

Specific Learning Disability Documentation Guidelines

Students who are seeking accommodations or services on the basis of a diagnosed specific learning disability are required to submit documentation to verify eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Protection under these civil rights statutes is determined on a case-by-case basis and is based upon documentation of a learning disability that **currently and substantially limits** some major life activity including learning.

The following guidelines are provided in the interest of assuring that documentation is appropriate to verify eligibility **and** to support requests for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids.

1. Testing **must** be comprehensive. It is not acceptable to administer only one test for the purpose of diagnosis or establishing that substantial limitation in a major life activity currently exists in individuals with a previous diagnosis of LD. Minimally, domains to be addressed must include (but not be limited to):

- **Aptitude.** The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale with subtest scores is the preferred instrument.
- **Achievement.** Current levels of functioning in reading, mathematics, and written language are required.
- **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

2. Testing must be **current**. In most cases, this means testing that has been conducted **within the past three years**. 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 in a student's best interest to provide recent and appropriate documentation.

3. There **must be clear and specific** evidence and identification of a learning disability. Individual "learning styles" and "learning differences" in and of themselves do **not** constitute a learning disability.

4. **Actual test scores** must be provided. Standard scores are required; percentiles and grade equivalents are **not** acceptable unless standard scores are also included.

5. In addition to actual test scores, interpretation of results is required. Test protocol sheets or scores alone are **not** sufficient.

6. Professionals conducting assessment and rendering diagnoses of learning disabilities must be qualified to do so. Trained, certified and/or licensed school psychologists, neuropsychologists, clinical psychologists, learning disabilities specialists, and other professionals with training and experience relevant to adults and their evaluation are typically involved in the process of assessment. Experience in working with an adult population is **essential**.

7. Tests used to document eligibility **must** be technically sound (i.e., statistically reliable and valid) and standardized for use with an adult population.
8. Diagnostic reports **must** include the names, titles, and professional credentials (e.g., licensed psychologist) of the evaluators as well as the date(s) of testing. **All reports must be typed.** Handwritten scores or summary sheets are **not** acceptable.
9. A written summary of or background information about the student's relevant educational, medical, and family histories that relate to the learning disability **must be included.**
10. Any recommendation for an accommodation should be based on objective evidence of a substantial limitation to learning supported by specific test results or clinical observations. Reports should establish the rationale for any accommodation that is recommended, using test data to document the need.
11. A description of any accommodation and/or auxiliary aid that has been used at the secondary or postsecondary level **should** be discussed. Include information about the specific conditions under which the accommodation was used (e.g., standardized testing, final exams) and whether or not it benefitted the student.
12. Individual Education Programs (IEPs) and Section 504 plans are useful but are not, in and of themselves, sufficient documentation to establish the rationale for accommodations.

NOTE: Please complete and return the **Student Intake Form** and the **Release of Information Form** with your documentation.