



## Accommodations and Resource Center (AARC) Documentation Guidelines

### *Specific Learning Disability*

#### **Introduction**

The Accommodations and Resource Center (AARC) at Western University of Health Sciences is committed to providing accommodations and services to qualified students and employees with disabilities in order to eliminate any disadvantages that may occur as a result of an individual's disability. In determining reasonable accommodations, AARC is guided by the federal definition of disability, which describes an individual with a disability as someone who has:

A physical or mental impairment that **substantially** limits one or more major life activities of such individual, a record of such impairment or is regarded as having such an impairment.

Any student or employee may request accommodations from AARC. In order to establish disability status and eligibility for specific accommodations, academic adjustments, ergonomic furniture/equipment and or auxiliary aids/services, AARC requires **current** and **comprehensive** documentation of the student's or employee's impairment(s). Disability documentation is reviewed by the Assistant Director AARC, and the determination of accommodations is made on a case-by-case basis based on the functional limitations of the disability. It is the student's and employee's responsibility to obtain and provide this information. If a student or employee cannot present current and comprehensive documentation, the Assistant Director may refer him/her to a qualified professional for assessment.

Disability documentation is credible evidence from a qualified practitioner that attests to the existence of a disability, the impact of the alleged disability on academic and job performance and related competencies and recommendations for accommodations.

#### **Documentation Guidelines for Specific Learning Disability**

Professionals conducting assessment and rendering diagnosis of specific learning disabilities (SLD) must be qualified. A qualified professional needs to hold a degree in a field related to diagnosis of SLD and have at least one

year of diagnostic experience with adults and late adolescents. Recommended practitioners may include: certified and/or licensed psychologists, learning disabilities specialists, educational therapists, diagnosticians in public schools or colleges and rehabilitations services, and private practitioners with the above characteristics. The diagnostician should be an impartial individual who is not a family member of the student or employee.

The following guidelines are provided to assist the service provider in collaborating with each student or employee to determine appropriate accommodations. Documentation serves as a foundation that legitimizes a student's or employee's request for appropriate accommodations; therefore the following should be included:

1. Testing that is comprehensive, including a measure of both Aptitude and Achievement in the areas of reading, mathematics and written language.
2. Documentation for eligibility should be current; preferably within the last three years; (the age of acceptable documentation is dependent upon the disabling condition, the current status of the student or employee, and the student's or employee's specific request for accommodations).
3. A clear statement that a learning disability is present along with the rationale for this diagnosis (Note: individual "learning deficits," "learning styles" and "learning differences" do not, in or of themselves, constitute a learning disability).
4. A narrative summary, including all scores, which supports the diagnosis.
5. A statement of strengths and needs that will impact the student's or employee's ability to meet the demands of the postsecondary environment.
6. Prior receipt of accommodations does not guarantee receipt of the same accommodations at Western University of Health Sciences.
7. Missing disability documentation information may result in a delay in reviewing a student's or employee's request for accommodations.
8. A statement of the functional impact or limitations of the disability on learning, working or other major life activity and the degree to which it impacts the individual in the learning or working context for which accommodations are being requested.

Further assessment by an appropriate professional may be required if coexisting AD/HD or other disabling conditions are indicated. If a diagnosis is provided by an unlicensed individual, documentation from a licensed professional may be required. The student or employee and the Assistant Director AARC collaborate regarding accommodations.