

## Learning Disability Documentation Guidelines

All disability eligibility and accommodation decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

Learning disabilities is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by **significant difficulties** in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical skills. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behaviors, social perception, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not, by themselves, constitute a learning disability. Although learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other disabilities (e.g., sensory impairment, intellectual disability, serious emotional disturbance), or with extrinsic influences (such as cultural differences, insufficient or inappropriate instruction), they are not the result of those conditions or influences. (From the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, Learning Disabilities: Issues on Definition).

Specific documentation guidelines for Learning Disabilities include the following:

- General documentation guidelines are addressed.
- Documentation should reflect data collected to represent current functioning.
- Clear and specific identification of an LD must be stated. For example, “Learning styles” or “Learning differences” **are not** synonymous with a learning disability.
- Documentation of a developmental and educational history consistent with an LD.
- Documentation of LDs should include **standardized measures** of academic achievement, cognitive/linguistic processing, and/or intellectual functioning **that have normative data representing the general population**. All standardized measures must be represented by **standard scores and percentile ranks based on published age-based norms**.
- Documentation of **one or more** cognitive/linguistic processing deficits associated in a meaningful way with the identified area(s) of academic limitation. Cognitive/linguistic processes commonly associated with academic achievement include the following:
  - Fluency/Automaticity
  - Executive functioning
  - Memory/Learning
  - Oral Language
  - Phonological Processing
  - Orthographic Processing
  - Visual-Motor
  - Visual-Perceptual/Visual-Spatial

- Documentation suggesting the academic limitations are unexpected is necessary. Evidence that **substantially limited areas of achievement fall significantly below higher-level cognitive and/or linguistic abilities** (e.g., broad intellectual functioning, reasoning, vocabulary, crystallized knowledge) must be included.
- **Quantitative and qualitative evidence** that symptoms are associated with **significant functional impairment** in the academic setting. In the case of LDs, documentation must include evidence of substantial limitation(s) in **one or more** of the following areas of academic achievement:
  - Reading (decoding, fluency, and/or comprehension)
  - Mathematics (calculations, math fluency, and/or applied reasoning)
  - Written Language (spelling, fluency, and/or written expression)
- Academic impairments, processing deficits, and evidence of intact functioning in other domains (e.g., higher-level cognitive functioning), should be evident on multiple measures.
- Documentation that other explanations for the academic and cognitive/linguistic limitation(s) have been considered and ruled out (e.g., low cognitive ability, other mental or neurological disorders, lack of adequate education, visual or auditory dysfunction, emotional factors like anxiety or depression, cultural/language differences, poor motivation, symptom exaggeration).

***These criteria are established by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents. If you have any questions, please contact Augusta University's Testing and Disability Services at (706) 737-1469. Thank you.***