

University of South Florida
Students with Disabilities Services

Guidelines for Documenting Learning Disabilities

Students seeking support services from Students with Disabilities Services (SDS) on the basis of a previously diagnosed learning disorder (LD) are requested to submit documentation that verifies their eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act. The documentation should describe a disabling condition, which is defined by the presence of *significant* limitations in one or more major life activity. The guidelines below are intended to provide guidance for the assessment process, including the areas that must be assessed in order for SDS staff to make appropriate decisions. Please do not hesitate **to contact SDS at (813) 974-4309 if you have any questions.**

Students submitting documentation of a learning disorder should provide a copy of the comprehensive psychoeducational report. Updated neuropsychological evaluations may be required to support specific accommodation requests.

Documentation in support of a learning disorder should include the following information:

1. Clear and specific evidence of a learning disability, including the exact **DSM-5 diagnosis** when appropriate.
2. **Testing should be comprehensive.** Objective evidence of a substantial limitation in cognition and learning should be provided. The domains to be addressed should include:
 - a. **Diagnostic interview** – include relevant background information in support of the diagnosis. This may include a self-report of limitations and difficulties, a history of the presenting problem(s), a developmental history, academic history, including summaries of previous evaluation results and reports of classroom behavior and performance, a history of the family's learning difficulties and primary language spoken in the home, any pertinent medical and psychological history, a discussion of possible comorbid conditions.
 - b. **Psychoeducational or neuropsychological evaluation** – actual test scores should be provided; standard scores are preferred. The assessment instruments used should be reliable, valid, and standardized for diagnosing LD in an adult population. The following areas are generally assessed:
 - i. Aptitude – intellectual assessment
 - ii. Achievement – current levels of academic functioning in relevant areas such as reading, mathematics, oral and written language
 - iii. Information Processing – specific areas of information processing (e.g. short and long term memory, sequential memory, auditory and visual perception/processing, processing speed, executive functioning, motor ability).
3. The testing report should clearly detail how the individual's disabling condition affects a major life activity and the resultant functional limitations in the academic setting. This may include information on the severity and pervasiveness of the disorder. The evaluator should also specify how the test results relate to the individual's functioning.
4. Recommendations for future accommodations and services are helpful and should be included, however, SDS will make the final determination as to whether appropriate and reasonable accommodations are warranted and can be provided to the individual.
5. Current evaluations can be critical for providing reasonable accommodations. Depending on the nature of the disability, updated evaluations may be requested.

*All reports should be on **letterhead, typed, dated, and signed**, and otherwise legible. The **name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator**, including information about **license or certification** as well as area of specialization, employment, and state in which the individual practices should be clearly stated.*

All documentation submitted to SDS is considered confidential.

Due to the broad nature of Florida's public records and email legislation, SDS encourages students to upload documentation with the secure on-line SDS application found via the "Access SDS" icon at www.sds.usf.edu.

Documentation may also be faxed to (813) 974-7337 or mailed to:

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