academic history should be included. Medical, developmental, and social histories should be investigated and reported, along with any family history of educational, medical, or psychosocial difficulties. A description of the individual's presenting attention symptoms should be provided, as well as any history of such symptoms. A family history of ADHD and the student's medication history also are important.

Assessment of Attention Difficulties

The evaluator should include any assessment data that supports or refutes a diagnosis of ADHD. Assessments such as checklists and rating scales are very important, but checklists, surveys, or subtest scores should not be used as the SOLE criterion for a diagnosis of ADHD. Most evaluators find it is valuable to administer, or examine the results of, intelligence tests such as the WISC-3, WAIS-R, or the Stanford-Binet.

The evaluator should investigate the possibility of dual diagnoses and/or co-existing medical and/or psychological disorders that result in behaviors that mimic ADHD. Medical, social, and psychiatric problems should be ruled out as causes of ADHD.

Diagnosis of ADHD Using DSM-IV Criteria – Individuals who exhibit general problems with organization, test anxiety, memory, and concentration do not fit the diagnostic criteria for ADHD. Likewise, a positive response to medication by itself does not confirm a diagnosis of ADHD. The diagnostician should use direct language in the diagnosis of ADHD, avoiding the use of terms such as "suggests", "is indicative of", or "attention problems". To enable Arkansas

Baptist College officials to make an informed decision regarding reasonable accommodations, a **SPECIFIC statement that the student is diagnosed with *ADHD* and the accompanying DSM-IV criteria are required.** Also, the evaluator **must describe the substantial limitation(s) to academic learning** presented by the attention disorder. If the data indicate that ADHD is not present, the evaluator should state that finding in the report.

Recommendations for Accommodations

The diagnostic report should include specific recommendations for academic accommodations, and the rationale for such recommendations and how the proposed accommodations benefit the student in light of the identified disability. If accommodations are not identified specifically in the diagnostic report, the office of Disability Support services will request this information prior to offering any reasonable accommodations. A history of accommodations in itself does not warrant the provision of similar accommodations at Arkansas Baptist College. The final determination of appropriate and reasonable accommodation rests with the Office of Disability Support Services.

A summary of diagnostic findings is a valuable component of the report. The summary might include an indication of how patterns of inattentiveness and/or hyperactivity validate the presence of ADHD, and the elimination of alternative explanations for academic problems (such as poor study habits, lack of motivation, psychosocial or medical problems).

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