Documentation: Guidelines for Students with a Disability

The following guidelines outline the standard of documentary evidence required by the Australian Catholic University for students seeking disability services. The guidelines are designed to help students and relevant professionals to understand what information is required to access disability support services.

A student seeking support for a disability or medical condition must be able to provide appropriate documentation. In conjunction with an interview with the Disability Adviser, this documentation assists in understanding the impact of the student's disability or medical condition on academic performance and in determining what facilities, services and educational adjustments may be appropriate.

**Documentation must be:**
- Less than three years old;
- Legible and in English,
- Written on letterhead and signed and dated by a clearly identified, qualified professional who is not related to the student.

**Unacceptable forms of medical documentation:**
- Medical certificates with insufficient information (such as and including WorkCover medical certificates);
- Documentation which is not current, non-specific, or from a provider who is not a recognised health professional or an appropriate health professional as outlined in the guidelines below;
- Documentation from other institutions outlining prior educational adjustments is not appropriate evidence of a medical condition or disability. However such documentation can be helpful in conducting an assessment of student needs.

If specialist adaptive technology is requested, a specialist functional assessment undertaken by a specialist service or professional may be required.

**Please refer to the following pages for detailed documentation guidelines for each specific condition.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Autism Spectrum Disorder</th>
<th>Appropriate Professional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psychiatrist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Registered Psychologist</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Examples:**
- Autism
- Asperger’s Disorder
- Rett’s Disorder

**Documentation Requirements**
- A clear statement of the condition including:
  - A diagnosis based on the criteria published in the DSMIV/V (American Psychiatric Association);
  - Description of severity of condition;
  - Current symptoms;
  - Current impacts of the condition on academic performance;
  - Any recommended strategies for reasonable adjustments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)</th>
<th>Appropriate Professional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psychiatrist</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Registered Psychologist</td>
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</table>

**Documentation Requirements**
- Clear evidence of a diagnosis of ADD or ADHD which results in functional limitations in a learning environment, based on the criteria published in the DSMIV/V (American Psychiatric Association);
- Description of any current treatment;
- Recommendations and reasons for adjustments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Disorders</th>
<th>Appropriate Professional</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Registered Clinical Psychologist, Educational Psychologist or Neuropsychologist</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educational Audiologist – for conditions such as Auditory Processing Disorder</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Behavioural Optometrist – for conditions such as Visual Processing Disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occupational Therapist – for conditions such as Motor Dyspraxia, coordination and handwriting issues related to learning disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speech Pathologist – for conditions such as Expressive Language Disorder, Oral or Verbal Dyspraxia.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Examples:**
- Dyslexia
- Information Processing Disorders
- Dyscalculia
- Dysgraphia

**Documentation Requirements**
- A complete copy of the results of comprehensive psychometric testing which includes:
  - Comprehensive details including standard scores or percentiles, about the student’s aptitude, academic achievement and areas of information processing deficit (such as short and long-term memory, sequential memory, auditory and visual perception/processing, processing speed, executive functioning and motor ability);
  - Scores achieved through psychometric testing along with the relevant interpretations;
- Details of the students learning strengths and weaknesses that will affect the students ability to meet academic demands;
- Description of any current treatment or interventions;
- A summary of findings including recommendations and reasons for adjustments.
- The student must have been at least 17 years of age at the time of testing, as levels of learning disability can change during childhood and adolescence. Generally test results should be current and no older than 3 years since the date of assessment.

*Note:* Students with documentation relating to “Irlen Syndrome” or “Scotopic Sensitivity” that does not include comprehensive testing as outlined above, of the student's current aptitude, achievement or ability to process information, will receive adjustments limited to use/provision of coloured paper and suitable lighting for examinations only. More extensive support will require a comprehensive assessment and report as detailed above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Appropriate Professional</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ophthalmologist</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specialist Vision Testing Service (such as Vision Australia Services)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Examples:**
- Blindness
- Vision Impairment
- Colour blindness
- Keratoconus

**Documentation Requirements**
- Clear statement of the condition, including a diagnosis, a description of the severity of the condition and relevant impact on visual acuity (such as colour differentiation and size font required for reading materials if applicable);
- Description of the effects of the condition on academic performance;
- Description of any current treatment;
- Recommendations for adjustments, including any accessibility requirements;
- If alternative formatting or specialist adaptive technology is requested, a functional vision assessment undertaken by a specialist service, such as Vision Australia, may be required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hearing</th>
<th>Appropriate Professional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Registered Audiologist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Examples:**
- Deafness
- Hearing Impairment
- Tinnitus

