

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES: SPECIFIC LEARNING DISORDER

The Office of Disability Services (ODS) provides academic accommodations to students with diagnosed disabilities. The purpose of documentation is to assist ODS in determining a student's disability* information and their eligibility to receive accommodations. The information you provide will be kept within the student's file at ODS, where it will be held securely and confidentially.

Students requesting accommodations must provide documentation from a qualified healthcare professional. These professionals are generally trained, certified, or licensed to diagnose and treat learning disabilities, including a psychologist or educational specialist.

School plans such as an IEP or 504 Accommodation Plan are often insufficient without accompanying information or testing results. Clinical chart notes or printed electronic records from a patient portal are also generally insufficient. Information or evaluations submitted should be from age 13 or older. A history of accommodations alone does not guarantee the provision of similar accommodations at UA. The final determination of appropriate and reasonable accommodations rests with ODS.

Please provide the psychoeducational evaluation used to determine diagnosis. The evaluation should be, typed, signed and on letterhead, addressing the following information. Evaluations completed by a school system may require an addendum in order to address the points below. We invite you to attach any other documents or information you deem relevant in supporting the student's academic accommodations request.

1. Diagnosis

- (a) Date of diagnosis
- (b) Primary diagnosis as listed in the most recent version of the DSM or ICD
- (c) What model did you use to determine diagnosis (i.e., IQ-achievement discrepancy, response to intervention, patterns of strengths and weaknesses)?

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2. Evidence of impairment

- (a) Address difficulties that have persisted for at least 6 months in at least one of the following areas:
 - i. Inaccurate or slow and effortful work reading
 - ii. Difficulty understanding the meaning of what is read
 - iii. Difficulties with spelling
 - iv. Difficulties with written expression
 - v. Difficulties mastering number sense, number facts, or calculation
 - vi. Difficulties with mathematical reasoning
- (b) Describe how the affected academic skills are substantially and quantifiably below those expected for the individual's chronological age, and cause significant interference with academic performance, or with activities of daily living, as confirmed by individually administered standardized achievement measures and comprehensive clinical assessment.
 - i. Indicate the scores on achievement, intelligence, or other measures which confirm the difficulties.
- (c) Were difficulties present during school-age years?
- (d) Are difficulties better accounted for by an intellectual disability, uncorrected visual or auditory acuity, other mental or neurological disorders, psychosocial adversity, lack of proficiency in the language of academic instruction, or inadequate education instruction?

Please share your letter with the student so they can upload it with their ODS application (found on our website, www.ods.ua.edu).

*The legal definition of disability is a mental or physical condition that substantially limits a major life activity compared to most people. Substantial in this context means a notable, significant, meaningful limit / difference to the manner in which the individual engages in the activity, the conditions necessary for them to engage in the activity, the duration for which they can engage in the activity, or the frequency which they engage in the activity. Major life activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and the proper functioning of major bodily systems.

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