**OSSD Documentation Guidelines**

## I. Purpose of Documentation

The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (OSSD) at West Chester University requests documentation of a disability for the purpose of better understanding the needs of a student who is covered under the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. These laws define a disability as *a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities as compared to someone in the general population*. The documentation requested by the OSSD establishes a student’s protection status, aids in understanding how the disability may impact a student and provides useful information about the functional impact of the disability so that effective reasonable accommodations can be identified. Reasonable accommodations are individually determined and may vary from student to student as well as course to course.

**II. Acceptable Documentation**

Documentation submitted to the OSSD supporting a student’s request for reasonable accommodations must demonstrate how the student’s disability substantially limits one or more major life activities when compared with the general population and **should reflect functional limitations that impact the student taking into consideration a variety of information including diagnosis by an appropriately qualified professional who can speak to the functional impact of the disability and provide suggestions for accommodations, which might be appropriate in a University setting.**

The OSSD may waive documentation requirements for a student whose disability is readily apparent or whose need for accommodation is obvious (e.g., paralysis, total blindness). OSSD recognizes that there are inherent inequalities in access to healthcare and that this can have an impact on the amount and type of documentation that a student may be able to provide. We are committed to working with students to determine which accommodations would best support the student during their time at West Chester University.

Examples of documentation that may meet established guidelines for third-party documentation include, but are not limited to, neuropsychological evaluations, psychoeducational evaluations, medical evaluations, physiological assessments, or audiograms. Alternate forms of documentation include narratives from professors detailing experiences in the classroom, proof of previous accommodations, etc.

**III. Applying for Services from the OSSD**

Students seeking services at West Chester University must self-disclose the need for academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, and/or services to the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (OSSD) at WCU. Documentation must be emailed, from the student’s WCU email account, to ossd@wcupa.edu.

When appropriate documentation has been received by the OSSD, students will be contacted via their WCU email address and given information about scheduling their intake meeting, which is a **one-on-one session** with the student and the OSSD Director.

**INCOMING FALL FRESHMEN, TRANSFER & PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS:** Please do not submit documentation until you have been accepted to WCU and have made your decision to attend. We are unable to review any documentation or discuss any specifics related to a student’s disability until the student has fully matriculated. If you had accommodations in high school, you may be interested in reading about the Differences Between High School and College.

Accommodations and/or services are **not** retroactive. Documentation submitted by you or on behalf of you is the property of the OSSD and will not be returned to you. If you do not register with the OSSD documentation submitted by you or on behalf of you will be permanently removed from our records no earlier than six months from the date originally received by the OSSD.

