

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES FOR LEARNING AND COGNITIVE DISORDERS

These guidelines are intended to help you identify appropriate professional evaluation materials to support your application for accommodations. We suggest that you review these guidelines with a care provider, educator, or disabilities support person who is familiar with your situation and your records, to determine whether or not an appropriate evaluation has already been completed, or whether more current and/or more thorough evaluation materials are needed. We realize that every applicant is unique, and we will be as flexible as we can when reviewing your materials. Once we review your materials, we may request additional information to clarify the nature and severity of your impairment and the reasonableness of the accommodations you are requesting.

We need to understand how your disability is impacting your CURRENT functioning. Thus, we will need to review the results of a comprehensive evaluation of your learning impairment performed by a licensed clinical or educational psychologist, neuropsychologist, or comparably trained expert in the diagnosis of learning disabilities. While evaluations done within the past three years are preferable, we will accept testing that has been performed at least within the late teen-aged years, provided that measures of adult intelligence and academic skills have been used (as described below). Your evaluation should include all of the following:

- **A clear DSM-IV or DSM-V diagnosis** should be provided, along with a detailed description of the specific symptoms that you have displayed, how these symptoms relate to DSM-IV or DSM-V criteria, and how alternative explanations for your present difficulties have been ruled out. Given that learning disabilities are developmental in nature, your evaluator should place your current functioning within the context of your history, making specific reference to your grades, academic supports and accommodations, and any previous test results, from the early grades through the present.
- **A detailed description of the functional impact of your disability in adulthood (at least in the late high school years), in academic/testing settings, as well as in employment and other life realms.**
- **A brief description of treatments, supports, and accommodations** (formal and informal) that have been used to address your impairment and the impact that these supports and accommodations have had on your functioning.
- **Performance-based, appropriately normed measures of relevant skills and symptoms**, to clarify the exact nature and severity of your learning disability at present, when compared with most people. This will provide an objective reference point to help us determine your need for accommodations and what accommodations are reasonable for you at this time on standardized exams. **The following measures will be particularly important to include:** age-normed

measures of reading, writing, and math skills that provide separate scores for relevant component skills, higher-order applications of those skills, and speed when performing reading, writing, and math tasks; age-normed measures of timed, extended, complex reading, writing, and math tests such as the Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults; a full measure of adult intelligence (e.g., the WAIS-IV or similar measure) with all subtest scores provided; additional age-normed performance-based measures that clarify the basis for your learning disability (e.g., measures of phonologic and symbolic processing are often helpful).

- **A statement as to what medications (if any) you typically take and what medications (if any) you chose to take on each day of your LD assessment.** Keep in mind that we need to understand how your LD is impacting your typical functioning in academic and testing situations. If medication use is an important factor for you, your evaluator should indicate what medication regimen you typically adhere to in academic and testing situations and what medications you took on each day of testing during your LD evaluation. If you typically adhere to a medication regimen but chose not to do so during your LD evaluation, your evaluator should address how these evaluation results may relate to your functioning in settings where you would typically take medication.
- **A statement as to what accommodations your evaluator believes are appropriate for you** in academic and testing settings at this time given the nature and current impact of your disability. Your evaluator should make specific statements as to how the accommodations being requested are expected to address the symptoms or challenges you are experiencing. Your evaluator should also indicate the extent to which you are currently making use of similar accommodations in other settings and how those accommodations have addressed your specific symptoms.

The comprehensive evaluation being requested should be performed by an appropriately licensed clinical or educational psychologist, neuropsychologist, or other professional with expertise in the differential diagnosis of learning disabilities and the objective evaluation of the impact of these disabilities using standardized, performance-based instruments. The evaluator's name, title, and professional credentials -- including license and certification information as well as area of specialization, employment, and the locality in which the professional evaluator practices -- must be included in the documentation. All reports must be typed on official letterhead, dated, and signed by the evaluator. The evaluator should not be a family member of the person being evaluated. The evaluation should list all tests that were administered and all external documents that were reviewed. Test results should be presented in sufficient detail to allow a comparably trained professional to review them. If an evaluation incorporates information and/or test data that was taken from a secondary source, this information should be clearly identified and presented separately from any new information or data that was obtained as part of the current evaluation.