

**UNCSA – Accessibility Resources**

**Learning Disability Documentation Guidelines**

UNCSA is committed to providing access to all programs and services for eligible students with disabilities. In order to register for *Accessibility Resources* and ensure the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodations, a student requesting accommodations or disability-related services must provide current documentation of his/her disability.

Documentation of a disability is evaluated on a case-by-case basis and approved through the office of *Learning Resources* at UNCSA. Documentation must validate the presence of a disability as noted under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disability Act and provide sufficient information for the provision of reasonable accommodations and services based upon the impact of the student's disability in either the academic or living environment on campus.

Documentation of a Learning Disability submitted to the office of *Learning Resources* must provide the following information:

- I. **Evaluation is to be conducted by a qualified professional:**
  - a. Documentation completed by a licensed psychologist or other qualified professional who has undergone appropriate and comprehensive training, has relevant experience and knowledge of Learning Disabilities is essential.
  - b. Documentation is to be typed or printed on official letterhead with original signature signed by an evaluator qualified to make the diagnosis (include information about licensure or certification and area of specialization).
  
- II. **Documentation is to include a specific diagnosis**
  - a. Documentation is to include a diagnostic statement clearly identifying the disability.
  - b. Information should describe how the condition was diagnosed, noting the individual's functional limitations due to the condition/disability, and detail the typical progression or prognosis of the condition.
  - c. Documentation is to include diagnostic codes from the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM) or the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF).
  
- III. **Documentation should be current**
  - a. UNCSA acknowledges that a learning disability may carry across ones lifetime and that once a person is diagnosed as having a learning disability, the individual qualifies for protection under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
  - b. It is important to recognize that accommodation needs can change over time and are not always identified through the initial diagnostic process.

Conversely, a prior history of accommodations does not, in and of itself, warrant the provision of a similar accommodation in the current environment. Because the provision of reasonable accommodations and services is based upon the assessment of the impact of the disability on a student in the current academic or living environment, it is in the best interest of the student to provide up-to-date documentation.

**IV. Documentation is to be comprehensive to substantiate the diagnosis**

- a. Standard scores and/or percentiles must be provided for all normed measures.
- b. The assessments must logically reflect a substantial limitation to learning for which the student is requesting accommodation.
- c. Testing instruments must be reliable, valid, and standardized for use with an adult population. Testing must be comprehensive in the assessment of a learning disability. This testing must include assessment of a cognitive ability, achievement, and information processing. The following list is provided as a helpful resource but is not intended to be definitive or exhaustive:

- i. Aptitude/Cognitive Ability

1. *Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-IV (WAIS-IV)*
2. *Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery-Revised: Tests of Cognitive Ability*
3. *Kaufman Adolescent and Adult Intelligence Test*
4. *Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale (5<sup>th</sup> ed.)*

**Please Note**--The *Slosson Intelligence Test-Revised* and the *Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test* are primarily screening devices, which are not comprehensive enough to provide the kinds of information necessary to make accommodation(s) decisions.

- ii. Academic Achievement

1. *Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA)*
2. *Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK)*
3. *Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery-Revised: Tests of Achievement*
4. *Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT)* or specific achievement tests such as:
  - a. *Nelson-Denny Reading Skills Test*
  - b. *Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test*
  - c. *Test of Written Language-3 (TOWL-3)*
  - d. *Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised*

**Please Note**--Specific achievement tests are useful instruments when administered under standardized conditions and when the results are interpreted within the context of other diagnostic information. The *Wide Range Achievement Test-3 (WRAT-3)* is not a comprehensive measure of achievement and therefore should not be used as a diagnostic measure of achievement.

iii. Information Processing

1. *Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude-3 (DTLA-3)*
2. *Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude-Adult (DTLA-A)*

**Please Note--**Information from sub-tests on the *WAIS-R* or *Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery-Revised: Tests of Cognitive Ability*, as well as other relevant instruments, may be useful when interpreted within the context of other diagnostic information.

- d. Documentation is to include a description of the diagnostic methodology used – information on the evaluation methods, procedures, tests, dates of administration, as well as clinical narratives, observations and specific results.
- e. Documentation is to include a description of the current functional limitations – information on how the disabling condition currently impacts the individual in the environment for which accommodations are recommended. Information is to be thorough enough to demonstrate whether and how a major life activity is substantially limited by providing a clear sense of the severity, frequency, and pervasiveness of the condition.
- f. A description of current and past accommodations, services and/or medications – information on both current and past medications including side effects, auxiliary aids, assistive devices, support services, and accommodations, including their effectiveness in ameliorating functional impacts of the disability.

**V. Documentation Must Include a Specific Diagnosis**

- a. The report must include a specific diagnosis of the disability. The diagnostician should use direct language in the diagnosis of the disability, avoiding such terms as “suggest” and “is inclusive of.”
- b. Nonspecific diagnoses, such as individual “learning styles,” “learning differences,” “academic problems,” “slow reader,” “difficulty” in and of themselves do not constitute a learning disability.
- c. If the data indicates that a learning disability is not present, the evaluator must state that conclusion in the report.

**VI. Each recommended accommodation is to include a rationale**

- a. Documentation is to include recommendations for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services, compensatory strategies, and/or collateral support services. Information is to be provided on the recommended accommodations and how they are related to the impact of the individual’s functional limitations in the environment for which accommodations are recommended.

**VII. An interpretative summary must be provided**

- a. A diagnostic summary based on a comprehensive evaluative process is a necessary component of the report. Assessment instruments and the data they provide do not diagnose; rather, they provide important elements that must be integrated by the evaluator with background information, observations of the client during the testing situation, and current context.

- b. A written summary must include:
  - i. Indication that the evaluator ruled out alternative explanations for academic problems, such as poor education, lack of motivation and/or study skills, emotional problems, attention problems, and cultural/language differences which may be interfering with learning, but do not constitute a learning disability;
  - ii. Indication of how patterns in cognitive ability, achievement, and information processing are used to determine the presence of a learning disability;
  - iii. Indication of the substantial limitation to learning presented by the learning disability and the degree to which it affects the individual in the testing context for which accommodations are being requested;
  - iv. Indication of why specific accommodations are recommended and how the effects of the learning disability would be mediated by the accommodations.

6/2019