



Documentation Guidelines Learning Disabilities (LD)

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Amendment Act of 2008 (ADAAA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Vernon College Office for Students with Disabilities reviews requests for accommodations. Accommodations are designed to provide equal access to educational services, programs, and activities. As part of the accommodation request process, students may be asked to provide documentation for their disability, current functional limitations, and the nature of those limitations. All documentation is reviewed on a case-by-case basis and is kept confidential. Providing documentation does not automatically qualify an individual for academic accommodations.

A learning disability refers to any number of diagnoses which include: dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, Reading/Writing/Math Disorders based on the DSM-V criteria; Specific Learning Disabilities in one (or more) of eight (8) areas.

The Office for Students with Disabilities will request a well-written report with an interpretive summary, from an unbiased professional who is certified or licensed to perform psycho-educational evaluations including: educational diagnosticians, clinical or educational psychologists, school psychologists, neurologists, and neuropsychologists. The report needs to include evidence of current functional limitations of a major life activity related to learning/academic deficits. Students submitting documentation of a learning disorder must provide a copy of the comprehensive psychoeducational report in order for the student to be eligible for accommodations.

Reports Should Include:

1. **DSM-5 or ICD Diagnosis (text and code)** and information concerning comorbidity. There must be clear and specific evidence of a learning disability.

Testing should be current. Accommodations are based on the current nature and impact of your disability. In general, this means that testing must have been conducted within the last five (5) years prior to your request for accommodations.

2. **Evaluation:** Testing must be comprehensive. Objective evidence of a substantial limitation in cognition and learning must be provided. Minimally, the domains to be addressed must include, but are not limited to:
 - **A diagnostic interview:** include relevant background information in support of the diagnosis. This may include a self-report of limitations and difficulties, a history of the presenting problem(s), a developmental history, academic history, including summaries of previous evaluations results and reports of classroom behavior and performance, a history of the family's learning difficulties and primary language spoken in the home, any pertinent medical and psychological history, and a discussion of possible comorbid conditions.



- **A complete psychoeducational or neuropsychological evaluation:** actual test scores must be provided; standard scores are preferred. It is not acceptable to administer only one test or to base the diagnosis on only one of several subtests. **Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) in and of themselves are not sufficient documentation to establish the student's eligibility for accommodations.** The assessment instruments used must be reliable, valid, and standardized for diagnosing learning disabilities in an adult population. The following areas are generally assessed:
 - **Aptitude** – intellectual assessments
 - **Achievement** – current levels of academic functioning in relevant areas such as reading, mathematics, and oral and written language
 - **Information Processing** – specific areas of information processing (short and long term memory, sequential memory, auditory and visual perception/processing, processing speed, executive functioning, and motor ability)

3. **Functional Limitations:** The testing report should clearly detail how the individual's disabling condition affects a major life activity and the resultant functional limitations in the academic setting. This may include information on the severity and pervasiveness of the disorder. The evaluator should also specify how the test results relate to the individual's functioning.

Functional limitations should be determined without consideration of mitigating measures, like medication for example. If the condition is episodic in nature, level of functioning should be assessed based on active phase of symptoms.

4. **Accommodations:** The documentation should include a history of current and past accommodations and whether or not they were useful. Recommendations for future accommodations and services are helpful and should be included. However, the determination of whether an accommodation is reasonable and appropriate within the college environment rests with the Office for Students with Disabilities.

The diagnostic report must be on letterhead, typed, dated, and signed, and otherwise legible. **The name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about license or certification, as well as area of specialization, employment, and state in which the individual practices, must be clearly stated.** Use of diagnostic terminology indicating a specific disability by someone whose training and experience are not in these fields is not acceptable. Evaluators should not be related to the individual being assessed. Diagnoses written on prescription pads and/or parent's notes indicating a disability are not considered appropriate documentation.