

Learning Disabilities Documentation Guidelines

It is the responsibility of the student to provide the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth's Center for Access & Success the comprehensive documentation outlined below and, when requested, provide any additional information or clarification that conforms to the following guidelines. As stated in the 2009 amendments of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Center for Access & Success may also engage in an interactive process with the professional evaluator to determine how the student's clearly diagnosed disability and limitations to a major life activity (i.e. walking, seeing, hearing, or learning) relate to the higher education classroom.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 states that in order for a student to demonstrate the need for accommodations in their classrooms he/she must provide documentation that contains **a specific diagnosis of a disability** and specify how this disability **substantially limits** a major life activity. "Major life activities" include, but are not limited to, seeing, hearing, walking, breathing, and learning. The documentation must also specifically contain the disability's **current impact on academic performance**. All accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis.

1) Documentation must be typed, current, be appropriate to the postsecondary environment, and include the name and credentials of the evaluator. The following professionals considered qualified to evaluate specific learning disabilities, providing he/she has experience and training in evaluating adolescent/adult learning disabilities, include, but are not limited to school psychologists, clinical or educational psychologists, neuropsychologists, learning disabilities specialists, and medical doctors.

Examples of professionals who are generally not qualified to make a specific diagnosis of a learning disability are speech language pathologists, vocational counselors, social workers, and elementary or secondary special education teachers.

Because an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) and/or a 504 Plan address a student's needs in the K-12 educational program and accommodation requirements for postsecondary education and high school education differ significantly, providing this and/or these alone may not be sufficient to establish eligibility for accommodations at the University and additional information may be required.

2) Actual test scores of neuropsychological or psychoeducational assessment, data, and data summary must be provided with the specific diagnosis of a disability and, again, specify the functional limitations related to the disability and its current impact on academic performance.

3) A diagnostic summary must include specific recommendations for academic accommodations. **Accommodations must be based on significant functional limitations and must be supported by the diagnostic assessment.**

Neuropsychological or Psychoeducational Assessment

It is not acceptable to administer only one test for diagnosis. The two essential areas of cognitive ability / aptitude and academic achievement must be assessed. Therefore, a student must submit results of one test from each of the two categories.

The possible assessment instruments listed below are not intended to be an exhaustive list. These tests are merely recommended due to their reliability and validity for use with adolescents/adults.

Cognitive Ability / Aptitude

- Kaufman Adolescent and Adult Intelligence Test
- Nelson - Denny Reading Test
- Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale: Fifth Edition (SB 5)
- Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-III (WAIS-III)
- Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery-III: Tests of Cognitive Ability (WJ III-Cognitive Ability)

Academic Achievement

- KeyMath, Revised NU
- Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA)
- Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK)
- Test of Written Language-4 (TOWL-4)
- Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery-III: Tests of Academic Achievement

Once it is determined that a student is eligible to receive services, it is important to note that he/she still must follow the established policies and procedures of the Center for Access & Success as it pertains to the timeliness of requests and the completion of necessary request forms in order to properly coordinate accommodations.

Students must complete accommodation request forms each semester for the specific courses for which they are requesting accommodations. **Accommodations cannot be made retroactively.**