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The purpose of this packet is to inform students and medical providers guidelines to define and inform students about the specific requirements placed on medical documentation in order to assist with the appropriate accommodations.

In compliance with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act and its amendments, the Florida Statute 1001.64, Tallahassee State College (TSC or the College) shall allow otherwise qualified, eligible students to utilize appropriate accommodations, where the student's disability can reasonably be expected to prevent the student from meeting requirements.

**ADA statement:** "A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a course, program, service, or activity that enables a qualified student with a disability to obtain equal access. Equal access means an opportunity to attain the same level of performance or to enjoy equal benefits and privileges as are available to a similarly situated student without a disability. Only the peripheral requirements of courses, programs, and activities are subject to modification; essential elements of courses, programs, and activities must remain intact."

Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act & the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

### **Psychiatric Disabilities**

Psychiatric disability is defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as a "mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual." Examples include anxiety disorders (which include panic disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder), bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, major depression, and personality disorders. Other examples include phobias such as agoraphobia, eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa, personality disorders such as borderline personality disorder and antisocial personality disorder, and dissociative disorders such as dissociative identity disorder and depersonalization disorder.

### **Disability Specific Guidelines**

Documentation for each of the specific disabilities should address a) the currency of the disability (how old is the evaluation), b) medical professional's/evaluator credentials, c) the assessment employed for the diagnosis and d) recommended accommodations, indicating or validating the need for services to minimize the impact in the educational setting.

### **Psychiatric Disabilities**

- a. Currency. 5 YEARS. If evaluations are more than 5 years old or based on children's norms, an addendum may be requested. Identifying the specific psychological/emotional/behavioral disability is preferred. Information about side effects of medications prescribed for treatment. Information regarding functional limitations or barriers connected to the student's psychological/emotional/behavioral disability in the academic environment is crucial; i.e. "How does the disability impair the student's ability to learn?" Documentation should validate the need for services based on the individual's current level of functioning in an educational setting.
  - b. Medical Professional Credentials. Letter from a physician, psychologist, psychiatrist, licensed social worker, or licensed mental health counselor, qualified to diagnose and treat the condition.
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- c. Assessments. Letter from a physician, psychologist, psychiatrist, licensed social worker, or licensed mental health counselor, qualified to diagnose and treat the condition. Identifying the specific psychological/emotional/behavioral disability is preferred. Information about side effects of medications prescribed for treatment. Information regarding functional limitations or barriers connected to the student's psychological/emotional/behavioral disability in the academic environment is crucial; i.e. "How does the disability impair the student's ability to learn?" \*Brief screening measurements are not sufficient.
- d. Recommended Accommodations. Recommended reasonable accommodations that will provide effective access to the student's academic program. Documentation should validate the need for services based on the individual's current level of functioning in an educational setting.

**Current functional impact** – The current functional impact on physical, perceptual, cognitive, mental, and behavioral abilities should be described either explicitly or through the provision of specific results from the diagnostic procedures.

**Documentation Currency** – Currency will be evaluated based on the typical progression of the disability, its interaction with development across the life span, the presence or absence of significant events (since the date of the evaluation) that would impact functioning, and how the information applies to the current situation of the request for accommodations. Given this, different disabilities may have different document currency for the reason/s stated.

#### **Documentation Requirements Components of all documentation**

1. Completed by a licensed or credentialed examiner (not a family member, nurse or general practitioner).
2. A description of the disability, including the diagnosis and history.
3. A description of the current functional impact in daily living and in an educational setting.
4. A description of the expected duration, frequency, severity, and progression of the condition.
5. A description of the past use of disability services.

#### **General Guidelines**

In order to provide reasonable, effective and appropriate academic accommodations to students at TCS who have disabilities, the Office of Student Accessibility Services (SAS) requires students to provide recent, relevant and comprehensive medical documentation of the disability and the disability's impact on the student's participation in a course, program, or activity. The student will also have the opportunity to discuss the impact of the disability on his or her academic performance, as well as discuss what accommodation has worked and what has not been effective.

**Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan reflects education and accommodation history and MAY or MAY NOT be used to determine the reasonableness of certain accommodations. The Plan should be 5 years old or less; however, not all secondary accommodations are applicable in postsecondary settings. Other documentation may be necessary.**

1. Documentation from appropriate medical professionals, i.e. typed letters on official letterhead.
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**STUDENT  
ACCESSIBILITY  
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2. Documentation reflects a specific diagnosis or condition and the current functional limitations or academic barriers presented by the disability; i.e., how does the disability create a barrier for the student academically?
  3. Include a DSM-IV or DSM-V code where appropriate.
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