



## ***Documentation of a Learning Disability***

Vassar College follows best practices for disability documentation used by postsecondary institutions to determine the accommodations to which an individual may be entitled.<sup>1</sup> Disability documentation for the purpose of providing accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services must both establish disability and provide adequate information on the functional impact of the disability so that effective accommodations can be identified. All documentation is reviewed on an individual, case-by-case basis. Individuals are encouraged to provide their clinicians with a copy of these guidelines. The cost of obtaining disability documentation is the responsibility of the individual. Questions about Vassar College's documentation requirements should be directed to the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity, Vassar College, Box 164, 124 Raymond Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12604-0164, (845) 437-7584.

### **A. Qualified Professional Must Provide the Documentation**

A professional providing documentation of a Learning Disability should be licensed or otherwise properly credentialed, have undergone appropriate and comprehensive training, and have relevant experience in diagnosing adults with LD. The individual's name, title, and professional credentials must be clearly stated in the documentation. Documentation from family members will not be accepted even when the family members are otherwise qualified by virtue of training and licensure/certification. All reports must be in English, typed or printed on professional letterhead, dated, and signed.

### **B. Documentation Must Be Current**

Documentation must address how the condition(s) *currently* impacts the individual in the current setting (postsecondary educational, residential or workplace setting). The need for recent documentation depends on the facts and circumstances of the individual's condition and need for specific accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services. If documentation is inadequate in scope of content, or does not address the individual's current level of functioning and need for accommodations, re-evaluation or documentation update may be required. A documentation update for a learning disability is a report by a qualified professional that includes a summary of the original LD findings, as well as additional evaluation data necessary to establish the individual's current need for accommodation(s).

Quality documentation generally includes:

- Statement or restatement of diagnosis, including date(s) for all prior diagnoses and data that were used to establish the diagnosis.
- Diagnostic Interview: including information about developmental history, including milestones such as language and speech acquisition and early motor skill development, relevant medical history, including the absence of a medical basis for the present symptoms, relevant academic or employment history, including areas of uneven academic achievement, results of prior standardized testing taken with or without accommodations, relevant family history, relevant psychosocial history, and information about pre-existing or coexisting disorders, including behavioral, medical, neurological, and/or personality disorders, along with any history of medication use that may affect the individual's learning.
- Results from a neuropsychological or psychoeducational evaluation that provides clear evidence that a specific learning disability does or does not exist. The evaluation should include measures of cognitive aptitude, academic achievement, and information processing. Reporting of standard scores and percentiles

---

<sup>1</sup> Updated November 8, 2010. Documentation guidelines adapted from the Educational Testing Services (ETS) Policy Statement for Documentation of a Learning Disability In Adolescents and Adults, Second Edition, and from AHEAD: Association on Higher Education and Disability: Seven Essential Elements of Quality Disability Documentation.

for all adult normed measures must be included. All data must logically reflect a substantial limitation of learning for which the individual is requesting the accommodation. The choice of the neuropsychological or psychoeducational assessment battery should be guided by the overall objective(s) of the evaluation, information obtained during the diagnostic interview, sound clinical judgment and prevailing professional practices.

*The following is not intended to be an exhaustive list or to restrict assessment in other pertinent and helpful areas such as vocational interests and aptitudes.*

- **Cognitive Aptitude:** The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Third Edition (WAIS-III) with subtest scores is the preferred instrument. The Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery III (W-J-III): Tests of Cognitive Ability or the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale: Fifth Edition are also acceptable.
- **Academic Achievement:** Assessment of academic ability in the areas of reading, writing, and math is required. Suggested instruments include: Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery III: Tests of Achievement (W-J-III); Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT-II); Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK); or a combination of tests in specific skill areas such as the Test of Written Language-IV (TOWL-IV); the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised; the Nelson Denny Reading Test; the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test; or the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test. The Wide Range Achievement Test-III (WRAT-III) is not a comprehensive measure of achievement and therefore is not suitable.
- **Information Processing:** Specific areas of information processing such as short-and long-term memory, sequential memory, visual and auditory perception/processing, or processing speed must be assessed. These areas may warrant evaluation as indicated by results from assessment of ability and achievement.

### **C. Recommendation and Rationale for Requested Accommodations Must Be Provided**

Effective and reasonable accommodations are individually determined and based on the functional impact of the condition and its likely impact on the current environment (classroom, residential, or workplace setting, course assignments, program requirements, etc.). Recommendations for specific accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services must be logically related to the functional limitations of the individual as a result of their condition(s). If connections are not obvious, a clear explanation of the relationship should be provided. For students, school plans such as an Individualized Education Plans (I.E.P.) or a 504 Plan can be helpful, and may provide insight in making current decisions about accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services. I.E.P. and 504 Plans, however, are not binding on Vassar College, and a prior history of accommodations without demonstration of current need does not warrant the provision of accommodations. If no prior accommodations were provided, the evaluator must include a detailed explanation of why no accommodations were needed or provided in the past and why accommodations are needed at this time.

### **D. Privacy and Confidentiality**

Disability documentation will be treated in a confidential manner and shared only on a need-to-know basis to ensure the provision of reasonable and effective accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services. Disability-related information is collected and maintained on separate forms and kept in secure files with limited access.

### **Send Documentation To:**

Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity  
Vassar College, Box 164  
124 Raymond Avenue  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12604