



DIVISION OF
STUDENT AFFAIRS
COUNSELING CENTER

Disability Support Service
0106 Shoemaker Building
4281 Chapel Lane
College Park, Maryland 20742
301.314.7682 TEL
301.405.0813 FAX

A Guide to Services for Students with a
Learning Disability

(Revised 8.15.15)

Do I Have a Learning Disability?

A person with a Learning Disability has difficulty taking in, remembering, or expressing information. The learning process is impaired resulting in problems acquiring and/or using listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities.

Most individuals who experience difficulties with learning during their earlier educational years would typically be identified through noted deficits in academic achievement.

The following is a brief description of types of academic learning disabilities:

- **Dyslexia:**
Dyslexia is perhaps the most commonly known learning disability and is primarily used to describe difficulty with processing the code for language and the impact on reading, writing, and spelling.
- **Dysgraphia:**
Dysgraphia involves difficulty with writing. Problems might be seen in the actual motor patterns used in writing. Other characteristics of dysgraphia are difficulties with spelling and the formulation of written composition. Problems with getting thoughts down in writing may be referred to as **written expression disorder**.
- **Dyscalculia:**
Dyscalculia involves difficulty with math skills and impacts math computation. Memory of math facts, concepts of time, money, and musical concepts can also be impacted.
- **Expressive Language Disorder:**
Expressive Language Disorder is a broad category that includes communication disorders in which there are difficulties with verbal, written, or both types of expression.

Information Processing Skills & Associated Difficulties

For adults, additional challenges to academic success might stem from problems with information processing. Our senses constantly provide us with information. Managing all of the information received, and using it effectively to complete a task at hand is called "information processing." Understanding the impact on academic performance may help identify the source of current difficulties.

The following is a brief description of types of difficulties with information processing:

- **Visual Discrimination:**
Visual discrimination is ability to use the sense of sight to notice and compare the features of different items to distinguish one item from another.

Individuals with problems in this area may find it difficult to notice the small differences between some letters and numbers. They may confuse the printed letters b, p, g, and q (or the numbers 6 and 9) because these printed characters have many features in common.

The following is a brief description of types of difficulties with information processing (continued from previous page):

- **Visual Closure:**

Visual closure is the ability to know what an object is when only parts of it are visible.

Individuals with problems in this area may find it difficult to:

- Recognize a picture of a familiar object that is missing some parts.
- Identify a word when a letter is missing.

- **Visual Figure-Ground Discrimination:**

Visual figure-ground discrimination is the ability to separate a shape or printed character from its background.

Individuals with problems in this area may find it difficult to:

- Find the specific bit of information they need from a printed page (or computer screen) filled with words and numbers.

- **Visual Memory:**

There are two kinds of visual memory. Long-term visual memory is the ability to recall something seen a long time ago. Short-term visual memory is the ability to remember something seen very recently. Visual memory often depends upon the nature of the information being processed. For example, most people find it easier to remember what an object looked like four weeks ago if the object is associated with a special event.

Individuals with problems in this area may find it difficult to:

- Remember the spelling of a familiar but irregularly spelled word.
- Use a calculator, typewriter, or computer keyboard with speed and accuracy.

- **Visual Motor Processing:**

Visual motor processing is the kind of thinking needed to use feedback from the eyes to coordinate the movement of other parts of your body. For example, your eyes and hands need to work together to write with a pen or pencil.

Individuals with problems in this area may find it difficult to:

- Write neatly or stay within the margins or on the lines of a page.
- Use scissors or sew.
- Move around without bumping into things.
- Place objects on surfaces so that they are not in danger of falling off.

The following is a brief description of types of difficulties with information processing (continued from previous page):

- **Spatial Relationships:**

Spatial relationships describe how objects are positioned in the space around us. We use our ability to recognize and understand spatial relationships as we interact with our surroundings and also when we look at objects (characters or pictures) printed on paper. The ability to recognize and understand spatial relationships helps us know whether objects are near to us or far away, on our left or right, or over or under other objects.

Individuals with problems in this area may find it difficult to:

- Find their way from one place to another, even in familiar surroundings.
- Write intelligibly. They may place letters, words, and numbers too close together or too far apart.

- **Auditory Memory:**

Like visual memory, there are two kinds of auditory memory. Long-term auditory memory is the ability to recall something heard long ago. Short-term auditory memory is the ability to remember something heard very recently.

Individuals with problems in this area may find it difficult to:

- Remember people's names.
- Memorize and recall telephone numbers.
- Follow multi-step spoken directions.

- **Auditory Figure-Ground Discrimination Memory:**

Auditory figure-ground discrimination is the ability to pick out important sounds from a noisy background. Some disorders of attention are associated with auditory figure-ground discrimination difficulties.

