



Student Disability Services

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Requirements for Professional Reports Documenting Accommodation Needs of Students with Learning Disabilities

Under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008, Student Disability Services (SDS) protects qualified students enrolled at the University of Iowa from discrimination on the basis of disability and assures provision of reasonable accommodations. To do this, SDS requires documentation that diagnoses a disability **and** describes how the condition directly and substantially limits a major life function such as learning. **The documentation must demonstrate that the condition rises to the level of a disability.**

The following documentation requirements establish that the student is eligible for protection and services on the basis of a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as such. The documentation also supports the student's request for accommodations.

All reports must be type written and signed on professional letterhead and include the name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator, including license or certification, area of specialization, employment, affiliation, and the state or province of practice. Please note that IEP's and 504 plans will not be considered documentation, but should be integrated by the professional into the final report.

Components I-IV **must** be included in the professional report.

I. Qualifications of the Evaluator

Professionals conducting assessments and rendering diagnoses of Learning Disabilities and making recommendations for accommodations must have comprehensive training and relevant experience with an adult learning disabled population. Examples of such professionals are Clinical, Counseling, Educational, School Psychologists, Neuropsychologists, and relevantly trained Medical Doctors and Learning Disability Specialists. The professional completing the report must be independently licensed or working under the supervision of a licensed professional.

II. Recency of Documentation

Because the provision of all reasonable accommodations and services is based upon our review of the professional's assessment of the current impact of the disability on academic performance, it is in a student's best interest to provide recent and appropriate documentation. This means that the comprehensive evaluation being submitted must have been completed within the past **three years**.

III. Comprehensive Information that Verifies the Existence of the Condition

A comprehensive evaluation should provide information about the history of the condition and verify the existence of a current condition. Clear objective evidence of a learning disability must be provided through assessment in the areas of **cognitive aptitude, achievement, and information processing**. The evaluator's report must also include the following:

1. **Developmental, Educational, and Accommodation History:** The report must contain evidence of the history of learning difficulties. The report may also include information substantiated in medical and educational records. Accommodation history must be discussed.
2. **Evidence of current impairment:** The report must describe the student's present learning difficulties including evidence of ongoing impairment in functioning at the time he or she was referred for the current evaluation. Documentation must include a current DSM-IV-TR diagnosis including the criteria by which the diagnosis was determined. A definitive diagnostic statement must be made and stated directly. **This statement should not use terms such as "suggests," "appears to," "is consistent with," "is indicative of" or similar language.** Relevant current medical information must be included.
3. **Alternate causes ruled out:** The report must demonstrate that the evaluator(s) has investigated and ruled out alternative psychological, medical, educational, and/or cultural explanations for the impairment.
4. **A Clear DSM-IV-TR Diagnosis must be provided** identifying the specific type(s) of learning disabilities diagnosed.
5. **Relevant testing must be provided to establish average or higher intelligence:** The WISC-III or IV or the WAIS-III or IV must be administered and all scale and subscale information must be included. Standard scores and percentile scores must be provided. Full scale and subscale information must be provided for both the intelligence test and any other testing used to substantiate a disability related to academic functioning.
6. **Specific areas of information processing must** be assessed in the areas of memory, auditory and visual perception/processing, processing speed, executive functioning, and motor ability to substantiate related accommodation requests.
7. **Achievement testing must be provided to demonstrate academic impairment:** The Wechsler Individual Achievement Test-II (WIAT-II) or the Woodcock Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-III or similar measures must be administered to measure the current impact of the disorder on an individual's ability to function in academic related settings. The Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT III or IV) is not sufficient in this regard.

IV. Each recommended accommodation must be discussed individually and specific evidence must support each accommodation requested in the report.

Accommodations are provided for a condition only when the condition materially restricts an individual's academic functioning and when there is a substantial limitation as compared to the **general population**. Accommodations are not provided for relative weaknesses, areas needing improvement, or below expectancy performance that is not directly related to a disability.

Each accommodation must be correlated with specific functional limitations that have been documented in the assessment. All data must logically reflect the substantial limitation(s) to learning for which the individual is requesting accommodations. For example, a recommendation for extra times for exams may be related to the individual's processing speed sub-score on the WAIS-III. "Laundry lists" of accommodations that are not individually supported are insufficient for this section.

Please feel free to attach any additional documentation to the report.