



Physical or Medical Disability Documentation Guidelines

Please complete the South Texas College of Law Houston online *Application for Accommodations and/or Services for Students with Disabilities* and submit the required documentation:

- A) **ACCOMMODATIONS:** An official notice of accommodations granted by high school, college, the SAT, ACT, LSAT, MPRE, etc., if applicable.
- B) **A PERSONAL STATEMENT** as directed below.
- C) A narrative **REPORT** from a qualified health care provider.

A REPORT should be completed by a qualified professional who conducted an individualized assessment and is recommending accommodations on the basis of a physical or medical condition. A licensed physician or other licensed health care provider must complete a separate report. Handwritten notes and copies of charts will not suffice, although they can be submitted to help provide a more substantive description of the condition. Documentation should reflect the student's *current* functioning. Disabilities that are sporadic or change over time may require more frequent evaluations.

Documentation should include the following:

1. Describe the nature of the physical disability. Include a history of presenting symptoms, date of onset, description of the duration and severity of the disability. State the student's current diagnosis, including the diagnosis code.
2. Describe procedures and tests used to make the diagnosis, evaluation results, and clinical impressions. Tests can include structured or unstructured interviews and medical evaluations, such as x-rays, lab work, etc.
3. Provide evidence of symptoms that meet the criteria for the diagnosis.
4. Include a statement as to whether the condition is stable or progressive. If the condition is stable, include a statement to that effect and the most recent documentation will usually be sufficient. If symptoms are episodic in nature, please describe some of the symptoms that may occur.
5. Briefly describe any treatment, including any prescribed medications and their effectiveness in reducing or ameliorating functional limitations. Please detail any unwanted side effects, including fatigue or difficulties with concentration.
6. Describe the student's current functional limitations and explain how the limitations substantially impact or limit basic life functions, which can include: communicating,

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hearing, concentrating, listening, reading, seeing, thinking, performing manual tasks, walking, working, etc.

7. Describe recommended services, strategies, or other supports, including assistive technology that may benefit the individual in a higher education environment, including suggestions about how assistive technology may be used and has been used.
8. Is the student's condition such that it may require them to drop a course and/or take fewer than what is considered a full-time load?

Describe recommended accommodations, directly related to functional limitations described above and provide a rationale for each accommodation. The following is composed by our Independent Educational Consultant, Laura Naistadt Massa, M.S., M.Ed., who has granted permission for qualified examiners to use this wording and format, verbatim, when it applies.

50% Extended time on tests

Rationale: The medication required to control this condition results in fatigue, brain fog, and overall difficulties concentrating for long periods. Symptoms from the condition not controlled by the medication also result in greater fatigue, such that the student needs to take very short and frequent breaks of one or two minutes while working to maintain optimal concentration.

Directions for a PERSONAL STATEMENT to be completed by you. This statement should be about two to three pages in length, although it may be longer. **This personal statement will form an integral part of our inquiry process and will factor strongly into the decision-making process.**

Respond to the topics below to show how your disability substantially limits one or more major life activities. Major life activities include learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, walking, writing, lifting, and working. Describe your current symptoms in detail. Recall that you should be describing functional limitations compared **to most people in the general population and not compared to your peers in law school.** Many students have trouble reading law books and must re-read material more than once. Many students have trouble concentrating for long periods and lose their train of thought. Provide as much concrete evidence as possible.

Topic 1: What current symptoms related to your disability substantially limit a major life activity in academic settings? Include limitations related to studying, reading, memorizing, writing, organizing time and materials, taking notes in class, participating in class discussions, etc.

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Topic 2: What current symptoms related to your disability substantially limit a major life activity on exams?

Topic 3: What current symptoms related to your disability substantially limit a major life activity outside of school? Remember, most people in the general population would experience difficulties in law school, so you should be able to describe a need for accommodations across settings. What current symptoms related to your disability substantially limit a major life activity in work or in internships in the recent past? Have you ever requested or received formal or informal accommodations in the workplace? If so, please explain. Formal accommodations might include asking for permission to work variable hours, or requesting additional “Work from Home” hours, or putting in non-billable hours to finish work colleagues easily finished in the allotted time.

Topic 4: What kind of treatment are you currently receiving? What kinds of strategies or skills have you learned that have helped you deal with your symptoms? Do you take medication to alleviate symptoms? If so, in what way is it helpful? Are there any limitations? Are there side effects that create unintended consequences, such as fatigue, anxiety, sleep difficulties, or problems with concentration?

Topic 5: What accommodations do you require? Write a very specific rationale for each accommodation. Tie the rationale to the symptoms and functional limitations you have described. Have you experienced a difference in your performance when you have had accommodations? What was the difference?

Topic 6: If applicable; this question should be given a great deal of consideration: Have you decided not to apply for accommodations in other settings while experiencing this condition? Were you successful without accommodations? Explain. Stating that the “reading in law school is harder,” would not likely rise to the level of a disability as that would be true for most people in the population, including most students with a four-year college degree. Stating that you were able to avoid in-class, timed exams is a legitimate explanation.

If you have applied for accommodations in other settings while experiencing this condition, and were denied in whole or part, provide the month and year the request was made, the condition or diagnosis for which accommodations were requested, the accommodations requested, the educational institution or testing agency and the reason given for the denial of partial denial.

Topic 7: (Optional) Add anything else you believe is relevant to formulate a solid argument to show why your disorder rises to the level of a protected disability meriting accommodations.