

Rush University Guidelines for Documentation of a Learning Disability

I. A qualified professional must conduct the evaluation.

- Name, title, professional credentials, licensure/certification information, and location of practice must be included on any reports submitted.
- Evaluators must have training in, and experience with, evaluating learning disabilities in adolescents and/or adults.
- Appropriate professionals may include neuropsychologists, clinical psychologists, educational psychologists, school psychologists, and psychiatrists. Learning disability specialists (and others) may be part of a diagnostic team, though they are not generally recognized as primary evaluators for post-secondary students.
- Evaluations performed by members of the student's family are not acceptable.
- All reports must be signed by the primary evaluator, and should include a completed Rush University form (if feasible), as well as any additional information typed on letterhead.

II. Documentation must be current.

- Reports should, in general, be based on evaluations performed within three years.
- They should describe the current impact of the diagnosed condition.
- They should make recommendations appropriate to a postsecondary setting, preferably a professional school environment.

III. Documentation must be comprehensive.

- Reports should include a history (medical, developmental, academic, familial), and indicate evidence of early impairment, even if not formally diagnosed in childhood or early adolescence.
- Reports should indicate evidence of current impairment, including the results of a diagnostic interview and a battery of psychoeducational tests designed to identify learning disabilities.
- Minimally, testing must include a) assessment of cognitive ability/intellectual functioning, b) measurement of academic achievement, c) instruments that measure various domains of information processing, d) other instruments to help rule in or rule out the diagnosis of learning disability.
- A specific diagnosis must be included if indicated. If the evaluation does not clearly indicate the existence of a learning disability, the examiner must state that fact.
- All test scores should be included, along with an interpretation of each and a summary.
- Documentation should rule out alternative explanations for learning problems (i.e. difficulties that are motivational, emotional, attentional, or related to limited fluency in the English language.)
- Documentation should address any coexisting disorders or suspected coexisting disorders.
- Documentation must indicate whether or not the evaluator believes the diagnosed condition rises to the level of a disability as defined by Section 504 and the ADA (i.e. substantially limiting a major life activity). This professional opinion should then be explained.
- A clear indication of the student's functional limitations must be included.
- Documentation should include recommendations for accommodation that are directly related to the designated functional limitations.
- A rationale, explaining why each recommendation for accommodation is appropriate, should be given.