

Guidelines for Documentation of Cognitive Impairments

The following guidelines are intended to assist you (and your evaluator) in completing your request for accommodations on the LSAT®. If you are seeking additional test time on the LSAT because of a cognitive impairment, such as, but not limited to, a specific learning disorder, a processing deficiency, an attention deficit disorder, or a physical, medical, neurological, or psychological disorder that affects your cognitive abilities, you must submit a comprehensive psychoeducational or neuropsychological assessment report. This assessment must comply with the following requirements and demonstrate the impact of your impairment on your ability to perform on the LSAT under standard time conditions. Following these guidelines will expedite the processing of your request and avoid delays caused by LSAC's need to request missing information.

It is important that you and your evaluator understand that the diagnosis and documentation of an impairment does not entitle you to accommodation(s). Rather, the impact of your impairment on a major life activity that affects your ability to take the LSAT under standard conditions must be appropriately documented so that reasonable accommodations can be determined. Please note if you are currently taking medication, you should consider being tested while on your medication. Any deviation from this practice must be explained by your evaluator.

1. Your testing and assessment must be conducted by a qualified and licensed/certified (where applicable) evaluator.

The diagnostician/evaluator must have comprehensive training and direct experience in working with adult populations. Diagnosticians/evaluators should describe their academic credentials and qualifications that allow them to diagnose your impairment and recommend accommodations on the LSAT.

2. Accommodations will be based upon an assessment of the current nature and impact of your impairment.

You are, therefore, required to submit a report or documentation of recent testing and a current assessment of the impact of your impairment. This means that testing must include all adult measures and must have been conducted within three years of your request for accommodations on the LSAT. If, however, you were tested as an adult (after the age of 21), testing conducted within the past five years of your request for accommodations on the LSAT may be acceptable. If the documentation you submit is insufficient or outdated, you will be required to obtain current testing and assessment in order to pursue your request for accommodations, and LSAC's decision on your request will be delayed accordingly. LSAC® reserves the right to request more recent documentation if it is warranted by the nature of your disorder.

3. A psychoeducational and/or neuropsychological evaluation.

In cases where a neuropsychological examination is necessary, it is expected that the assessment will be a comprehensive battery of tests administered by someone with clear credentials in the field (such as board certification by a recognized board). Individuals may use fixed or flexible batteries (or a combination of the two) but the evaluations must include consideration of sensory-motor, auditory, attentional, visual-spatial, receptive and expressive language, immediate and delayed memory, achievement, and intelligence. Reports that only include percentiles or scores based on grades will not be accepted and your request will be considered incomplete. All scores generated by each test must be reported in standard score and percentile format based on age.

The testing/assessment must be comprehensive and include a Diagnostic Report. Objective evidence of a substantial limitation in cognition/learning must be provided. This is the heart of the evaluation if you are claiming a cognitive disorder or claiming cognitive impairment due to a secondary attentional or psychiatric disorder. All deviations from these guidelines must be discussed and defended in light of the goals of the evaluation in terms of fair administration of the LSAT. A psychoeducational/neuropsychological evaluation is required of all applicants in this category without exception. The psychoeducational/neuropsychological evaluation for the diagnosis of a cognitive impairment should be submitted on the letterhead of a licensed/certified (where applicable), qualified professional, and it should provide clear and specific evidence that a cognitive impairment does or does not exist. It is not acceptable to administer only one test, nor is it acceptable to base a diagnosis on only one of several subtests or on a test that is not designed for that purpose. All standard scores (and scaled scores) must be reported. Percentiles must also be reported in addition to standard scores for each test. For tests with subtests (such as the WAIS-IV, WJII, or WIAT) the scores from **all subtests** must also be included. Unless noted below, all standard scores and percentiles should be on age-adjusted rather than education-adjusted norms. Domains included in each evaluation **MUST** include the following:

a. A diagnostic interview

The report of assessment must include a comprehensive diagnostic interview that contains relevant background information to support the diagnosis. In addition to the candidate's self-report, the report of assessment should include a description of the presenting problem(s), including DSM-IV-TR symptoms; a developmental history; an academic history, including high school transcript(s), especially in classes related to LSAT performance; behavioral observations and notable trends; a family history, including primary language of the home and current fluency of English (where relevant); a psychosocial history; a medical history, including the presence or absence of a medical basis for the present symptoms; history of prior psychotherapy; a discussion of dual diagnoses, alternative or coexisting mood, behavioral, neurological and/or personality disorders, along with any history of relevant medication and current use that may impact the individual's learning; and exploration of possible alternatives that may mimic a cognitive impairment when, in fact, one is not present. All reports must also include, at a minimum, scores on previous standardized admission tests, such as, but not limited to, the SAT, ACT, GRE, MCAT, and LSAT, with scores broken down by areas (such as verbal, mathematics, reasoning, critical reading, etc.) and with both the standard scores and percentiles reported. In addition, if accommodations have been granted for any of these tests, the exact accommodations granted and used must also be described. For example, if you were



granted extended time, provide a report of the specific time used. This information will expedite the processing of your request considerably and will avoid delays due to requests for more information.

