Seattle Pacific University Guidelines Regarding Documentation of a Learning Disability

Students who are seeking support services from Seattle Pacific University on the basis of a diagnosed 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 individual’s present level of information processing as well as his/her achievement level. The cost and responsibility for providing this 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. Documentation presented to Disability Support Services (DSS) will remain in a private confidential file in the DSS office. The Director or Coordinator of DSS is available to consult with diagnosticians regarding any of these guidelines. The documentation must:

1. be prepared by a professional qualified by education and experience to diagnose learning disabilities, which would include but not be limited to: a licensed neuropsychologist or psychologist, learning disability specialist or other appropriate professional certified to administer the psychological tests identified below. Experience in evaluation of adults with learning disabilities is essential.

2. be comprehensive. All tests administered must be age appropriate, nationally normed, and individually administered.

   a. aptitude. The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale III (WAIS III with subtest scores is preferred. The Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery Revised: Tests of Cognitive Ability is acceptable.

   b. achievement. Current levels of functioning in all areas in which accommodations are requested are required. Acceptable instruments include the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery Revised: Tests of Achievement; Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK); or specific achievement tests such as the Test of Written Language-3 (TOWL-3), Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests Revised, or the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test. (The Wide Range Achievement Test Revised IS NOT a comprehensive measure of achievement and therefore is not suitable.)

   c. information processing. Specific areas of information processing (e.g. short and long term memory, sequential memory, auditory and visual perception/processing, processing speed) must be assessed. Use of subtests from the WAIS-III or the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability are acceptable.

   This is not intended to be an exhaustive list or to restrict assessment in other pertinent and helpful areas such as vocational interest, aptitudes and learning strengths.

3. be current. In most cases this means within the past three years or at adult functioning. Since assessment constitutes the basis for determining reasonable accommodations, it is in a student’s best interest to provide recent and appropriate documentation to serve as the basis for decision-making about a student’s needs for accommodations in an academically competitive environment. Retesting may not be required if a qualified medical professional determines it is not medically necessary.
4. present *clear and specific evidence*, which identifies and states specific learning disabilities. Individual “learning styles” and “learning differences” in and of themselves do not specify a learning disability.

5. *include* in the report the exact instruments used, any exceptions to standardized procedures, 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 dates of testing.

6. provide *sufficient data* to support the particular academic adjustment(s) requested. The documentation should demonstrate the individual has a disability in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Requests that are not supported by documentation may not be approved without additional verification and documentation.

If there are questions regarding this policy, please contact the Coordinator for Disability Support Services at (206) 281-2272.

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