

# Guidelines for the Documentation of Learning Disabilities

Students who are seeking support services from Washington State University Tri-Cities on the basis of learning disability will be required to submit documentation of a disability to verify eligibility. Documentation of disability and related information will be kept in a separate file in the Disability Services Office.

The student is responsible for providing this documentation. Documentation of a learning disability consists of the provision of professional testing and evaluation including a written report, which reflects the student's present level of information processing as well as his or her achievement level.

Documentation should show current impact of the disability. The following guidelines are provided in the interest of assuring that the evaluation and report are most useful for documenting eligibility and identifying appropriate academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids. The documentation should:

1. **Be prepared by a professional** qualified to diagnose learning disabilities, which would include: a licensed neuropsychologist or psychologist, learning disability specialist, clinical or educational psychologist, or other appropriately qualified professional. Experience in the evaluation of adults with learning disabilities is essential;
2. **Be comprehensive.** The use of a single test and/or informal screening instruments (such as Slingerland, Peabody, Slossen and Scotopic Sensitivity Screening) is not acceptable for the purpose of diagnosis. Minimally, areas to be addressed must include but not be limited to:
  - a. **Aptitude.** The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-III (WAIS III) including subtest scores is preferred. The Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery Revised: Tests of Cognitive Ability is acceptable. The Leiter International Performance Scale or the Comprehensive Test of Non-Verbal Intelligence is accepted when cultural bias or hearing loss is a concern;
  - b. **Achievement.** A comprehensive academic achievement battery is essential with all subtests and standard scores reported for those subtests administered. The battery should include current levels of functioning in reading (decoding and comprehension), mathematics, and written language. Acceptable instruments include the Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised: Test of Achievement; Stanford Test of Academic Skills; or specific achievement tests such as the Test of Written Language-2, Woodcock Reading Master Test-Revised, or the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test. (The Wide Range Achievement Test Revised is NOT a comprehensive measure of achievement and therefore is not suitable.);

- c. **Information Processing.** Specific areas of information processing (e.g., short- and longterm memory; sequential memory; auditory and visual perception/processing; processing speed, executive functioning, and motor ability) must be assessed. Use of subtests from the WAIS III or the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability are acceptable; (This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of testing instruments or to restrict assessment in other pertinent and helpful areas, such as vocational interest and aptitudes. Future revisions of the above listed testing instruments will be accepted.)
3. **Be current.** In most cases, this means within the past three years and adult normed testing instruments. The provision of all academic adjustments and auxiliary aids is based upon assessment of the current impact of the student's disabilities on his or her academic performance. It is in a student's best interest to provide recent and appropriate documentation to serve as the basis for decision making about adjustments in an academically competitive environment;
4. **Present clear and specific evidence,** which identifies the learning disabilities and reflects the individual's present level of functioning in aptitude, achievement, and processing. Individual "learning styles" and "learning differences" in and of themselves do not specify a learning disability;
5. **Include the exact instruments used and procedures followed** to assess the learning disabilities. Test results (including subtests score data), standard cores, and/or percentiles should be provided for all normed measures. Grade equivalents alone are NOT acceptable. All reports should be on letterhead, typed, dated, and signed.

Suggestions of academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids with supporting evidence may be included. The final determination for providing appropriate academic adjustments and auxiliary aids rests with Washington State University Tri-Cities Disability Services Office.