



SIAST GUIDELINES FOR THE ASSESSMENT AND IDENTIFICATION OF ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

TO THE PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL PRACTITIONER:

The SIAST Education Equity Program is designed to increase enrolment and graduation rates of designated groups, one of which are individuals with disabilities. SIAST adopts the Human Rights definition of disability, which includes those with learning disabilities.

To be eligible for the benefits of Education Equity including designated seating and reasonable accommodations in the program, documentation verifying the permanent disability is required.

Definition of Disability, Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, Section 2 (d.1)

Definition of a disability.

(d.1) "disability" means:

(i) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes:

- (A) epilepsy;
- (B) any degree of paralysis;
- (C) amputation;
- (D) lack of physical co-ordination;
- (E) blindness or visual impediment;
- (F) deafness or hearing impediment;
- (G) muteness or speech impediment; or
- (H) physical reliance on a service animal, wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device; or

(ii) any of:

- (A) an intellectual disability or impairment;
- (B) a learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in the comprehension or use of symbols or spoken language; or
- (C) a mental disorder

(Section 2(l) d.1), *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*)

"Learning Disability" means:

- (i) a neurological dysfunction which interferes with information processing. It affects the way information is taken in, retained and/or expressed. Individuals experience difficulty in listening, reading, writing, spelling, reasoning and/or

mathematical abilities to such an extent that conventional instruction methods are not always successful.

“Mental Disability” means:

- (i) a disorder of thought, perception, feelings or behaviour that impairs a person’s:
 - a. judgment;
 - b. capacity to recognize reality;
 - c. ability to associate with others; or
 - d. ability to meet the ordinary demands of life

Right to education:

- 13(1) Every person and every class of persons shall enjoy the right to education in any school, college, university or other institution or place of learning, vocational training or apprenticeship without discrimination on the basis of a prohibited ground other than age.

(Section 13(1), *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*)

Guidelines for Preparing a Report of Assessment Findings

The assessment documentation should follow professional standards as indicated in the publications:

- *Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada* (1993)
- *Guidelines for Professional Practice for School Psychologists in Canada* (Canadian Psychological Association, 2006)
- *Guidelines for the Practice of Professional Psychology in Schools Within Saskatchewan* (2008), and
- *Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists* (Canadian Psychological Association, 2000).

The assessment must identify the learning disability as the primary disabling condition even in the cases of multiple-involvement with other secondary factors. Again, those with measured global ability/intelligence below the average range in the borderline range are considered eligible on an equal basis with those with learning disabilities. In this case qualification is due to indications of intellectual disability. Individuals assessed to have a global intellectual ability which falls within the borderline range as measured by a standardized intelligence test are viewed as qualifying for accommodation based on an intellectual disability.

Supporting Documentation

- A clear diagnostic statement (e.g. DSM-IV) of the learning and/or intellectual disability is provided by a Registered Psychologist with APE (Authorized Practice Endorsement) designation.
- Vision and hearing problems, health problems and/or lack of adequate consistent educational opportunities as the primary cause of academic problems are ruled out.
- For a diagnosis of learning disability, the information in the report confirms the individual has average or above average general ability or intelligence.
- Includes clinical judgements based on a pattern of observed and reported behaviour or "soft signs".
- Demonstrates relationship between cognitive abilities and lack of academic performance or underachievement,
- Is sensitive to cultural and economic groups and to educational history. Assessment tools reflect the degree of linguistic demand and cultural loading.

- Provides a summary of the applicant's educational and personal history including medical and developmental history.
- Uses current assessment instruments. Qualified Practitioners are responsible for selecting appropriate instruments with high reliability and validity. Abilities assessed include spatial-perceptual ability, memory, attention, processing speed, auditory processing, reasoning, oral language, background knowledge and general cognitive abilities, as well as reading, writing, and math achievement.
- Includes the criteria the psychologist uses to identify/diagnose the learning disability.
- Provides recommendations for accommodations in classroom instruction, exams/assignments, and program load based on current test results described in the report, and professional judgement.
- Recommendations made for educational interventions are based upon specifically-described psychometric findings. Recommendations verified by assessment data allow SIAST to implement accommodations and support funding requests (e.g. scribe recommended due to below average writing skills). Not all students with learning disabilities require the same accommodations, nor every accommodation listed in Appendix A. A thorough assessment of the student's functioning and ability should include psychometric evidence to support the educational accommodations requested by the psychologist.

