

GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTATION OF LEARNING DISABILITIES for Students, Residents and Employees

Introduction

Students, residents and employees requesting accommodations or services because of a learning disability from the University of Kansas Medical Center are required to submit documentation to determine eligibility in accordance with the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA). A diagnosis of a learning disability does not necessarily qualify a student, resident or employee for accommodations under the law. To establish that an individual is covered under The Federal Rehabilitation Act, the ADA and the ADAAA, the documentation must indicate that the condition substantially limits some major life activity and/or major bodily functions.

The following guidelines are provided in the interest of assuring that documentation of a learning disability is complete and supports the request for accommodations. The University of Kansas Medical Center will determine eligibility and appropriate accommodations, case-by-case, based on the quality, recency and completeness of the documentation submitted. The following requirements provide students, residents, employees, schools and qualified professional with a common understanding of the components of documentation that are necessary to validate a diagnosis of a learning disability, the impact on the individual's educational or job performance, and the need for academic or job accommodations for the purpose of the ADA, ADAAA or the Rehabilitation Act.

Documentation Requirements

A Qualified Professional Must Conduct the Evaluation

The assessment must be administered by a trained and qualified (i.e., certified and/or licensed) professional, who has had direct experience with adults with learning disabilities. A qualified professional may include but is not limited to a medical doctor, psychologist, or student clinician who is being supervised by a professional. The evaluator's name, title and professional credentials and affiliation should be provided. The professional completing the evaluation should not be a family member. All reports should be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed, and otherwise legible.

Documentation Must be Current

Reasonable accommodations are based on the **current** impact of the disability on academic or job performance. In most cases this means that a diagnostic evaluation should be age appropriate and relevant to the individual's learning or working environment, and show the individual's current level of functioning. If documentation does not address the individual's current level of functioning a reevaluation may be required.

Documentation Must Include a Specific Diagnosis

The report must include a clear and direct statement that a learning disability does or does not exist including a rule out of alternative explanations of learning problems. Terms such as "learning difficulty", "appears", "suggests", or "probable" do not support a conclusive diagnosis.

Documentation Must be Comprehensive

The documentation must include a summary containing relevant historical information, instructional interventions, related services, and age of initial diagnosis. The documentation must also include objective data regarding aptitude, achievement and information processing. Test scores (standard scores, percentiles, and grade equivalents) must be included in the documentation.

Documentation Must Include Relevant Testing Information

Psycho-educational assessments are important in determining the current impact of the disorder on the individual's ability to function in an academic or employment setting. The report must include objective data, which might

include, but not be limited to psychological assessments, educational assessments, rating scales, memory function tests, attention or tracking tests, or continuous performance tests. A score report page(s), which presents the test, sub test, standard scores, and percentiles, should accompany the report.

Current Plan for Treatment and Effects of Medication

The current plans for treatment, including the use of medications, should be summarized. Whether or not the individual was evaluated while on medication and whether the use of medications mitigates the impact of the disorder on the individual's ability to function in an academic or employment setting should be indicated.

Co-existing Conditions

The diagnostic assessment should examine the possibility of co-existing conditions including medical and psychiatric disorders as well as a possible learning disability. The evaluator should determine and discuss the possibility of alternative disorders that may mimic learning disabilities.

Recommendations for Accommodations

A diagnostic report should include specific recommendations for accommodation(s). A prior history of an accommodation, without a demonstration of a current need, does not in and of itself warrant the provision of a like accommodation. Each accommodation recommended by an evaluator should include a rationale. The evaluation should support the recommendations with specific test results or clinical observations. If an accommodation is not clearly identified in the diagnostic report the University of Kansas Medical Center will seek clarification and, if necessary, more information, and will make the final determination as to whether appropriate and reasonable accommodations are warranted and can be provided. The University of Kansas Medical Center reserves the right to request reassessment when questions regarding previous assessment or previous service provision arise.

Examples of Typical Measures Used in Adult Assessment of Learning Disabilities **(this is not intended to be a complete list, but rather serve as a guide for clinicians)**

Aptitude

- a. *Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-3rd Edition (WAIS-III)*
- b. *Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery-3rd Edition: Tests of Cognitive Ability*
- c. *Kaufman Adolescent and Adult Intelligence Test*

Achievement

- a. *Wechsler Individual Achievement Tests II (WIAT II)*
- b. *Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery-3rd Edition: Tests of Achievement (WJ-III)*
- c. *Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK)*
- d. *Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA)*

Note: Screening tools such as the **Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT-III)** are not considered comprehensive measures of achievement and must be accompanied by a comprehensive measure such as one of those listed above. All instruments selected to measure these areas must be age appropriate.

Information Processing

- a. *Subtests of the WAIS-R or WAIS-III*
- b. *Subtests of the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery: Tests of Cognitive Ability*
- c. *Wechsler Memory Scales-Revised or 3rd Edition*

