

MOUNTAIN EMPIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Disability Support Services

Documentation Requirements for 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 equal access to programs and services.

*The following documentation requirements are provided in the interest of assuring that LD documentation is appropriate to verify eligibility and to support requests for accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids.

I. A Qualified Professional Must Conduct the Evaluation

The usual level of acceptable training for a learning disability evaluation is a graduate degree. The report should include the name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator.

The following professionals would generally be considered appropriate for evaluating learning disabilities:

- Clinical or educational psychologists
- School psychologists
- Neuropsychologists
- Learning Disability Specialists

II. Testing must be current - it must have been completed within the last 3 years.

Although a learning disability may be life-long, the severity of the condition may change over time. Testing conducted in elementary school will not include recommendations that are appropriate for college. Therefore, it is in the student's best interest to provide recent and appropriate documentation.

III. Documentation Must be Comprehensive

A copy of the IEP or 504 plan is NOT acceptable.

A comprehensive assessment battery and the resulting report must include:

A. Diagnostic Interview

B. Assessment

1. Aptitude/Cognitive Ability

A complete intellectual assessment with all subtests and standard scores is essential.

2. Academic Achievement

The battery must include current levels of academic functioning in relevant areas such as reading, mathematics and oral and written language.

3. Information Processing

Specific areas of information processing such as short-term and long-term memory, sequential memory, auditory and visual perception/processing, processing speed, executive functioning and motor ability should be addressed.

C. A Specific Diagnosis

1. The diagnosis must be based on the most recent version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV).
2. Nonspecific diagnoses, such as individual learning styles, learning differences, academic problems, computer phobias, slow reader and test difficulty or anxiety in and of themselves do not constitute a learning disability.

D. Actual Test Scores from Standardized Instruments

1. The tests used must be reliable, valid and standardized for use with an adult population.
2. The data must logically reflect a substantial limitation to learning for which the student is requesting accommodation.
3. The student's strengths and weaknesses must be shown to relate to functional limitations that may necessitate accommodations.

E. Recommendations for Accommodations

Specific recommendations for accommodations as well as an explanation of why the accommodations are recommended should be included in the report. The evaluator should support recommendations with specific test results or clinical observations.

A prior history of accommodation, without documentation of a current need, does not warrant the provision of a similar accommodation.

IV. An Interpretive Summary

A diagnostic summary based on a comprehensive evaluation process.

This document was adapted from the Educational Testing Service (ETS) website (www.ets.org). The original document was developed by a group of professionals established by the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD).