

# CORNERSTONE UNIVERSITY

Center for Student Success (CSS)

Student Disability Services (SDS)

## Guidelines for Documentation

The Cornerstone University Center for Student Success is responsible for providing students with disabilities equal access to their education and related experiences. To receive academic accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, students with disabilities at Cornerstone University must register with the Cornerstone University Center for Student Success. Upon registration, students must provide documentation from an appropriately trained and credentialed professional evaluator indicating that they have a “*substantially limiting*” condition as defined by federal legislation noted above.

Federal law requires that students with disabilities be considered on an individual case-by-case basis. To provide each individual with appropriate accommodations, the Center for Student Success requires documentation that not only confirms the presence and severity of the disability, but also provides adequate information about the functional limitations for the student. In other words, the documentation must be comprehensive enough to address specific symptoms and specific information as to how the disability impacts the person’s everyday life functioning. Specific recommendations for academic accommodations/services should also be outlined in a written report, provided to the student who, in turn, will need to sign and release the information to the Center for Student Success for review. By providing the information outlined below, the evaluator will assist us in being able to serve the student effectively by enabling us to assess the appropriateness of the student’s request for academic accommodations.

Given that the manifestations and severity of a student’s disability may change over time, the evaluation must reflect the student’s *current status*. Our policy is that documentation must be no more than 5 years old. In other words, there should be no more than five years’ time between the date of the evaluation report and the date of application for services at Cornerstone University. For incoming freshman at Cornerstone University, an evaluation report from the student’s junior or senior year in high school is acceptable documentation; however, an IEP/MET that is older than three years is not current enough, and the student may need to obtain a current evaluation and report in order to request disability-related accommodations at Cornerstone University. Also, please note that an IEP in itself does not provide enough information to qualify for services; any IEP must be accompanied by a diagnostic report from a psychologist, physician and/or social worker.

While Cornerstone University does not provide assessment services, we would be happy to provide referrals for local professional who can provide quality assessment and documentation services. Also, students and families should be aware that insurance typically does not cover assessment and diagnostic services of this type, and such costs are left to the responsibility and sole discretion of the family.

Please be aware that having a comprehensive assessment completed does not automatically translate into qualification for services. For a student to qualify for disability-related accommodations and services, the assessing professional must certify the presence of a diagnosable and significantly limiting condition and provide specific and relevant recommendations.

Specifically, appropriate and acceptable documentation must be *current, comprehensive*, and include the following:

1. Documentation must relate to assessment conducted no longer than 5 years from the date upon which SDS services are being requested. If a student submits documentation that is more than 5 years old, he or she may be asked to seek updated assessment and documentation of disability. Such assessments are the sole cost and discretion of the student and/or the family.
2. A specific diagnosis, if applicable, including level of severity; diagnosis should adhere to a widely recognized diagnostic system such as the DSM-V; if no diagnosis is rendered, that should also be clearly documented in the written report;
3. The specific findings in support of this diagnosis including relevant history, observations of the individual, tests administered, test results, and the evaluator's interpretation of those test results;
4. For a diagnosis of a Specific Learning Disability or ADHD, a comprehensive neuropsychological examination or psychoeducational evaluation is required to determine eligibility for services as a student with a disability. Objective evidence of a substantial limitation must be provided. Depending on the specific nature of the diagnosis, such assessment should, in most cases, include some combination of the following:
  - Cognitive/intelligence assessment (required for LD diagnosis; highly recommended for ADHD diagnosis)
  - Academic achievement assessment (required for LD diagnosis; highly recommended for ADHD diagnosis; Note: The WRAT instruments are not appropriate for LD diagnosis)
  - Behavioral Checklists
  - Continuous Performance Tests
  - Personality assessment
  - Social-emotional assessment
  - Adaptive functioning assessment
5. A description of the student's functional limitations as they are directly related to the stated disabilities and necessitate any accommodations.
6. Specific academic recommendations (recommendations related to social and/or residential situations are also appropriate and helpful for some disabilities)
7. The evaluator's name, address, telephone number (in the event our office needs to contact the evaluator), and professional credential relevant to the diagnosis. (i.e., M.D., Ph.D., LSSP).
8. The documentation must be on professional letterhead, typed, dated, and signed.

### **How to Attain Documentation**

The professional making the diagnosis of a disability should be an appropriately trained evaluator, such as a physician, psychologist, psychiatrist, or educational diagnostician. For example, an audiologist would diagnose a hearing impairment; while a psychiatrist, psychologist, or clinical social worker would diagnose a psychological disability such as a learning disability or ADHD. *In general, when a student is suspected of a diagnosis that is primarily psychological in nature, an assessment from a physician who is not trained in psychology or psychiatry is not sufficient and should be accompanied by an evaluation*

*from a credentialed mental health professional.* Documentation from a family member or family friend is not acceptable.

The Cornerstone University Center for Student Success reserves the right to request additional information or evaluation.

Additional Grand Rapids area referrals are available from Dr. Nicole McDonald upon request; contact her during the academic year at [nicole.mcdonald@cornerstone.edu](mailto:nicole.mcdonald@cornerstone.edu) or via telephone at 616.949.5300, ext. 1909.

## **Selected Referrals for Psychological Assessment**

If you suspect that you have a specific learning disability or Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, you may choose to contact one of the following assessment service providers. Please note that all costs for services are the sole responsibility and discretion of the student and his/her family.

### **BRAINS Institute**

3292 N. Evergreen Drive

Grand Rapids, MI 49525

Phone: 616-365-8920

### **Western Michigan University Clinic – Grand Rapids, Downtown**

Center for Counseling and Psychological Services

200 Ionia Ave. SW

Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Phone: 616-771-4171

### **Christian Learning Center (Learning Disability and ADHD Assessment Only)**

Phone: 616-245-8388

### **Psychological Assessment Clinic at Pine Rest (ADHD Assessment)**

Phone: 866-852-4001