

ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
DISABILITY SERVICES OFFICE

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES
Specific Learning Disabilities

RIT has adopted the AHEAD guidelines in assessing students with learning disabilities. In accordance with these guidelines, the following information must be included in reports:

1. Professionals conducting the assessments must be qualified. The name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about license or certification as well as the area of specialization, must be clearly stated in the documentation.
2. Documentation should be recent and validate the need for services based on the student's current level of functioning (it is suggested that the documentation not be older than three (3) years). The evaluation should include a diagnostic interview, assessment of aptitude, academic achievement, information processing and a diagnosis. An IEP or 504 plan without supporting data is insufficient.
3. Evidence of substantial limitation to learning or other major life activity must be provided. Minimally, the domains to be addressed must include the following:
 - **Aptitude** - a complete intellectual assessment with all subtests and standard scores reported.
 - **Academic Achievement** - a comprehensive academic achievement battery is essential with all subtests and standard scores reported for those subtests administered. The battery should include current levels of academic functioning in relevant areas such as reading (decoding and comprehension), mathematics, and oral and written language.
 - **Information Processing** - specific areas of information processing (e.g. short and long term memory, sequential memory, auditory and visual perception/processing, processing speed, executive functioning and motor ability) should be assessed.
4. Individual learning styles, learning differences, academic problems, and test difficulty or anxiety, in and of themselves do not constitute a learning disability. It is important to rule out alternative explanations for problems in learning such as emotional, attentional or motivational problems that may be interfering with learning but do not constitute a learning disability.
5. Standard scores and/or percentiles should be provided for all normed measures. The data should logically reflect a substantial limitation to learning for which the student is requesting the accommodation.
6. A well-written diagnostic summary based on a comprehensive evaluation process is a necessary component of the report. It is essential that professional judgment be utilized in the development of a clinical summary. The clinical summary should include:
 - demonstration of the evaluator's having ruled out explanations for academic problems as a result of poor education, poor motivation and/or study skills, emotional problems, attentional problems and cultural/language differences;
 - indication of how patterns in the student's cognitive ability, achievement and information processing reflect the presence of a learning disability;
 - indication of the substantial limitation to learning or other major life activity presented by the learning disability and the degree to which it impacts the individual in the learning context for which accommodations are being requested;
 - indication as to why specific accommodations are needed and how the effects of the specific disability are accommodated.