

How is it determined that a disability "substantially limits one or more major life activities" and requires accommodation?

The law has defined learning as one of the "major life activities." The courts have determined that not every impairment is substantially limiting and that each need for accommodation must be made on a case by case basis with the key factor being the effect of the impairment on the individual's life as determined by assessment using both clinical judgment and objective evidence such as testing, which shows the individual to be significantly impaired when compared to the average person. The assessment should be completed by an appropriately qualified professional and address the current impact of the disability on academic performance along with providing a rationale for all recommended accommodations.

Components of SLD and ADD Documentation

A letter of diagnosis, IEP, or 504 plan is insufficient for obtaining ongoing accommodations for a learning disability or attention deficit disorder. Psycho-educational testing is required to document the current academic impact of specific learning disabilities (SLD) and attention deficit disorders (ADD/ADHD). Testing should be completed by a licensed psychologist or licensed or certified school psychologist.

Necessary Components for both SLD and ADD Evaluations at Florida Tech:

1. Intelligence (Aptitude or Cognitive) Test - predicts level of academic achievement

- WAIS (Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scales)
- SB-IV (Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale - 4th Edition)
- WJ-Cog. (Woodcock-Johnson Cognitive Battery)

2. Achievement Test - measures current academic skills

- WJ-Ach. (Woodcock-Johnson Achievement Battery)
- WIAT (Wechsler Individual Achievement Test)
- SATA (Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults)
- TASK (Stanford Test of Academic Skills)
- Nelson- Denny Reading Skills Test
- Tests of Written Language (TOWL)
- Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests
- Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test

3. Information Processing Tests- identifies specific deficit in memory, auditory, visual, visual-motor, or speed.

- Digit Span or Digit Symbol subtests of WAIS
- Subtests of the Woodcock Johnson - Cognitive Battery
- Wechsler Memory Scale
- Test of Visual - Motor Integration (VMI)
- Bender-Gesalt Test
- Test of Variable Attention (TOVA)

• Additional Assessment Necessary for ADD/ADHD Behavioral Checklist and Interview

- DSM - IV ADD/ADHD Criteria Statement
- MMPI-II
- ADHD Brown Checklist
- ADHD ASRS Symptom checklist