

LEARNING AND OTHER COGNITIVE DISORDERS

Documentation Guidelines for Evaluators

For Pearson VUE Test Accommodations

Introduction

Pearson VUE is committed to ensuring access to the test for all individuals with disabilities. Pearson VUE provides reasonable and appropriate accommodations to individuals with documented disabilities who demonstrate a need for accommodations. For example, applicants may request someone to record answers, a separate testing room, or extra testing time.

Purpose of Accommodations

The following technical information is provided for the evaluators who prepare documentation for candidates as part of their request for test accommodations. Candidates requesting test accommodations are asked to share these guidelines with their evaluator so that appropriate documentation can be assembled to support the request for test accommodations.

Requests for test accommodations are inherently individualized and need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Consequently, no single type of accommodation (i.e., extra time) would necessarily be appropriate for all individuals with disabilities. Moreover, simply demonstrating that an individual meets diagnostic criteria for a particular disorder does not mean that the person is automatically entitled to accommodations.

The purpose of accommodations is to provide candidates with an opportunity to have full access to the test. However, accommodations are not a guarantee of improved performance or test completion.

Specific accommodations should be related to the identified *functional limitations* so that the impairment is mitigated by the requested auxiliary aid or adjustment to the testing format. For example, a functional limitation associated with a learning disability might be an impairment in decoding that impacts reading fluency. An appropriate accommodation might be extended exam time (standard time + 25%) to compensate for this functional limitation. It is essential that the documentation provide a clear explanation of the current functional limitation and a rationale for the requested accommodation.

Detailed Documentation Requirements

Candidates who are requesting accommodations based on a diagnosis of a learning disability are generally expected to provide a report of a current, comprehensive psychoeducational or neuropsychological evaluation. The diagnosis of a learning disability and recommended accommodations are to be based on the aggregate of relevant history, test results, and level of current functioning, along with clinical judgment.

Note that meeting diagnostic criteria for a particular disorder does not necessarily mean that the individual will be found to be *disabled* for the purpose of testing accommodations.

The evaluation should:

1. Be performed by a qualified evaluator (see Note #1 below)
2. Be current (<5 years; see Note #2 below)
3. Include objective tests that are designed and normed for use with adults
4. Include objective tests that are the most recent edition and that are scored using the most current normative data

The diagnostic report should:

1. Include identifying information:
 - a. The first page of the report should be printed on the evaluator's letterhead, and should provide relevant identifying information, including the examinee's name, date of birth, the testing dates, age at the time of testing, and grade and school (if applicable).
 - b. The last page of the report should be signed by the evaluator.
2. Include a comprehensive history:
 - a. educational history
 - b. psychosocial history
 - c. relevant medical history
 - d. history of the condition
 - e. history of the *impact* of the condition (not just past use of accommodations)
 - f. summary of *previous* psychoeducational test results (if any)
3. Include relevant behavioral observations during testing
4. Include age-based Standard scores and equivalent percentiles for each test and subtest that was administered.
5. Include information about the current impact of the disorder on academic performance, employment (if relevant), and other daily activities
6. Include information about the candidate's native language (if English is not the candidate's native language, then see Note #3 below).

Specific components of the psychoeducational evaluation that generally should be included:

1. IQ battery (Please refer to the "[Commonly Used Intellectual and Academic Assessments](#)" reference for more information. Appendix-A.)
2. A comprehensive achievement battery (Please refer to the "[Commonly Used Intellectual and Academic Assessments](#)" reference for more information. Appendix-A.)
3. Although not required, we strongly recommend administering timed as well as untimed tests in each academic area.
4. Consideration of alternative explanations for the condition, such as emotional functioning or ESL factors, and evidence that these can be ruled out as contributing to the person's condition
5. A specific diagnosis, generally based on globally recognized standards (e.g., DSM, ICD), and clear evidence that all of the diagnostic criteria have been met
6. Specific recommendations for accommodations that have a basis in objective evidence (see Note #5 below)
7. A specific rationale for each recommended accommodation

Analysis and integration of relevant data: The report should demonstrate:

1. A clear pattern of deficits, not just one or two isolated low test scores
2. Evidence that the evaluator integrated current test results with clinical observations, previous test results (if any), historical evidence, and concurrent evidence, in the process of reaching a diagnostic formulation. Note that if there are large discrepancies between previous test results and current test results, this should be explained.

NOTES:

1. A qualified professional should evaluate the person who is requesting accommodations. An individual is deemed to be qualified to conduct a neuropsychological or psychoeducational evaluation if s/he has had extensive graduate-level training in the area of assessment of learning disabilities with adults. This usually includes formal education and training in the history, nature, identification, and remediation of learning disabilities. The name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator should be clearly stated in the documentation. The evaluator should be prepared, if asked, to provide evidence of comprehensive training and direct experience in the diagnosis and treatment of adults with learning disabilities. Pearson VUE reserves the right to request evidence from an evaluator of their professional qualifications. Note that simply having a particular degree or license does not automatically mean that the evaluator has had sufficient formal training and expertise in learning disabilities. Psychoeducational testing administered by family members, even if otherwise qualified, will not be accepted.

If a graduate-trainee is conducting some or all of the evaluation, for example as part of a university-based assessment practicum, we will consider the results if both the clinician and the faculty supervisor sign the written report. Pearson VUE reserves the right to contact the faculty supervisor and/or the graduate trainee/clinician to inquire about the level of supervision during the assessment.

