Guidelines for Documenting a Disability

There are four important areas for proper documentation of a disability:

- Qualifications of the evaluator
- Recency of documentation
- Appropriate clinical documentation to substantiate the learning disability
- Evidence to establish a rationale supporting the need for accommodation(s)

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with learning disabilities are guaranteed certain protections and right to equal access to programs and services. In order to access these rights, the documentation must indicate that the disability *substantially limits* some major life activity, including learning. The following guidelines are provided to assure that LD documentation is appropriate to verify eligibility and to support requests for academic adjustments, accommodations, and auxiliary aids.

Documentation of Learning Disabilities should include:

- A summary of the student's history.
- A clinical summary including a summary of the diagnostic interview.
- Measurements of aptitude, academic achievement, and information processing, including, all scores, scales, percentiles on sub-tests. For example, a measure of fluid reasoning is of potential value where mathematics related impairment or dyscalculia is indicated.
    - **Aptitude Tests:** The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised (WAIS-R) with all subtests scores is preferable. The Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery Revised Test of Cognitive Ability is acceptable.
    - **Achievement Tests:** Current levels of functioning in all area in which accommodations are requested are required. Acceptable instruments include Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery Revised: Tests of Achievement: Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK): or specific achievement tests such as the Tests of Written Language-3 ITOWL), Woodcock-Johnson Reading Mastery Tests Revised, or the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test. (Neither the Wide Range Achievement Tests Revised nor the Slingerland High School Screening Test is acceptable.
    - **Information Processing:** Specific areas of information processing (e.g. short and long term memory, sequential memory, auditory and visual processing / perception speed) must be assured. Use of subtests from the WAIS-R or the WJ-R Tests of Cognitive Ability is acceptable.

These guidelines are not intended to be an exhaustive list or to restrict assessment in other pertinent and helpful areas such as vocational interest, aptitudes, and learning styles. However any tests results used must meet the criteria below.

- Be reasonably current (assessment done in late high school or as an adult, or following any additional injury or therapy; that is relevant to the impairment).
- A statistical analysis of specific discrepancies if any, identifying how expected performance level was calculated and how actual achievement has been contrasted with expected.
- Test score, sub-scores and normal measure intra-individual patterns and intra-individual discrepancies if any.
- Be technically sound, reliable, and valid for the adult population and document the nature and severity of learning disabilities, if any.
- The name and signature of the qualified professional (licensed psychologist, psychiatrist,etc.) who administered the test battery, and the name of the professional who prepared the report if different must be included. A brief summary of the psychologist's or psychiatrist's background and expertise in assessing learning disabilities should be attached (or put on file with the Academic Success Center, Office of Students with Disabilities).

All psycho-educational assessment reports will be kept confidential in the Academic Success Center in compliance with the Family Rights and Privacy Act, and the professional and ethical standards of the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD).

The Academic Success Center has available the Guidelines for Documentation of a Learning Disability in Adolescents and Adults published by the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD). Psychologists and other qualified professionals preparing psycho-educational assessment reports for our students are urged to obtain and follow those guidelines.

Documentation of Eligibility for Services for Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder

To receive reasonable and appropriate services, students must present documentation of their disability and current functional limitations. In most cases of ADHD, this means a diagnosis by a neurologist, psychiatrist, licensed clinical or educational psychologist or a combination of such professionals with expertise in the diagnosis of attention deficit

disorder adults. The documentation must be on letterhead stationary of the clinician and include the following:

- Clear statement of the DSM-IV diagnosis (DSM-IV classification and subtype)
- Date of diagnosis and date student last seen for treatment or evaluation.
- Procedures and instruments used to make the diagnosis (e.g., clinical interview, behavior rating scales, neuropsychological or psycho educational testing)
- Interpretive summary of evaluation results, including all standardized scores that are available. The information derived from the instruments or procedures used to reach the conclusion that the student meets criteria for ADHD is required. A mere listing of the names of the instruments used to make the diagnosis or a statement from a professional saying a student has ADHD are not sufficient evidence in and of themselves to establish the presence of a disability. We must see documented evidence, including results and test scores whenever possible.
- Past symptoms or evidence of early impairment
- Current symptoms that meet the criteria for diagnosis. (Note that diagnosis based on DSM-IV criteria include six or more symptoms of inattention and / or six or more symptoms of hyperactivity and impulsivity)
- Information related to co-occurring symptoms or how other diagnoses were ruled out
- Currently prescribed medications, including side effects, if any, and the impact of the
- medications on the student's ability to meet the demands of the academic program.
- Ways in which current symptoms of ADHD interfere with academic achievement
- Recommendations for academic accommodations to minimize the impact of disability on the student's academic performance, including the rationale for each recommendation

In additions to the diagnostic report, please attach any information that you feel is relevant to determine appropriate accommodations for this student.

They may obtain a copy of the AHEAD guidelines through the internet at http://www.ahead.org/ldguide.htm evaluator. That will assure maximum usefulness of the assessment report product for the student as the documentation requirements of many universities and testing agencies closely follow these requirements. Following the AHEAD guidelines will also assure the maximum utility for the Academic Success Center, enabling the College to best formulate accommodation recommendations for the student.

The diagnostic report must include specific recommendations for accommodation(s) as well as a detailed explanation of why each accommodation is recommended. If no prior accommodation(s) has been provided, the qualified professional and /or the candidate should include a detailed explanation of why no accommodation(s) was used in the past and why an accommodation(s) is needed at this time. The above is subject to change. For the most up-to-date information contact the ASC.

Location and Hours

The Academic Success Center is located in the center of campus between the Bookstore and the Library.

Monday– Friday, 9am to 6pm

Drop-In and Appointments

Students may drop-in in to the Academic Success Center for assistance at any time during normal hours. However appointments are recommended, especially at the beginning of the semester and during registration.

Judy Wasmann
Tutor/Testing Coordinator; Freshman Class Advisor
1000 El Camino Real
Atherton, CA 94027-4301
650.543.3845
jwasmann@menlo.edu