



Florida Gulf Coast University Adaptive Services

Guidelines For Documentation of a Specific Learning Disability

Qualifications of the Evaluator

Professionals conducting assessments, rendering diagnoses of learning disabilities, and making recommendations for appropriate accommodations must be qualified to do so. Comprehensive training and direct experience with an adolescent and adult LD population is essential. Include the name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about license or certification.

Substantiation of the Learning Disability

Documentation should validate the need for services based on the individual's current level of functioning in the educational setting. **(An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is insufficient documentation)**. A comprehensive assessment battery and the resulting diagnostic report should include a diagnostic interview, assessment of aptitude, academic achievement, information processing and a diagnosis.

Diagnostic Interview

Assessment: Neuropsychological or psychoeducational evaluation for the diagnosis of a specific learning disability must provide clear and specific evidence that a learning disability does or does not exist. Evidence of a substantial limitation to learning or other major life activity must be provided. Should address Aptitude, Academic Achievement and Information Processing.

Specific Diagnosis: Should rule out alternative explanations for problems in learning (such as emotional, attentional or motivational, etc).

Test Scores: Standard scores and/or percentiles should be provided for all normed measures. Data should logically reflect a substantial limitation to learning for which the student is requesting the accommodation. A profile of the student's strengths and weaknesses must be shown to relate to functional limitations that may necessitate accommodations. Tests should be reliable, valid and standardized for use with an adolescent/adult population. Should document both the nature and severity of the learning disability.

Clinical Summary: Should demonstrate evaluator's having ruled out alternative explanations for academic problems. Indicate patterns in student's cognitive ability, achievement and information processing reflect the presence of a learning disability. Indicate substantial limitation to learning or other major life activity presented by the learning disability and the degree to which it impacts the individual in the learning context. Indicate why specific accommodations are needed and how the effects of the specific disability can be accommodated. Include any record of prior accommodation or auxiliary aids.

Recommendations: Specific recommendations for accommodations, as well as an explanation as to why each accommodation is recommended. Describe the impact the diagnosed learning disability has on specific major life activities, as well as the degree of significance of this impact on the individual.