



## *Documentation Guidelines for Learning Disabilities*

In order to determine if an individual is entitled to support services at Colby College, the College requires documentation that establishes the presence of a learning disability. The report should provide sufficient information to describe the likely impact of the learning disability on the individual's participation in the learning process as well as other campus programs and activities.

Documentation consisting only of a diagnosis, case or chart notes, and/or prescription notations is not accepted as documentation needed for consideration of accommodations. Copies of IEPs and Section 504 plans may be informative, but are not sufficient documentation to support accommodation.

Students requesting support services are required to provide the Associate Dean of Students with current documentation of a diagnosed learning disability from a recognized authority. The evaluation must have been administered within three (3) years of the student's enrollment date. The report must be comprehensive and include test scores and a clear diagnosis of a significant impairment.

Individuals conducting evaluation and rendering diagnosis must have appropriate qualifications. Documentation typically would be provided by certified and/or licensed school psychologists, clinical psychologists, neuropsychologists, learning disability specialists, or other professionals with specific certification and experience in the identification of learning disabilities. The evaluator may not be related to the student.

Colby College has final authority for determining accommodations. Accommodations do not include interventions that are remedial or needed for personal care or study.

### **Your Documentation should:**

- Be current – less than 3 years – up to 5 years could be considered at the discretion of the Associate Dean of Students
- Clearly state the diagnosed disability
- Describe the functional limitations resulting from the disability
- Include complete educational, developmental and medical history relevant to the disability
- Include a list of all test instruments used in the evaluation report and relevant subtest scores used to document the stated disability
- Describe the specific accommodations requested and why they are needed
- State why the disability qualifies the applicant for the testing accommodations requested

Documentation of a Learning Disability must include:

### **1. Relevant Historical Information**

A summary of background information includes relevant developmental, medical and educational histories.

### **2. Testing**

Testing must be current, generally within the past three years, in order that accommodations are appropriately suited to the current impact of the disability.

Testing must be comprehensive. It is not acceptable to administer only one test for the purpose of diagnosis or establishing that substantial limitation exists. Minimally, domains to be addressed must include but are not limited to:

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### **Intellectual Functioning**

A complete intellectual assessment is required with all subtest and standard scores. The preferred instrument is:

- Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-III (WAIS-III) or
- Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery: Tests of Cognitive Ability

### **Achievement**

A complete achievement battery, with all subjects and standard scores, should be provided. Acceptable instruments include, but are not limited to:

- Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery-Revised: Tests of Achievement
- Nelson-Denny Reading Test
- Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA)
- Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT)
- The Wide Range Achievement Test-3 (WRAT) is not a comprehensive measure of achievement and therefore is not acceptable if used as the only measure of achievement.

### **Information Processing**

Specific areas of information processing, such as short and long-term memory, auditory and visual processing, and processing speed must be assessed. Acceptable instruments include, but are not limited to:

- Detroit Tests of Learning-3 (DTLA)
- WAIS-III
- Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery: Test of Cognitive Ability
- Bender Visual-Motor Gestalt
- Wechsler Memory Scale

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list or to restrict assessment in other pertinent and helpful areas such as vocational interests and aptitudes.

### **3. Actual Test Scores**

Standard scores and percentiles must be provided for all normed measures. Grade equivalents are not acceptable unless standard scores and/or percentiles are also included. The evaluation must show evidence of a significant discrepancy in cognitive/achievement and in information processing that demonstrates a substantial limitation for which an accommodation is recommended as necessary in order for the student to access his/her educational program.

### **4. Specific Diagnosis**

The evaluation must include a specific diagnosis. For example, individual learning styles, learning differences, or academic weaknesses are not considered neurological disabilities for which accommodations will be granted. The specific diagnosis must be supported by test data, academic history, and clinical observations that may include comments about the candidates level of motivation, study skills, and other psycho-social factors.

### **5. Recommended Accommodations**

Suggestions for appropriate auxiliary aids or services should be included. The documentation should provide a rationale substantiating the need for accommodation based on the impact of the disability. Description of accommodations and/or auxiliary aids used previously are informative, but past accommodations, especially those used in a high school environment, will not necessarily be appropriate in a university setting. Accommodations that would fundamentally alter the essential nature of a course or program will not be implemented, nor any measures that will give the student an unfair advantage over other students.

### **6. Identifying Information**

Documentation must include the name and professional title(s) of the evaluator as well as the date(s) of testing. Reports must be typed on letterhead and signed by the evaluator. Handwritten scores or summary sheets are not acceptable.

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