



LEARNING DISABILITIES DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES

Students requesting accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 must provide documentation of a diagnosed learning disability that substantially limits a major life activity. Documentation and recommendations must be appropriate to the postsecondary setting. The report must describe the current impact of the disability on the student's academic performance.

Accommodations are individually determined each semester. Once Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) receives documentation, it is the student's responsibility to make an appointment with a staff member at SSD to discuss eligibility and receive academic accommodations that semester.

Confidentiality Statement

Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) will not release any information at any point in the disability accommodation process regarding an individual's diagnosis or medical information without his or her informed written consent or under compulsion of legal process. Information will be released only on a "need to know" basis, except where otherwise required by law. All documentation will be stored in a secure place.

Documentation Guidelines: Learning Disabilities

The following guidelines describe the necessary components of acceptable documentation for students with learning disabilities. Students are encouraged to provide their clinicians with a copy of these guidelines.

1. Testing must be **current**: administered within the past three years for students age eighteen and older, and within one year for students under the age of eighteen. Because the provision of all reasonable accommodations and services is based upon assessment of the current impact of the student's disabilities on his/her academic performance, it is important to provide recent documentation. For that reason, dates of testing must be included in the report.
2. Testing must be performed by a qualified evaluator: clinical or educational psychologists, learning disabilities specialists, or physicians known to specialize in learning disabilities. Information about their professional credentials, including licensing and certification, and their areas of specialization must be clearly listed in the report.
3. Testing must involve a comprehensive psychoeducational evaluation, and include a diagnostic interview and clinical summary.
4. The evaluation report must indicate the norm-reference group. For example, the report must specifically indicate how the student performs in relationship to the average person in the general population.

The following areas must be assessed using standardized instruments. Actual scores from all above instruments must be provided. If grade equivalent scores are included, they must be accompanied by standard scores and/or percentile rank scores.

Aptitude: The *Weschler Adult Intelligence Scale III (WAIS-III)* with subtest scores is the preferred instrument. The *Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery III: Tests of Cognitive Ability* or the *Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale-IV* are acceptable.

Achievement: Assessment of comprehensive academic achievement in the areas of reading (decoding and comprehension), mathematics (calculation and problem solving), oral language, and written expression (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, writing samples) is required. The *Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery III: Tests of Achievement* is the preferred instrument. The *Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA)* and the *Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK)* are acceptable.

Other specific achievement such as the *Test of Written Language-3 (TOWL-3)*, *Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised*, the *Stanford Diagnostic Test*, and the *Nelson-Denny Reading Test* can be helpful when results are utilized to support other standardized instruments.

Additional notes:

- The *Wide Range Achievement Test 3 (WRAT-3)* is NOT a comprehensive measure of achievement and therefore should not be the only measure of overall achievement utilized.
- The Reading, Math, and Writing Fluency subtests of the *Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery III: Tests of Achievement* and the One Minute Reading Rate subtest of the *Nelson-Denny Reading Test* should not be provided as the sole documentation of processing speed and/or reading, math, and writing speeds.
- Results from the *Nelson-Denny Reading Test* form G or H should be included for students who are documenting a reading disability. If the impairment involves reading speed, the *NDRT* should be administered under both standard and untimed conditions.

Information Processing: Specific areas of information processing (e.g., short and long term memory; sequential memory; auditory and visual perception processing; processing speed) must be assessed. Use of the *Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery III-Tests of Cognitive Ability* (Standard Battery-subtests 1-10) or subtests from the *Weschler Adult Intelligence Scale III (WAIS-III)* are acceptable.

5. A diagnosis as per the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual – IV (DSM-IV)* is required. Terms such as "learning problems," "learning differences," "weaknesses," etc. are not the equivalent of learning disability.

6. Testing must demonstrate that the Learning Disability currently and substantially limits a major life activity, and indicate how the student's current participation in courses, programs, services, or any other activity of the University may be affected.

***** While a student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) may be submitted as evidence of past accommodations, it is not sufficient documentation. An IEP is the plan that the student's high school team developed to promote their academic success.**

***** Submission of documentation is not the same as the request for services. You still must complete the Application for Accommodations and Services. SSD cannot support any accommodation requests until the documentation is complete.**