

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

AT MANCHESTER

GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTATION OF A SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY*

To qualify for services, a student must provide documentation of a diagnosed specific learning disability. The guidelines that follow are provided to assure that evaluation reports are appropriate to determine eligibility.

A member of the UNHM Academic Counseling Office is available to consult with diagnosticians regarding any of these guidelines.

1. Testing must be *comprehensive*. It is not acceptable to administer only one test for the purpose of diagnosis. Minimally, domains to be addressed must include (but are not limited to):
 - a. *Aptitude*. The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-III (WAIS-III) with subtest scores; the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery-Revised: Tests of Cognitive Ability; Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale: Fourth Edition; or the Kaufman Adolescent and Adult Intelligence Test. The WISC-III may be acceptable if given recently.
 - b. *Achievement*. Current level of functioning in reading, mathematics and written language are required. Acceptable instruments include the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery-Revised: Tests of Achievement; Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK); Scholastic Abilities Tests for Adults; Weschler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT); or specific achievement tests such as the Tests of Written Language-2 (TOWL-2), Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised, or the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test. The Wide Range Achievement Test-Revised in NOT a comprehensive measure of achievement and therefore is not suitable.
 - c. *Information Processing*. Specific areas of information processing (e.g., short and long term memory; sequential memory; auditory and visual perception/processing; processing speed must be assessed. Use of subtests from the WAIS-III or the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability is acceptable.

2. Testing must be *current*. In most cases, this means within the past three years. Since assessment constitutes the basis for determining reasonable accommodations, it is in a student's best interest to provide recent and appropriate documentation to serve as the basis for decision-making about a student's needs for accommodations in a college environment which is academically very competitive.
3. There must be *clear* and *specific* evidence and identification of a learning disability. Individual "learning styles" and "learning differences" in and of themselves do not constitute a learning disability.
4. *Test scores/data* should be included. This is important since certain University policies and procedures (e.g., petitions for permission to substitute courses) require actual data to substantiate eligibility.
5. Professionals conducting assessment and rendering diagnoses of specific learning disabilities must be qualified to do so. Trained and certified and/or licensed psychologists, learning disabilities specialists, and educational therapists are typically involved in the process of assessment. Experience working with an adult population is *essential*.
6. Evaluators should be able to demonstrate that the selection of assessment instruments is based upon their suitability (i.e., reliability and validity) for use with an adult population.
7. Diagnostic reports must include the names and titles of the evaluators and their signatures as well as the date(s) of testing.
8. Recommendations for accommodations will be considered.
9. Accommodations are always individually determined. Once the Academic Counseling office receives documentation, the student has a responsibility to make an appointment with an Academic Counselor to discuss his/her eligibility to receive accommodations and appropriate referral for support services.

ALL DOCUMENTATION IS CONFIDENTIAL AND SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO:

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*Source: Brinckerhoff, Loring C. (1993). *Promoting Postsecondary Education for Students with Learning Disabilities*. Texas: Pro-ed Inc. Appendix E, University of Connecticut Guidelines for Documentation of a Specific Learning Disability; adopted for the University of New Hampshire at Manchester, 1995.