



DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTING YOUR DISABILITY

Berkshire Community College values inclusion and equal access to its programs and activities and is committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and welcoming. If you are a student with a disability and require reasonable academic accommodations, we encourage you to contact us prior to the start of a semester to discuss your accommodation needs and options. We will work collaboratively with you to develop an effective accommodation plan.

To develop this plan, we will need documentation of your disability. Ideally, your documentation will provide a *clear statement of your disability* based on the most recent edition of the DSM or ICD, discuss its *current impact* on your academic performance and other major life activities, and will be completed by a *qualified professional*. Additionally, your documentation should:

- Rate the current status of your condition, level of severity and whether it is permanent or temporary. If temporary, it should include an estimated time for recovery;
- Summarize the relevant education, developmental or medical history that supports your diagnosis; and
- Recommend accommodations and provide a direct link between the requested accommodation and the symptoms of your disability.

If you have a learning disability, traumatic brain injury or intellectual disability, you should provide the following:

- A complete intellectual assessment with all subtests and standard scores reported;
- A comprehensive academic achievement battery with all subtests and standard scores;
- Current levels of academic functioning in relevant areas such as reading (decoding and comprehension), mathematics (calculations and reasoning), and oral and written language (mechanics and development); specific areas of information processing;
- A written summary of or background information about your education, medical and family histories that relate to your disability; and
- Clear and specific evidence and identification of your disability. When diagnosing a learning or intellectual disability, please use direct language, avoiding terms such as, “suggests” or “is indicative of” or “is consistent with.”

All documentation should include the name, title and credentials of the person completing it. It should be signed, dated and on letterhead. Additionally, your documentation should state your full name and date of birth. Documentation from multiple sources, including **IEPs** and **504 Plans**, will be considered as long as, together, they meet the criteria above.

Who is considered disabled?

A student is considered disabled when they have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity as defined in the ADA (2008).

What is considered current documentation?

When used for determining accommodations, currency of documentation depends on whether the disability is of a changing or unchanging nature.

| <i>Disability</i> | <i>Currency of Documentation</i> |
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| <i>Learning Disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders, Traumatic Brain Injuries</i> | Five years |
| <i>Psychiatric Disabilities, Health-Related Disorders</i> | One year |
| <i>Blind, Legally Blind</i> | Does not need to be current |
| <i>Low Vision</i> | Three years |
| <i>Deaf, Hard of Hearing</i> | Does not need to be current unless there is a significant change in hearing status or amplification use |

Who is a qualified evaluator?

Professionals conducting assessment, rendering diagnoses of disabilities, offering clinical judgments and making recommendations for accommodations must have training, expertise and appropriate licensure/certification to do so.

| <i>Disability</i> | <i>Qualified Professional</i> |
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| <i>Learning Disabilities</i> | Clinical, school or educational psychologists, learning disability specialists |
| <i>Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders</i> | Licensed psychologists, neuropsychologists, psychiatrists, other relevantly trained medical doctors |
| <i>Traumatic Brain Injuries</i> | Clinical psychologists, neuropsychologists, neurologists, occupational therapists, speech and language pathologists, and other medical doctors with relevant training |
| <i>Autism Spectrum Disorders</i> | Psychologists, neuropsychologists, speech/language therapists, occupational therapists, psychiatrists, other relevantly trained professionals |
| <i>Psychiatric Disabilities</i> | Licensed psychologist, neuropsychologists, psychiatrists, other relevantly trained medical doctors, clinical social workers, school psychologists, psychiatric nurse practitioners |
| <i>Physical and/or Health-Related Disorders</i> | Medical doctors, surgeons, chiropractors, physical and speech therapists, neuropsychologist, other relevantly trained health care professionals |
| <i>Blindness, Low Vision</i> | Ophthalmologist, optometrist or other relevantly trained eye care specialist |
| <i>Deaf, Hard of Hearing</i> | Audiologist, Otolaryngologist or other relevantly trained hearing specialists |