

Guidelines for Assessment and Accommodation Of Students with Learning Disabilities

I. Student Responsibility for Verification of a Learning Disability

It is the responsibility of each student seeking accommodations and services from Cal Poly's Disability Resource Center to provide a written comprehensive evaluation verifying his/her learning disability. Although the University does not provide assessment and diagnostic services, students suspecting a learning disability are encouraged to see the Learning Disability Specialist for referral information or assistance.

II. Assessment Providers

The Disability Resource Center maintains a partial list of local clinicians who provide psychoeducational assessment services. Any licensed educational psychologist, clinical psychologist, neurologist, or learning disabilities specialist can administer psychoeducational assessments. The clinician must be a neutral, unrelated, non-biased professional. Students are encouraged to review their health insurance regarding possible coverage.

III. Assessment Process

The proper diagnosis of a learning disability involves an orderly, deductive process during which a wide range of information must be considered. Reliance on a single test, no matter how comprehensive it appears, may be misleading. A comprehensive assessment and the resulting diagnostic report will include a diagnostic interview, evaluation of aptitude, academic achievement, information processing, clinical observations/processes, and a diagnosis (AHEAD, 1997; ETS, 1999).

IV. Assessment Documentation

A. Diagnostic report must include:

1. Clinician's name, title, license number, phone number, address, and signature on office letterhead.
2. Written summary of developmental, medical, educational, family, social histories and behavioral observations.
3. Summary of all instruments and procedures; date(s) of examination.
4. All test scores (scaled scores, standard scores, percentiles) and a detailed interpretation of the results, including strengths and weaknesses.
5. Clearly described intracognitive and/or aptitude-achievement discrepancies, processing deficits, or the clinician's rationale for "professional judgment."
6. Clear statement of a specific DSM-IV diagnosis.
7. Statement of how the learning disability substantially interferes with the student's educational progress and presents functional limitations.

B. Assessment must be comprehensive and include at least one test from each category:

Aptitude: Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revision 4 (WAIS-IV)
Woodcock Johnson - Tests of Cognitive Ability-Revision 3 (WJ-III)
Kaufman Adult Intelligence Test (KAIT)
Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale- 5th Edition (SB-V)
Universal Nonverbal Intelligence Test (UNIT)

Achievement: Woodcock Johnson - Tests of Achievement (WJ-III)
Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests - Revised: Forms G or H
Wechsler Individual Achievement Test–Revision 2 (WIAT-II)
Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK)
(The WRAT version 2, 3, or 4 is not acceptable as a sole measure of achievement)

C. Processing assessments should be administered in conjunction with cognitive and achievement measures if processing deficits are suspected. Sample processing assessments include:

Visual Processing: TVPS-III, MVPT-III, VMI

Sensory Motor Processing: VMI, BENDER

Attention Processing: CPT-II, BROWNS, CONNERS, BASC-2 (should be conducted by a licensed Psychologist, Psychiatrist, or Medical Physician)

Auditory Processing: SCAN-A, ACTP, SSW (should be conducted by licensed Audiologist or Speech and Language Pathologist)

D. Assessments must be current

Since assessment constitutes the basis for determining reasonable accommodations and because the provision of academic accommodations are based upon the impact of a disability on *current* academic performance, it is in a student's best interest to provide recent and appropriate documentation. In most cases, the testing should have been conducted during adulthood (18 years or older) or within three years of the student's initial request for disability-related services at the University. This assessment serves as the basis for decision-making about a student's needs for accommodations in a college environment that is academically very competitive.

IV. Academic Accommodations Are:

- Designed to meet a student's disability-related needs without fundamentally altering the nature of the instructional program or altering any directly-related licensing program.
- Not intended to provide remediation (instruction in basic skills not acquired earlier in the educational process; (e.g. basic grammar, basic math, English as a Second Language, etc.)
- Specific support services are reviewed and discussed during the intake process to best meet the needs of the individual student.

To ensure a valid and comprehensive assessment process, please share this document with your clinician before testing.

Questions? Please call DRC at (805) 756-1395