2. Currency: Because the provision of reasonable accommodations is based on assessment of the *current impact* and *current functional limitations* caused by the applicant's disability, Pearson VUE requires a current report of psychoeducational assessment. The documentation provided should be no older than five (5) years prior to the anticipated test date.

3. *If the test-taker's native language is NOT English:* The following information should be included in the diagnostic report:

- The report specifies when the candidate first learned English
- The report specifies the candidate's current level of proficiency with oral as well as written English
- The report includes a statement that English-as-a-second-language (ESL) factors are not primarily responsible for the person's current academic difficulties
- The report includes information about how the learning disability impacted language development in the person's native language.

4. Examples of specific recommendations for accommodations could include "25% extra time" or "Testing in a separate room". Non-specific recommendations such as "extra time" or "the maximum allowable time" are not acceptable. Note that the purpose of extra time is not to ensure that the candidate finishes the test (many non-disabled test-takers do not finish the exam).

NOTE: In situations where an individual is thought to have two or more disorders, such as a learning disability and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), the diagnostic report should clearly describe the unique impact of each disorder, and Documentation Requirements should be met for each disorder.

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COMMONLY USED INTELLECTUAL AND ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS

for Intellectual, Learning, and Other Cognitive Disorders

Introduction

The following technical information is provided for evaluators who prepare documentation for candidates as part of their request for test accommodations. Candidates who are requesting accommodations based on a diagnosis of an intellectual, learning, or other cognitive disability are generally expected to provide a report of a current, comprehensive psychoeducational or neuropsychological evaluation. Comprehensive evaluations for intellectual, learning, or other cognitive disabilities typically contain current intellectual and academic assessments.

Intellectual and academic assessments conducted as part of an evaluation should be sufficiently comprehensive to depict a clear pattern of deficits. The following is a list of commonly used intellectual and academic assessments in psychoeducational or neuropsychological evaluations. Since the selection of assessments for an evaluation is based upon the presenting issues of the client, this list is not intended to be prescriptive in nature, but a useful reference for selecting intellectual and academic assessments.

Commonly Used Intellectual Assessments

A current, comprehensive measure of intelligence should be included. Abbreviated IQ batteries (e.g., WASI) or IQ screening measures (e.g., K-BIT) presented alone are not sufficiently comprehensive for diagnostic purposes.

Commonly used intellectual assessments include:

- Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scales (RIAS)
- Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales-5th ed. (SB-5)
- Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-IV (WAIS-IV)
- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-IV or V (WISC-IV or WISC-V)

Commonly Used Academic Assessments

Current, comprehensive assessment of a candidate's academic skills should be included. Certain portions of the following test batteries may be used as part of a comprehensive psychoeducational evaluation. Please note that while academic screeners (e.g. Wide Range Achievement Test-4) may be included as part of the academic assessment battery, academic screeners alone are not comprehensive measures of one's academic skills. Although not required, we strongly recommend administering timed as well as untimed tests in each academic area.

Commonly used academic assessments include:

- Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (Level AR)
- Gray Silent Reading Test (GSRT)
- Kaufman Tests of Educational Achievement-3 (KTEA-3)
- Nelson-Denny Reading Test (Forms G or H)
- Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults
- Test of Adolescent & Adult Language-4 (TOAL-4)
- Test of Written Language-4 (TOWL-4)
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test-III (WIAT-III)
- Wide Range Achievement Test-4 (WRAT-4)
- Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-III or IV (WJ-III or WJ-IV)
Tests of Achievement

Commonly Used Subtests/Measures of Academic Achievement

<p>Reading Achievement (untimed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WJ-III / WJ-IV Letter-Word Identification WJ-III / WJ-IV Passage Comprehension WJ-III / WJ-IV Word Attack WIAT-III Word Reading WIAT-III Pseudoword Decoding WIAT-III Reading Comprehension WRAT-4 Reading KTEA-3 Letter & Word Recognition KTEA-3 Reading Comprehension KTEA-3 Nonsense Word Decoding 	<p>Reading Achievement (timed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WJ-IV Word Reading Fluency WJ-IV Sentence Reading Fluency WJ-III Reading Fluency Nelson-Denny Vocabulary Nelson-Denny Comprehension SATA Reading Vocabulary SATA Reading Comprehension Gates-MacGinitie Reading Vocabulary Gates-MacGinitie Reading Comprehension KTEA-3 Word Recognition Fluency KTEA-3 Silent Reading Fluency Gray Silent Reading Quotient
<p>Written Language Achievement (untimed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WJ-III / WJ-IV Writing Samples WJ-III / WJ-IV Editing WIAT-III Sentence Composition WIAT-III Essay Composition TOAL-4 Written Language Composite KTEA-3 Written Expression 	<p>Written Language Achievement (timed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SATA Writing Composition WJ-IV Sentence Writing Fluency WJ-III Writing Fluency TOWL-4 Spontaneous Writing Composite KTEA-3 Writing Fluency
<p>Mathematics Achievement (untimed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WJ-III / WJ-IV Calculation WJ-III / WJ-IV Applied Problems WJ-IV Number Matrices WJ-III Quantitative Concepts WIAT-III Math Problem Solving WIAT-III Numerical Operations KTEA-3 Math Computation KTEA-3 Math Concepts & Applications 	<p>Mathematics Achievement (timed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WJ-IV Math Facts Fluency WJ-III Math Fluency SATA Math Calculation SATA Math Application WRAT-4 Math Computation