



## University Disability Resources

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# Documentation Guidelines for Harvard University Housing Reasonable Accommodation Requests

In order to establish that an individual has a disability for the purposes of requests for Harvard University Housing reasonable accommodations, individuals must submit current and full documentation confirming that an impairment substantially limits one or more major life activities as compared to the average person in the general population. Accommodations are not granted on the basis of a diagnosis; they must be tied to current functional limitation(s). The following guidelines are designed to provide individuals and medical providers with a common understanding and knowledge base of the components of documentation which are necessary to validate the existence of a disability, its impact on the individual's functional limitations and accommodation(s) that are necessary to allow an opportunity to use a dwelling or to participate in the Housing program.

Documentation should be comprehensive in order to avoid or reduce time delays in decision-making related to eligibility and the provision of services. We carefully review documentation, make eligibility decisions and contact the individuals as quickly as possible.

These guidelines contain information regarding:

- I. Qualifications of the Medical Provider
- II. Necessary Components of the Medical Documentation
- III. Rationale and Justification for Requested/Suggested Accommodation
- IV. Confidentiality

## I. Qualifications of the Medical Provider

The professional conducting the evaluation and making the diagnosis must be qualified to make the diagnosis and recommend appropriate accommodations.

Diagnoses and supported documentation by professionals with personal relationships with the individual requesting accommodations will not be accepted even when such professionals are otherwise qualified by virtue of training and licensure/certification. The documentation must include the name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about licensure and/or specialization. All reports should be in English, typed or printed on professional letterhead, dated, signed and otherwise legible.

## II. Necessary Components of the Medical Documentation

Since reasonable accommodations are based upon the assessment of the current impact of the disability, medical reports must address the individual's current level of functioning and the need for accommodations. If the documentation is inadequate in scope or content or is not relevant to the individual's current functional impairments and need for accommodations, additional information may be required.

Medical reports should be based on a comprehensive diagnostic/clinical evaluation that adheres to the guidelines outlined in this document and include the following:

- A clear statement of the medical diagnosis from a qualified medical provider.

*This document is available in alternative format upon request.*

- An assessment of the functionally limiting manifestations of the condition (s) for which accommodations are needed.
- A description of present symptoms and the impact they have on the substantial limitations to this individual's major life activities.

Medical reports related to requests for assistance animals should also:

- Demonstrate an established relationship between the individual and the animal
- Describe the nexus between the limitations and the need for the assistance animal: how does the animal alleviate one or more symptoms of the person's disability (i.e. reduces anxiety, lowers blood pressure, etc. and what evidence is available?)
- Identify that the assistance animal is necessary for the individual's equal opportunity to use and enjoy housing

### **III. Rationale and Justification for Requested/Suggested Accommodation**

Accommodation requests are not granted on the basis of a diagnostic label: they must be tied to current functional impairment(s). The medical documentation provided by your health care provider must establish a link between the requested accommodation and the current functional limitations pertinent to the Harvard University Housing Program.

### **IV. Confidentiality**

All information obtained in diagnostic and medical records will be maintained and used in accordance with applicable confidentiality requirements.

### **V. Submitting Documentation and Questions**

When an individual with an impairment requests a housing accommodation, it is that individual's responsibility to obtain and submit (to UDR) medical/psychological documentation from appropriate healthcare providers.

**This documentation can be sent to University Disability Resources at:**

**Richard A. & Susan F. Smith Campus Center  
1350 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 900  
Cambridge, MA 02138**

**Email: [disabilityresources@harvard.edu](mailto:disabilityresources@harvard.edu)**

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