

Section 4: Documentation of Disability

4.1 Documentation As Eligibility for Accommodation

Students with disabilities may need reasonable accommodations or auxiliary aids in order to have meaningful access to the programs and services offered here. See Appendix B for suggestions for documentation of specific types of disabilities. General recommendations are below.

Documentation that legitimizes a student's request for accommodation must be no more than 4 years old for learning disabilities, 6 months for mental health disabilities, somewhere in between for physical health disabilities, depending on the situation. It must come from an appropriate professional. Physical disabilities require documentation from a medical doctor, primarily to provide clarification of the severity of the disability and the extent of the student's needs. Mental health disabilities require documentation from psychologists, psychiatrists, or neuropsychologists. Learning disabilities require documentation from psychologists, psychiatrists, neuropsychologists, or learning disabilities specialists. Diagnosticians must be impartial and not a family member of the student.

In general, the following evaluative criteria must be met:

Testing that is comprehensive, including a measure of both aptitude and academic achievement in the areas of reading, mathematics, and written language.

Documentation for eligibility reflecting the current impact the learning disability has on the student's functioning.

A clear statement that a learning disability is present along with the rationale for this diagnosis.

A narrative summary, including all scores (standard and percentile) supporting the diagnosis.

A statement of strengths and needs that will impact the student's ability to meet the demands of the university environment.

A statement of the functional impact or limitations of the disability on learning or other major life activities and the degree to which it impacts the individual in the learning context for which accommodations are being requested. Further assessment by an appropriate professional may be required if coexisting learning disabilities or other disabling conditions are indicated. Using these stated criteria, the student and the Coordinator of Disabilities Services will collaboratively determine appropriate accommodations.

In determining eligibility for services, Elon University will consider documentation based on the following assessment measures.

- a. On WAIS-R (WISC-R) (III), a 15-points or greater discrepancy between verbal and performance. (More than one assessment is necessary.)
- b. Aptitude-achievement discrepancy regression formula.
- c. Aptitude-achievement discrepancy utilizing norm-referenced standardized testing; an overall/verbal/performance IQ score that is at least one standard deviation or greater below the mean with some specific area of academic achievement that is minimally one standard deviation below measured ability level.
- d. Intracognitive subtest variability on the WAIS-R (WISC-R); a range of 10 points either in verbal, performance or full scale. (Blalock)
- e. Lower performance (one standard deviation or greater) on the ACID (arithmetic, coding (digit symbol), information, digit span) cluster of the WAIS-R. (Beckman)
- f. Recategorization hierarchy of the WAIS-R: Spatial > Conceptual > Sequential Acquired knowledge (Bannatyne) (Groth-Marnot, 1997, p. 195-197).

Professional judgment is important, and justification and reasoning for any learning disability that digresses considerably from the standard definitions (see APPENDIX A) will be noted.

Elon observes the evaluation criteria for various disabilities as recommended by AHEAD. These are outlined in Appendix B.

4.2 Confidentiality of Documentation

Disabilities Services maintains disability-related information in confidential files for the benefit of students. The university protects the confidentiality of these materials by insuring limited access. Federal law does not allow for other departments or individuals to keep a copy of such documentation.

Confidential information is shared only on a “need-to-know” basis. Faculty need to know the accommodations that are recommended as appropriate to meet a student’s disability-related needs, but do not need access to all diagnostic information.

Disabilities Services follows guidelines established by federal and state agencies concerning the treatment and release of confidential information. In accordance with those guidelines, information is shared only when:

Students present written authorization for release of information;

Students manifest behavior indicating an intention to harm themselves or others;

Students experience a medical emergency;

Students report or describe physical abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse or exploitation as children or as vulnerable adults within the last three years;

Students report the use of illegal drugs for non-medical purpose;

Also, student files may be released with a court order or subpoena or as otherwise required by law.