

Guidelines for Clinical Documentation of Attention Disorders (ADD/ADHD)

The provision of reasonable accommodations for otherwise qualified individuals with diagnoses of ADD and ADHD will be made on a case-by-case basis, and will be based on current impact on academic functioning. Prior diagnosis or a prior history of receiving academic accommodations, does not guarantee the provision of similar accommodations in the absence of additional documentation. The documentation must describe a disabling condition, which is defined by the presence of substantial limitations in one or more major life activities. The following guidelines are provided to ensure documentation not only validates the existence of ADD or ADHD, but establishes the impact of ADD or ADHD on the individual's educational performance, and supports the request for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids.

ADD and ADHD documentation will distinguish a clinically significant impairment from circumstantial causes of symptoms such as stressful life situations, and from a range of behaviors or development normal for adolescents and young adults. Distractibility, disorganization, procrastination, or other symptoms in and of themselves do not constitute a disability. Non-specific diagnoses such as test anxiety, difficulty with timed tests, memory or attention problems in test situations, learning differences, and academic problems, in and of themselves, do not constitute disabilities.

Disability Support Services will make the final determination regarding whether accommodations are reasonable and can be provided in the University environment. This determination will be based not only on the data provided in the documentation, but also on Colorado School of Mines criteria for reasonable accommodations.

All information obtained in diagnostic and medical reports will be maintained and used in accordance with applicable confidentiality requirements.

Documentation should be sent to:

Disability Support Services
Colorado School of Mines
W. Lloyd Wright Student Wellness Center
1770 Elm St., Room 209
Golden, CO 80401

Fax: 303-384-2009

Please expect a minimum of two weeks for a review of documentation.

Documentation Requirements:

A Qualified Evaluator Must Conduct the Evaluation:

Professionals qualified to diagnose and recommend accommodations must be trained and experienced in the assessment of ADD/ADHD and the needs of adolescent and young adult learners. The following professionals would generally be considered qualified: developmental pediatricians, family physicians, neurologists, psychiatrists, and licensed clinical or educational psychologists. (Family members and physician's assistants do not qualify.)

Name, title, professional credentials of evaluator, and information about licensure and/or specialization are required. All evaluation reports must be typed on letterhead, signed, and dated.

Documentation Must Be Current:

- Since reasonable accommodations are based upon the assessment of the current impact of the ADD or ADHD, documentation must be up-to-date. In most cases, that means a diagnostic evaluation must have been completed within the past five years.
- Older documentation should also be included to demonstrate a history of substantial academic impairment.
- If a student underwent full neuro/psychoeducational testing and evaluation as a child, full testing is not expected a second time. However, an update of current symptoms, impact, and other relevant information, as well as the need for recommended accommodations, must accompany original testing and evaluation.

Documentation Must Include the Following Components:

Diagnostic Evaluation:

- Neuro/psychoeducational assessment is important in determining student ability to function academically and to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Self-report, checklists, and surveys can serve to supplement the diagnostic profile but are inadequate for the diagnosis of ADD or ADHD and do not substitute for clinical observations and sound diagnostic testing and judgment.
- An IEP or a 504 is important to show a history of impairment, but neither is sufficient in and of itself.

Evaluation Results:

Provide the following, applicable information to demonstrate how patterns of inattentiveness, impulsivity, and/or hyperactivity across the life span and settings determine the presence of ADD or ADHD and substantial impact on academic functioning.

- Specific, DSM-IV (or later) psychiatric diagnosis
- Date of first visit to provider(s) and frequency of visits
- Developmental history
- History of presenting symptoms, including evidence of ongoing impulsive/hyperactive or inattentive behavior that has significantly impaired functioning over time

- Current symptoms and clear evidence of significant impairment in academic functioning
- Clear evidence that symptoms do not meet criteria for another mental disorder
- Descriptors/codes for applicable Axis I, Axis II, Axis III, Axis IV, and Axis V diagnoses
- Thorough academic history of elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education
- Review of prior neuro/psychoeducational test reports to determine whether a pattern of strengths or weaknesses is supportive of attention or learning problems
- Relevant family history of educational, physical or psychological difficulties
- Relevant medical and medication history, including the absence of a medical basis for the symptoms being evaluated
- Relevant psychosocial history and interventions
- Relevant therapy history
- Relevant employment history
- Explain the possibility of dual diagnoses: co-existing neurological, mood, behavioral, and/or personality disorders that may confound or mimic the diagnosis of ADD or ADHD.

Prescribed Medications:

- Dosages
- Schedules, which may influence the types of accommodations provided
- Impact of medication, including side effects, on the student's ability to meet the demands of post-secondary education.

Narrative Summary:

- Rule out alternative explanations for inattentiveness, impulsivity, and/or hyperactivity as a result of psychological or medical disorders or non-cognitive factors.
- Indicate how patterns of inattentiveness, impulsivity, and/or hyperactivity across the life span and across settings determine the presence of ADD or ADHD.
- Describe the substantial limitation to the individual's learning presented by the ADD or ADHD and the degree to which it affects the student in the testing context for which accommodations are being requested.
- Indicate whether or not the student was evaluated while on medication, and whether or not the prescribed treatment produced a positive response.
- Indicate why specific accommodations are needed and how the effects of ADD or ADHD symptoms, as designated by DSM-IV (or later), are mediated by the accommodations.

Recommended Accommodations:

The recommendation of reasonable accommodations must be appropriate for the postsecondary level and Colorado School of Mines, and must be supported by the diagnosis. If extended test/quiz and/or lab time is recommended, the amount of time must be specified. Rationale must be given for each recommendation.