The University of Louisiana at Monroe
Counseling Center

Documentation Guidelines
Psychological Disorders

The University of Louisiana at Monroe is committed to providing educational opportunities to qualified students with disabilities for purposes of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. In order to establish that an individual is covered under these laws, students must submit current documentation (i.e., psychological/diagnostic reports, records and information) confirming that a disability substantially limits one or more major life activities as compared to the average person in the general population. Accommodations are not granted on the basis of a diagnosis; they must be tied to current functional impairment(s).

The diagnosis of a disorder/impairment alone does not automatically qualify an individual for accommodations under the federal laws. The following guidelines are designed to provide students and professional diagnosticians with a common understanding and knowledge base of the components of documentation which are necessary to validate the existence of a psychological disorder, its impact on the individual’s educational performance, and accommodation(s) that are necessary in the post-secondary setting.

Documentation should include:

I. Qualifications of the Evaluator/Diagnostician
II. Currency of Evaluation
III. Rationale and Justification for Requested Accommodations

I. Qualifications of the Evaluator/Diagnostician

The professional conducting the evaluation and making the diagnosis must be qualified to make the diagnosis and recommend appropriate accommodations. Professionals typically qualified to make this diagnosis include psychologists, neuro-psychologists, psychiatrists, and other doctors trained in psychology/psychiatry. A clinical team approach to diagnosis may also be appropriate. The documentation must include the name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about licensure and/or specialization.

II. Currency of Evaluation

Due to the changing nature of psychiatric disorders, it is essential that a student provide current and appropriate documentation from a qualified evaluator. Since reasonable accommodations are based upon the current impact of the disorder, the documentation
must address the individual’s current level of functioning and the need for accommodations. On a case-by-case basis, a student may be asked to also submit updated information from a qualified professional on a semester-by-semester or yearly basis.

III. Rationale and Justification for Each Requested Accommodation

Accommodation requests are not granted on the basis of a diagnostic label: they must be tied to history and current functional impairment(s). A link must be established between the requested accommodations and the current functional limitations of the individual that are pertinent to the anticipated academic environment.

It is also important to include information regarding any prior accommodations or auxiliary aids; including the specific criteria used to grant prior accommodations/auxiliary aids, the conditions under which the accommodations/auxiliary aids were used and whether or not they were effective. Given that many individuals may perceive that they might benefit from extended time in testing situations, evaluators must provide specific rationales and justification for recommended testing accommodations.