It is incumbent upon the practitioner to include information regarding levels of confidence, standard scaled scores (and ranges), percentile ranks and/or copies of computer scoring. When drawing conclusions and recommendations, it is useful to indicate the degree of "fit" between demonstrated verbal-conceptual reasoning and visual-spatial aptitude and the career choices being formulated by the applicant/student. When in doubt, please contact the SIAST Disabilities Counsellor at the Campus for further information. Some practitioners include portions of vocational assessment results in a report. Eligibility for selection for a SIAST program is based on meeting regular or special admission requirements, not on reported assessment results. However, diligent assessment assists in making informed vocational choices through counselling, assessment and research, prior to application. Applicant/students may involve the practitioner, educators and SIAST counselling staff in order to make an informed vocational choice.

If the practitioner has any questions about preparing a psycho-educational assessment for an in-school pupil, or a referred client, please contact one of the following Disability Counsellors at the following campuses: Kelsey (306) 659-4050, Palliser (306) 691-8309, Wascana (306) 775-7417, and Woodland (306) 765-1573.

Reasonable Accommodations (Reasonable Accommodation Policy G 3.5)

At SIAST it is understood that sometimes services must be provided to students in a variety of ways to achieve the equity goals of fair representation. Therefore, in the case of qualified students with learning disabilities, a variety of accommodations may be required in a number of areas.

- A. Classroom/instruction:
Refer to Appendix A for reasonable accommodations.
- B. Assignments and Exams:
Fair evaluation means all students will demonstrate achievement of the same learning objectives but not in the same way.
- C. Program Load:
Many adult students with learning or intellectual disabilities are more successful in post-secondary programs with a reduced course load. Research and experience have

shown that a 1/2 to 2/3 load is most effective. This allows extra time for studies and for regular appointments with tutors. For students who apply for Saskatchewan/Canada student loans, 40% or more is considered a full-time course load and 20% - 39% is considered a part-time course load, if a documented disability is identified.

Funding Opportunities for Students with Learning Disabilities

Qualified applicants with learning disabilities may be entitled to special provisions for educational loans, sponsorship and grants from funding agencies such as Student Financial Assistance (Loans), Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities (EAPD), and other funding sponsors. Documented assessment and diagnosis are required to access these provisions. The Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Persons with Permanent Disabilities and the Saskatchewan Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Persons with Permanent Disabilities and Canada Student Grant for Persons with Permanent Disabilities, for those who are eligible for a student loan will cover special learning support costs (e.g., tutoring, etc.). See current Student Loans Handbook. EAPD may cover these costs for students with learning disabilities who have unmet needs which have not been covered by the Grants or who are ineligible for student loans. To be eligible for the Canada Student Grant for Persons with Permanent Disabilities, an applicant must identify a disability and provide documentation prior to negotiating a Student Loan (Schedule 1).

Education Equity and the Applicant with Learning Disabilities

It is recommended that the applicant provide the campus with an assessment report during the application period. The report must include a definitive diagnostic statement of the learning or intellectual disability and evidence-based recommendations. The report needs to be current. If the applicant is a high school student, the assessment should be completed during the grade 11 or grade 12 year. If the applicant has been out of high school for some time, the report should be completed as an adult and dated within five years prior to the current SIAST application. Please contact a SIAST campus Counselling Office for further information regarding this requirement.

When assessment results indicate borderline or below average intelligence, an intellectual disability is recognized. An applicant/student who is "otherwise qualified", that is, meets specific program entrance requirements and has borderline ability, is eligible for reasonable accommodations associated with the Reasonable Accommodation Policy (G 3.5).

To be eligible for the benefits of Education Equity, which includes reserved seating, educational accommodations and possible funding, the applicant must:

- Meet SIAST regular or special admission entrance requirements of the specific program, and
- Self-identify on the SIAST application form as having a permanent disability.
- Provide documentation of a permanent disability.

Note: Faxing assessment documents is not recommended.

Disclaimer: SIAST works collaboratively with other professionals. Comprehensive documentation will assist SIAST in accommodating students in a timely manner.

