Documentation Guidelines for Psychological Disabilities

A psychological disability is a disorder that impacts the mental and or emotional state of a client. Mental illness also refers to the term mental impairment and is categorically different from a learning impairment disability with regard to the clinical significance of the emotional functioning. A Psychological disability may include diagnoses such Major Depressive Disorder, Schizophrenia, and Social Anxiety Disorder.

In order to qualify for services through the Office of Disability Services at Southeastern Louisiana University for a psychological disability, students need to provide us with appropriate documentation of their disability. In order for the office to determine theses accommodations, we will need the following information provided to us on letterhead:

- Specific diagnosis, date of diagnosis, and date of last contact with student. The evaluator should list the diagnostic criteria on which the diagnosis is based, according to the DSM-IV or DSM-IV-TR
- Please briefly describe the relevant history of clinical contact and the date of the last visit with this person
- What specific symptoms does this person experience and to what severity (mild or moderate to severe and profound)?
- Information from a comprehensive clinical interview summarizing student self report, educational history, historical documentation, developmental history, relevant family history, medical and/or psychiatric history. Also, a ruling out of other potential diagnoses, dual diagnoses, and alternative explanations such as educational, linguistic, and cross-cultural factors.
- What are the functional limitations of the disability that will substantially impact this person in a college or university environment? [Functional limitations refer to the manifestations of the disability that impede the individual's ability to function as compared to the average person. A college environment would include activities such as taking classes, the amount of credits [12 hrs. = fulltime], studying, taking exams, getting around campus, interacting with faculty and student, etc.]
- Please include the results of any informal or clinical tests that were performed to support your diagnosis. In addition, include the information you gathered to rule out a differential diagnosis.
- What medications are prescribed and what are some of the side effects from the medication that will impact this person in a university environment? Please list any recommended treatment, medical or rehabilitative devices that were prescribed that may or may not mitigate the condition, disability , or the symptoms
- Signature, professional title(s), credentials/licensure (if applicable), and contact information (address, telephone number, and email).

Note: The age of documentation is a critical factor in helping us determine the current functioning of an individual. Some disabilities require more up-to-date documentation (e.g. psychological, post-traumatic stress disorder, etc.). Please send us the most recent documentation you have and if it is not sufficient we will collaborate with the student to obtain the necessary documentation. Please remember the student bears all costs associated with obtaining the documentation.