

# Learning Disabilities Documentation Guidelines

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.

Documentation must include all of the following elements:

1. Test performed by a **qualified evaluator**: clinical or educational psychologist, learning disabilities specialist, or physician known to specialize in learning disabilities. Information about professional credentials, including licensing and certification, and areas of specialization must be clearly listed in the report.
2. Current testing: administered **within the past three (3) 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 necessary to provide recent documentation.*
3. Comprehensive psycho-educational evaluation with appropriate standardized instruments (see below), and includes a diagnostic interview and clinical summary. The evaluation report should also include:
  - **Dates** of testing.
  - An indication to 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 Psycho educational Battery III: Tests of Cognitive Ability* or the *Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale-IV* is 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)* is acceptable.

Other specific achievement tests 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.

Please note:

- 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 un-timed conditions.

**Information Processing:**

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

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

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.

Please also note:

- 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.