Developed by SIAST Student Development

References

- American Psychiatric Association, (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th Edition). DSM-IV-TR. Washington, DC: APA.
- Canadian Association of School Psychologists, (1993). *Standards for Practice in School Psychology*.
- Canadian Counselling Association. (1996). *Code of Ethics*. **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**
- Canadian Psychological Association. (2006). *Guidelines for professional practice for school psychologists in Canada*. Ottawa, ON: Author
- Canadian Psychological Association. (2001). *Companion manual to the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists (3rd ed.)*. Ottawa, ON: Author
- Flanagan, Dawn P., Ortiz, Samuel O., Alfonso, Vincent C., & Mascolo, Jennifer T., (2006). *The achievement test desk reference - A guide to learning disability Identification*. (2nd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Flanagan, D., Keiser, S., Bernier, J., Ortiz, S., (2003). *Diagnosis of Learning Disability in Adulthood*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Fletcher, J., Reid Lyon, G., Fuchs, L., Barnes, M., (2008). *Learning Disabilities from Identification to Intervention*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Joint Advisory Committee, (1993). *Principles for fair student assessment practices for education in Canada*, Rogers, W.T. Chair of the Working Group, Centre for Research in Applied Measurement and Evaluation, 3 -104 Education Building North, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2G5.
- Kaufman, A., (2002). *Assessing adolescent and adult intelligence*, Needham, Massachusetts: Allyn & Bacon.
- Saskatchewan College of Psychologists. (2010). Professional Practice Guidelines. www.skcp.ca
- Saskatchewan Learning. (2002). *Children's services policy framework*. Regina, SK: Author.
- Saskatchewan Learning. (2001). *Creating opportunities for students with intellectual or multiple disabilities*. Regina, SK: Author
- Saskatchewan Learning, *Teaching students with reading difficulties and disabilities: A guide for educators*. (2004).
http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/branches/curr/special_ed/docs/teachreaddiffanddis.pdf
- Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, (2008). *Guidelines for the practice of professional psychology in schools within Saskatchewan*. Regina, SK: Author
- Sattler, J. (2001). *Assessment of Children-Cognitive Applications (4th ed.)* San Diego, CA: Author
- SIASST (2009). Governance – Legal Requirements - Reasonable Accommodation Policy G 3.5. www.siasst.sk.ca

CONFIDENTIAL

Appendix A
SIAST _____ CAMPUS DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION PLAN

To be completed by SIAST Disability Counsellor only

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____
Student # _____ Equity Status _____ Academic Year: _____
Program: _____ Program Head: _____

Classroom/Instruction Requirements:

- Note Takers (peer)
- Taped Lectures with permission
- ASL Signing Interpreter
- Preferred Seating
- Advance Course Outlines, Lecture Notes
- Assistive Technology: _____
- Alternate Format for Learning Materials (i.e. large print, copies of PPT) _____
- Photocopy Funds
- Calculator
- Lap Top
- Practicum Requirements: _____

Exam & Evaluation Modifications:

- Extended Exam Time (1.5x or 2x)
- Lap Top
- Exams with computers
- Invigilator
- Other: _____
- Exam Scribe
- Quiet Setting
- Formula Sheet
- Interprovincial Exams (ATC) over 2-3 sessions
- Exam Reader
- Private Room
- Calculator
- Part-time, Cont. Ed. _____%
- Monitor for adjustment as needed
- Course Load: _____
- Full-time 100 % _____
- Extended time in core program _____%
- Reduced load (Recommend Percentage): _____

Learning Services:

- Content Tutoring (_____-hrs/week).
- Exam Taking Strategies
- Note Taking Skills
- APA/MLA Style
- Other: _____
- General Tutoring
- Study Skills
- Reading Skills
- Kurzweil Tutorial
- Writing Skills
- Time Management
- Math Basic Skills

Physical Access Information:

- Access to Buildings
- Access to Work/Lab Station
- Close Access to Washroom
- Access to Classrooms
- Ergonomic chair
- Handicap Parking

Other Comments:

Authorized by SIAST Disability Counsellor: _____
Name Date

I understand this information will be shared with the program to facilitate student success.
Accepted by student named above _____
Student Name Date

cc: Program Head, Learning Services, Assigned Tutor