

ALVIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Student Accessibility Services

Documentation Guidelines

These guidelines will assist you in identifying or obtaining documentation necessary to verify eligibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Students requesting support services through the Student Accessibility Services Office at Alvin Community College are required to submit documentation. Providing documentation does not automatically qualify an individual for academic accommodations.

Appropriate documentation should meet the following guidelines:

- The evaluation should be **typed on letterhead** that includes the place of employment, address, and phone number of the qualified professional that completed the evaluation. It must be dated, and signed by the qualified professional.
- The evaluation must be conducted by a **qualified professional** with comprehensive training and relevant experience in the diagnosis of psychiatric and related disorders. It must include the name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator including information about license, certification and/or area(s) of specialization.
- Qualified professionals may include: psychologists, neuro-psychologists, psychiatrists, and other relevantly trained medical doctors - *The qualified professional(s) completing evaluation must be impartial and not related to person being evaluated.*
- The documentation and identified diagnosis should be **current**. In some cases, it may be necessary to update or obtain a more recent diagnostic evaluation.
- The documentation must address the **severity or current level of functioning** of the individual and areas of academic impact.
- The diagnostic evaluation or verifying letter must identify current **functional limitations and/or academic limitations** and address the need for accommodations in an educational setting.

Information in these guidelines was derived from a variety of sources, including the *Association of Higher Education and Disability* (AHEAD), *Educational Testing Service* (ETS), *the University of North Texas*, and *Collin College*. AHEAD and ETS have developed comprehensive documentation guidelines for use by post-secondary institutions.

3110 Mustang Road Alvin, TX 77511
281-756-5701 (phone) / 281-756-5760 (fax)
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Learning Disabilities

Learning Disability documentation must include:

1. **Specific diagnosis** of a Learning Disability (using definitive language) according to diagnostic criteria and specification of presenting symptoms.
2. **Severity of the condition** and/or assessment of the social, occupational, and psychological functioning of the individual.
3. **Current Functional Limitations** or symptoms of a Learning Disability that impact this individual in educational setting / academic environment.

Learning Disability documentation must also include:

- A complete assessment of cognitive ability must include both verbal and nonverbal ability. All subscale/subtest scores should be listed. The documentation must include assessment of information/cognitive processing strengths, weaknesses, deficits (i.e. long/short term, auditory and visual perception/processing, fine motor/dexterity, speed/accuracy, attention).
- Administration of a comprehensive achievement battery measuring current levels of performance in Basic Reading (both sight words and phonetic decoding), Reading Fluency, Reading Comprehension, Math Calculations, Math Reasoning, Written Expression, Oral Expression, and Listening Comprehension.
- Investigate and rule out other factors that may influence the diagnosis such as neurological, medical, substance abuse, educational, linguistic, sensor motor, or cultural factors.

Learning Disability documentation criteria:

Criteria for a learning disability may be met using a 16-point discrepancy model or using a cross battery approach similar to Flanagan, Ortiz, Alfonso (2007). When using a cross battery, there must be a normative deficit (standard score 84 or below) present in at least one area of academic functioning. There must also be a normative deficit in cognitive or processing ability, and an empirical or logical relationship between the area of cognitive deficit and academic deficit must exist. There must be an otherwise normal cognitive profile in the areas not strongly related to the area of academic deficit.

A cross battery must include measures for the following broad strata: Fluid Intelligence (Gf), Crystallized Intelligence (Gc), Short-Term Memory (Gsm), Visual Processing (Gv), Auditory Processing (Ga), Long-Term Retrieval (Glr), and Processing Speed (Gs). Two or more qualitatively different narrow abilities must be included in each broad stratum (G). If two narrow scores are more than one standard deviation apart, another subtest should be administered.

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