

UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

MODEL FORM GUIDANCE

Specific Learning Disabilities Eligibility – Method C: Alternative Research- Based Method

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to help groups of professionals understand how to document their data on the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) Model Form 5jc: Group Evaluation Summary Report and Prior Written Notice of Eligibility Determination: Specific Learning Disabilities – Method C: Other Alternative Research-Based Method.

In Utah, there are three approved methods for determining eligibility for Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD): 1) Response to Intervention (RtI), 2) Combination of RtI and a discrepancy analysis, 3) An alternative research-based method (e.g., Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses [PSW]). Local education agencies (LEAs) must use the method outlined in their LEA policies and procedures that has been approved by USBE and their local board. In addition to the USBE Special Education Rules (Rules), groups must refer to the USBE SLD Eligibility Guidelines when using any of the three approved methods. The model form aligns with the Rules and the SLD Guidelines but does not replace the requirement for groups to refer to them when making eligibility determinations.



Utah State
Board of
Education

Special
Education
Services

INSTRUCTION INFORMATION FOR EVALUATION

Question 1

Did the group consider data demonstrating that prior to, or as part of, the referral process, the student was provided appropriate instruction in regular education settings, delivered by qualified personnel? (Only required for initial evaluation; use N/A for reevaluation.)

Guidance for Question 1

To mark yes, the group determining eligibility needs to review documentation that shows the student has received appropriate instruction in the regular education setting delivered by qualified personnel. This may include a review of the student's educational history, interviews with parents, observations of teacher instruction, and data collected from the classroom.

Question 2

Did the group consider data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction which was provided to the student's parent(s) or the student who is an adult? (Only required for initial evaluation; use N/A for reevaluation.)

Guidance for Question 2

To mark yes, the group needs to review **a variety of data sources** evaluating the student's academic performance. The most useful data are those comparing the student's performance to state standards, showing how the student measures up to what's expected for the grade level.

This can include district and school-wide screenings, statewide assessments, classroom assessments, and other formative and summative assessments used by the school.

Question 3

Is an observation of the student in the student's learning environment (including the regular classroom setting) documenting the student's academic performance and behavior in the areas of concern attached?

Summary of the relevant behavior, if any, noted during the observation of the student and the relationship of that behavior to the student's academic functioning.

Guidance for Question 3

The student needs to be observed in the regular classroom in the area(s) of concern. For example, if the area of concern is mathematics, the observation needs to occur in the regular education mathematics classroom. The observer also needs to watch the student's behavior and note any relevant behaviors that may impact the student's learning.

Question 4

Are there educationally relevant medical findings? If yes, attach supporting data.

Guidance for Question 4

This portion of the model form is where the group can indicate if there are medical issues that may be relevant to the student's difficulty in making progress in the regular education curriculum. The group can use this information to determine if SLD is the student's primary disability as well as for educational planning purposes.

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES INFORMATION

Question 5

Document data from a variety of sources (e.g., Acadience, RISE, classroom data, common formative assessments, progress monitoring, etc.) in one or more of the following areas. Indicate whether the data show the student does not achieve adequately for the student's age or to meet State-approved grade-level standards when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the student's age or State-approved grade-level standards.

Guidance for Question 5

Question 5a: Area of Concern

SLD can manifest itself in several academic achievement areas. This column lists those areas defined under SLD in the Rules. It is not necessary to document data in each of these areas, only in the area(s) of concern.

Question 5b: Date

List the dates each assessment was administered to the student in each area of concern.

Question 5c: Measurement Tool/Method

List the names of the assessments that were administered to the student in each area of concern. **Document a variety of data sources from the classroom** for each area of concern. This can include district and school-wide screenings,

statewide assessments, classroom assessments, and other formative and summative assessments used by the school. For initial evaluations, this can be the same pre-referral or referral data reviewed in Question 2. This is not the section to document standardized, norm-referenced assessment results (see Question 8).

Question 5d: Results

Document assessment results with clear descriptors to ensure all members, including the parent(s), can understand the data and how they align with grade-level expectations. Low achievement should be apparent across multiple measures in each area of concern.

