
Learning Disabilities

To be appropriately diagnosed, learning disorders require the expertise of a psychologist, neuropsychologist, or other related professional with experience and expertise in the area for which he/she is diagnosing a disability and recommending accommodations. The following guidelines must be followed to ensure that the diagnostic evaluation is appropriate for establishing eligibility, verifying accommodation needs, and determining academic adjustments.

1. Testing necessary to substantiate a learning disability must be comprehensive. When selecting a battery of tests, it is critical to consider the technical adequacy of instruments, including their reliability, validity, and standardization on an appropriate norm group. Cognitive functioning in the following domains must be assessed by one of the following instruments:
 1. **Aptitude**
 - Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-III (WAIS-III)
 - Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised: Tests of Cognitive Ability (WJ-R)
 2. **Achievement**

Current levels of functioning in reading, mathematics and written language are required.

 - Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised: Tests of Achievement
 - Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK)
 - Scholastic Ability Test for Adults (SATA)
 - Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT) or a combination of specific achievement tests such as:
 - Test of Written Language-2 (TOWL-2)
 - Woodcock Reading Mastery Test-Revised
 - Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test
 - Nelson Denny Reading Test
 3. **Information Processing**

Specific areas of cognitive processing must be assessed.

 - Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-III (WAIS-III)
 - Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery- Revised:Tests of Cognitive Ability
 - Halstead-Reitan Neuropsychological Battery
2. Testing must reflect adult status (18 years and over) and is considered valid if administered within the last five years. The provision of accommodations is based upon the disability's current impact on an individual's ability to learn.
3. Documentation must provide clear and specific evidence of a learning disability and include a diagnostic statement.
 - Evidence must be included that addresses alternative explanations for problems in learning such as emotional, attentional, or motivational problems.
 - Individual "learning styles", "learning problems", "learning differences", "slow reader", and "test difficulty or test anxiety", in and of themselves, do not constitute a learning disability.
4. Standard scores and percentiles must be included for all normative measures.
 - Data must support a statistically significant limitation to learning.
 - Grade equivalents are not acceptable unless standard scores and/or percentiles are included.
5. A narrative report should include:
 - Summary of a comprehensive diagnostic interview;
 - Summary of student self report, interview with others, and historical documentation such as standardized test scores and transcripts;
 - Description of the presenting problems(s);
 - Developmental history, relevant family history, medical history, and relevant psychiatric history
6. Diagnostic evaluation must include a statement addressing the individual's requested accommodation(s) and rationale as to why these accommodation(s) are warranted.