

Guidelines for Documenting a Learning Disability (LD)

1.) **A Qualified Evaluator.** Professionals conducting assessments, diagnosing learning disabilities, and making recommendations for appropriate academic accommodations must be qualified to administer the required comprehensive test battery and be licensed to diagnose learning disorders as defined by *DSM* guidelines. The documentation must meet the following criteria:

- include evaluator's name, title, professional credentials
- be presented on the professional's letterhead, typed, dated, signed, and legible
- the evaluator may not be an immediate family member.

2.) **Current Documentation.** The impact of a learning disability (LD) on an individual changes over time. To determine the most appropriate accommodations, it is important for documentation to be current – within the past 5 years if given an aptitude test normed for adults, or 3 years if given an aptitude test normed for children. If your medical document is older than 5 years old, please have a qualified evaluator as listed above, complete the **DRC 102 General Medical and/or Mental Health Documentation Form** and submit it with your most current evaluation, as stated below.

3.) **A Comprehensive Evaluation.** The LD evaluation **must** contain:

- A discussion of:
 - relevant developmental, psychosocial, employment, family, and/or medical history
 - an academic history with a history of LD-related accommodation,
 - cultural and linguistic background and level of English-language fluency,
 - co-morbidity or alternate disorders which may mimic or exacerbate symptoms of LD (if applicable).
- an individually administered **Aptitude Test** battery (Intelligence or Cognitive tests) with all subtests included. **The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale – 4th Edition (WAIS-IV)** and the **Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children - 5th Edition (WISC-V)** are preferred, depending upon the age of the student at the time of testing.
- an **Achievement Test** battery, also called an academic achievement battery. **The Woodcock Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery: Tests of Achievement** is preferred. The Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) is not comprehensive and is not acceptable as the sole measure of achievement. Achievement tests must show current academic functioning in:
 - reading - decoding and comprehension of long passages typical of college texts,
 - mathematics - applied word problems and calculations, specifically algebra problems,
 - written language skills - spelling and written expression.

- an **Information Processing** battery, such as the **Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude (DTLA)** or subtests from the **WAIS-IV** or **WISC-V**. These assessments must describe strengths, weaknesses, and deficits in:
 - visual-spatial abilities,
 - memory (auditory and visual; short-term and long-term),
 - executive functions including: processing speed, attention, and auditory processing.
- a **clear, unequivocal** diagnosis of a learning disability based on *DSM* criteria with diagnostic code and discussions of ruling out alternative explanations and co-morbid diagnoses
- an interpretation of test scores leading to the diagnosis
- a description of current treatments used to manage the impact of the LD
- a description of the current functional limitations of the individual in an academic environment – the ways that the diagnosed LD currently substantially limits the student’s learning
- appropriate and specific recommendations for an academic environment including:
 - detailed explanation as to why each accommodation is recommended must be provided
 - correlation to functional limitations previously described
- a presentation of all test scores including all raw, broad, standard scores, and percentile ranks.
- Suggestions of reasonable accommodation(s), which might be appropriate at the post-secondary level, are encouraged. These recommendations should be supported by the diagnosis.

4.) **Supporting Documentation.** While required, the report of the qualified evaluator is by no means the only documentation we can use to better understand and accommodate the student with a LD. Other helpful documents are: records of accommodation, high school 504 plans or IEPs, and previous psycho-educational evaluations. Please see the **DRC 102 General Medical and/or Mental Health Documentation Form**, should you wish to add this to your supporting documentation.

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*Please note that the on-campus DRC office is currently closed. Students must submit documentation as an attachment to drc@emich.edu prior to their scheduled appointment. Please visit the [DRC website](#) for additional information.