

Documentation Guidelines for a Learning Disability (LD)

To know a student has an LD and that it causes a disability for education students must arrange documentation meeting the criteria described below. Statements that simply note a diagnosis of LD was made, or that academic adjustments were allowed prior to the start of college, are not enough to indicate academic adjustments will be necessary for college. The documentation must be written by qualified professionals: For an LD diagnosed before high school graduation the author may be a school district staff who holds a pertinent Master's degrees and license; in all other situations the author should have a relevant doctorate degree and licensure. The following elements of documentation are very important:

1. The author is outwardly identified by name; credentials for assessing a learning disability are indicated; the author's phone number and postal address are provided.
2. The amount of relevant information is sufficient (i.e, it verifies a learning disability exists at the present time, regarding the student as an adult).
3. There should be an indication of the reason an assessment was conducted, including a summary of the student's academic history with circumstance suggesting an LD was present at an early age).
4. There must be the summary of an appropriate and adequate psycho-educational evaluation using standardized tests. All test scores should be provided with indications of means, standard deviations, and outward indication of statistically significant scores and/or discrepancies. The testing should include complete batteries and subtests for aptitude and academic achievement; most useful is a complete WJ-III compu-score. Other necessary assessments may be information processing, memory, auditory and visual perception and processing, processing speed, executive functions, and motor ability.
5. There should be an outward statement that a particular type of LD is present or an assignment of LD Not Otherwise Specified should be made and explained.
6. There should be written descriptions about how the LD limits the student academic functioning on conventional academic endeavors (reading, taking notes, taking tests, writing papers, etc.)
7. Recommendations should be made for the kinds of academic adjustments that are "appropriate" and "reasonable." (The adjustments must offset limitations caused by the LD without reducing the essential components of courses or the ability to evaluate what the student has learned).

Note: a public school Educational Support Plan (IEP) or Transition Plan (ITP) that does not contain the testing information described above will not be adequate. Copies of those plans can be helpful but are not necessary. The clinical type of information is essential.