



## Guidelines for assessment of specific learning difficulty (SpLD)

In the senior cycle students should be assessed on age appropriate tests as specified by the age range and age limit of each test. Students who are 17 years and above should be assessed using age appropriate tests. The report should be dated no older than three years at the time of applying for a language waiver.

**Background Information:** Referral information; family, developmental and educational history; any relevant medical information and the student's perceptions of his/her challenges. Any previous assessments should be summarised. Where English is spoken as a second or additional language, details of the student's language history and current levels of competence should be included.

**General Level of Intellectual Ability:** Measures of verbal, non-verbal and overall ability should be reported as standard scores or percentile points, age equivalent scores are not acceptable. Descriptive terms and score ranges alone are not sufficient. The FSIQ or GAI or equivalent must be recorded. Profiles of scores should be discussed, with particular reference to any significant discrepancies between verbal and non-verbal ability. An updated or review assessment may be accepted where a full assessment has been conducted within the last three years prior to the DARE application year, i.e. on or after 1 February 2010. This assessment should report FSIQ, GAI or GCA, and should be attached to the application.

**Cognitive Processing:** Where a full assessment of cognitive ability has been obtained, these may have been reported in the previous section. Performance in tests of motor control and/or attentional functioning may be included.

**Attainments in Literacy:** Reading performance should include fluency, reading speed and ability to extract information from text. Information about spelling will come from a standardised and age appropriate spelling test and from a piece of free writing, which will also yield information about written expression, writing speed and legibility of handwriting. Performance should be reported as standard scores and percentile points; Descriptive terms and score ranges alone are not sufficient.

**Attainments in Numeracy:** Should be included if the student has difficulties in this area or is undergoing assessment for dyscalculia. Reporting should include evidence of reduced mathematical attainment, numerical operations, maths reasoning, calculation, maths fluency, problems and quantitative concepts. Performance on standardised tests of maths ability should be reported as standard scores and percentile points; age equivalent scores are not acceptable.

**Conclusion:** It should be stated whether or not the student has a SpLD and the effects of SpLD on the student's literacy and study skills should be outlined, taking account of compensatory strengths.