

## Disability Groups and Means of Verification

A student with a disability is a person enrolled at a community college who has a verified impairment that limits one or more major life activities, which imposes an educational limitation. An educational limitation prevents the student from fully benefiting from classes, activities or services offered to non-disabled students, without specific additional support services or instruction. Services and accommodations provided by OSD must be directly related to the student's educational limitation.

Mobility Impairment – any orthopedic or physical impairment that causes a serious limitation in locomotion or motor functions in the educational environment. Mobility impairment includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- a.) Impairments caused by congenital anomaly (e.g., clubfoot, absence of a body member, etc.)
- b.) Impairment caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.)
- c.) Impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputation, fractures and burns that can cause contractors)
- d.) Other conditions in this category include: carpal tunnel, arthritis, spinal cord injury, post polio, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, back injury, etc.

Mobility impairment does not apply to a mobility limitation due to seeing, hearing, or psychological limitations or mobility limitation resulting from a brain trauma (ABI).

Mobility Impairment can be verified, if possible, by the personal observation of a OSD professional staff member with the OSD Director's review, by documentation from a physician, or through documentation from a referring agency that obtains its verification from a physician.

Visual Impairment – A total or partial loss of sight that adversely affects a student's educational performance. Visual impairment includes the following conditions:

- a.) Blindness is visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye after correction; or visual loss so severe that it no longer serves as a major channel for information processing.
- b.) Partial sightedness is visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye after correction, with vision still capable of serving as a major channel for information processing.

Visual impairment does not apply where the loss or impairment is the result of a psychological condition or ABI.

Visual impairment can be verified by a physician, a licensed vision professional or through documentation from a referring agency that obtains its verification from a physician or other licensed eye professional. This disability can be verified by a OSD staff member, only if that person has the appropriate license.

Hearing Impairment – total deafness or a hearing loss so severe that a student is impaired in processing information through hearing, with or without amplification. Hearing impairment is defined as:

- a.) Deaf means a total or partial loss of hearing function so severe that it no longer serves as a major channel for information processing. For purposes of this definition, deafness is defined as a condition that requires the use of

communication in a mode other than oral language including sign language, telephone devices for the deaf, etc. or;

- b.) Hearing limitation means a functional loss in hearing which is still capable of serving as a major channel for information processing and is measured as follows:
  - 1.) A mild to moderate hearing impaired person is one whose average unaided hearing loss in the better ear is 35 to 54 dB in the conversational range or average aided hearing loss in the better ear is 20 to 54 dB.
  - 2.) A severely hearing impaired person is one whose average hearing loss in the better ear (aided or unaided) is 55 dB or greater in the conversational range, or a person with speech discrimination of less than 50%, or medical documentation of rapidly progressing hearing loss.

Hearing impairment does not apply where the loss or impairment is the result of a psychological disability, autism, or ABI.

Hearing Impairment can be verified by a physician, a licensed hearing professional or through documentation from a referring agency that obtains its verification from a physician or other licensed hearing professional. This disability can be verified by a OSD staff member, only if that person has the appropriate license.

Speech Impairment – one or more speech and language disorders of voice, articulation, rhythm and/or the receptive and expressive processes of language that limits the quality, accuracy, intelligibility or fluency of producing the sounds that comprise spoken language.

Speech impairment does not apply to language having to do with a foreign accent. It also does not apply to any limitation that is caused by a physical or hearing impairment, psychological disability or ABI.

Speech impairment can be verified by a licensed speech professional or through documentation from a referring agency that obtains its verification from a licensed speech professional. This disability can be verified by a OSD staff member, only if that person has the appropriate license.

Learning Disability – a persistent condition of a presumed neurological impairment. This dysfunction continues despite instruction in standard classroom situations. Learning disabilities are exhibited by:

- a.) Average to above average intellectual ability; and
- b.) Severe processing deficit(s); and
- c.) Severe aptitude-achievement discrepancy(ies); and
- d.) Measured achievement in an instructional or employment setting.

