

## Guidelines for Documentation Autism Spectrum Disorder

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

- A diagnosis by a psychologist, psychiatrist or medical doctor is recommended. This diagnostician must be an impartial individual who is not a family member of the student, and the diagnosis must include his/her license number in the report/letter. Summaries from any clinician(s) such as occupational therapists, speech/language pathologists, developmental/educational specialists, and/or social workers who have worked with the student within the last 3 years are encouraged.
- Name, title, signature, professional credentials, licensure/certification information, and location of practice must be included on any reports submitted.
- Evaluators must have training in, and experience with, evaluating Autism Spectrum Disorder in adolescents and/or adults.
- Appropriate professionals may include occupational therapists, speech/language pathologists, developmental/educational specialists, and/or social workers who have worked with the student. Specialists (and others) may be part of a diagnostic team, though they are not generally recognized as primary evaluators for post-secondary students.
- 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 Office of Accessibility form (if feasible), as well as any additional information typed on letterhead.

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

- Reports must reflect adult norms and should be based on evaluations performed within the last 3 years.
- All documentation (including any supplements), should describe the current impact of the diagnosed condition(s).
- All documentation should make recommendations currently appropriate to a college academic environment.

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

- Reports should include a history (medical, developmental, academic, familial), and indicate evidence of early impairment, even if not formally diagnosed in childhood or early adolescence.
- Reports should indicate evidence of current impairment, including the results of a diagnostic interview and a battery of psychoeducational tests designed to identify Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- Minimally, testing must include a) assessment of cognitive ability/intellectual functioning, b) measurement of academic achievement, c) instruments that measure various domains of information processing, d) other instruments to help rule in or rule out the diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- A specific diagnosis must be included if indicated. If the evaluation does not clearly indicate the existence of Autism Spectrum Disorder, the examiner must state that fact.
- All test scores must be included, along with an interpretation of each and a summary.
- Documentation should address any coexisting disorders or suspected coexisting disorders.
- Reports must indicate that criteria have been met for any DSM-5 diagnosis.
- Documentation must indicate whether or not the diagnosed impairment(s) substantially limits the students learning in the academic environment.
- Documentation should include recommendations for accommodations that are directly related to the functional limitations, including a rationale explaining why each recommendation for accommodation is appropriate.

# Documentation Verification Autism Spectrum Disorder

The Office of Accessibility at The University of Akron provides academic accommodations to students with diagnosed disabilities that reflect a **current substantial limitation to learning**. To ensure the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodations for our students, this office requires current, comprehensive documentation **within the last 3 years** of the impairment from a current treatment/assessment professional that is legally qualified to make the diagnosis. The Office of Accessibility has the right to request additional documentation in order to provide appropriate services. The following documentation guidelines will assist the service provider in collaborating with each student to determine appropriate accommodations. Documentation serves as the foundation that supports a student's request for appropriate accommodations. Comprehensive documentation should include the following:

1. A clear statement of the diagnosis including the DSM-5 code.
2. A history of functional limitations of major life activities resulting from the disorder which may include but not be limited to: communication or language skills; social interaction; restricted, repetitive and/or stereotypical patterns of behavior and activities; sensory functioning and sensitivity to environmental conditions and motor planning.
3. Comprehensive testing, based on adult norms where applicable, may include measures of aptitude, achievement information, processing and social communication. This testing may include the following commonly used evaluation instruments:
  - a. A comprehensive standardized IQ test based on adult norms (including cognitive/achievement scores)
  - b. A communication assessment specifically addressing the use of language in a social context
  - c. Autism Diagnostic Observation Scale (ADOS)
  - d. Autism Diagnostic Interview- Revised (ADI-R)
  - e. Gilliam Autism Rating Scale (GARS)
  - f. Gilliam Asperger's Disorder Scale (GADS)
  - g. Adult Asperger's Assessment (AAA)
4. Medical information relating to the student's needs; may include impact of current medication to meet the demands of the post-secondary environment.
5. A statement of the current functional impact or limitation of the disability on learning or other major life activities and how it impacts the individual in the learning environment. Include the degree of the impact as compared to the average person, i.e., mild, moderate or severe.
6. Students with coexisting diagnoses of any other disability may need to provide the results of a comprehensive medical/educational/or psychological assessment for that particular disorder.
7. Recommendations of accommodations appropriate for the student based on the information gathered and current test results may be included.

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Please note: The Office of Accessibility will not accept disability-related documentation from treatment professionals who are related, in any way, to the student requesting services. In order to provide the appropriate analysis to documentation received, the Office of Accessibility must be able to rely on treatment professionals with the highest capacity for objectivity.

*The information provided is maintained in the Office of Accessibility according to the guidelines of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).*

**Please return the completed documentation to the student.**

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