

2006-2007

DIAGNOSTIC EVALUATION REFERRAL PACKET

*[For a diagnostic evaluation at a
NJ Special Needs Regional Center for Learning Disabilities]*

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FORMS

- Service Provider Referral Form (SP1)
- Screening Interview Form (SP2)
- Diagnostic Evaluation Application Cover Sheet (DEA1)
- Student Confidential Self Report (DEA2)
- Acknowledgement of Responsibility and Release of Information Agreement (DEA3)
- Writing Sample Form (DEA4)

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND ELIGIBILITY

The purpose of the Special Needs Grant is to assist in-state college students who are visually impaired, deaf and hard of hearing, or who have learning disabilities. The grant currently provides funding for eight regional centers, five of which specifically focus on students with learning disabilities. One of the priorities for these five regional centers is to provide a limited number of diagnostic evaluations for students outside their institutions.

For colleges and universities to be eligible to use this diagnostic evaluation service, a representative from the institution must have attended a training session held by one of the five regional centers serving students with learning disabilities. Additional training may be required in subsequent years to maintain eligibility.

To be eligible for this service, students must meet the following requirements:

- Student must be currently enrolled in collegiate study at the institution leading to a degree or certificate
- Student is an undergraduate

It is the responsibility of the referring institution to verify a student's eligibility.

II. OVERVIEW OF THE DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS

This Diagnostic Evaluation Referral Packet includes instructions and forms related to referring an undergraduate student for a diagnostic evaluation at one of the NJ Special Needs Regional Centers for Learning Disabilities.

To refer an eligible student (requirements for student eligibility is located on page 1), you must have completed a Regional Center training session. Call one of the Regional Centers if you need the training. Our names, addresses, and telephone numbers are listed in Section IV (page 7).

The Diagnostic Evaluation Process has three distinct components: referral, assessment, and feedback. The following is an overview of the activities that take place during each component.

A. Referral Steps

1. Conduct a screening interview with the student and fill out the *Screening Interview Form* (SP2). Instructions for completing this form and an overview of the process are available in Section II (page 3). A detailed explanation of each interview question is also included.

Upon completion of the interview, if you determine that the referral is appropriate, continue with the referral process.

Ask the student to fill out the three forms comprising the Diagnostic Evaluation Application, and return to you. Specific instructions for completing each of these three forms is located on page 5.

- *Diagnostic Evaluation Application Cover Sheet* (DEA1),
 - *Student Confidential Self Report* (DEA2), and
 - *Acknowledgement of Responsibility and Release of Information Agreement* (DEA3)
2. Under your supervision, have the student provide a sample of his or her writing on the *Writing Sample Form* (DEA4). Instructions for the Writing Sample are located on page 5.
 3. Fill out the *Service Provider Referral Form* (SP1). Instructions for completing this form are located on page 5.
 4. Mail the entire **referral packet** to one of the Regional Centers. Section III contains instructions for mailing the referral packet.

B. Assessment Phase

1. Following receipt, review and acceptance of the referral packet, a diagnostician will phone the student to arrange for testing. A confirmation letter with the date and time of testing will be mailed to the student. A copy of the letter will be sent to the Disability Service Provider at the sending institution.

The student must notify the diagnostician a minimum of 24 hours in advance if s/he cannot keep the appointment and wishes to reschedule. If a student fails to keep the appointment, the student's payment will be used to cover the diagnostician's expenses.

2. The diagnostician will test the student and prepare a report which will include:
 - Cover sheet
 - Reason for referral
 - Background Information
 - Assessment procedures
 - Testing Observations
 - Discussion of Results
 - Summary
 - Conclusion
 - Recommendations
 - Addendum of Test Results

C. Feedback Process

1. Following testing and report preparation, the diagnostician will phone the student to arrange for an Interpretation Session. A confirmation letter with the date and time of the Interpretation Session will be sent to the student. A copy of the letter will be mailed to the Disability Service Provider.
2. If a student fails to appear at the Interpretation Session, the report will be mailed to the student and a copy to the Disability Service Provider. The Interpretation Session will be rescheduled only if the student notifies the diagnostician at least 24 hours in advance to cancel the originally scheduled Interpretation Session.
3. At the Interpretation Session, the diagnostician will give a copy of the report to the student and provide an explanation of the report.
4. A copy of the report will be mailed to the Disability Service Provider. The Disability Service Provider may contact the Regional Center Director if he or she has questions about the report.

III. INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING FORMS

A. Screening Interview Form (SP2)

Conduct a screening interview by asking the student the questions on the *Screening Interview Form (SP2)* and recording the responses in note form on the lines provided. Be sure to include your observations at the end of the form and determine whether or not the student should be referred for a diagnostic evaluation.

If you decide that a diagnostic evaluation is in order and the student is in agreement, proceed with the referral process.

Following is an overview of the screening interview and a detailed explanation of the questions.

1. Overview of the screening interview

When a student comes in for an intake interview, this person is experiencing some type of problem. As much as you can, you need to try to determine just what the problem is and to make some type of recommendation or referral. In order to do this, you will need information. Before the interview, get as much information about the student's academics as possible: grades; major, Basic Skills Test results, etc. Go over these and note what you can.

As you go through the interview process, ask yourself if this is a student with a potential learning disability or some other problem? Could this person have a brain injury, a psychiatric disability, or is s/he simply someone who is an overachiever and is getting poor grades for the first time? Could this person be overwhelmed because s/he is carrying too many credits? You may not automatically refer the student for an evaluation right away. You might refer him or her to tutoring services, for a neuropsychological evaluation (especially for a head injury), or to the counseling office for stress and anxiety management. You might encourage the student to withdraw from a particularly difficult course or to cut down on work hours or to speak to the instructors. Be aware of pre-referral interventions on your campus.

If you decide that the student may be a good candidate for a diagnostic evaluation, it is important that you get a commitment from him or her. Make certain that the student plans to follow through with the testing. Taking the test for learning disabilities is an important decision and sometimes students really are not ready to take this step. You don't want to spend a great deal of time if your feeling is that the student isn't really committed to following through.

2. Explanation of the interview questions

Question 1: How did you find out about our office? What seems to be the problem?

- You want to find out how the student was referred.
- What does the student see as the presenting problem?

Question 2. What are your reasons for coming to college?

- Question 3. Explain your past schooling and any type of assistance or support you received.
- For students who have never been classified, you need to get a school history including elementary, junior and senior high school, and college.
 - Look at several issues - any speech therapy, retention, remedial classes, behavior problems, social problems, failing the HSPT. Was student pleased with academics?
 - Did the student always have school problems or did these begin at a certain time? When? What happened then?
- Question 4. Explain what you think your learning difficulties may be. Discuss learning strengths and weaknesses.
- Have the student describe what s/he sees as some of the specific difficulties s/he is currently having in college.
- Question 5. Discuss your health history. Have there been any major health concerns in your life? Are you taking any medication(s)?
- You are looking for any health information that could be helpful regarding the student's academic difficulties, including hospitalizations and accidents.
 - It is helpful to know if there have been any problems with substance abuse or with psychiatric issues. Has the student been in any counseling?
- Question 6. Are there any pertinent family concerns? Follow-up questions:
- Does anyone else in the family have a learning disability? Discuss.
 - Do you live with your family? What do they say about your learning difficulties? Are they supportive of your academic efforts?
- Question 7. Discuss your job history.
- You want to know if the student can keep a job for awhile or if s/he jumps around to different jobs. Has s/he ever been fired? Why?
 - What work is s/he currently doing and what are the hours? Are these realistic hours for a student? How does the student get along with the boss and co-workers?
- Question 8. What are some changes you think you'd like to make in your life (e.g., academic, personal, vocational)?
- Focus on why the student wants testing. What academic changes does s/he hope to achieve? What might the student be looking for from service providers after the testing?

Observations by interviewer. Be sure to record your observations immediately. Your insight is very helpful in the process.

Refer decision. Record your decision about diagnostic referral at the bottom of the form.

