Services for Students with Disabilities

Learning Disability Documentation Requirements

To ensure the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodations, students requesting services must provide current documentation of their disability. This documentation should provide information regarding the onset and severity of the disability, as well as describe how it interferes with educational achievement. In order to establish that an individual is covered under ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, documentation must demonstrate that the individual has a disability and that it substantially limits some major life activity, including learning. The documentation must show how the disability impacts the major life activity of learning, and if you are requesting accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, the documentation must support your request.

The following format should facilitate this information gathering. Appropriate services will be determined based on the specific information provided.

Please submit the signed Release of Information and required evaluation reports to:

Services for Students with Disabilities
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
105 Garfield Ave, P.O. Box 4004
Centennial Hall 2106
Eau Claire, WI 54702-4004
Fax: 715-831-2651

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

I, ____________________________________________, hereby authorize the release of requested information to the Services for Students with Disabilities Office at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire for the purpose of determining my eligibility for educational accommodation.

__________________________________________
Date

__________________________________________
Student Signature
The following documentation requirements are provided in the interest of assuring the LD documentation is appropriate to verify eligibility and to support requests for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids. Documentation of a learning disability must identify a significant discrepancy between achievement and ability or an intra-cognitive discrepancy not attributable to other disabling conditions or to environmental deprivation. Requirements for documentation consist of four important components: (1) qualifications of the evaluator; (2) current evaluation information; (3) comprehensive assessment and use of appropriate clinical/diagnostic instruments; and (4) evidence to establish a rationale supporting the need for accommodations.

Copies of neuropsychological, psychoeducational and learning disabilities specialist reports, which include all four components, should be submitted to the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities and accompanied by the signed Release of Information.

1. A qualified professional must conduct the evaluation. Diagnostic reports must include the names, titles and license numbers of the evaluators as well as the date(s) of testing.

2. Documentation of the disability and the need for accommodations must be current. Although a learning disability is typically viewed as life-long, the severity of the condition may change over time and current evaluation information is essential in determining appropriate accommodations. In most cases, testing should have been conducted within the past three years. Individuals who submit documentation that is not current, and/or inadequate in scope and content or that does not address the candidate’s current level of functioning or the need for accommodation(s) will be required to update the evaluation report.

3. Assessment must be comprehensive and must include a specific diagnosis. Nonspecific diagnoses, such as individual “learning styles,” “learning differences,” “academic problems,” “slow reader,” etc. in and of themselves do not constitute a learning disability. More than one assessment device should be administered for the purpose of diagnosis and actual test scores from standardized test instruments must be provided. Testing must address, at a minimum, the following three domains:

- **APTITUDE/COGNITIVE ABILITY**
  A complete intellectual assessment with all subtest and standard scores should be included. (Assessment instruments may include but are not limited to: *Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale – III*, *Stanford-Binet Tests of Intelligence - IV*, *Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability – III*, *Kaufman Adolescent and Adult Intelligence Test*. Evaluators are encouraged to avoid “screening” or brief types of intelligence tests)

- **ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**
  Comprehensive assessment of current levels of academic functioning in reading, mathematics and written language are required. Subtests, standard scores, percentiles and grade equivalent scores should be included. (Assessment instruments may include but are not limited to: *Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement – III*, *Wechsler Individual Achievement Test, Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults*, *Stanford Test of Academic Skills*. NOTE: Documentation guidelines for learning disabilities developed by Educational Testing Services (ETS), American College Testing (ACT) and the Association of Higher
Education and Disability (AHEAD) all note that the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) is NOT a comprehensive measure of achievement and, therefore, is not suitable.

- **INFORMATION PROCESSING**
  Specific areas of information processing (e.g., short and long term memory; sequential memory, auditory and visual perception/processing; processing speed; executive functioning; motor ability) should be assessed. (Assessment instruments may include, but are not limited to, Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude – 3rd Edition or Adult, and specific subtests of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale - III or Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability – III would be appropriate. In addition, the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) is often used to assess a student’s ability to learn a foreign language. If the student’s acquisition of a foreign language is a concern, the assessment process should include the MLAT.)

4. Each accommodation recommended by the evaluator MUST INCLUDE a rationale.

The diagnostic report must include specific recommendations for appropriate accommodation(s) as well as a detailed explanation of why each accommodation is recommended. A prior history of accommodation, without demonstration of current need, does not necessarily warrant the provision of that accommodation. The recommended accommodations must be supported by specific test results or clinical observations.

If an accommodation is not clearly identified in the diagnostic report, further clarification and additional information will be necessary.

The above conditions are necessary because assessment constitutes the basis for determining reasonable services and accommodations. At times, the University also examines diagnostic information when determining the appropriateness of adjustments for a given student. Both the student and the University are well served by assessment that clearly substantiates the appropriateness of various accommodations to a student’s needs or requests.

*The information has been adapted from the Policy Statement of the Educational Testing Service for Documentation of a Learning Disability in Adolescents and Adults which has also been approved for use by the Association of Higher Education and Disability.*