



LORAS COLLEGE™

Lynch Office of Disability Services
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Recommendations for Professional Reports Documenting Accommodation Needs of Students with Learning Disabilities

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008, authorize the Lynch Office of Disability Services (LODS) and Loras College to safeguard qualified students enrolled at Loras College from discrimination on the basis of disability and to assure provision of reasonable accommodations. To qualify for services, LODS suggests students submit documentation and or disability history that describes how the condition directly and substantially limits a major life function such as learning.

The following documentation suggestions and other supporting documentation are to help the process of the student's request for accommodations. Completion of a LODS Disability History Update Form available at the Loras College website (<http://myweb.loras.edu/Loras/LODS/LODSDisabilityHistoryUpdate.pdf>) is required to determine qualification for services.

Components that may be included in the professional report:

Reports should be typewritten and signed on professional letterhead and include the name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator, including license or certification, area of specialization, employment, affiliation, and the state or province of practice. Please note that IEP's, SARs and 504 plans may not be considered as an assessment of limitations of a major life function, but could be integrated by the professional final report to reflex suggestions of history of accommodations.

I. Qualifications of the Evaluator

Professionals conducting assessments and rendering diagnoses of Learning Disabilities and making recommendations for accommodations should have comprehensive training and relevant experience with an adult learning disabled population. Examples of such professionals are Clinical, Counseling, Educational, School Psychologists, Neuropsychologists, and relevantly trained Medical Doctors and Learning Disability Specialists. The evaluator cannot be a family member or closely related to the person being evaluated.

II. Comprehensive Information that Verifies the Existence of the Condition

A comprehensive evaluation should provide information about the history of the condition and verify the existence of a current condition. Clear objective evidence of a learning disability through assessment in the areas of **cognitive aptitude, achievement, and information processing**. The evaluator's report could also include the following:

1. **Developmental, Educational, and Accommodation History:** The report may contain evidence of the history of learning difficulties, also including information substantiated in medical and educational records. Accommodation history should be discussed.
2. **Evidence of current impairment:** The report should describe the student's present learning difficulties including evidence of ongoing impairment in functioning at the time he or she was referred for the current evaluation. Documentation can include a current DSM-IV or DSM-V diagnosis including the criteria by which the diagnosis was determined. **A definitive diagnostic**

statement is best made clear and stated directly. Statement should not use terms such as "suggests," "appears to," "is consistent with," "is indicative of" or similar language as these may not help to identify the impairment. Relevant current medical information should be included.

3. **Alternate causes ruled out:** The report can demonstrate that the evaluator(s) has investigated and ruled out alternative psychological, medical, educational, and/or cultural explanations for the impairment.
4. **A Clear DSM-IV or DSM-V Diagnosis provided** identifying the specific type(s) of learning disabilities diagnosed.
5. **Relevant testing could be provided to establish average or higher intelligence:** Provide the WISC-III or IV or the WAIS-III or IV administered and all scale and subscale including the information of standard scores and percentile scores. Full scale and subscale information provided for both the intelligence test and any other testing used to substantiate a disability related to academic functioning.
6. **Specific areas of information processing can be** in the areas of memory, auditory and visual perception/processing, processing speed, executive functioning, and motor ability to substantiate related accommodation requests.
7. **Achievement testing provided to demonstrate academic impairment:** The Wechsler Individual Achievement Test-II (WIAT-II) or the Woodcock Johnson Psycho-educational Battery-III or similar to measure the current impact of the disorder on an individual's ability to function in academic related settings. The Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT III or IV) is a minimal indicator in this regard.

III. Each recommended accommodation be discussed individually and specific evidence supporting each accommodation requested in the report.

Accommodations are provided for a condition only when the condition materially restricts an individual's academic functioning and when there is a substantial limitation as compared to the general population. Accommodations are not provided for relative weaknesses, areas needing improvement, or below expectancy performance that is not directly related to a disability.

Each accommodation correlates with specific functional limitations that have been documented in the assessment. All data logically reflect the substantial limitation(s) to learning for which the report is suggesting the accommodations. For example, a recommendation for extra times for exams may be related to the individual's processing speed sub-score on the WAIS-III. "Laundry lists" of accommodations that are not individually supported are insufficient for this section.

These guidelines adapted from The University of Iowa, Iowa City.