Question 5e: Do the data show the student does not achieve adequately for the student's age or to meet State-approved grade-level standards?

Mark yes if there is enough data to show the student does not meet State-approved grade level standards in the identified area(s) of concern. Mark no if the data do not indicate the student is not meeting grade-level standards. It is not necessary to mark yes or no for each area listed in column 5a; only the ones where the group has concerns.

Question 6

Are the student's learning problems primarily the result of any of the following external factors? Basis for Decision.

- *A visual, hearing, or motor disability*
- *An intellectual disability*
- *An emotional behavioral disability*
- *Cultural factors*
- *An environmental or economic disadvantage*
- *Limited English Proficiency*

Guidance for Question 6

Students may present with some of the factors. However, the intent of this requirement is to ensure none of these factors are the **primary** cause of the student's learning and academic challenges.

The group needs to discuss each factor, look at the available data, and indicate Yes or No for each factor.

The "Basis for Decision" portion is optional but providing an explanation is recommended to ensure each factor has been thoroughly addressed. Data can include screeners, formal and informal assessments, parent information, classroom observations, etc.

Question 6a

While none of the factors above may be the primary factor in determining eligibility, is there any effect of these factors on the student's achievement level?

Guidance on Question 6a

Although certain factors may not be the primary contributors, they can still influence student achievement. While this question is optional, answering it is recommended, as it provides valuable insight into how these factors impact the student's educational programming during IEP development.

AREAS OF ASSESSMENT FOR ELIGIBILITY

Question 7

The group reviewed data from multiple sources that examine the student's progress over time (historical data) in the area(s) of concern when evidence-based instruction has been provided.

- *Document data reviewed.*

Guidance on Question 7

Review and document multiple data sources from the student's past school records in each area of concern. Check the box and document the data reviewed. This can include parent and teacher interviews, informal assessments, test scores, grades, screenings, benchmark assessments, formative assessments, and summative assessments.

Question 8

Document the student's strengths and weaknesses that are evident in both the classroom and standardized assessment results.

Guidance on Question 8

Question 8a: Area of Assessment

In each area of concern, data must be gathered from current classroom assessments (e.g., formative and summative assessments); standardized, norm-referenced academic achievement assessments; and standardized, norm-referenced cognitive processing assessments.

Question 8b: Measurement Tool/Method

List the name of the assessment used for each area. Multiple assessments should be listed for the classroom assessment area.

Question 8c: Results

Indicate the results of each assessment. This should include results with clear descriptors to ensure all members, including the parent(s), can understand the data. For the cognitive processing data, document the scores from each cognitive domain (fluid reasoning, processing speed, etc.), not just the full-scale IQ score.

Questions 8d1 and 8d2: Strengths and Weaknesses

Determine whether assessment data show a strength or a weakness. This can be indicated with a checkbox, yes/no, or a statement.

Question 9

Using standardized testing, does the student's cognitive profile include a normative weakness?

Guidance on Question 9

Using the data from the cognitive processing assessment, indicate if there is a normative weakness by marking yes or no. Normative means a student's scores are compared to other students' scores. A normative weakness would be a score below the average range according to the test publisher's guidelines.

Question 10

Using standardized testing, does the student's cognitive profile include an intraindividual weakness?

Guidance on Question 10

Using the data from the cognitive processing assessment, indicate if there is an intraindividual weakness by marking yes or no. Intraindividual means a student's own scores are compared to each other to see if there is a statistical difference between the highest and lowest scores.

Question 11

Document the group's consideration of whether the student's cognitive profile includes both a normative and intraindividual weakness that is consistent with academic classroom performance.

Guidance on Question 11

The group must analyze the cognitive processing data and compare them to the academic classroom performance data. The normative and intraindividual weaknesses should align with the areas of weakness in the classroom performance data. This is not a yes or no question, but rather where the group writes out their analysis of the scores and their determination.

Question 12

Using standardized testing, does the student's cognitive profile include a normative strength?

