



Documentation Guidelines for Learning Disabilities and Autism

Lesley University is committed to the full participation of all students in its programs. In addition to this long-standing Lesley philosophy, students with disabilities have specific legal rights. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Amendments Act of 2008 are civil rights laws enacted to protect otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities from discrimination on the basis of their disabilities. The provisions of both laws apply to Lesley. The following is a summary of Lesley's policy and procedures for students with disabilities seeking services under Section 504 and the ADA Amendments Act.

An essential component of both laws is the right of otherwise qualified individuals to reasonable accommodation. Documentation serves as the foundation that explains and legitimizes a student's request for appropriate accommodations in the post-secondary setting.

The process for obtaining reasonable accommodation or support services is an interactive one with the student initiating the process in a meeting with the appropriate disability provider. Self-identification or submission of documentation alone does not activate the process.

An appropriate documentation report provides a Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) diagnosis by a professional qualified to evaluate Learning Disabilities/Autism. Such professionals include:

- educational or clinical psychologists,
- school psychologists,
- neuropsychologists,
- neurologists, or
- psychiatrists, provided that they have experience in the assessment of Learning Disabilities/Autism with adolescents and adults.

The diagnostic paperwork should,

- provide clear and specific evidence that a learning disability exists which impacts a major life activity;
- be substantiated by an array of reliable, valid and standardized tests;
- include a description of the current functional limitations of the disability; and
- be on letterhead which includes the evaluator's name, signature, title, professional credentials, affiliation, and contact information.

Recommendations for accommodations and support services may be included. However, accommodations and Disability Support Services cannot fundamentally alter academic standards or the essential requirements of any course or program of study.

Each semester accommodations are put in letter form by the disability provider in collaboration with the student. The student presents the letters to professors for each course in which accommodations are approved.

An Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan may not constitute sufficient documentation but can be submitted along with a medical or clinical evaluation. If documentation is inadequate in scope or content, next steps will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If a student has diagnoses for both LD/Autism and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), please also read the documentation guidelines for ADD; many of the requirements overlap.

Documentation and questions should be directed to:

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