Individuals with problems in this area may find it difficult to:

- Separate meaningful sounds from background noise. For example, you may not be able to easily pick out the words spoken by a teacher standing at the front of the classroom from the sounds made in the next room or traffic outside.
- Stay focused on the auditory information that is needed to successfully complete the task at hand.

- **Auditory Discrimination:**

The ability to notice, compare and distinguish the distinct and separate sounds in words. In order to read efficiently, we have to be able to isolate sounds (distinguish one sound from another), especially those sounds that match letters in the alphabet. Most of us make mistakes from time to time because we fail to isolate sounds correctly. For example, "turn left down the hall" may be mistakenly heard as "turn left at the wall".

Individuals with problems in this area may find it difficult to:

- Understand spoken language, follow directions, and remember details.
- Learn to read.

So Now What?

If you are interested in requesting accommodations for a Learning Disability through the Disability Support Service, you must have documentation that fulfills the criteria set forth on the following page. You should schedule a registration appointment with the counselor who works with students with Learning Disabilities at DSS. Be prepared to spend at least 45 minutes to an hour in that session during which time a discussion about how your learning disability may affect your academic performance will take place. The reasonable and appropriate accommodations for which you are eligible will then be determined and information regarding implementation procedures will be explained.

The most frequently requested accommodation is extended time on exams. DSS provides testing services as well as other accommodations such as note taking support, or other supports that are recommended in your documentation. Information about all of these supports will be provided at your initial meeting. Once your accommodations letter has been completed you will receive validated copies of the letter to share with your professors. The original of the letter will be placed on file at DSS for future use in subsequent semesters. You must obtain newly validated letters from the DSS office each semester in which you plan to request accommodations. Students with Learning Disabilities may also be eligible for priority registration allowing them to schedule sufficient time between classes and/or to schedule classes during times most optimal for learning.

During your registration meeting, referrals for other academic support services available through the University may be discussed with you. Assistance may be sought through campus departmental resources and programs such as the Learning Assistance Service (LAS) or OMSE, the Office for Multi-Ethnic Student Education. In addition, the University Career Center offers advice and guidelines for success in your chosen career. Your counselor will provide you with contact information for resources that are most appropriate for you.

If you have any questions, please contact DSS at 301.314.7682



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Disability Verification for Students with Learning Disabilities

Students wishing to explore the possibility of a disability impacting upon their academic performance must pursue comprehensive evaluation to provide adequate documentation. The following is a detailed description of the required assessment components and report content.

I. Documentation:

Each student has the responsibility to secure appropriate documentation and present a copy to the Disability Support Services Office. DSS adheres to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

- LD evaluation must be current and appropriate given the understanding that the impact on learning may change over time.
- It is in the individual's best interest to submit evaluations that were completed within the last 5 years of registration with DSS. DSS will review existing documentation to determine eligibility requirements.
- The report of the comprehensive evaluation (**Psychoeducational** or **Neuropsychological evaluation**) should reflect the incorporation of a diagnostic interview, assessment of aptitude, academic achievement and information processing, clinical interpretation and diagnoses.

If the documentation acquired does not adequately address the student's current functional impairment or explain how the condition limits a major life activity(s), additional information may be required.

Individual Education Program (IEP) and Prior Academic Adjustments in Secondary Settings

The transition from secondary schools to post-secondary institutions is quite demanding in that the student's responsibilities change. Laws related to providing services to students with disabilities are different. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 Plan **cannot** be substituted for adequate documentation to provide a rationale for academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, and/or services in the post-secondary setting.

- DSS will review existing documentation to determine eligibility requirements.

II. Diagnostic Interview:

An evaluation report should include the summary of a comprehensive diagnostic interview. Learning disabilities commonly manifest during childhood, but is not always formally diagnosed. Relevant information regarding the student's academic history and learning processes in elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education should be investigated. The diagnostic interview may include:

- A description of the problem(s) being presented
- Developmental, medical, psychological, and employment histories
- Relevant family history (including primary language of the home and the student's current level of English fluency)
- A discussion of other diagnosis where indicated.

III. Diagnostician:

The diagnosis of a learning disability should be made by a professional such as a clinical psychologist, administering a comprehensive evaluation to determine diagnosis of a learning disability and its impacts on learning, as well as other psychiatric disorders which might resemble symptoms of learning disabilities. In addition, it is important that the diagnostician be able to screen for other coexisting conditions. **The provider completing the evaluation cannot be a relative of the student, a friend of the student's family, a primary care provider or general practice physician.**

IV. Assessment:

The assessment, and any resulting diagnoses, should be based on a comprehensive evaluation that does not rely on any one test or subtest. Evidence of a substantial limitation on a major life activity must be provided. 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.