b. Aptitude

A complete aptitude assessment is required with all subtests, scaled, and standard scores. The preferred instrument is the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale—Fourth Edition (WAIS-IV). Earlier versions of the WAIS are not acceptable. In addition to the WAIS-IV, the aptitude area may be further explored by such tests as the Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-III: Tests of Cognitive Abilities (Subtests 1–14), the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales: Fifth Edition, or other tests that have current norms for an adult population. Tests that do not have norms appropriate for the age of the applicant will not be accepted in this or any other category.

c. Achievement

A **comprehensive** achievement battery normed on adults, with all subtest, standard, or scaled scores and percentiles normed by age must be provided. The diagnostic battery needs to include current levels of academic functioning in reading (decoding and comprehension) and written language (spelling and written expression). Acceptable instruments include, but are not limited to, the Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-III: Tests of Achievement (WJ-III) and the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test-III.

In addition, a **timed reading comprehension measure**, which has been normed on adults and which allows for both extended and regular administration, **is required**. At the present time, the reading skills assessed, and the format utilized, by the Nelson-Denny Reading Test (NDRT) form G or H most closely match those measured on the LSAT; therefore, it is the preferred measure. However, the NDRT provides only education-based norms that result in inaccuracies when compared to age-adjusted aptitude measures such as the WAIS-IV. Thus, the NDRT should be scored twice for standard time conditions, using the actual grade level and, for comparison purposes, using the first-semester college norms. In all cases, extended-time testing should also be completed *when all items are not completed under the standard-time administration*, with notation of the actual additional time used to complete the test (not the time allowed). The number of items attempted and completed during the regular and extended periods is also required. If a test other than the NDRT is used, a detailed description of the test and the norming sample should also be included. **It should also be noted that the NDRT cannot serve as a substitute for a comprehensive diagnostic comprehension measure and should not be utilized for that purpose.**

Please be aware that the Wide Range Achievement Test-4 (WRAT-4) is also not a comprehensive measure of achievement and, therefore, is not acceptable if used as the sole measure of achievement. The WJ-III and the WIAT-III do not measure sustained timed reading comprehension.

Writing measures, including timed writing, are necessary only if additional time on the nonscored writing section is requested. Measures of spelling and grammar skills are required only when you wish to use a computer with a spelling and/or grammar check. Inasmuch as math skills are not assessed on the LSAT, mathematics measures may be included but are never required.

d. Information Processing

Specific areas of information processing (e.g., short- and long-term memory, sequential memory, processing speed, executive functioning, motor ability) must be addressed in cases claiming learning disorders, attentional problems, or psychiatric problems that interfere with attention. Since the LSAT is a reading-based test, processing measures that relate to the processing of words and sentences presented visually are most relevant and will be given the greatest weight. Impairment in nonverbal functions must be related to LSAT performance to be given significant weight. Commonly used instruments in this area include, but are not limited to, information from subtests on the WAIS-IV, the Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-III: Tests of Cognitive Ability, Wechsler Memory Scale-III, Halstead-Reitan neuropsychological battery, and the Test of Variables of Attention (TOVA) or the Connors' Continuous Performance Test (CCPT-II). Other instruments also may be used to address these areas. It should be noted that self or other report checklists will not be accepted as the sole basis for attentional disorders nor will diagnosis by history.

e. Personality Testing

Other standard and formal assessment measures (for example, personality or clinical inventories) may be integrated with the above documents to help support a dual diagnosis, or to disentangle the cognitive/learning impairment from coexisting mood, behavioral, neurological, and/or personality disorders. In addition to standardized test batteries, it is also very helpful to include informal observations of the student during the test administration. Nonstandard measures and informal assessment procedures may be helpful to determine performance across a variety of domains. These procedures are supplemental

to the basic evaluation described above and do not replace the need for the objective measures. Personality testing is required for those who claim psychiatric disorders that impact their ability to take the LSAT. It is often most useful to see the results of objective, well-normed tests such as the MMPI-II or MCMI-III along with more projective instruments such as the Rorschach. **As with other tests, all scores must be reported for these tests.**

4. Actual test scores must be provided.

Standard scores and percentiles based on age norms must be provided for all measures. Grade equivalents are not acceptable unless standard scores and/or percentiles are also included.