Learning disability does not apply to learning problems resulting from cultural deprivation, English as a second language, physical, visual, or hearing impairments, psychological disabilities, ABI, below average intellectual functioning, or any health related disabilities.

Learning Disability must be verified using the community college LD eligibility model. OSD staff members who meet the appropriate minimum qualifications for community college LD specialists and have completed training in the community college LD eligibility model can verify this disability. Documentation of appropriate test results from a referring agency may be used in the community college LD eligibility model.

Acquired Brain Injury – an acquired injury to the brain caused by external or internal trauma, resulting in total or partial functional disability that adversely affects or limits a student’s educational performance by impairing:

- a.) Cognition, information processing, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment and/or problem solving
- b.) Language and/or speech
- c.) Memory and/or attention
- d.) Sensory, perceptual and/or motor abilities
- e.) Psycho social behavior, or
- f.) Physical functions.

ABI does not apply to functional limitations resulting from brain trauma induced by birth, present at birth or which is progressive and/or degenerative in nature. ABI students cannot be claimed under any other disability category.

ABI can be verified by a physician or by the documentation of a referring agency that obtains its verification from a physician.

Developmentally Delayed Learner – a student who exhibits both below average intellectual function and potential for measurable achievement in instructional and employment settings. In other words, this disability is defined as learning deficits resulting from below average intellectual functioning that adversely affects educational performance, existing concurrently with measurable potential for achievement in educational and/or employment settings.

DDL does not apply to learning problems that can be explained by any physical, visual, hearing, speech impairment, ABI, psychological disabilities or other disabling factors.

DDL can be verified by the OSD Director or DDL specialists using documentation from a referring agency.

Psychological Disability – a persistent psychological or psychiatric disorder, emotional or mental illness that adversely affects educational performance. Psychological disability is a condition which:

- a.) is listed in the current revision of the American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM), and is coded as Axis I or II as moderate to severe,
- b.) reflects a psychiatric or psychological condition that interferes with a major life activity, and
- c.) poses a functional limitation in the educational setting.

This disability does not apply to:

Any condition designated by the DSM with a V code signifying that it is not attributable to a mental disorder.

The following conditions listed in the DSM are not included in the California Community College’s definition of a psychological disability:

- 1) Transvestitism, transsexualism, pedophilia, exhibitionism, voyeurism, gender identity disorder not resulting from physical impairment, or other sexual behavior disorders;
- 2) Compulsive gambling, kleptomania, or pyromania;
- 3) Psychoactive substance abuse disorders resulting from current illegal use of drugs.

Any condition designated by the DSM as a developmental disorder (mental retardation, pervasive developmental disorder or specific developmental disorder), or that is covered by another disability category.

*Recovering drug and alcohol abusers are considered as psychologically disabled as long as they are in or have completed a recovery program and meet all other conditions for this disability category. This disorder is in the DSM.*

Psychological disabilities can be verified by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist, or by the documentation of a referring agency, if its verification was done by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist. This disability can be verified by a OSD staff member, only if that person is a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist. Verification documents from the psychologist or psychiatrist should include either the DSM disorder code or the name of the disorder plus a description of the disorder as moderate to severe.

Other Disability – all other verifiable disabilities and health related limitations that adversely affect education performance but do not fall into any of the other disability categories. Therefore, it is first necessary to consider whether the condition qualifies in any of the specific disability categories discussed above. If so, the student should be served and reported under the appropriate disability specific category. A student should only be categorized under “other” if the student has a current verifiable impairment, which meets the general definition of a disability with an educational limitation, but does not qualify in any of the disability specific categories.

“Other” disabilities include conditions having limited strength, vitality, or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems. Examples are environmental disabilities, attention deficit disorder, heart conditions, tuberculosis, nephritis, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, leukemia, epilepsy, acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), diabetes, etc.

*In addition, a person may be protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act because he or she has a history of disability or is regarded as having a disability.*

“Other” disability must be verified by an appropriately licensed or certified professional or through documentation from a referring agency that obtains its verification from an appropriately licensed or certified professional.