

## **Rush University Guidelines for Documentation Of Psychiatric Disabilities**

### **I. A qualified professional must conduct the evaluation.**

- Name, title, professional credentials, licensure/certification information, and location of practice must be included on any reports submitted.
- Evaluators must have training in, and experience with, the differential diagnosis of psychiatric disorders in adolescents and/or adults.
- Appropriate professionals may include clinical psychologists, neuropsychologists, psychiatrists or other specifically trained medical doctors, clinical social workers, licensed mental health counselors, and psychiatric nurse practitioners.
- Evaluations performed by members of the student's family are not acceptable.
- All reports must be signed by the evaluator, and should include a completed Rush University form (if feasible), as well as any additional information typed on letterhead.

### **II. Documentation must be current.**

- Reports should, in general, be based on evaluations performed within six months.
- If a report is older than six months, and the student has remained in clinical contact with his or her evaluator, that professional may supplement the original report with a letter (on letterhead) describing any and all changes since the previous report. [The supplement would be in lieu of another complete report.]
- Documentation, including any supplements, should describe the current impact of the diagnosed condition(s).
- Documentation should describe any currently mitigating factors, such as medication or other treatment.
- Documentation should make recommendations appropriate to a professional school environment.

### **III. Documentation must be comprehensive.**

- Reports should include a brief history of the student's psychiatric problems, and must include any prior behavior that was violent or destructive.
- A specific diagnosis, or more than one, must be included.
- Reports must indicate that DSM-IV criteria have been met for each condition.
- Other potential diagnoses must be ruled out in the report.
- Documentation must indicate whether or not the evaluator believes the diagnosed condition(s) rise(s) to the level of a disability as defined by Section 504 and the ADA (substantially limiting a major life activity).
- There must be a clear indication of the individual student's functional limitations, in a professional school environment and across other domains.
- Documentation should include recommendations for accommodations that are directly related to the functional limitations.
- A rationale, explaining why each recommendation for accommodation is appropriate, should be given.
- A statement regarding potential for harm to self or others must be included.
- A clinical summary is helpful.