

Learning Disability Documentation Guidelines

Primary Documentation

The Office of Disability Services for Students at Centenary College has established guidelines for the documentation of learning disabilities based on the Association of Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) guidelines for documentation of specific learning disabilities in adults.

1. Professionals conducting assessments, determining a diagnosis of specific learning disabilities, and making recommendations for appropriate academic accommodations must be qualified to perform the appropriate psycho-educational evaluation as outlined below. Comprehensive training and direct experience with an adolescent/adult LD population are essential.
2. The evaluation used must be comprehensive and current. An evaluation performed before age 18 must have been performed within five years prior to the student's request for accommodations. An evaluation performed during or after age 18 will be considered current. It is not acceptable for an evaluation to consist of only one test for the purpose of diagnosis. All assessment instruments used in the evaluation must have age appropriate norms for high school seniors, college freshmen, or older students. All standardized measures must be represented by standard scores or percentile ranks based on published norms (grade equivalents are not useful without the standardized scores). **Minimally**, the domains to be addressed in the evaluation must include the following:
 - (a) ***Diagnostic Interview***- The diagnostician should provide a summary of the following:
 - A relevant developmental, psychosocial, employment, and medical history (including the absence of a medical basis for the present symptoms);
 - An academic history, including results of prior standardized testing and reports of classroom performance and behaviors (e.g., transcripts, study habits, study attitudes, and notable trends);
 - A relevant family history, including primary language of the home and current level of English fluency;
 - A discussion of dual diagnosis, alternative or co-existing disorders, along with any history of relevant medication and current use which may impact the individual's learning;
 - A discussion of alternative diagnoses that have been ruled out
 - A history of prior psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy

(b) ***Aptitude***- A complete test battery with all sub-test and standard scores reported is essential. The test battery must include one of the following individually administered intelligence tests:

Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale- 3rd Edition (WAIS-III); (preferred)

Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children- 3rd Edition (WISC-III);

Kaufman Adolescent and Adult Intelligence Test;

Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale (4th ed.); or the

Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery- Revised: Test of Cognitive Ability.

Some tests (e.g., the *Slosson Intelligence Test- Revised* and the *Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test*) are primarily screening devices that are not comprehensive enough to provide the kinds of information necessary to make academic accommodation decisions.

(c) ***Achievement***- A complete test battery with all sub-test and standard scores reported is essential. The student's current levels of functioning are required in the following domains:

- Reading decoding
- Reading comprehension*
- Mathematics- applied word problems
- Mathematics- calculations**
- Written language skills- spelling
- Written language skills- written expression.

*The evaluation should indicate the student's ability to comprehend long passages typical of college text.

**The evaluation should indicate whether or not the student was successful with algebra problems.

The achievement testing can be done using a single comprehensive achievement test or series of specific achievement tests that cover all the required domains.

Acceptable comprehensive achievement tests include the following:

Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery: Test of Achievement;
(preferred)

Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults;

Stanford Tests of Academic Skills;

Wechsler Individual Achievement Test.

Specific achievement tests are useful when administered under standardized conditions and interpreted within the context of other diagnostic information. Certain tests (e.g., the **Wide Range Achievement Test-3 (WRAT-3)**) are **not** a comprehensive measure of achievement and therefore are not useful as the sole measure of achievement.

(d) ***Information Processing***- Strengths, weaknesses, and deficits should be discussed. Clear documentation of deficit areas is necessary in order to provide appropriate

accommodations. Information processing areas which should be discussed include (a) visual-spatial abilities; (b) memory (auditory and visual; short-term and long term); (c) motor ability; (d) executive functions (verbal and nonverbal reasoning); (e) processing speed; (f) attention (auditory and visual) and, (g) auditory processing. The Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude-3 (DTLA-3) and sub-tests from the WAIS-III or the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability are among the acceptable assessments.

- 3. The documentation must also include an overall summary, all standardized test scores/data, clear, unequivocal diagnosis of a learning disability diagnosis; and recommended accommodations.**

The evaluator should include a specific rationale for each recommended accommodation (based on test results or clinical observations).

- 4. The name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about license or certification as well as area of specialization, place of employment, and state in which the individual practices, should clearly be stated on documentation. Further, all reports must be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed, and legible.**