



MEDICAL  
UNIVERSITY  
OF OHIO

## Medical University of Ohio at Toledo Student Disability Services

### Documentation Guidelines for a Specific Learning Disability

Students who are seeking assistance from the Office of Student Affairs/Student Disability Services on the basis of a specific learning disability must submit documentation to verify the existence of the learning disability. The purpose of the documentation is to determine eligibility for academic adjustment(s) and the type of adjustment(s) to be received. Eligibility to receive adjustment(s) under applicable laws is based upon the existence of a learning disability that currently **substantially limits learning**.

The following guidelines assure that the documentation verifies eligibility and adequately supports request for reasonable academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids. The Coordinator, Student Disability Services is available to consult with the diagnostician regarding any of these guidelines at (419) 383-6118.

1. Documentation of a specific learning disability should be comprehensive and should include a diagnostic interview and measures of APTITUDE, ACHIEVEMENT, AND INFORMATION. **All test scores, full scale and sub-test scores**, should be included. The assessment should result in a clearly stated diagnosis.
2. Preferred Standards Assessment Measures (one in each category)
  - a) Aptitude-Academic Potential
    - i) The Weschsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS-III) (**preferred** aptitude assessment).
    - ii) The Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-III Tests of Cognitive Ability.
    - iii) Stanford Binet intelligence Scale: Fourth Edition.
    - iv) Kaufman Adolescent and Adult Intelligence Test

**NOTE:** The Slosson intelligence Test-Revised and the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test are primarily screening devices which do not provide the information necessary to make academic adjustment decisions.

- b) Achievement-Levels of functioning in reading, mathematics, and written language
      - i) Weschsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT)-2<sup>nd</sup> Edition
      - ii) Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised: Tests of Achievement
      - iii) Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK)
      - iv) Nelson-Denny Reading Skills Test
      - v) Woodcock Math Mastery Test –Revised

**NOTE:** The Wide Range Achievement Test-Revised is **NOT** a suitable comprehensive measure of achievement.

- c) Information Processing-Short and long term memory, sequential memory, auditory and visual perception/processing, and processing speed.
        - i) WAIS-III sub-tests
        - ii) W-J ® tests of Cognitive Ability
        - iii) Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude-Adult (DTLA-A)

The preceding list is not intended to restrict assessment in other pertinent and helpful areas such as vocational interest and aptitudes.

3. The diagnostic interview must include presenting problems, developmental, medical and psychosocial histories, family history, primary language in the home, and discussions of dual diagnoses where indicated.
4. **Testing must be current and completed when the student is an adult.** Because the provision of reasonable academic adjustments is based upon assessment of the disability on current academic functioning, **recent** and appropriate documentation is required. Functional limitations (significant weaknesses) must be identified.
5. The documentation should provide clear and specific evidence of the presence of a learning disability. Individual "learning styles," "learning differences," "academic problems," and "test anxiety" in and of themselves do not constitute a learning disability. The diagnosis should be in direct language and avoid such terms as "suggests" or "is indicative of." **If a learning disability is not present, that should be clearly stated in the report.** An individualized Education Plan or a 504 Plan is inadequate documentation for a learning disability; however, it can be provided as a supplement to documentation.
6. **Standard scores and/or percentiles** should be included along with the full-scale scores. The data should logically reflect a substantial limitation for learning and a particular profile of strengths and weaknesses that may necessitate academic adjustments.
7. **Professionals** conducting assessment and rendering diagnoses of specific learning disabilities must be qualified to do so. Qualified professionals include trained and certified and/or licensed clinical, educational, or school psychologist, learning disabilities specialist, and educational therapist who are experienced in working with an adult population. Diagnostic reports must include the names, titles, and credentials of the evaluators and the date(s) of the testing.
8. The diagnostic summary rules out alternative explanations for academic problems, indicates patterns in the cognitive ability, academic achievement, and information processing, and suggests academic adjustments with reasons for the specific disability. Each academic adjustment recommended by the evaluator must include a rationale.
9. Reports should be readable; they should be typed in a readable font and have no smudges in the body of the text.

Several situations where individuals do not meet eligibility criteria include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Letters or reports used as documentation from such professionals as medical doctors, optometrist or speech pathologist who have not administered a psychological battery to make a diagnosis.
2. Psycho-educational test reports that do not specifically state the individual is learning disabled.
3. A 504 Plan that is not supported by a diagnosis of a learning disability.

Adapted from the following guidelines: Association for Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD), The Ohio State University, The University of California at Berkeley, The University of Connecticut, The Educational Testing Service, and The University of Toledo.