

Learning Disabilities Documentation Guidelines

A student has requested support services from the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at SUNY Geneseo in regards to a Learning Disability. To be eligible for disability support, ODS guidelines require that students provide documentation of the condition and how it impacts his/her access to learning or other major life activities.

A learning disability is a disorder which affects the manner in which individuals with **average** or **above average** intelligence take in, retain, and express information. It is commonly recognized as a significant deficit in one or more of the following areas: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, mathematical calculation, or problem solving.

Professionals recommended to provide documentation include trained, certified, and licensed clinical psychologists, school psychologists, neuropsychologists, learning disabilities specialists, and other professionals with training and experience relevant to adults and their evaluation.

Documentation should be printed on letterhead that lists the Name, Profession, License Number, Office Address, Phone, Fax, and Email of the Certifying Professional. The letter must include all of the information requested below; if this information is not provided, services may be delayed as ODS obtains clarification. Please call 585-245-5112 if you have questions. Documentation may be faxed to 585-245-5091, attached to an email (disabilityservices@geneseo.edu), or it may be mailed to the address at the bottom of this page. ODS welcomes any additional documentation that is pertinent to providing academic and programmatic access for the student.

Please note that Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or 504 Plans alone are not sufficient documentation. However, they may provide useful information about services previously provided to the student, and therefore may be submitted with the comprehensive report.

Documentation adequate to establish eligibility for services must include:

- Clear identification of a learning disability, supported by specific evidence obtained from a psychoeducational evaluation. Whenever possible, use the current DSM to diagnose a learning disability. Documentation that names only “weaknesses”, “learning styles,” “learning differences,” or “learning difficulties,” do not demonstrate the existence of a disability.

- Comprehensive testing that addresses at least three of the following:

Aptitude: The **Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS)** with subtest scores is the preferred instrument.

Achievement: Current levels of functioning in reading, mathematics, and oral and written language are required. The **Woodcock-Johnson III: Tests of Achievement**, Standard and Extended Batteries, is preferred.

Information Processing: Specific areas of information processing (e.g. short- and long-term memory, sequential memory, auditory and visual perception/processing, processing speed) must be assessed. Information from subtests on the WAIS or the Woodcock-Johnson: Tests of Cognitive Ability may be used to address these areas.

- Standard scores, percentiles and grade equivalents for all tests administered.
- A narrative interpretation of all test results.

- A summary of a comprehensive diagnostic interview, to include a description of the presenting problem, the student's developmental, educational, family, medical, psychosocial, and employment histories as relevant, and a discussion of dual diagnosis where indicated.
- The rationale for any recommended academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, using test data to support the need. Recommended accommodations must be directly related to the functional limitations evidenced in the documentation.

Students who choose to obtain an updated psychoeducational evaluation are advised to contact Disability Services to discuss the most current information.

Supplemental Information for Documentation of Learning Disabilities

- *Aptitude:* Other acceptable instruments include the Woodcock-Johnson III: Tests of Cognitive Ability or the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale: Fourth Edition. The Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test is *not* a comprehensive measure and therefore is not suitable.
- *Achievement:* Other acceptable instruments include the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT), the Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK), the Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA), or a combination of specific achievement tests such as the Nelson-Denny Reading Skills Test, Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests–Revised, Stanford Diagnostic Math Test, or Test of Written Language-3 (TOWL-3). The Wide Range Achievement Test-3 (WRAT-3) and the Mini-Battery of Achievement (MBA) are *not* comprehensive measures of achievement and therefore are not suitable.
- *Information Processing:* Other instruments relevant to the learning problems (i.e. Halsted-Reitan, Wisconsin Card Sort) may be used to address short- and long-term memory, visual perception, processing speed, etc. If the individual has memory/word retrieval problems, instruments such as the Wechsler Memory Scale-III, the Boston Naming Test, or the Test of Adolescent/Adult Word Finding are recommended.