

Notre Dame College Guidelines for Documentation of Specific Learning Disabilities

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with Learning Disabilities are guaranteed certain protections and rights to accommodations based upon documentation. The documentation must indicate that the disability substantially limits some major life activity, including learning. The following guidelines were developed by the Association of Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD), and are provided in the interest of assuring that documentation is appropriate to verify eligibility and to support requests for accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids.

THE NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL OR PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL EVALUATION

The neuropsychological or psychoeducational evaluation for the diagnosis of a specific Learning Disability must be submitted on letterhead of the qualified professional, and it must provide clear and specific evidence of a Learning Disability. It is not acceptable to administer one test, nor is it acceptable to base a diagnosis on only one of the several subtests. Specifically, the evaluation must adhere to the following criteria:

1. Testing must be current (within the past 3-5 years).
2. Testing must indicate a specific diagnosis from the DSM-IV. **Please not that individual “learning styles,” “learning differences,” and “academic problems” in and of themselves do not constitute a Learning Disability. The nature and severity of the disability must be supported by the psychoeducational assessment.
3. Actual test scores must be provided. (Standard scores for all normed measures or percentiles are acceptable, grade equivalents are not unless standard scores/percentiles are also included).
4. Test scores must show evidence of significant discrepancies and intra-individual differences.
5. A description of requested accommodations including the rationale must be provided.
6. A qualified professional must conduct the evaluation. They must indicate licensure or certification on the assessment.

MINIMALLY, DOMAINS TO BE ADDRESSED MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

A. Aptitude

A complete aptitude battery is required with all subtests and standard scores. An adult level battery should be administered, if appropriate. This should include one of the following:

- Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-version III (WAIS-III) (the preferred instrument).
- Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised: Test of Cognitive Ability
Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale: Fourth Edition

Note: The Slosson Intelligence Test-Revised and the Kaufman Adult Intelligence Test do not constitute adequate intelligence test measures.

B. Achievement

A complete aptitude battery is required with all subtests and standard scores. This battery may include current levels of academic functioning in Reading (decoding and comprehension), Mathematics, and Written Language. Acceptable instruments include, but are not limited to:

- Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised: Tests of Achievement
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT)
- Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK)
- Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA)
- Or, specific achievement tests such as the Test of Written Language-2 (TOWL-2), Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised; or the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test

Note: The Wide Range Achievement Test-Revised is not a comprehensive measure of Achievement, and therefore is not acceptable if used as the sole measure of achievement. Also, the Nelson-Denny is not an appropriate diagnostic measure of Reading achievement. It is a useful screening instrument when administered under standardized conditions, but it should not be used as basis for diagnosis.

C. Information Processing

Specific areas of information processing (i.e. short-and long-term memory; sequential memory; auditory and visual perception/processing; processing speed; executive functioning; motor ability) must be assessed. Acceptable instruments include but are not limited to:

- Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude-3 (DTLA-3)
- Information from subtests of the WAIS-III or the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability
- Other instruments relevant to the presenting learning problem

These guidelines are designed to assist individuals who have documented Learning Disabilities in receiving reasonable accommodations under the law. By providing a current and comprehensive battery of tests, which support the requests for accommodation on the basis of substantial limitation to learning, each individual will be provided an opportunity to demonstrate his/her abilities at the post-secondary, graduate and professional level as well as with testing and licensing agencies.