B. Diagnostic Evaluation Application Forms

1. Ask the student to fill out the Diagnostic Evaluation Application, comprised of the following three forms:
 - *Diagnostic Evaluation Application Cover Sheet (DEA1)*,
 - *Student Confidential Self Report (DEA2)*, and
 - *Acknowledgement of Responsibility and Release of Information Agreement (DEA3)*
 2. Be sure that the student has attached copies of previous evaluation reports, if any.
 3. Be sure that the student has attached a check for the appropriate amount made out to the institution where the Regional Center is based.
 4. Staple an unofficial copy of the student's transcript to the back of the application. A copy of the high school transcript would be helpful, especially if the student has just started at the college level.
- C. *Writing Sample Form (DEA4)*
1. Under your supervision, have the student complete a writing sample on the WRITING SAMPLE FORM, following the directions on that sheet, without benefit of any accommodations.
 2. Staple the form to the back of the DIAGNOSTIC EVALUATION APPLICATION.
- D. *Service Provider Referral Form (SP1)*
1. Once you decide to refer the student for a diagnostic assessment, complete a *Service Provider Referral Form (SP1)*.
 - Check the regional center selected for referral
 - Check to indicate that you have verified the student's eligibility
 2. Staple the completed *Screening Interview Form (SP2)* to the back of the *Service Provider Referral Form (SP1)*.

IV. ASSEMBLING THE REFERRAL PACKET

NOTE: Please keep a complete copy of the referral packet for your files.

Assemble the pages of the referral packet in the following order using the checklist below as your guide:

_____	Service Provider Referral Form (SP1)
_____	Screening Interview Form (SP2)
_____	Diagnostic Evaluation Application Cover Sheet (DEA1)
_____	Student Confidential Self Report (DEA2)
_____	Acknowledgement of Responsibility and Release Of Information Agreement (DEA3)
_____	Previous Evaluation Reports (if available)
_____	Unofficial College Transcript
_____	Writing Sample Form (DEA4)
_____	Check

Mail the packet to the Regional Center of your choosing. The Regional Center in your geographical area is recommended. A list of all the regional centers and their mailing addresses is located on page 7 (Section III).

V. NJ SPECIAL NEEDS REGIONAL CENTERS FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES

<p>Ms Sandy Sheard, Asst. Director Project Assist Program Cumberland County College P.O. Box 1500 Vineland, NJ 08362 Phone: (856) 691-8600 x282 Fax: (856) 691-6157 Email: ssheard@cccnj.edu</p>	<p>Counties: Atlantic Camden Cape May Cumberland Gloucester Salem</p>
<p>Mary Farrell, Director Mr. Vincent Varrassi, Teaneck Campus Director Mr. Paul Vico, Madison Campus Director Fairleigh Dickenson University 1000 River Road Teaneck, NJ 07766 Phone: (201) 692-2716 Teaneck Campus (973) 443-8981 Madison Campus Fax: (201) 692-2813 Teaneck Email: farrell@fdu.edu varrassi@fdu.edu vico@fdu.edu</p>	<p>Counties: Bergen Morris Passaic Sussex Warren</p>
<p>Ms. Mary Jane Warshaw, Center Director Central Regional Connections Middlesex Community College 2600 Woodbridge Avenue Edison, NJ 08816 Phone: (732) 906-2507 Fax: (732) 906-7767 Email: mary_jane_warshaw@middlesexcc.edu</p>	<p>Counties: Hunterdon Middlesex Somerset Union</p>
<p>Ms. Jennifer Aitken - Director, Project Mentor New Jersey City University 2039 Kennedy Boulevard Jersey City NJ 07305 Phone: (201) 200-2091 Fax: (201) 200-3083 Email: jaitken@njcu.edu</p>	<p>Counties: Essex Hudson</p>
<p>Ms. Maureen Reustle, Dean of Academic Services <i>(Please mail Referral Packet to Jorene Burke)</i> Project Academic Skills Support Ocean County College P.O. Box 2001 - College Drive Toms River, NJ 09754-2001 Phone: (732) 255-0456 Fax: (732) 255-0458 Email: mreustle@ocean.edu jburke@ocean.edu</p>	<p>Counties: Burlington Mercer Monmouth Ocean</p>