

Rock Valley College Disability Documentation Guidelines

Prospective students of Rock Valley College (RVC) who wish to seek academic accommodations are encouraged to schedule an intake appointment with the DSS Coordinator as early as possible. The intake is a deliberative and collaborative process that is responsive to the unique experience of each individual. The rationale for seeking information about a student's condition is to support the Coordinator in establishing disability, understanding how disability may impact a student, and making informed decisions about accommodations. Professional judgment is an essential component of this process.

Students should be aware that other colleges and universities as well as testing agencies may have different documentation guidelines and/or require different or additional documentation.

RVC refers to the national best practice standards of the Association on Higher Education & Disability (AHEAD) for Guidance on documentation practices.

The following are core elements of quality disability documentation:

1. *The credentials of the evaluator*

The best quality documentation is provided by a licensed or otherwise properly credentialed professional. A good match between the credentials of the individual making the diagnosis and the condition being reported is expected (e.g., an orthopedic limitation might be documented by a physician, but not a licensed psychologist).

2. *A diagnostic statement identifying the disability*

Quality documentation includes a clear diagnostic statement (or clinical summary) that describes how the condition was diagnosed, provides information on the functional impact, and details the typical progression or prognosis of the condition.

3. *A description of the diagnostic methodology used*

Quality documentation includes a description of the diagnostic criteria, evaluation methods, procedures, tests and dates of administration, as well as a clinical narrative, observation, and specific results. If results from informal, non-standardized or less common methods of evaluation are reported, an explanation of their role and significance in the diagnostic process will strengthen their value in providing useful information.

4. *A description of the current functional limitations*

Information on how the disabling condition(s) currently impacts the individual provides useful information for both establishing a disability and identifying possible accommodations. The best quality documentation is thorough enough to demonstrate whether and how a major life activity is substantially limited by providing a clear sense of the severity, frequency and pervasiveness of the condition (s).

5. *A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability*

It is helpful when documentation provides information on expected changes in the functional impact of the disability over time and context. If the condition is not stable, information on interventions (including the individual's own strategies) for exacerbations and recommended timelines for re-evaluation are most helpful.

6. *A description of current and past accommodations, services and/or medications*

The most comprehensive documentation will include a description of both current and past medications, auxiliary aids, assistive devices, support services, and accommodations, including their effectiveness in ameliorating functional impacts of the disability.

7. *Recommendations for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services, compensatory strategies, and/or collateral support services*

It is most helpful when recommended accommodations and strategies are logically related to functional limitations; if connections are not obvious, a clear explanation of their relationship can be useful in decision-making.

If a disability is new, or no documentation is available, students are encouraged to meet with the DSS Coordinator to discuss current barriers and resources for addressing the barrier(s).

If you have any questions regarding the above, or would like additional information, please contact:

Disability Support Services
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