



# Documentation Guidelines for Psychological Disabilities

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## Overview

A psychological disability is a substantially limiting condition that arises out of neurologically based difficulties. Psychological disabilities cover a broad range of mental and emotional conditions, and limit the student's ability to perform academically or in the living environment. These difficulties are not representative of the student's overall intellectual ability. For students who are requesting accommodations on the basis of a psychological disability, the Disability Access office requires documentation of the condition from a qualified medical professional. This documentation must describe the disability (i.e. gives a diagnosis) and the functional limitations caused by the disability (i.e. how the student is impacted). This documentation serves three purposes:

- To establish that the student can be considered a person with a disability, and therefore is eligible for protection against discrimination on the basis of disability.
- To supplement information from the student's narrative regarding the impact of their disability.
- To inform the development of reasonable accommodation in an individualized access and accommodation plan designed to facilitate equal access to Gonzaga University's environments.

## Good documentation needs to include

- A DSM or ICD diagnosis of a psychological disability including diagnostic methodology used.
- A description of the current impact/limitations of the disability with specific focus on barriers to the educational or living environment.
- Potential impacts of any medications currently being used or the side effects of those medications.
  - Current or ongoing changes in the medication plan that could impact the student.
- A description of prognosis, history, and stability of the condition.
  - Depending on the history and stability of the condition, Disability Access may put in place temporary accommodations and require additional documentation for continued services.
  - If the condition is temporary, please provide information on the expected duration and timeline for re-evaluation.

## Good documentation for episodic conditions

Some psychological disabilities may have episodic flare-ups. A few such examples are Depression, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Social Phobia, Panic Disorder, and PTSD. To help Disability Access understand the impact of these types of conditions, good documentation should discuss the following:

- Symptoms experienced during an episode.
- Frequency and duration of episodes.
- Triggers and warning symptoms of onset.
- Care plan for management.

## All documentation needs to be from a qualified healthcare provider and include

- Contact information
- License number
- Signature or electronic signature

## Documentation can come in a variety of formats, including

- Healthcare provider form
- Psycho-educational evaluation
- Qualified provider's letter or report on professional letterhead
- Official visit summary, such as emergency department discharge papers

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What if my existing documentation doesn't meet the criteria for "good" documentation?

We encourage students to submit whatever documentation they have for review by the Disability Access office. It is possible that we may be able to establish disability and the need for accommodation without "good" documentation. It is also possible that provisional accommodation can be put in place while more documentation is obtained. If additional documentation is necessary, we will let the student know what is needed. A member of the Disability Office can meet with any student to discuss questions they may have about documentation. Students should not hesitate to contact us because they feel they lack "good" documentation.

### Where should I submit my documentation?

Students may upload documentation when they fill out our [Online Student Application](#) found on our website ([gonzaga.edu/disabilityaccess](http://gonzaga.edu/disabilityaccess)), under the “Student Resources” link, then “Process for Securing Accommodations”. Alternatively students can bring their documentation directly to Disability Access, we are located in Foley 208 (second floor, south-east corner). Students or their health care providers can email the documentation to [disability@gonzaga.edu](mailto:disability@gonzaga.edu), fax it to 509-313-5523, or mail it to 502 E Boone Ave, AD 19, Spokane WA, 99258-0019.

### What if I do not have any documentation for my disability and/or health condition?

We are happy to meet with any student who has this question and wants to discuss their options. However, students who do not have documentation may also go to Gonzaga Health and Counseling Services (509-313-4052) for up-to-date information on Spokane area resources.