Guidance on Question 12

Using the data from the cognitive processing assessment, indicate if there is a normative strength by marking yes or no. Normative means a student's scores are compared to other students' scores. A normative strength would be a score at or above the average range according to the test publisher's guidelines.

Question 13

Using standardized testing, does the student's cognitive profile include an intraindividual strength?

Guidance on Question 13

Using the data from the cognitive processing assessment, indicate if there is an intraindividual strength by marking yes or no. Intraindividual means the student's own scores are compared to each other to see if there is a statistical difference between the highest and lowest scores.

Question 14

Document the group's consideration of whether the student's cognitive profile includes both a normative and intraindividual strength that is consistent with academic classroom performance:

Guidance on Question 14

The group must analyze the cognitive processing data and compare them to the academic classroom performance data. The normative and intraindividual strengths should align with the areas of strengths in the classroom performance data. This is not a yes or no question, but rather where the group writes out their analysis of the scores and their determination.

Question 15

Using standardized testing, does a relationship between the student's cognitive processing delays and academic deficits exist?

- *Basis for decision:*

Guidance on Question 15

Using research-based methods (e.g., USBE SLD Guidelines), the group must determine if there is a meaningful relationship between the weaknesses identified

in the cognitive processing assessment and the academic deficits found in both the norm-referenced standardized assessments results and the classroom assessment results. The group must indicate if there is a relationship and should write out the data used, the identified relationship, and summarize their findings.

Question 16

Identify how the relationship between the student's cognitive weakness and academic/classroom performance has been evident over time:

Guidance on Question 16

Using the information gathered in Question 15, the group must also compare the current data with historical data to identify how the relationship has been evident over time. The group must write a statement of their findings.

Question 17

Parent Input

Guidance on Question 17

Parents are an integral part of the eligibility determination group. Document information provided by parents regarding the student's strengths and needs, as well as any other information the parents may provide.

PRIOR WRITTEN NOTICE OF SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

Question 18

Using the Alternative Research-Based method, did the group determine if the student meets the criteria for SLD?

Guidance on Question 18

To mark yes, the group determining eligibility must ensure the requirements above (Questions 1–14) have been met. It is not appropriate to determine eligibility based on a single criterion.

Question 19

Did the group determine if the SLD adversely affects the student's educational performance?

Guidance on Question 19

A student can have a disability, but that disability does not always negatively impact the student's educational performance. The group needs to look at data and determine if the disability has a negative impact on the student's ability to progress in the general curriculum.

Question 20

Did the group determine the student requires special education and related services?

Guidance on Question 20

Even if the disability is negatively impacting the student, not all students require special education. Some students can make progress with accommodations or other supports provided in the classroom.

For this requirement, the group needs to determine if the student needs special education services, which require specially designed instruction (SDI). SDI is adapting as appropriate, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction.

To mark yes, the group needs to determine that without SDI, the student would not be able to make sufficient progress in the general curriculum.

Question 21

Did the group determine if the SLD is the student's primary disability?

Guidance on Question 21

The group needs to ensure other disability categories have been considered. A student can meet the requirements of other categories, but for this question, the key word is *primary*, meaning SLD is causing most of the difficulties the student is experiencing in school.

Questions 22 and 23

Did the group determine that a lack of appropriate instruction in reading is not the primary factor in determining eligibility?

Did the group determine that a lack of appropriate instruction in mathematics is not the primary factor in determining eligibility?

Guidance on Questions 22 and 23

Using the data gathered in Questions 1 and 2, the group can address these questions. The focus is on determining the primary issue. Although the student may have experienced some gaps in instruction, the group can assess whether the difficulties stem mainly from the SLD or from insufficient instruction.

Question 24

All the above are "Yes." The group determines the student is eligible for special education and related services under the categorical classification of SLD.

At least one of the above is "No." The group determines the student is not eligible for special education and related services under the categorical classification of SLD.

Guidance on Question 24

Questions 18–23 must all be answered Yes for the student to be found eligible for special education and related services under the SLD category. If any are answered No, the student is not eligible under this category.