

## **Documentation Requirements**

### **Learning Disability**

#### **I. A Qualified Professional Must Conduct the Evaluation**

The professional conducting the assessment must be qualified in administration, scoring, and interpretation of psychological assessment tools. Identifying information such as name, title, professional credentials and license or certification number (if applicable) should be included in the assessment report. Professionals who are qualified to conduct psychological evaluations include: clinical, educational, or school psychologists, neuropsychologists, learning disabilities specialists, and medical doctors with training and experience in the assessment of learning disabilities.

It is important to note that PSD will not accept documentation performed by a family member or a close family friend, even if the evaluator is otherwise qualified.

The documentation must be on official letterhead, typed, dated and signed by the evaluator.

#### **II. The Documentation Must Be Current**

Although a learning disability is generally considered to be a lifelong disability, the impact of the disability may change over time. Therefore, it is important that PSD have an accurate picture of the student's current functioning. Furthermore, it is necessary that the student's functional limitations are assessed using adult norms.

PSD will accept documentation of psychological evaluations that have been conducted in the past **five** years, if the evaluation used adult measures.

Note to incoming freshman: We will not accept psychological evaluations that diagnose a learning disability based on children's norms (i.e. WISC-III). If your last psychological evaluation was completed before you were 16 years old, it was likely conducted using children's assessment tools.

#### **III. The Documentation Must Be Comprehensive**

A comprehensive evaluation is needed to establish eligibility for accommodations in a post-secondary institution. A School IEP or 504 Plan will not be accepted as documentation of a learning disability. The following components are considered necessary for a comprehensive evaluation:

A **Diagnostic Interview** including, but not limited to the following:

- Presenting problem
- Developmental history
- Relevant medical history
- Thorough educational history
  - History of academic strengths/weaknesses
  - Previous accommodations or any additional academic resources
  - Relevant grades, standardized test performance etc.
- Family history
- Relevant psychological history
- Relevant employment history

### **Psychometric Assessment**

The evaluation must provide support for a learning disability by showing a pattern of suppressed performance across a comprehensive assessment battery. A single suppressed subtest score does not indicate the presence of a learning disability. Behavioral observations and any factors influencing validity should also be included in the interpretation of test scores. In order to diagnosis a learning disability and give a comprehensive picture of functioning, the following domains should be included in the test battery:

- **Aptitude/Cognitive Ability:** a valid assessment should be administered using all subtests, standard scores (no age/grade equivalents) must be provided
  - Accepted Instruments include but are not limited to: WAIS-III (preferred), Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale, WJ Tests of Cognitive Ability
  - Unacceptable Instruments: WISC-III, KBIT, WASI, other abbreviated instruments
- **Academic Achievement:** this assessment must be comprehensive and assess skills in reading, writing, math, and oral expression. Please also include fluency scores in each academic area. All subtests administered and resulting standard scores (no age/grade equivalents) must be reported.
  - Accepted Instruments include but are not limited to: WJ-III Tests of Achievement Assessment (preferred), WIAT-II, Nelson-Denny Reading Test, TOWL-3
  - Unacceptable Instruments: WRAT, MBA, other abbreviated instruments
- **Cognitive/Information Processing:** tests assessing memory, executive functioning, processing speed, cognitive fluency, attention, motor functioning, sensory-perceptual functioning should be administered as needed to support a diagnosis and/or provide a more comprehensive picture of strengths and weaknesses. Common tests include: WMS-III, WJ-III Tests of Cognitive Ability, CVLT-II, D-KEFS, CPT II, Grooved Pegboard etc.

### **Clinical Summary/Interpretation**

The evaluator should include a list of the tests administered. All scores must be included and reported as standard scores, (age or grade equivalents are not acceptable). Finally, the

scores must be accompanied by a thorough interpretation. The interpretation should address:

- The possibility of alternative diagnoses or explanations and address how the evaluator ruled out these alternatives.
- How the pattern of scores in academic achievement, cognitive ability, and information processing support the presence of a learning disability.
- The student's strengths and weaknesses and what implications the learning disability may have on his/her academic functioning.

A **Specific Diagnosis** with the accompanying DSM-IV-TR diagnostic code is required. Vague terms that do not clearly identify the presence of a specific learning disability will not be accepted (i.e. learning disabled, slow reader etc.).

#### IV. The Accommodations Must be Appropriate and Supported by the Documentation

The evaluator should make recommendations for academic accommodations. It is important that each accommodation is supported by the evidence presented in the scores and clinical summary. Each accommodation should have a rationale that supports the need for the accommodation; test data can be used to provide this rationale. The need for certain accommodations can change over time; therefore a prior history of an accommodation does not warrant a similar accommodation if the test data do not support the need.

PSD reserves the right to seek clarification from the evaluator if it is believed that the accommodations are excessive or are not clearly supported by the test data. If this occurs, an addendum will be requested in which the evaluator provides rationale for the accommodations in question and/or revises the recommended accommodations.