



# LEARNING AND OTHER COGNITIVE DISORDERS

## Documentation Guidelines for Evaluators

For GED Testing Service® Test Accommodations (Reasonable Adjustments)

### Introduction

GED Testing Service is committed to ensuring access to the test for all individuals with disabilities. GED Testing Service provides reasonable and appropriate accommodations to individuals with documented disabilities who demonstrate a need for accommodations.

### 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, or even with the same diagnosis or disability. Moreover, simply demonstrating that an individual meets diagnostic criteria for a particular disorder does not mean that the person needs or is automatically entitled to accommodations.

The purpose of accommodations is to ensure that candidates can take the test in an accessible manner. However, accommodations are not a guarantee of improved performance or test completion.

Recommended accommodations should be related to the identified *functional limitations* that the specific candidate experiences due to the diagnosed disability 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 adversely impacts reading fluency. An appropriate accommodation might be extended exam time (standard time + 25%) to compensate for this functional limitation. **In all events, it is essential that the documentation provide a clear explanation of the current functional limitation(s) and a rationale for the requested accommodation.**

### Detailed Documentation Requirements

Candidates who are requesting accommodations based on a diagnosis of a learning or other cognitive disorder are generally expected to provide a report from a current, comprehensive psychoeducational or neuropsychological evaluation. The diagnosis of a learning disability and recommended accommodations should be based on consideration of the examinee's 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 needing or being eligible to receive 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 comprehensive objective tests that are the most recent edition

## 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 intervention efforts and results
  - f. history of the *impact* of the condition
  - g. 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 relevant activities.
6. Include information about the candidate's native language (if English is not the candidate's native language, then see Note #3 below).
7. For a diagnosis of an Intellectual Disability - include assessment information and discussion about the candidate's levels of adaptive behavior.

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

1. A comprehensive IQ test battery (Please refer to the "Commonly Used Intellectual and Academic Assessments" reference for more information, attached as Appendix-A.)
2. A comprehensive academic achievement battery (Please refer to the "Commonly Used Intellectual and Academic Assessments" reference for more information, attached as 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 the diagnostic criteria have been met (e.g., DSM-5 requires limitations relative to age peers rather than within-individual discrepancies for a Learning Disorder diagnosis).
6. Specific recommendations for accommodations that have a basis in objective evidence relating to the candidate's functional limitations.
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 significant 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. In general, 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, and is appropriately credentialed. This usually includes formal education and training in the nature and identification of learning or other cognitive disorders. The name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator should be clearly stated in the documentation. GEDTS reserves the right to request evidence from an evaluator of their professional qualifications. 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, this fact should be noted whenever possible. We will consider the results if both the clinician and the faculty supervisor sign the written report. GEDTS reserves the right to contact the faculty supervisor and/or the graduate trainee/clinician to inquire about the level of supervision during the assessment or in connection with any diagnosis that has been made or accommodations that have been recommended.

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, GEDTS 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:

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

*NOTE: In situations where an individual has 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 guidelines should be addressed for each disorder.*

## APPENDIX-A

# 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 current, comprehensive psychoeducational or neuropsychological evaluation report. 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 individual, this list is not intended to be prescriptive in nature, but a useful reference for selecting intellectual and academic assessments.

*Note: While this reference on commonly used intellectual and academic assessments is provided for your reference, this list does not constitute an endorsement of these assessment tools by GEDTS®.*

## 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-5<sup>th</sup> 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 or 5) 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 or 5 (WRAT-4 or WRAT-5)
- Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-III or IV Tests of Achievement (WJ-III or WJ-IV)

### Commonly Used Subtests/Measures of Academic Achievement

<p><b>Reading Achievement (untimed)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WJ-III / WJ-IV Letter-Word Identification</li> <li>WJ-III / WJ-IV Passage Comprehension</li> <li>WJ-III / WJ-IV Word Attack</li> <li>WIAT-III Word Reading</li> <li>WIAT-III Pseudoword Decoding</li> <li>WIAT-III Reading Comprehension</li> <li>WRAT-4/WRAT-5 Reading</li> <li>KTEA-3 Letter &amp; Word Recognition</li> <li>KTEA-3 Reading Comprehension</li> <li>KTEA-3 Nonsense Word Decoding</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reading Achievement (timed)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WJ-IV Word Reading Fluency</li> <li>WJ-IV Sentence Reading Fluency</li> <li>WJ-III Reading Fluency</li> <li>Nelson-Denny Vocabulary</li> <li>Nelson-Denny Comprehension</li> <li>SATA Reading Vocabulary</li> <li>SATA Reading Comprehension</li> <li>Gates-MacGinitie Reading Vocabulary</li> <li>Gates-MacGinitie Reading Comprehension</li> <li>KTEA-3 Word Recognition Fluency</li> <li>KTEA-3 Silent Reading Fluency</li> <li>Gray Silent Reading Quotient</li> </ul>
<p><b>Written Language Achievement (untimed)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WJ-III / WJ-IV Writing Samples</li> <li>WJ-III / WJ-IV Editing</li> <li>WIAT-III Sentence Composition</li> <li>WIAT-III Essay Composition</li> <li>TOAL-4 Written Language Composite</li> <li>KTEA-3 Written Expression</li> </ul>	<p><b>Written Language Achievement (timed)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SATA Writing Composition</li> <li>WJ-IV Sentence Writing Fluency</li> <li>WJ-III Writing Fluency</li> <li>TOWL-4 Spontaneous Writing Composite</li> <li>KTEA-3 Writing Fluency</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mathematics Achievement (untimed)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WJ-III / WJ-IV Calculation</li> <li>WJ-III / WJ-IV Applied Problems</li> <li>WJ-IV Number Matrices</li> <li>WJ-III Quantitative Concepts</li> <li>WIAT-III Math Problem Solving</li> <li>WIAT-III Numerical Operations</li> <li>KTEA-3 Math Computation</li> <li>KTEA-3 Math Concepts &amp; Applications</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mathematics Achievement (timed)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WJ-IV Math Facts Fluency</li> <li>WJ-III Math Fluency</li> <li>SATA Math Calculation</li> <li>SATA Math Application</li> <li>WRAT-4/WRAT-5 Math Computation</li> </ul>