Guidelines for Documentation of Learning Disabilities

Any student with a documented disability is eligible for reasonable and appropriate accommodations. Students must first declare the disability to the Academic Development Center and provide adequate documentation. The documentation enables the Learning Specialist to determine reasonable academic adjustments that are appropriate for the student’s needs. Disability documentation must confirm the nature and extent of the disability, and it must support the necessity of all accommodation requests. Testing or diagnosis performed by a family member is unacceptable. If the submitted documentation is incomplete, the college can require additional documentation. The cost of this additional documentation is the responsibility of the student. If the submitted documentation is complete but the college requests a second professional opinion, the cost will be incurred by the college.

The following guidelines will assist in ensuring that documentation appropriately supports requests for reasonable accommodations. The Learning Specialist is available to consult with diagnosticians regarding any of these guidelines.

Format/Qualification Requirements:
- Must be on official letterhead of the professional service provider
- Must be conducted by a qualified professional (e.g., trained and certified and/or licensed psychologists, neurologist, learning disabilities specialist, educational therapist)
- Must include clinician’s name, signature, title, professional credentials (including information about licensing or certification), phone number, and address
- Must include a summary of all instruments and procedures used
- Must state date(s) of testing
- Should be no more than 3 years old

Documentation for learning disabilities and traumatic brain injury must include all of the following components:

**Interview**
- A diagnostic interview that includes: a description of the problem(s); developmental, medical, psychosocial, and family histories; and behavioral observations.

**Aptitude Tests**
*Aptitude assessment should include assessment of information processing ability (e.g. short- and long-term memory, sequential memory, auditory and visual perception/processing, processing speed)*
- An assessment of global intellectual functioning measured by the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised (WAIS-R) with standard and scaled scores for all subtests in table format, and/or
- The Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery-Revised Tests of Cognitive Ability with standard and scaled scores for all subtests in table format, and
Achievement Tests

Current levels of functioning in reading, mathematics, and written language should be indicated. Standard scores, standard deviations, and percentiles of each subtest and test cluster are required in table format.

- Woodcock-Johnson-Revised Tests of Achievement, or
- Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised-Forms G and H, or
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test, or
- Stanford Test of Academic Skills, or
- Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults
  (The WRAT-2 or 3 is not acceptable as a sole measure of achievement.)

A Specific Diagnosis:

- Explicit statement of a disability, if any, based on the testing results.
- Exclusionary condition. The learning problem does not primarily result from a sensory disability, another neurological or psychological condition, or an impoverished or disadvantaged background.
- Potential vs. Performance Discrepancies. Aptitude-achievement and intra-achievement discrepancies should be evident.

Clinical Summary:

1. Specific information regarding strengths and weaknesses
2. Explanation of how the diagnosed learning disability substantially interferes with the student’s educational progress, and
3. Specific data that support the recommendation of particular academic accommodations.
4. A description of any accommodation that has been made in previous educational and testing situations. If no accommodations have been made, please specify why.

Testing should be current. In most cases, this means that the testing should have been conducted within the past three years and should clearly show the impact of a disability on current academic performance.

Academic Accommodations

Academic accommodations provided are designed to meet a student’s disability-related needs without fundamentally altering the nature of the instructional program or altering any directly related licensing program. They are not intended to provide remediation (instruction in basic skills not acquired earlier in the educational process, such as basic grammar or basic math).

To ensure that your assessment is comprehensive, please share this document with your clinician before testing.

Questions?
Please call us at the Center (603) 526-3711 or email us at learning@colby-sawyer.edu.