

Checklist of Documentation Requirements for Students with Learning Disabilities

Documentation must include all of the following:

1. Documentation is provided by a clinician qualified and experienced in the diagnosis of LD. Diagnostician must be legally allowed to undertake the controlled act of diagnosis.
2. All reports must be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed, and otherwise legible. Use of diagnostic terminology indicating a specific learning disability by someone whose training and experience are not in relevant fields is not acceptable.
3. Documentation is current. Ideally, the documentation on which accommodations requests are being made should be no more than 3 years old. Exceptions may be made for a comprehensive assessment completed after age 18.
4. Demonstration of academic underachievement relative to the average student. It is mandatory to document under-achievement or school achievement sustained only by extremely high levels of effort or support in one or more academic areas (as evident both in the classroom and on standardized test results).
5. Evidence that academic impairments are logically related to observed deficits in specific psychological processes. This would require administration of tests measuring specific processing skills associated with learning such as memory, phonological awareness, processing speed, attention, and executive functions. **Note that a low score in an underlying process in the absence of a functional impact on academic performance is not sufficient to support the diagnosis of LD.
6. Evidence that the identified deficit causes functional impairments. The disturbance in academic functioning (e.g. reading, math, etc.) significantly interferes with academic achievement or activities of daily living that require reading, writing or math skills.
7. Exclusion clause: Evidence that the identified impairments are not better explained by other conditions, environmental/educational deprivation, lack of motivation, cultural or linguistic diversity, psychological disturbance, or another co-existing condition.
8. The summary of the report must contain a clear diagnostic statement indicating the presence of a learning disability. Statements such as "suggest the presence of" or "may indicate" or terminology not associated with an accepted diagnosis (e.g. Reading speed problem, Learning difference, Dyslexia, etc.) are not acceptable diagnostic statements. Also, the report should make every effort to identify the underlying psychological processing deficit.
9. The diagnostic report must include specific suggestions/recommendations for accommodation(s) as well as a detailed explanation of why each accommodation is recommended. The evaluator(s) must describe the impact the diagnosed learning disability has on a specific major life activity as well as the degree of significance of this impact on the individual. A detailed explanation supporting the need for each requested accommodation must be provided and correlated with specific functional limitations established through the evaluation process.