

Guidelines for Documentation of a Specific Learning Disorder

Students who are seeking support services from NWFSC's Disability Support Services on the basis of a diagnosed learning disability are required to submit documentation to verify eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA as amended in 2008. The professional providing the diagnosis must be qualified to do so. Protection under Section 504 and ADA is based upon documentation of a disability that **currently substantially limits** some major life activity such as learning.

The following guidelines are provided in the interest of assuring that documentation provided is appropriate to verify eligibility and support requests for reasonable accommodation, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids. The Coordinator for Disability Support Services is available to consult with diagnosticians regarding any of these guidelines.

The report needs to be typed in English on Letterhead, signed, and dated. A doctor's prescription pad note or a school plan such as Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or 504 plan is not sufficient documentation by itself but may be included and used as part of a more comprehensive evaluative report.

- ❖ Diagnostic reports must include the name, titles, and professional credentials (e.g., licensed psychologist) of the evaluators as well as the date(s) of testing. Trained and certified and/or licensed psychologists, learning disabilities specialists, and educational therapists are typically involved in the process of assessment.
- ❖ A written summary of /or background information about the student's educational, medical, and family histories that relate to the learning disability should be included.
- ❖ Testing must be comprehensive. Minimally, domains to be addressed should include (but not be limited to):
 - **Aptitude.** The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale – Third Edition (WAIS-III) with subtest scores is the preferred instrument. The Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery – III: Test of Cognitive Ability or the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale: Fifth Edition is acceptable.
 - **Achievement.** Current levels of functioning in reading, mathematics and written languages are required. Acceptable instruments include the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery – III: Tests of Achievement; Wechsler Individual Achievement Test- Third Edition (WIAT- III); Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK); Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA); or specific achievement tests such as the Test of the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test – 4th edition.
 - **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-III or the Woodcock – Johnson III Tests of Cognitive Ability as well as other instruments relevant to the presenting learning problem(s) may be used to address these areas.
 - **DSM-V Diagnosis of the type of learning disability or disabilities.** There must be clear and specific evidence and identification of a learning disability. Individual “learning styles” and “learning differences” in and of themselves do not constitute a learning disability. Alternative explanations for stated learning problems with terms such as “seems”, “appears”, “suggests”, or “probable” in the diagnostic summary will be considered equivocal and not supporting a definite and conclusive diagnosis.
 - **Other pertinent and helpful areas such as vocational interests and aptitudes.**
- ❖ Testing must be current. In most cases, this means testing that has been conducted within the past three years.
- ❖ Actual test scores must be provided. Standard scores and/or percentiles are acceptable; grade equivalents are not acceptable unless standard scores and/or percentiles are also included.

Appropriate **reasonable accommodations** and services are individually determined by Disability Support Services in consultation with the student on the basis of information in the documentation provided.

All documentation is confidential and should be submitted to:

Coordinator, Disability Support Services
Northwest Florida State College
100 College Boulevard
Student Life Center, Bld 410 Rm 119
Niceville FL 32578
(Telephone and TDD 850 729-6079)
(Fax: 850-729-6893)
Florida Relay Service:
800-955-8770