

SAN DIEGO CITY COLLEGE

disAbility Support Programs & Services

LEARNING DISABILITY TESTING

Frequently Asked Questions
(FAQS)

San Diego City College
Disability Support Programs and Services
A-115, (619) 388-3513

Please read through FAQ's 1-15. After reading, if you would like to move forward to the next step in the learning disability (LD) testing process sign and submit the last page of this document to the DSPS office to verify that you have read and agree to the policies and procedures for LD testing at City College.

What is a learning disability?

The National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities gives the following definition for learning disabilities (1990): Learning disabilities is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the lifespan. Problems in self-regulatory behaviors, social perception, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability. Although learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other disabling conditions (for example, sensory impairment, serious emotional disturbance), or with extrinsic influences (such as cultural differences, insufficient or inappropriate instruction), they are not the result of these conditions or influences.

Refer to the following link for a document pertaining to this definition:

<http://www.ldonline.org/about/partners/njeld/archives>

Is testing at City College required to receive services for a learning disability?

No testing is required for students that provide sufficient documentation of a learning disability. On occasion, these students are recommended for testing to update information regarding current levels of academic achievement, cognitive strengths and weaknesses, etc. This information is helpful in constructing an effective accommodation plan when student records are lacking in detail, or were developed several years ago.

What documentation assists in determining one's eligibility for services based on a learning disability?

If students have a history of a learning disability, they are encouraged to provide copies of the following: (1) Educational records (I.E.P., 504, school psychological reports, etc.), (2) Relevant medical records, (3) Other reports or assessments pertaining to the existence of a learning disability.

What criteria do California Community Colleges use when testing for a learning disability?

One must have average or above average intelligence. There needs to be a significant discrepancy between ability as measured by a test of intelligence and current functioning in reading, math, or written language. The assessment should indicate at least one severe processing problem in areas such as working memory, processing speed, verbal reasoning, perceptual reasoning, or auditory processing. Assessment results are viewed in combination with one's background information. The deficits in achievement cannot be the result of extrinsic influences (i.e., cultural differences, lack of instruction) or other factors that better explain the deficits in achievement. Learning disabilities are presumed to be

due to a central nervous system dysfunction. Therefore, deficits in learning should have occurred throughout the grades.

Why is the Intake Screening questionnaire essential to the determination of a learning disability?

Test results alone are not sufficient for the determination of a learning disability. Student background information is an essential factor. The student, by responding thoroughly to the items in the purple book, helps satisfy the self-report portion of the assessment process.

Is there a fee for testing?

There is no fee for testing. However, students are enrolled in DSPS 040 and receive 0.5 units for their time and effort and the learning strategies taught in completing the assessment process. This results in a small per-unit fee. This expense is dismissed for students receiving assistance through a Board of Governors (BOG) waiver or financial aid.

What tests are administered?

The most frequently used tests are: (1) Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale – Fourth Edition, (2) Wechsler Individual Achievement Test – III, (3) Nelson-Denny Reading Test. Additional tests include the Woodcock-Johnson Test of Cognitive Abilities, Fourth Edition, Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement, Fourth Edition, and Raven Standard Progressive Matrices.

All tests are individually administered by a learning disability specialist or counselor that has completed an approved course of study in the assessment of learning disabilities.

How much time does the evaluation require?

Testing takes approximately four hours. It can be done in two appointments, or in one session. Breaks are taken between tests.

What happens when one fails to keep a testing appointment?

A testing appointment that is not kept, and is not cancelled or rescheduled at least one day prior to the testing session, is a failed appointment. The first failed appointment requires the student meet with the DSPS Coordinator before another testing appointment can be made. A second failed appointment can result in termination of testing.

What happens when one completes testing?

After completion of the assessment, a one hour test interpretation appointment is scheduled. An accommodation plan is developed if one qualifies for services. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to: (1) Extended time for testing, (2) Taking tests in a distraction-reduced setting, (3) Being able to record lectures, (4) Assistance with note taking, (5) Use of the resources in the High Tech Center, (6) Use of alternative media such as audio books, (7) Specialized classes in math, writing, and study skills, (8) Preferential seating, (9) Disability-related counseling and advising, (10) Priority registration.

Will testing tell if I have attention deficit disorder?

This assessment is not sufficient to determine an attention deficit disorder. In addition, that diagnosis is made by a medical doctor, clinical psychologist, or other licensed mental health professional with documented training supporting their ability to make the diagnosis.

Will all my instructors know I have a learning disability?

Information about your disability is confidential. For sharing to occur, even with instructors, the student must sign a release of information. Instructor notification for accommodations is initiated by the student. You do not need to inform instructors in other classes.

Will school records indicate I have a learning disability?

DSPS participation is not shown on your transcript or grade reports. Your name will appear on a list sent to the registrar's office each semester authorizing priority registration, and on a data base that is used to secure funding from the state.

Does my disability status automatically transfer to my next school?

Your next college or university will not know of your disability status unless you sign a release of information and provide contact information indicating where to send your records. Naturally, we cannot guarantee your disability status will meet the criteria established by the next school, but it is highly unlikely there will be a problem.

Can I be tested for a learning disability if I already have disability verification that makes me eligible for DSPS at City College?

Typically, we do not provide learning disability testing to students that are already eligible for DSPS services. This is because the sole purpose of LD testing is to determine eligibility for DSPS services. However, there is an exception to this policy if a referral is made by your DSPS counselor. This referral would be made if you do not have sufficient documentation for a counselor to authorize a particular type of accommodation. Meet with your DSPS counselor to discuss your options.

TO MOVE FORWARD TO THE NEXT STEP IN THE PROCESS, PLEASE COMPLETE THE AGREEMENT ON THE NEXT PAGE AND SUBMIT IT TO THE DSPS RECEPTION STAFF.

Learning Disability Testing Agreement

I have reviewed the Frequently Asked Questions packet (See items 1-15). I want to move forward to the next step in the process for learning disability testing (See item 8), and am aware of the attendance policy (See item 9). I realize I will be enrolled in DSPS 040 (See item 6).

Print Name: _____ CSID#: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Is English your first and only language? _____ Yes _____ No