The particular profile of the individual's strengths and weaknesses must be shown to relate to functional limitations that necessitate the recommended accommodations. The tests used must be reliable, valid, and standardized for use with an adult population. The test findings must document both the nature and severity of the impairment(s). Informal inventories, surveys, and direct observation by a qualified diagnostician may be used **in tandem** with formal tests in order to further develop a diagnosis and recommend accommodations. However, they may not be utilized in lieu of formal diagnostic measures.

5. The report of assessment must include a specific diagnosis.

For example, individual "learning styles," "learning differences," and "academic problems" are not by themselves cognitive impairments for which accommodations will be granted. The specific diagnosis must be supported by test data, academic history, and anecdotal and clinical observations that may include comments about the candidate's level of motivation, study skills, and other noncognitive factors. Discrepancies between test results; previous scores on the SAT, ACT, or LSAT; and a history **MUST** also be addressed to avoid delays caused by requesting additional information. These findings must demonstrate that the candidate's functional limitations are due to the diagnosed impairment(s). It is important that the diagnostician rule out alternative explanations for problems in learning such as emotional or attentional problems that may interfere with learning, but which do not, in and of themselves, constitute a disorder in learning.

6. The report of assessment must recommend specific accommodations.

The diagnostician must include a detailed **explanation** as to why each SPECIFIC recommended accommodation is necessary and a detailed **rationale** for each accommodation requested. Requests for accommodations must reference test results and history, including all prior standardized test data that support the need for the accommodation. Recommendations must not give the candidate an unfair advantage over other candidates but must be designed to give a fair chance for the applicant. Recommendations that are clearly excessive will bring the expertise of the evaluator into question.

LSAC does not provide unlimited time as an accommodation. An inability to complete the test under standard time conditions is not automatically a reason for an accommodation for additional test time; not all standard test takers are able to do this.

Summary Score Sheet

Please Print or Type

Candidate Name: _____ LSAC Account #: _____

Note: This form is being provided for your convenience. Evaluators may also provide an appendix of scores as part of the Comprehensive Assessment report. The following tests are frequently used to demonstrate the impact of an individual's impairment. In order to be considered for additional test time as an accommodation for cognitive impairments, the candidate's documentation must include a psychoeducational assessment report that includes data from both cognitive and achievement measures. The assessment must have been conducted within the last three years (in the case of adults tested after the age of 21, testing within a five-year period may be acceptable); identify an information-processing deficit; and identify an aptitude-achievement discrepancy that meets the appropriate diagnostic criteria. For additional information about these requirements, please refer to the enclosed guidelines.

If other tests were used, please indicate the results of those tests on a separate page or in a separate report.

Cognitive Assessment

Date Cognitive Assessment Completed: _____

Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Fourth Edition (WAIS-IV) _____ Full Scale

SCALED SCORES:

| | | | |
|----------------------------|------------|----------------------------|------------|
| Verbal Comprehension Scale | _____ (SS) | Perceptual Reasoning Scale | _____ (SS) |
| Similarities | _____ | Block Design | _____ |
| Vocabulary | _____ | Matrix Reasoning | _____ |
| Information | _____ | Visual Puzzles | _____ |
| Comprehension | _____ | Picture Completion | _____ |
| | | Figure Weights | _____ |
| Working Memory Scale | _____ (SS) | Processing Speed Scale | _____ (SS) |
| Digit Span | _____ | Symbol Search | _____ |
| Arithmetic | _____ | Coding | _____ |
| Letter-Number Sequencing | _____ | Cancellation | _____ |

Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery III: Cognitive Abilities. Attach full printout from the WJ Compuscore utilizing age norms, standard scores, and percentiles.

Achievement Assessment

Nelson-Denny Reading Test Form: G _____ H _____

| Comprehension: | Raw Score | # items Completed | Scaled Score | Percentile |
|--|-----------|-------------------|--------------|------------|
| Standard Time (current grade) | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Standard Time (1st year College Norms) | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Extended Time | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery III: Tests of Achievement. Attach full printout from the WJ Compuscore utilizing age norms, standard scores, and percentiles (with Discrepancy Profiles).

Weschler Achievement Test III (WIAT-III). Attach full printout from publishing company.

Other Tests Administered

All scores from all tests administered must be provided for the documentation to be considered complete. If they are not included above, they should be attached as an appendix to the Evaluation Report.

I certify that all the information on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature _____

License/Certification Number _____

Date _____