**Documentation Requirements**
- Clear statement of the condition, including a diagnosis and a description of the severity of the condition;
- Assessment of the amount and type of hearing loss and the nature of any residual hearing;
- Description of any current treatment;
- Description of the effects of the condition on academic performance;
- Recommendations for adjustments or technology used or required, such as hearing aids, Auslan interpreters, hearing loop systems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical Condition</th>
<th>Appropriate Professional</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relevant specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General Practitioner with evidence of a clinical history with the patient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Examples:**
- ...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Documentation Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Fibromyalgia, Diabetes, Digestive Disorders such as Coeliac Disease, HIV/AIDS, Endocrine Diseases, Meniere’s Disease | • Clear statement of the condition, including a diagnosis and a description of the severity of the condition;  
• Description of present symptoms and treatment;  
• Description of the effects of the condition on academic performance;  
• Recommendations for adjustments and strategies to support academic performance and participation. |

**Physical Impairment**  
Appropriate Professional  
• Relevant specialist with evidence of a clinical history with the patient  
• General Practitioner with evidence of a clinical history with the patient  

**Examples:**  
- Spinal Cord Injury  
- Amputation  
- Paraplegia  
- Muscular dystrophy  
- Cystic Fibrosis  
- Arthritis  
- Cancer

**Documentation Requirements**  
• Clear statement of the condition, including a diagnosis and a description of the severity of the condition;  
• Description of present symptoms and treatment;  
• Description of the effects of the condition on academic performance;  
• Recommendations for adjustments and strategies to support academic performance and participation.

**Neurological Disorders**  
Appropriate Professional  
• Relevant specialist with evidence of a clinical history with the patient  
• General Practitioner with evidence of a clinical history with the patient  

**Examples:**  
- Multiple Sclerosis  
- Epilepsy  
- Spina Bifida  
- Cerebral Palsy  
- Acquired Brain Injury

**Documentation Requirements**  
• Clear statement of the condition, including a diagnosis and a description of the severity of the condition;  
• Description of present symptoms and treatment;  
• Description of the effects of the condition on academic performance;  
• Recommendations for adjustments and strategies to support academic performance and participation.  
• **Note:** If there is an associated learning disability, documentation will need to be provided in line with the guidelines listed for Learning Disabilities.

**Mental Health Condition**  
Appropriate Professional  
• Psychiatrist  
• Registered Psychologist  
• General Practitioner with evidence of a clinical history with the patient  

**Examples:**  
- Depression

**Documentation Requirements**  
• Clear statement of the condition, including a diagnosis based on relevant diagnostic criteria (such as...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical Conditions</th>
<th>Description of the condition;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety Disorder</td>
<td>• Description of present symptoms and treatment;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schizophrenia</td>
<td>• Indication of whether the condition is temporary, fluctuating or stable;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bipolar Disorder</td>
<td>• Recommendations for adjustments and strategies to support academic performance and participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eating Disorders</td>
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</table>

**Temporary Condition or Injury**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Professional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General practitioner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant registered health professional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Examples:**
- Broken limbs affecting mobility or writing ability
- Impending surgery affecting study ability

**Documentation Requirements**
- States the nature of the condition and limitations on academic performance;
- Specifies dates or a timeframe for which the student is expected to be affected by the condition or when the student is due to be reassessed;
- Suggests recommendations and reasons for adjustments;
- Current documentary evidence of the condition.

**Carer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Professional</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centrelink documentation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>General practitioner</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Examples:**
- Primary Carer for:
  - An elderly person
  - A person with a disability
  - A child with a disability or special needs

**Documentation Requirements**
- Confirmation from Centrelink of receipt of carer payment; OR
- Confirmation from a treating doctor or specialist that a named person requires daily care. This should include the details of the condition and a statement by the doctor that the student is the primary carer for that person; OR
- In the case of a dependent child, current medical documentation for the child as outlined in the categories above.

Please contact a Disability Adviser if you wish to discuss or clarify these requirements:

*ACU Disability Services would like to acknowledge the University of Wollongong in the development of these guidelines.*