

Texas Christian University



Center for Academic Services—Student Disabilities Services
Sadler Hall, Room 1010; TCU Box 297710
Fort Worth, TX 76129
Telephone: 817-257-6567; Fax: 817-257-5358
Web: <http://www.acs.tcu.edu/disability>

Documentation Guidelines for TCU Students with Disabilities

Food-related Disability

Food-related disabilities due to a diagnosed physical/systemic illness or injury are considered to be in the medical domain and require the expertise of a physician for diagnosis and ongoing treatment. The diagnosing professional should be a medical specialist with training, clinical experience and expertise in the area for which accommodations are being requested (i.e. allergist, endocrinologist, gastroenterologist, immunologist, internal medicine specialist). Additionally, the medical specialist must be an impartial individual who is not related to the student.

A disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended (ADAA) is a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, such as eating. Major life activities also include major bodily functions, such as the functions of the gastrointestinal system. Some individuals with food allergies have a disability as defined by the ADAA, particularly those with more significant or severe responses to certain foods. This would include individuals with celiac disease and others who have autoimmune responses to certain foods, the symptoms of which may include difficulty swallowing or breathing, asthma, or anaphylactic shock.

The University requires comprehensive documentation of the student's disability in order to fully evaluate requests for accommodations and to determine eligibility for services. Documentation should be presented to the Student Disabilities Services office. Information concerning a student's disability is treated in a confidential manner in accordance with University policies as well as applicable state and federal laws. Appropriate University professionals who serve on the Disabilities Services Documentation Review Committee (DSDRC; the "Committee") shall review documentation to verify the existence of a disability and to determine appropriate accommodations. Should accommodations be authorized, they are not retroactive.

Comprehensive documentation includes, but is not limited to, the following information:

1. Clearly stated medical diagnosis regarding the physical and systemic illness and/or injury, including answers to the following questions:
 - a. What date was the original diagnosis made?
 - b. How long has the student been under the current physician's care?
 - c. When was the student's last appointment?
 - d. Does the student have regularly scheduled appointments with a medical specialist?
2. Description of the current impact the food-related disability has on the student's functioning.
3. Documentation must be current, within the last 6-12 months. Recommendations for currency will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

4. Summary of assessment procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the differential diagnosis, including detailed evaluation results.
5. Description of present symptoms that meet the criteria for the differential diagnosis.
6. Description of on-going medical treatment, (for example, antigen/immunotherapy injections of prescription medications for a severe food allergy-related disability.) Include duration and frequency of treatment.
7. Medical information relating to the student's needs, including the impact of medication side effects on the student's ability to meet the demands of the postsecondary environment.
8. Statement of (1) the functional limitations of the disability on learning or other major life activities and (2) the degree to which the food-related disability impacts the individual in the learning context for which accommodations are being requested.
9. When appropriate, include a statement of whether (1) a co-existing physical/systemic illness or injury, (2) a specific learning disability, (3) a mental health disability, or (4) another disabling condition, requires an additional assessment by an appropriate specialist.
10. When co-occurring disabilities exist, the student and the Disabilities Specialist will collaboratively work with the DS Review Committee to assess whether additional accommodations are reasonable and appropriate. All determinations are made on an individualized, case-by-case basis.

The above information should be provided in a typewritten report on professional letterhead that bears the evaluator's name, license number, professional credentials, and original signature. Additionally, the evaluator's business card should be included. Please have the medical specialist's office send the documentation letter by mail directly to Center for Academic Services—Texas Christian University—Student Disabilities Services; TCU Box 297710, Fort Worth, TX 76129.