Guidelines for Clinical Documentation of a Specific Learning Disability

The provision of reasonable accommodations for otherwise qualified individuals with diagnoses of specific learning disabilities will be made on a case-by-case basis, and will be based on current impact on academic functioning. Prior diagnosis or a prior history of receiving academic accommodations, does not guarantee the provision of similar accommodations in the absence of additional documentation. The documentation must describe a disabling condition, which is defined by the presence of substantial limitations in one or more major life activities. The following guidelines are provided to ensure documentation not only validates the existence of a learning disability, but establishes the impact of the learning disability on the individual's educational performance, and supports the request for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids.

Learning disability documentation will distinguish a clinically significant impairment from circumstantial causes of symptoms such as stressful life situations, and from a range of behaviors or development normal for adolescents and young adults. Non-specific diagnoses such as test anxiety, difficulty with timed tests, memory or attention problems in test situations, learning differences, and academic problems, in and of themselves, do not constitute disabilities.

Disability Support Services will make the final determination regarding whether accommodations are reasonable and can be provided in the University environment. This determination will be based not only on the data provided in the documentation, but also on Colorado School of Mines criteria for reasonable accommodations.

All information obtained in diagnostic and medical reports will be maintained and used in accordance with applicable confidentiality requirements.

Documentation should be sent to:

Disability Support Services
Colorado School of Mines
W. Lloyd Wright Student Wellness Center
1770 Elm St., Room 209
Golden, CO 80401

Fax: 303-384-2009

Please expect a minimum of two weeks for a review of documentation.
Documentation Requirements:

A Qualified Evaluator Must Conduct the Evaluation:

Professionals qualified to diagnose and recommend accommodations must be trained and experienced in the assessment and diagnosis of specific learning disabilities. The following professionals would generally be considered qualified: certified and/or licensed psychologists, learning disabilities specialists, educational therapists; and diagnosticians in public schools, colleges, and rehabilitation services. (Family members and physician’s assistants do not qualify.)

Name, title, professional credentials of evaluator, and information about licensure and/or specialization are required. All evaluation reports must be typed on letterhead, signed, and dated.

Documentation Must Be Current:

- Since reasonable accommodations are based upon the assessment of the current impact of the learning disability, documentation must be up-to-date. In most cases, that means a diagnostic evaluation must have been completed within the past five years.
- Older documentation should also be included to demonstrate a history of substantial academic impairment.
- If a student underwent full neuro/psychoeducational testing and evaluation as a child, full testing is not expected a second time. However, an update of current symptoms, impact, and other relevant information, as well as the need for recommended accommodations, must accompany original testing and evaluation.

Documentation Must Include the Following Components:

1. Diagnostic Evaluation
   - Diagnostic interview
   - Ability/cognitive testing
   - Academic achievement testing
   - Information processing testing
   - Other testing

2. Evaluation Results
   - Test scores
   - Specific diagnosis
   - Date of first visit to provider(s) and frequency of visits
   - Developmental, medical, educational history, applicable to current limitations
   - History of presenting symptoms and current impact on functioning
   - Explain the possibility of dual diagnoses: co-existing neurological, mood, behavioral, and/or personality disorders that may confound or mimic the diagnosis of ADD or ADHD.
3. **Narrative Summary**

- A clear statement that a learning disability is present along with the rationale for this diagnosis.
- All scores which support the diagnosis.
- A statement of strengths that will impact the student's ability to meet the demands at the postsecondary level.

4. **Recommended Accommodations:**

The recommendation of reasonable accommodations must be appropriate for the postsecondary level and Colorado School of Mines, and must be supported by the diagnosis. If extended test/quiz and/or lab time is recommended, the amount of time must be specified. Rationale must be given for each recommendation.