

DOCUMENTATION CRITERIA FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

It is the policy and practice of the University of Central Arkansas to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and state and local requirements regarding individuals with disabilities.

Under these laws, no qualified individual with a disability shall be denied access to or participation in services, programs and activities of the University of Central Arkansas. Academic accommodations are provided to students with documented learning disabilities so that these students are viewed according to their abilities, not disabilities.

A learning disability is generally defined as significant discrepancy between achievement and ability with intra-cognitive discrepancies not attributable to other disabling conditions or to environmental deprivation. Documentation for learning disabilities is required for academic adjustments and is obtained at the student's expense.

The following documentation criteria are used to determine disability-related support services. Documentation verifying a learning disability shall include all of the following:

1. Be prepared by a professional qualified to diagnose a learning disability, (e.g. a licensed psychologist, learning disabilities specialist, or neuropsychologist). Collaboration with speech and language clinicians, reading specialist and other educational professionals may be appropriate and necessary for a comprehensive assessment of a student's needs; however, these professionals are not generally considered qualified to diagnose a learning disability.
2. Include results of a clinical interview with the individual and descriptions of the testing procedures, instruments used, test and subtest results reported in standard scores as well as percentile rank and grade scores where useful, interpretation and recommendations based on the data gathered.

3. Be comprehensive and include test results in the following areas, where applicable: intelligence, reading, mathematics, spelling, written language, language processing and cognitive processing skills. Testing should carefully examine areas of concern/weakness as well as areas of strengths so a complete profile of an individual's learning is developed.
4. Include a clear diagnostic statement based on the test results and personal history.
5. In general, be dated no more than five years prior to admission or request for services. Documentation older than three years often does not adequately reflect an individual's current status because compensation and maturation skills, as well as accommodation needs, change over time. (Historical documentation of disability provides useful information; however, it alone may not be used to determine service eligibility).
6. Recommendations regarding effective academic accommodations to equalize this student's educational opportunities at the post-secondary level (describe the services or accommodations needed for exam administration, classroom or study activities of fulfillment of course requirement).

Assessment Tool Guidelines:

Selection of test instruments should be individually tailored to answer the referral issues of the client. Instruments should, to the extent possible, be normed on an age, educational and culturally appropriate sample. The domains of intelligence, academic achievement and cognitive processing should all be assessed when a diagnosis is to be made. The following instruments are examples of test that would be considered appropriate for use in the diagnosis of a learning disability in adults:

Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised (WAIS-III)

Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised, Cognitive and Achievement Sections

Halsted-Retan Neuropsychological Test Battery for Adults

Nelson-Denny Reading Test.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive or to restrict assessment in other pertinent areas. Other test may be deemed appropriate based on the presenting issues of the individual. The referral issues presented by the student should guide the assessment. However, it is not appropriate to base a diagnosis on the results of one test in a single domain.

Accommodations and academically-related services for students with learning disabilities are designed to accommodate a perceptual disorder impairing the student's ability to acquire, process or communicate information. They are not designed to provide remediation.

Accommodations and services are determined based on the specific nature of the learning disability and are provided based on the collaboration between the student, Disability Resource Center staff and in many cases, with the faculty teaching the course in which the student is enrolled. Each academic accommodation is determined on an individual basis and made available to the extent that it does not compromise the academic integrity of the student's program.

Questions regarding learning disability documentation and assessment procedures can be addressed to:

Disability Resource Center
University of Central Arkansas
Student Health Center, Suite 212
201 Donaghey Avenue
Conway, AR 72035

(501) 450-3613 Phone
(501) 450-5664 Fax
(501) 269-8038 Text

Adapted from the University of Madison Wisconsin-McBurney Disability Resource Center