

Documentation Requirements for Other Learning Disabilities (Dyslexia, Reading, Writing and Math Disorders)

The requirements necessary to diagnose other learning disabilities (non-ADD/ADHD related) are different than those for documentation of ADD/ADHD. A comprehensive psychological report, neuropsychological report, psychoeducational report, or diagnostician report must be provided, and must meet the following requirements:

1. Professionals conducting this evaluation must be qualified to conduct an assessment, render a diagnosis of a specific learning disability and make recommendations for reasonable accommodations for adults. The name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator (including information about license and/or certification) should be included on the report. Examples of professionals considered to be qualified to evaluate specific learning disabilities might include clinical or educational psychologists, school psychologists, neuropsychologists, and learning disability specialists with training and experience in the assessment of learning problems in adults. Note: It is not appropriate for professionals to evaluate members of their own families.
2. Although a person diagnosed as having a qualified learning disability is normally viewed as life-long, the severity of the condition may change over time. Because reasonable accommodations and services are based upon assessment of the current impact of the individual's disabilities on his/her academic performance, recent and appropriate documentation should be submitted. For the most part, comprehensive testing should be conducted within the past five years.
3. Actual test scores must logically reflect a substantial limitation to learning for which the individual is requesting the services. Documentation should indicate a significant discrepancy calculation (based on industry standards) relative to expectancy:
 - a. Expectancy is defined as a standard score (or intelligence quotient) obtained on an intelligence test. In cases where a significant difference is calculated between verbal and performance scores, the verbal, performance, or full-scale score (whichever best represents the individual's intelligence level, as documented) may be used.
 - b. Significant discrepancy is defined as a negative difference of more than 15 standard score points between the standard score on the intelligence test and the standard score obtained in an academic area, as well as in a specific area of processing ability. This discrepancy in scores must be documented in terms reported in the technical manual for the individual test instrument. Evidence of a significant academic deficiency relative to expectancy, as well as significant discrepancy in at least one area of cognitive processing must be present. Based on expectancy, a statistically significant discrepancy of at least one standard deviation shall be calculated in one or more of the following academic areas, as measured by standardized tests:

1. Reading/reading comprehension
2. Written expression
3. Mathematics (calculation and/or apply problems). In addition to the discrepancy measured between expectancy in at least one academic area, a discrepancy must also be found in at least one area of specific processing ability. These abilities as measured by standardized tests include:
 1. Visual processing (e.g., visual-perceptual speed, visual-spatial abilities, visual-motor).
 2. Auditory processing (e.g., auditory sequencing ability, auditory discrimination, auditory concentration skills and auditory memory).
 3. Verbal processing (e.g., word retrieval abilities and verbal fluency).
 4. Reasoning ability (e.g., ability to approach problem solving in a logical and sequential manner, and ability to shift cognitive strategies as the specific task requires).
4. The comprehensive report should include the following:
 - a. Diagnostic Interview. This should include (but is not limited to) relevant historical information regarding the individual's academic history and learning processes in elementary, secondary and postsecondary education. Also, the report should include information summarizing previous testing completed by other clinicians. A combination of individual self-report, interviews with others, historical documentation (e.g., transcripts, standardized testing, etc.) is recommended. Also, information should be provided summarizing any developmental history and current or relevant medical history. This information must exclude the following as the primary handicapping condition:
 1. Individual is mentally challenged according to DSM-IV standards
 2. Visually impaired
 3. Deaf or hard of hearing
 4. Physically impaired
 5. Emotionally disordered
 6. Poor educational background or lack of opportunity to learn
 7. Cultural differences or lack of experience with the English language

- b. Measurement of academic achievement: A standard score for the basic achievement areas of reading (word recognition, vocabulary, comprehension), math (calculation, application), and written language (mechanics, composition) needs to be available. Testing must include at least two achievement test scores in the specific area of the documented disability. NOTE: Raw scores, standard scores and percentile scores are also required for each of assessments completed. In general, most students will have average or above intelligence with a significant deficit in at least one area of information processing (i.e., acquisition, integration, storage, retrieval). There may be a discrepancy between verbal and performance scores on a measure of overall intelligence but this is not always the case. Documentation of a learning disability must be based on the specific criteria outlined above.
- c. Summary of assessment/test results, which includes a clear statement of the presence of a learning disability. Discussion of possible alternative explanations for the results. A statement of functional limitations and suggestions for reasonable accommodations, which must be directly linked to the stated limitation and supported by the test scores.

The following standardized tests are used in the field of learning disabilities and are recommended:

Intellectual

- Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (K-BIT) (only if supported by a comprehensive IQ test)
- Leiter International Performance Scale
- Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale
- Test of Non-verbal Intelligence (only if supported by verbal IQ measure)
- Weschler Adult Intelligence Scale
- Woodcock-Johnson - Test of Cognitive Abilities

Information Processing

- Bender-Visual Motor Gestalt
- Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude - Adult
- Halsted-Reitan Neuropsychological Test Battery for Adults
- Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT)
- Weschler Adult Intelligence Scale
- Weschler Memory Scale

- Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery - Part I Cognitive Ability

Achievement

- Nelson-Denny Reading Test
- Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test
- Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA)
- Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK)
- Test of Adolescent Language
- Test of Reading Comprehension (TORC)
- Test of Written Language Revised
- Test of Written Spelling Revised
- Weschler Individual Achievement Test
- Wide Range Achievement Test (will only be accepted if supported by other achievement tests in the area that is being measured)
- Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery, Tests of Achievement

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