IV. Assessment (continued from last page):

- **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.

V. Test Scores:

Standard scores and percentiles should be provided for all normed measures. The data should logically reflect a substantial limitation to learning for which the student is requesting accommodation. The test findings should document both the nature and severity of the learning disability. The particular profile of the student's strengths and weaknesses must be shown to relate to functional limitations that may necessitate accommodations. The tests should be reliable, valid, and standardized for the use with an adolescent/adult population.

VI. Specific Diagnosis:

It is important to rule out alternative explanations for problems in learning such as emotional, or motivational problems that may be interfering with learning, but do not constitute a learning disability. The diagnostician is encouraged to use direct language in the diagnosis and documentation of a learning disability, for example DSM terminology. If the data indicates that a learning disability is not present, then the evaluator should state that conclusion in the report.

VII. Clinical Summary:

A well-written diagnostic summary based on the comprehensive evaluation process is a necessary component of the report. The clinical summary should include:

- Demonstration of the evaluator's having ruled out alternative explanations for academic problems.
- Indication of how patterns in the student's cognitive ability, achievement, and information processing reflect the presence of a learning disability.
- Assessment 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.
- A list of recommended accommodations and justification as to why specific accommodations are needed and how they address the academic needs associated with the specific disability.



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LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICES

Disability Support Service (DSS)

DSS Services:

- Test Accommodations
- Note Taking Services
- Individualized Student Advocacy and Support Services
- Priority Registration
- Assistive Technology
- Digital Books and Materials

Contact DSS:

- Location: 0106 Shoemaker
- Phone: 301.314.7682
- Fax: 301.405.0813
- Website: www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS

Learning Assistance Service (LAS)

LAS Services:

- Tutor Referrals
- Workshops
- Note-taking Skills
- Test Taking Strategies
- Study Skills
- Writing Papers
- Mathematics
- Reading
- Organization
- Time Management

Contact LAS:

- Location: 2202 Shoemaker
- Phone: 301.314.7693
- Website: www.counseling.umd.edu/LAS/

LD SERVICES (continued from previous page)

Counseling Service

Counseling Services:

- Adjustment Difficulties
- Interpersonal Problems
- Career Guidance
- Individual Sessions
- Special Groups

Contact Counseling Service:

- Location: 1st Floor Shoemaker
- Phone: 301.314.7651
- Website: www.counseling.umd.edu

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR DIAGNOSTIC TESTING

Provided by
Disability Support Service
University of Maryland
301.314.7682 / 301.405.0813 Fax

(Updated 8.15)

ON CAMPUS:

University of Maryland Psychology Clinic

2114 Biology-Psychology Building
College Park, MD 20742
Phone: 301.405.4808
Fax: 301.405.0367
marylandclinicalpsychology.tumblr.com/Clinic
Services: Therapy, Diagnostic Consultation, IQ Evaluations, LD Evaluations, ADHD Evaluations

Beth S. Warner, PhD

7303 Hanover Parkway, Suite C
Greenbelt, MD 20770
Phone: 301.442.3593
Fax: T301.441.2511
Services: ADHD Evaluations, Disability Verification, Educational Evaluations, IQ Testing, Learning Disabilities, Neuropsychological Evaluations, Psychological Evaluations, Psycho-educational Evaluations

Applied Counseling & Psychoeducational Services

Mvra Burgee, PhD

932 Hungerford Dr., Suite 5B
Rockville, MD 20850
Phone: 301.933.2374
Fax: 301.253.5859
www.psychoeducationaltests.com
Services: \$200 discount for UMD – must ask for discount when calling. ADHD Evaluations, Disability Verification, Educational Evaluations, IQ Testing, Learning Disabilities, Psycho-educational Evaluations, Psychological Evaluations

Chesapeake ADHD Center of Maryland

Kathleen Nadeau, PhD, Director

8607 Cedar Street
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Phone: 301.562.8448, extension 10
www.chesapeakeadd.com
Services: ADHD Evaluations, Disability Verification, Neuropsychological Evaluations, Psycho-educational Evaluations, Psychological Evaluations, Educational Evaluations, Learning Disabilities

Manny Gerton, PhD

1325 18th St. NW #105
Washington, DC 20036
(near Dupont Circle, Red Line Metro)
Phone: 202-331-9722
Services: Psychoeducational Evaluations

Gallaudet University Mental Health Center

William P. Kachman, Ph.D, NCSP
800 Florida Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002-3695
Phone: 202.651.6080 (TTY/V)
Fax: 202.651.6085
www.gallaudet.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services.html
Services: ADHD Evaluations, Educational Evaluations, IQ Testing, Learning Disabilities, Psycho-educational Evaluations, Psychological Evaluations

