

Documentation Guidelines for a Learning Disability (LD)

Every report should be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed and otherwise legible and be comprised of the following elements:

I. Evaluator Information

Professionals conducting assessments and rendering diagnosis of specific learning disabilities and making recommendations for appropriate accommodations must be qualified to do so. The following professionals would generally be considered qualified to evaluate specific learning disabilities provided that they have additional training and experience in evaluating adolescent and adult learning disabilities:

- clinical or educational psychologists
- school psychologists
- psychiatrists
- neurologists
- neuropsychologists
- learning disabilities specialists
- medical doctors with training and experience in the assessment of learning disabilities in adolescents and adults

The name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about license or certification (e.g., licensed psychologist) should be listed in the report. Please note that members of the student's family are not considered appropriate evaluators.

II. Recent Assessment

The report must provide adequate information about the student's **current** (generally within 3 years) level of functioning. If such information is missing and/or outdated, the student may be asked to provide a more recent or complete assessment.

III. Neuropsychological and/or Psycho-educational Testing

There should be a discussion of all tests that were administered and observations of the student's behavior during testing. **Actual test scores must be provided.** Standard scores are required; percentiles and grade and age equivalents are **not** acceptable unless standard scores are also included. In addition to actual test scores, **interpretation of results is required.** Test protocol sheets or scores alone are **not** sufficient; some form of narrative must accompany scores. If time constraints for exams are an issue, tests should be administered both timed and untimed and scores for both testing conditions should be reported. Non-standardized, non-normed measures (such as informal reading inventories or writing samples) may supplement standardized testing, but are insufficient documentation by themselves.

Please note that most IEP's and/or 504 plans do not contain the necessary testing and diagnostic information required for documentation. Please check your plan for such testing before submitting the plan as sole documentation of your learning disability. If you are confused about whether or not your paperwork includes the necessary testing, please contact the Office of Disability Services.

Diagnostic Interview Summary

▪ The interview should focus upon the student’s developmental and educational history, including any persistent academic or emotional problems. Comorbid conditions should be discussed and there should be a statement explaining whether the learning disability or the other condition is the primary diagnosis. **It is important for examiners to note in the report whether or not the student was on medication at the time of testing.**

Tests used to document eligibility **must** be normed, standardized, and otherwise technically sound (i.e., statistically reliable and valid) and should be standardized for use with an adult population, tests include:

- Aptitude testing (also known as “tests of cognitive ability,” intelligence testing,” “IQ testing” or a “psychological evaluation”) – examples include the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scales (WAIS) and the Woodcock-Johnson-III - Tests of Cognitive Ability.
- Academic achievement testing (sometimes called an “educational evaluation” or “academic testing”) – examples include the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test II (WIAT II), the Woodcock-Johnson-III - Tests of Achievement. The Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) is considered insufficient as a measure of achievement.

If applicable, additional supplemental tests such as:

- Nelson-Denny Reading Test for both normal and extended time conditions
- Test of Written Language - 3
- Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests – Revised
- Continuous Performance Test

Clinical Summary

▪ The clinical summary should integrate the elements of the battery with background information, observations of the client during the testing situation, and explain how the student’s performance demonstrates **a need for accommodation(s) at the post-secondary level**. This summary should present evidence of **a substantial limitation to learning** and explain how the patterns of strength and weakness are sufficiently significant to substantiate a learning disability diagnosis. It should also demonstrate that the evaluator has ruled out alternative explanations for the learning problem. Individual "learning styles" and "learning differences" in and of themselves do not constitute a learning disability. If social or emotional factors are believed to contribute to the pattern of observed scores, they should be discussed.