**DOCUMENTATION INFORMATION: LEARNING DISABILITIES**

The following information is intended to provide information for students who wish to register their diagnosis of a specific Learning Disability (LD) with the DRC:

1. **The evaluator must be a qualified professional with training and experience in the assessment and diagnosis of learning disabilities in adolescents and adults.** Qualified professionals include clinical or educational psychologists, school psychologists, neuropsychologists, and credentialed learning disability specialists. All documentation must be in English, legible, and presented on letterhead, dated, and signed. It must include the professional’s title, professional credentials, and/or license number. The evaluator should be an impartial professional who is not a family member.
2. **A comprehensive assessment and the resulting diagnostic report must have been completed within the past five (5) years and include the following components:**
	* **Comprehensive History**

Documentation must include a comprehensive history of the learning difficulty, including its previous and current manifestation; the impact of the difficulty on academic, occupational, or social functioning. Relevant information on the individual’s medical, developmental, educational, and family history should also be included. Additional sources of information such as school-based records (e.g., IEP, 504 Plan) or other related documents regarding the individual’s history of eligibility for disability services and/or accommodation use in school and/or employment should be integrated into the discussion. When previous assessment results are available, include the date of the diagnosis, duration, and level of severity.

* + **Comprehensive Battery of Cognitive and Achievement Tests with Adult Norms**

In most cases, psychoeducational or neuropsychological testing is useful to determine the degree to which the learning disability currently impacts the individual’s learning and using of academic skills.

Specific academic achievement tests are useful instruments when administered under standardized conditions and when the results are interpreted within the context of other diagnostic information. For example, the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) is not a comprehensive measure of achievement, and therefore should not be used as the sole measure of achievement. An academic achievement battery should include current levels of proficiency in reading (decoding, comprehension, fluency), writing (organization, spelling, fluency,), and math (reasoning, calculation, and fluency).

It is not acceptable to administer only one test or to base a diagnosis on only one of several subtests. The tests used must be reliable, valid, and standardized for use with the appropriate population. Actual test scores, including subtest scores, must be provided and reported as scaled scores, standard scores, and percentiles using adult age-based norms. It is helpful to attach a score summary sheet to the diagnostic report.

* + **Clinical Observations**

The diagnostic report must include relevant direct observations of behavior during the evaluation which formed the basis for the diagnostic impression when combined with standardized instruments.

* + **Interpretive Summary**

Interpretation of test scores is required. Test scores, subtest scores, or test protocol sheets alone are not sufficient. The evaluator must integrate assessment data, background information, clinical observations, and the current context. Discrepancies between test results, previous scores on other standardized tests, and the applicant's history must be addressed.

It is important that the evaluator eliminate alternative explanations, such as emotional or attention problems that may interfere with learning; but which do not, in and of themselves, constitute a learning disorder. The evaluator should rule out, to the extent possible, other potential diagnosis that may alter the expression of the disability, including cross-cultural factors, ESL, lack of educational opportunity, and/or medical conditions that may mimic a learning disorder. Include any relevant information regarding current medication use that may impact the person's ability to learn or perform academically.

* + **Specific Diagnosis/Diagnoses**

At least one specific diagnosis based on the latest edition of the DSM or the ICD must be stated, including the level of severity. Individual "learning styles," "learning differences," "academic problems," and "test anxiety" are not, by themselves, considered to be learning disabilities for which accommodation(s) will be granted. A discussion of dual diagnosis would include alternative or coexisting mood, behavioral, neurological, and/or personality disorders, along with any information regarding current medication use that may impact learning or use of academic skills.

* + **Recommendations for Specific Accommodations**

The individual's disability must be shown to relate to functional limitations that necessitate the recommended accommodation(s). Requests for accommodations must refer to test results and clinical observations that support the need for accommodation. Recommendations for specific accommodations should include a rationale based on the demonstrated impairments directly resulting from the diagnosed condition. If there is no history of prior accommodation(s), an explanation as to why no accommodation was used in the past and why accommodation is needed at this time must be provided.

By definition, accommodations provide an alternative way to accomplish academic requirements and have equal access to course materials and evaluations by eliminating or reducing disability-related barriers. Accommodations should not provide the student with an unfair advantage relative to other students by fundamentally altering program or course requirements or jeopardizing academic integrity. Please note that unlimited time for tests is NOT considered a reasonable accommodation in the postsecondary environment.

Please note that a prior history of accommodation(s) without demonstration of a current need does not, by itself, warrant the provision of a similar accommodation at Cal Poly Pomona.Our office will make the final determination regarding which accommodation(s) are appropriate to the academic environment of Cal Poly Pomona.