Paula Elitov, PhD

6262 Montrose Road
Rockville, MD 20852
Phone: 301.738.7990
Fax: 240.260.0810
www.paulaelitovphd.com
Services: ADHD Evaluations, Disability Verification, Educational Testing, IQ Testing, Learning Disabilities, Literacy Evaluations, Psycho-educational Evaluations, Psychological Evaluations

The Lab School of Washington

4759 Reservoir Rd, NW
Washington DC 20007
Phone: 202.944.3071
Contact: Doug Fagen, PhD, Director of Psychological Services
www.labschool.org/Page/Services/Psychological-Services
Services: Psychoeducational Testing, Diagnostic Services, Career and College Counseling, IQ Testing, Speech and Language Services, Occupational Therapy

James F. McTamney, PhD

Licensed Psychologist

Green Spring Station, Suite 218
2360 W. Joppa Road
Lutherville, MD 21093
Phone: 410.823.4311
Fax: 410.825.7203
www.jamesmctamney.com
Services: ADHD Assessment, Cognitive Strengths and Weaknesses, Executive Functioning

R. Patrick Savage, Jr. Ph.D

& Associates

(1) 6010 Executive Blvd.,
Suite 1030,
North Bethesda, MD 20852
(2) 17101 Thatcher Ct.
Olney, MD 20832
Phone: 301.587.2818; 301.774.0575
Fax: 301.587.6279

www.silverspringpsychology.com

Services: Psychology Evaluations, Neuropsychological Evaluations, Neuropsychoevaluational Evaluations, Psychoeducational Evaluation for ADHD, LD, and Traumatic Brain Injuries, Disability Verification

The Wake-Kendall Group PLLC

5247 Wisconsin Avenue NW Suite 4
Washington, DC 20815
Phone: 202.686.7699

www.wakekendall.com

Services: Neuropsychological Evaluations, Psychoeducational Testing

Kenneth Stefano & Associates

6345 Executive Blvd.
Rockville, MD 20852
Phone: 301.770.7507
Fax: 301.770.3576

www.stefanoassociates.com

Services: Psychoeducational Evaluations, ADHD Evaluations, Cognitive Adaptive Functioning, Consultations, Advocacy

Humanim

Jennifer Schwartz-Mitchell, PhD

Director of Community Mental Health Services 6355
Woodside Court
Columbia, MD 21046
Phone: 410.381.7596
Fax: 410.381.0782

www.humanim.com/cognitive-assessment-center-cog

Services: Learning Disability Evaluations, Educational Evaluations, Psycho-educational Evaluations, Psychological Evaluations, ADHD Evaluations, Behavioral Consultation, Executive Function Coaching

Patrick Brice, PhD – Clinical Psychologist

8405 Piney Branch Road Takoma,
MD 20901
Phone: 301.221.8199
Fax: 202.651.5747

Services: ADHD Evaluations, Psycho-educational Evaluations, Psychological Evaluations, IQ Testing, Learning Disabilities

Loyola Clinical Centers

Belvedere Square
5911 York Road, Ste. 100
Baltimore, MD 21212
Phone: 410.617.1200

www.loyola.edu/clinics

Services: Speech Evaluations, Psychological Evaluations, Educational Evaluations

Spectrum Behavioral Health

(1) 1509 Ritchie Highway, Suite F Arnold,
MD 21012

Fax: 410.757.5184

(2) 49 Old Solomans Island Road, Suite 303
Annapolis, MD 21401

Fax: 410.573.1972

(3) 1662 Village Green, Suite 100
Crofton, MD 21114

Phone: 410.757.2077 (for all locations)

www.spectrum-behavioral.com

Services: ADHD Evaluations, Disability Verification, Educational Evaluations, IQ Testing, Learning Disabilities, Neuropsychological Evaluations, Psycho-educational Evaluations, Psychological Evaluation

The Treatment & Learning Center

2092 Gaither Road, Suite 100
Rockville, MD 20850
Phone: 301.424.5200
Fax: T301.424.8063

www.ttlc.org/psychoeducational_evaluations/

Services: ADHD Evaluations, Disability Verification, Early Childhood Evaluations, Educational Evaluations, IQ Testing, Learning Disabilities, Literacy Evaluations, Psycho-educational Evaluations, Psychological Evaluations, Speech and Language Evaluations

The Stixrud Group

8720 Georgia Avenue, Suite 300
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Phone: 301.565.0534

www.stixrud.com

Services: Limited number of pro bono evaluations based on financial need. Neuropsychological Evaluations, Adult Neuropsychology, Asperger's/High Functioning Autism Evaluations