OFFICE OF ACCESSibility
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ACCESSibility Documentation Guidelines

The Office of ACCESSibility is committed to ensuring equitable access to Mercy University's programs, services, and learning environments. We work collaboratively with students to identify disability-related barriers and appropriate accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services. We also assist students seeking religious accommodations and students experiencing temporary illness or injury.

Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), disability-related documentation helps us understand a student's needs and determine appropriate accommodations. Documentation informs this process; it is not about proving that a student deserves support. Students may be asked to provide information from a treating healthcare provider or qualified diagnostician. All requests are reviewed individually, considering the students' needs and the essential requirements of the relevant academic program or activity.

Types of documentation that may be helpful to provide are:

- Educational, psychological, or medical records.
- Reports, assessments, or evaluations from healthcare providers, clinical psychologists, licensed social workers, or school psychologists.
- Documents that outline the use of academic accommodations such as an IEP, 504 Plan, or list of approved accommodations from a previous institution.

Documentation MUST include:

1. A statement identifying the nature of the disability experienced by the student.
    - Diagnosis, type of health issue, etc.

2. A description of the functional impact of the disability. The functional limitation is a description of how the student's disability affects the student in an academic setting.
    - What symptoms does the student experience?
    - How does this affect their ability to function in the classroom?
    - What challenges does the student experience in relation to their studies?

3. Any treatments, medications, services, or assistive devices currently prescribed, their level of effectiveness, and potential side effects from medications as they might relate to school.

4. Information stating the certification, licensure, and/or qualification of the individual providing the supporting documentation (documenting professional). Documentation must be provided in an un-editable format (ex: PDF) on letterhead, signed, and include the licensed professional's title, license number, address, and phone number.
    - Documenting professional must be a qualified professional whose credentials demonstrate expertise in the respective field.
    - Documenting professional may not be related to the student.

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This list is not comprehensive. The following are listed as examples. All documentation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The Office of ACCESSibility may require additional documentation if the documentation provided does not fully support the request being made.

Request due to:	Examples of Limitations:	Examples of Supporting Documentation
Learning Disability	Difficulty with speaking, reading, concentrating, thinking, processing, etc.	High School IEP, 504 plan, school evaluations, achievement tests.
Vision and Hearing	Deaf, hard of hearing, blind, low vision, color blindness, light sensitivity, etc.	If disability is not apparent, a letter and/or evaluation may be required from a medical professional.
Caring for Oneself	Difficulty with breathing, sleeping, eating, and/or communicating.	If disability is not apparent, a letter and/or evaluation may be required from a medical professional.
Performing Manual Tasks	Difficulty with walking, standing, lifting, bending, working, and/or other mobility impairments.	If disability is not apparent, a letter and/or evaluation may be required from a medical professional.
Major Bodily Functions	Digestive, immune system, respiratory, circulatory, and neurological conditions.	A letter and/or evaluation from a medical professional.
Psychological	Diagnosis of anxiety, depression, bipolar, mood disorders, personality disorders, dissociative disorder, PTSD, ADD/ADHD, etc.	A letter and/or evaluation from a medical professional.
Allergy	Documented allergic reactions (ex: food items, latex, etc.) that may interfere with course work.	A letter and/or evaluation from a medical professional.
Pervasive Developmental Disorder	Diagnosis of Autism, Autism Spectrum, Asperger's, PDD-NOS, etc.	High School IEP, 504 plan, school evaluations, achievement tests.
Other Medical Condition	Injury (temporary or permanent), side effects of medical treatment, etc.	A letter or evaluation from a medical professional indicating the nature of the temporary condition and its expected duration.
Religious or Personal Beliefs	Requests related to food preferences, absences, classroom content, etc.	Discussed on an individual basis with The Office of ACCESSibility
Housing Requests	Requests for Emotional Support Animal, single unit, private bathroom, assistive devices, etc.	**Certain housing requests require additional forms; please contact ACCESS team as soon as possible to discuss your request.*