



Documentation Guidelines Learning Disability

Students requesting support services through the **ACCESS Office** at Collin College are required to submit documentation **after admission to Collin College** to verify eligibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Academic accommodations provided through **ACCESS** ensure **equal access** to educational activities and programs at Collin College.

Current documentation must validate the need for services based on an **individual's present level of functioning**. In order for a person to qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA Amendments Act of 2008, or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, **a disability must substantially limit a major life function (learning)**. Therefore, a well-written report with an interpretive summary based on a comprehensive evaluation is a necessary component of documentation. **ACCESS** will determine if reasonable and appropriate academic accommodations are warranted and can be provided for an individual.

There are several definitions for specific learning disabilities. The seven areas that may be impacted by a disability include: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading fluency skills, reading comprehension, mathematic calculation, and mathematic problem solving. Criteria for a learning disability may be met using a 16 point discrepancy model or using a cross battery approach similar to Flanagan, Ortiz, Alfonso (2007). When using a cross battery, there must be a normative deficit (standard score 84 or below) present in at least one area of academic functioning. There must also be a normative deficit in cognitive or processing ability. An empirical or logical relationship between the area of cognitive deficit and academic deficit must exist. There must be an otherwise normal cognitive profile in the areas not strongly related to the area of academic deficit. Regardless of which criteria method is used, there **must be evidence of current functional limitations** in daily life activities related **to the academic deficit**.

These guidelines will assist you in working with your qualified psychological or psycho-educational professional to prepare documentation for ACCESS to determine your eligibility for requested academic accommodations. In general, the college usually will recognize a diagnosis of a specific learning disability when the following criteria are met:

An **unbiased** professional, who is certified or licensed to perform psycho-educational evaluations, conducts the evaluation. This may include clinical or educational psychologists, school psychologists, neuropsychologists, and educational diagnosticians.

1. The evaluation must have been completed within the last three years for students graduating from high school. If possible, individuals who are 17 years of age or older may be tested using diagnostic instruments normed for adults. For students who have been out of school for a number of years, documentation that is more than five years old may be considered on a

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case-by-case basis. However, in most cases the student may be required to submit more recent documentation.

2. A complete assessment of cognitive ability must include both verbal and nonverbal ability. All subscale/subtest scores should be listed. The documentation must include assessment of information/cognitive processing strengths, weaknesses, deficits. (i.e. long/short term; auditory and visual perception/processing; fine motor/dexterity; speed/accuracy; attention).

A cross battery must include measures for the following broad stratum: Fluid Intelligence (Gf), Crystallized Intelligence (Gc), Short-Term Memory (Gsm), Visual Processing (Gv), Auditory Processing (Ga), Long-Term Retrieval (Glr), and Processing Speed (Gs). Two or more qualitatively different narrow abilities must be included in each broad stratum (G). If two narrow scores are more than one standard deviation apart, another subtest must be administered. **Simply administering the CHC Factor or Clinical Clusters of the Woodcock Johnson-Cognitive will not provide enough information.**

One or more of the following instruments is acceptable: WAIS-IV; Stanford-Binet V; WISC-IV; or WJ-III NU (Cognitive Battery). The TONI (all versions), WASI, K-BIT, Slosson, abbreviated batteries, and other screening tests are not comprehensive measures, and therefore are not suitable for use in the diagnosis of a learning disability. **Scores from screening instruments will only be considered when accompanied by scores from one of the full-scale instruments mentioned above. Submission of results from screening instruments does not guarantee these scores will be used to establish eligibility.**

3. Administration of a comprehensive achievement battery measuring current levels of performance in Basic Reading (both sight words and phonetic decoding), Reading Fluency, Reading Comprehension, Math Calculations, Math Reasoning, Written Expression, Oral Expression, and Listening Comprehension.

One or more of the following instruments is acceptable: Woodcock Johnson Psycho-educational Battery-III NU; Wechsler Individual Achievement Test-Third Edition (WIAT-III), Test of Written Language-2 (TOWL-4). The Nelson-Denny, Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA) **untimed norms** and oral reading tests are useful tools for gathering information about strengths and weaknesses but should not be used as the sole measure of achievement. The Wide Range Achievement Test-IV (WRAT-any version) is

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not a comprehensive measure of achievement and is not acceptable when used as the sole measure of achievement.

4. The absence of other primary factors that could lead to lower achievement such as emotional/behavioral disorders, visual or auditory disabilities, lack of educational experience due to cultural or socioeconomic circumstances, or deficiencies in intellectual functioning should be noted.

Documentation must include the following information:

- Evaluation submitted on letterhead of the qualified **unbiased** professional or that of a school district or cooperative.
- Names, titles, addresses, and phone numbers of the evaluator(s).
- Signature of the evaluator.
- Date of the report.
- Reason for assessment.
- Review of language, physical, medical, behavioral, academic or other factors that could influence learning.
- Name(s) of the assessment instruments used and the dates of administration.
- Quantitative and qualitative information that supports the diagnosis.
- The substantial limitations to major life functions posed by the disability.
- The extent to which these limitations impact academic performance.
- Recommendations for specific accommodations that can be linked to assessment data/observation.
- Additional observations or recommendations that could assist ACCESS in adequately serving this student.

It is not acceptable to determine a strength/weakness or make a diagnosis based on only one subtest score or one subtest within a cluster score.

Information for these guidelines was derived from a variety of sources, including the ***Association of Higher Education and Disability*** (AHEAD) and the ***Educational Testing Service***. Both organizations have developed comprehensive documentation guidelines for use by postsecondary institutions.

Documentation received will be reviewed by a committee, and the student will be notified of the decision regarding eligibility. Documentation is reviewed weekly; however, during peak times, we request at least two to three weeks to notify a student of the decision regarding eligibility. Providing documentation does not automatically qualify an individual for academic accommodations.