

Guidelines for Documentation of a Learning Disability

Last updated March 11, 2015

Students seeking support services from Whitman College (other than those provided to all students) or a variance of college policy on the basis of a diagnosed specific learning disability are required to submit documentation to verify eligibility. Documentation of a learning disability consists of the provision of professional testing and evaluation, including a written report which reflects the student's present level of information processing as well as his or her achievement level. The cost and responsibility for providing outside professional evaluation shall be borne by the student.

The following guidelines are provided in the interest of assuring that the evaluation and report are appropriate for documenting eligibility. All requests for accommodations will be considered, but the College will make the final determination on whether the requested accommodations are reasonable under state and federal guidelines for private colleges. Documentation presented to the Academic Resource Center will remain in a private confidential file in the Academic Resource Center and/or the Welty Health Center. Staff is available to consult with diagnosticians regarding these guidelines:

1. The documentation must be prepared by a professional who is qualified by education and experience to diagnose learning disabilities, which would include but not be limited to: a licensed neuro-psychologist or psychologist, learning disability specialist, or another appropriate professional certified to administer the psychological tests identified below. Experience in evaluation of adults with learning disabilities is essential.
2. The documentation must be comprehensive. Examples of acceptable, age-appropriate, nationally-normed tests are as follows:
 - For aptitude assessment - The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised (WAIS-III) with sub-test scores preferred. The Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery Revised: Tests of Cognitive Ability is acceptable. WJ Reading Mastery 3rd Edition.
 - For achievement assessment - The instrument used must assess current levels of functioning in all areas in which accommodations



are requested. Acceptable instruments include the Woodcock - Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery: Revised: Tests of Achievement; Stanford Test of Academic Skills; or specific achievement tests such as the Test of Written Language-2; Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests Revised, or the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test. (The Wide Range Achievement Test Revised is not comprehensive enough and therefore not acceptable.)

- For information processing assessment - The instrument used must assess specific areas of information processing such as short-term memory, sequential memory, auditory and visual perception/processing and processing speed. Acceptable tests are the sub-tests from the WAIS-R or the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability.
3. The documentation must be current. In most cases, this means within the past three years. Since the documentation provided constitutes the basis for determining reasonable accommodations, it is in a student's best interest to provide recent and appropriate documentation to reflect his/her present level of learning. Decisions about accommodations for students in an academically rigorous environment should be based on adult learning disability assessment.
 4. The documentation must present clear and specific evidence, which identifies and states specific learning disabilities. Individual "learning styles" and "learning preferences" are not necessarily learning disabilities.
 5. The report must include the exact instruments used, any exceptions to standard testing procedures for that instrument, test score data in percentiles or standard scores, a written interpretation of the results by the professional doing the evaluation, the name of the evaluator and the dates of testing.
 6. The report can include a list of recommendations for academic accommodations, specific to the student, with supporting data from the assessment test(s). The professional providing the documentation should keep in mind that students with learning disabilities are held to the same academic standards as other students. Asking instructors to reduce the workload or course requirements in a specific class for students with disabilities is generally not appropriate. Taking fewer classes can reduce the workload. Accommodations are made for Whitman College students with disabilities in order to assure equal access to all programs and activities, but they do not guarantee equal



outcomes. Time management, motivation, and many other variables contribute to academic success.

All students with disabilities who would like to request accommodations must make an appointment to see the director of the Academic Resource Center at the beginning of each semester. Students are encouraged to contact staff in the Academic Resource Center by phone at (509) 527-5213 or via e-mail at arc@whitman.edu for more information about accommodations for students with learning disabilities.