

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES AND OTHER COGNITIVE DISORDERS

Fordham Law School's Disability Services facilitates equal access for students with disabilities by coordinating accommodations and support services and cultivating a campus culture that is sensitive and responsive to the needs of students. The following Guidelines are provided to assist students who intend to request accommodations or services on the basis of a Learning Disability. Students are encouraged to carefully read these Guidelines and share them with their evaluators.

1. The evaluation must be current

- While learning disabilities are generally considered to be lifelong, because the provision of all reasonable accommodations and services is based upon the assessment of the current impact of the student's disabilities on his/her academic performance, it is necessary to provide current documentation
- The tests must have been administered within the past four years
- A summary of past testing is insufficient documentation

2. A comprehensive evaluation report must include:

- Confirmation that the evaluation was undertaken by a qualified evaluator who is unrelated to the student by birth or marriage. Qualified evaluators include clinical or educational psychologists, neuropsychologists, or physicians known to specialize in learning disabilities.
- Evaluator's professional credentials, including licensing and certification and areas of specialization
- Dates of testing
- Results based on the administration of the most recent edition of each assessment instrument
- An appendix listing all scores obtained during the course of the evaluation, including scaled and percentile scores, even if the evaluator has reported scores embedded in the report
- Comparison to the norm-reference group (e.g. how the student performs in relationship to the average person in the general population) • A diagnosis made using the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual – V (DSM-5). Terms such as "learning problems," "learning differences," "weaknesses," etc. are not the equivalent of learning disability.
- Administration of psychiatric, personality and behavioral assessments based on the student's presentation and/or history including but not limited to the Beck Depression Inventory, Beck Anxiety Inventory and the MMPI

3. Clinical summary and comprehensive history of presenting problems must be included which:

- Demonstrates that a learning disability currently and substantially limits major life activities
- Describes the extent to which these limitations impact the student in an academic context, such as courses, programs, services or any other activity at the University for which accommodations are being requested, with or without the use of mitigating measures
- Describes any record of prior accommodation(s), including any information about specific conditions under which the accommodation(s) were used such as standardized testing, final exams, licensing or certification examinations
- Includes a comprehensive history of presenting problems associated with the disability as well as information on the student's medical, developmental, educational, and family history as well as the date of diagnosis, duration, and severity of the disability
- Shares relevant observations of behavior during testing including observations of behavior during the diagnostic evaluation which may help to form a diagnostic impression when combined with the clinician's professional judgment and expertise
- Recommendations for academic or other accommodations, including a rationale for each, linked to specific test results

4. The following areas must be addressed using standardized instruments:

Aptitude/Cognitive Ability: A complete intellectual assessment including all subtests must be included

- The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale IV (WAIS-IV), The Woodcock-Johnson IV (WJ-IV) Tests of Cognitive Ability and the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale-V are acceptable measures
- Brief versions or screening measures which are not comprehensive, including the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test, Second Edition (KBIT-2) and the Slosson Intelligence Test-Revised are not accepted

Achievement: Comprehensive academic achievement must be assessed through the administration of a complete standard battery in the following areas:

- Reading (decoding and comprehension)
- Mathematics (calculation and problem solving)
- Oral language o Written expression (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, writing samples)
- Evaluators should further probe student's reported areas of weakness (e.g. written expression) with additional relevant tests, if the standard battery does not sufficiently demonstrate the student's functional limitations
- The Woodcock-Johnson IV (WJ-IV) Tests of Achievement, The Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA), The Stanford Test of Academic Skills 10 (TASK 10) and The Wechsler Individual Achievement Test - III (WIAT-III) are acceptable measures
- Please note that the Wide Range Achievement Test 4 (WRAT-4) and the Peabody Individual Achievement Test are NOT comprehensive measures of achievement and therefore should not be the only measure of overall achievement utilized

Cognitive and Information Processing: Specific areas of cognitive and information processing must be assessed including, but not limited to, the below domains. Assessment selection should be based on student's presentation:

- Memory: Visual and verbal acquisition, retrieval, retention, and recognition
 - Examples of acceptable measures include, but are not limited to California Verbal Learning Test (CVLT-II), Halstead-Reitan Neuropsychological Test Battery, WAIS-IV Working Memory Index (WMI), Wide Range Assessment of Memory and Learning - Second Edition (WRAML-2), Wechsler Memory Scales — Fourth Edition (WMS-IV), WJ-IV Tests of Oral Language (if not assessed through the Achievement Battery)
- Processing speed and cognitive fluency: Timed psychomotor or graphomotor tasks, decision and naming fluency
- Attention: Visual and auditory spans of attention, scanning tasks and vigilance assessment, including continuous performance tasks
 - Examples of acceptable measures include, but are not limited to Test of Variables of Attention, Version 8 (TOVA8) and the Conners Continuous Performance Test 3rd Edition - (CPT-3)
- Sensory-perceptual functioning: High-level visual, auditory, and tactile tasks
 - The Bender-Gestalt Test is an example of an acceptable measure
- Executive functioning: Planning, organization, prioritization, sequencing, self-monitoring
 - Examples of acceptable measures include, but are not limited to the Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function (BRIEF), Delis-Kaplan Executive Function System (DKEFS), Stroop Color and Word Test, Trail Making Test Parts A and B, Tower of London DX, Second Edition (TOLDX-2), Wisconsin Card Sorting Test (WCST).
- Motor functioning: Tests of dexterity and handedness
 - Examples of acceptable measures include, but are not limited to the Rey-Osterrieth Complex Figure Test (ROCF) and the Grooved Pegboard Test

Please note: The above list is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit assessment in other areas that may be pertinent to the individual's needs.

Multiple Diagnoses

Multiple diagnoses may require a variety of accommodations beyond the typical accommodations associated with just a single diagnosis. For this reason, documentation shall meet the individual guidelines for each condition. For example, if an individual has a hearing impairment accompanied by a learning disability, the individual will need to provide documentation for both physical conditions and the learning disability.

Submitting Documentation

Documentation should be submitted via email (amontez@fordham.edu) to the attention of Abel Montez, Director, Fordham University School of Law, Disability Services, 150 West 62nd Street, Room 4-101E, New York, NY 10023. Tel: 212-636-7955.

Documentation may be submitted via fax at (212) 636-7167 (but please contact Mr. Montez before doing so).

Please note: The Law School reserves the right to require that a certified copy of the evaluation be transmitted directly from the evaluator to the Disability Services Office. Disability Services will make the final determination of eligibility for accommodations.