



### Guidelines for Documenting a Hearing Disability

Students who seek accommodations or services for a hearing disability must submit documentation that meets the guidelines described here, with the following components listed below:

1.) **A Qualified Evaluator.** Professionals conducting assessments rendering the diagnosis of a hearing disability and making recommendations for appropriate accommodations must be qualified to do so. Such professionals can include licensed medical doctors with special training in assessing hearing loss or audiologists. The report must meet these criteria:

- include evaluator's the name, title, professional credentials, license and/or certification number,
- be presented on the professional's letterhead, typed, dated, signed, and legible,
- the evaluator may not be a member of the student's family.

2.) **Current Documentation.** Reasonable accommodations are based on the current impact of a disability. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that medical documentation addresses an individual's current level of functioning and present need for accommodations. A full report from a treating healthcare professional completed within the past twelve months is considered current. Older documentation may be accepted if the condition is unchanging in its impact.

3.) **Comprehensive Documentation of a Hearing Disability** must include:

- the results of a current **audiogram with a narrative interpretation of it.** The narrative should provide:
  - a history of presenting symptoms and relevant medical history
  - description of current impairment
  - a summary of assessment procedures and evaluation instruments/reports used to make the diagnosis
  - duration and severity of the disorder
  - if applicable, documentation of assistive devices and technology used, with estimated effectiveness; this would include a history of any disability-related accommodation(s)
  - status of the individual's condition - static, improving, or degrading. Expected progression of the condition over time is useful.
- A **clear diagnosis** of medical disability must be rendered, preferably in *ICD-10* format. A specific diagnosis does not use wording such as "seems to indicate" or "suggests." The diagnosis must **clearly state** the disorder and the subtype if applicable.
- The current **functional limitations** of the individual in an academic environment must be addressed. Functional limitations are the ways that the diagnosed disability would currently substantially limit the student in a major life activity. This should include a thorough description of the degree of impact to the individual and reference to allowable activities.
- Based on the knowledge of the individual and the diagnosed disorder, the evaluator should make appropriate and specific **recommendations** for accommodation in an academic environment. Each recommendation should be accompanied by clear and convincing rationale supported by interview, observation, and/or testing.

4.) **Supporting Documentation.** The qualified evaluator's report, while necessary, is by no means the only documentation we can use to better understand and accommodate the student with a hearing disability. Other helpful documents include: records of previous accommodation, high school 504 plans or IEP's, previous medical evaluations, report cards, transcripts, and parent, teacher, tutor, or employer reports. DASS reserves the right to access student transcripts (e.g. classes taken and grades earned at SMU) for evaluation purposes.