

**Williams College**  
**Office of the Dean of the College**  
Director of Academic Resources

## **FACT SHEET - ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER**

**Definition:** According to the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Fourth Edition, (DSM-IV)*, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD/ADHD) is a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that is more frequent and severe than is typically observed among individuals at a comparable level of development. ADD/ADHD manifests itself in academic, occupational and/or social situations. In order to be considered a disability, the disorder(s) must substantially limit a major life activity. Symptoms include significant inability or difficulty to do the following:

\* *give close attention to details making careless mistakes in schoolwork, work or other activities* \* *sustain attention in work tasks or leisure activities/keep up with things necessary for tasks or activities* \* *listen when spoken to directly* \* *follow through on instructions or finish schoolwork, chores, or duties in the workplace* \* *organize tasks and activities/engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort* \* *remember to attend daily activities*

**Diagnosis:** The best diagnosis includes medical information as well as psychoeducational testing. This may be obtained from family and general physicians or psychiatrists. The documentation should include the following: the name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about license or certification; area of specialization; employment and state/province in which the individual practices. All reports should be on letterhead, typed, dated and signed.

**When choosing a practitioner, make sure that the professional has experience in the field of adult Attention Deficit Disorders. The Dean's Office may be able to provide you with information about professionals in this area who are qualified to conduct such assessments.**

**Eligibility for accommodations:** Students are asked to provide a recent professional evaluation which identifies the disability, describes the substantial limitation caused by the disability, and recommends modifications to be provided. The documentation is intended to assist the student and the College in determining reasonable, appropriate and effective accommodations; testing must be current (usually within three years) and must be comprehensive. This documentation should include information regarding the onset, longevity and severity of the symptoms, as well as the specifics describing how it has interfered with educational achievement. Therefore, individualized assessments of current cognitive processing and educational achievement are necessary. All information is confidential, shared only with individuals determining the appropriate accommodations, and is not released to others without the student's permission.

**Implementation:** Students requesting accommodations submit a professional assessment of their disabilities to the Dean's Office for review. The request is discussed with the student, the evaluator providing the assessment, the Health Center or Psychological Services Center and/or an outside disabilities consultant as necessary to determine an appropriate of action. The dean communicates the need for the accommodation in writing, advising the appropriate individual that a particular accommodation must be implemented. Such a procedure continues on a semester-by-semester basis.

**Grievance Procedure:** If a student is refused an accommodation he or she believes is necessary, he or she may consult with the Associate Dean for Student Services or Assistant Dean of the College or the Assistant to the President. If an agreement cannot be reached, the student may take the grievance to the Disabilities and Accommodations Advisory Group which would review the original request and any additional relevant information in order to make a recommendation.

### **Questions:**

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