

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES

The campuses of the University of Maine System are committed to providing equal access to campus programs and activities to qualified persons with disabilities. A qualified individual is a person who, with or without reasonable accommodations, can meet established criteria applied to all students for participation in campus programs and activities.

In order to determine if an individual is entitled to these protections the campuses of the University of Maine System require documentation that **establishes the presence of a learning disability**; and provides 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 unacceptable. Copies of IEPs and Section 504 plans may be informative, but are not sufficient documentation to support accommodation.

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 University has final authority for determining accommodations. This decision is based on the nature of the course or program, and specifics of the individual's disability-related needs. Accommodations do not include interventions that are remedial or needed for personal care or study.

Documentation of a Learning Disability must include:

1. Relevant Historical Information

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

2. Testing

- a. Testing must be current, generally within the past three – four years, in order that accommodations are appropriately suited to the current impact of the disability.
- b. 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:
 - i. Aptitude: The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale IV (WAIS IV) with subtest scores is the preferred instrument. Other acceptable instruments include: The Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery III/NU Tests of Cognitive Ability; the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale: Fifth Edition; Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scales (RIAS) and the The Kaufman Adolescent and Adult Intelligence Test (KAIT). The Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (KBIT) is **NOT** a comprehensive measure and therefore is **NOT** suitable).

- ii. Information Processing: Specific areas of information processing (e.g., short and long term memory; sequential memory; auditory and visual perception/processing; processing speed) must be assessed. Information from subtests on the WAIS-IV, the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability as well as the Test of Memory and Learning, Second Edition (TOMAL-2) and other instruments relevant to the presenting learning problem(s) may be used to address these areas.
 - iii. Achievement: Current levels of functioning in reading, mathematics and written and oral language are required. Acceptable instruments include the Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery III/NU: Tests of Achievement; Wechsler Individual Achievement Test III (WIAT III); Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK); Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA); Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement III (KTEA-III) or specific achievement tests such as the Test of Written Language 4 (TOWL 4); Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests – R/NU; The Nelson – Denny Reading Test (*provides valuable college level reading information*). (The Wide Range Achievement Test 4 (WRAT 4), and the Mini-Battery of Achievement, MBA, are **NOT** comprehensive measures of achievement and therefore are **NOT** suitable.)
- c. 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. Scores

- a. Standard scores are required in reporting test data. Percentiles and grade equivalents are inadequate by themselves.

4. Interpretation and Diagnosis

- a. Test scores and other information gathered through the evaluation process should be synthesized by the evaluator and provide clear and specific evidence that a learning disability does or does not exist. Evidence of a substantial limitation to learning or other major life activity must also be provided. **It is the clinician's responsibility to make a clear diagnostic statement about the presence of a disability if it exists.**

5. Recommended Accommodations

- a. 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.

6. Identifying Information

- a. 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.

Please submit this information marked confidential to:

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