

HARFORD COMMUNITY COLLEGE GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTATION OF LEARNING DISABILITIES

A requirement for students receiving services from Harford Community College's Disability and Student Intervention Services (DSIS) is to submit documentation about their disability. In order to be able to determine eligibility and what, if any accommodations are warranted, specific documentation or additional documentation is needed.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with disabilities are protected from discrimination and may be entitled to reasonable accommodations. To establish that an individual is covered under the law, documentation must indicate that a specific disability exists and that the identified disability limits one or more major life activities (e.g. learning). *A diagnosis of a disorder in and of itself does not automatically qualify an individual for accommodations.* The documentation must also support the request for accommodations and explain how the disability impacts learning.

The guidelines below will assist student/parent/caregiver obtain specific evaluation reports of Learning Disabilities, or seek evaluation to determine Learning Disabilities. Please follow them carefully.

REQUIREMENTS FOR DOCUMENTATION OF LEARNING DISABILITIES

- 1) The evaluation must be performed by a professional who is certified or licensed in the area of adults with learning disabilities (e.g., School Psychologist, Educational Diagnostician or Psychologist). In addition, the report must be printed on professional stationery and a signature from the professional must be included at the end of the documentation. *It is NOT appropriate for professionals to evaluate members of their family or others with whom they have personal or business relationships.*
- 2) Information from diagnostic interview: history of presenting symptoms, developmental history, family history, psychosocial history, academic history, prior psycho-educational or neuropsychological test reports and history of academic adjustments.
- 3) Testing Criteria:
 - a. Individuals must be tested with appropriately normed diagnostic instruments.
 - b. Evaluation of intelligence (IQ) must contain the full battery or series of tests. Example of acceptable instruments in current versions: Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, Stanford-Binet, Kaufmann Intelligence Scales.
 - c. Academic Achievement and Cognitive Processing tests are required. Examples of acceptable achievement tests: Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery, Tests of Achievement and Cognitive Functioning; The Wechsler Individual Achievement Test, Wechsler Memory Scales.
 - d. Test results must be stated in percentile and standard score form.
 - e. Record behavioral observations that took place during the testing process.

- 4) Write a narrative of test results. Please state specific cognitive processing strengths, weaknesses, and deficits. Please discuss the following processing areas:
 - a. Visual spatial abilities
 - b. Memory (auditory and visual; short-term and long-term)
 - c. Fine motor/dexterity (speed/sequence of motor patterns)
 - d. Executive functions (verbal and nonverbal reasoning)
 - e. Selective attention/perception (auditory and visual)
 - f. A well-written interpretative summary based on a comprehensive evaluative process is required.
- 5) If oral language skills are assessed, please discuss formal instruments or informal analysis of language sample used.
- 6) Social-emotional assessment is required in order to rule out a primary emotional basis for learning difficulties. Social-emotional status should be assessed and discussed. Formal assessment instruments and/or clinical interview are appropriate. If applicable, a mental health diagnosis should be clearly stated.
- 7) Conclusion – includes a brief summary of test results, background history and test observations. This section must also include an eligibility statement using clear definitive language. The statement that identifies a specific learning disability either meets DSM-V criteria of federal special education standards. The conclusion should clearly explain how the condition causes significant impairment in one or more major life activity. It should also include a detailed explanation of how the disorder limits the student’s functioning in an educational setting for learning or taking tests. This information is important for Harford Community College to fully evaluate the necessity for any of the following: academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, and/or auxiliary services.
- 8) The recommendation section should include recommendations for accommodations in an educational setting (e.g., extended time because of focusing difficulties, etc.) and indicate the reason these accommodations are warranted if the current treatments are successful. It is helpful if accommodations and strategies are logically related to functional limitations. If connections are not obvious, a clear explanation of their relationship would be helpful. Please note: In reviewing the accommodation requested by the student or recommended by an evaluator, the DSIS office may find that the accommodation is not appropriate given the requirements of a course or program. DSIS may propose an alternative accommodation that would be appropriate for the student, but which neither the student nor evaluator has requested.

Documentation can be returned to DSIS office by mail, email or fax to:

Harford Community College
Disability and Student Intervention Services
401 Thomas Run Road
Bel Air, Maryland 21015
Attn: _____
Fax: 443.412.2200
Email: disabilitysupport@harford.edu