

The University of the Incarnate Word is committed to providing a supportive, challenging, diverse, and integrated environment for all students.

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973—Subpart E and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the University ensures accessibility to its programs, services, and activities for students with documented disabilities.

To qualify for services, the student must provide the Office of Student Disability Services appropriate documentation of his or her disability at the time services and/or accommodations are requested.

This brochure is available  
in alternate format  
upon request

\*Information provided by the University of Southern California

The University of the Incarnate Word  
**Student Disability Services**  
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San Antonio, TX 78209

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Administration Building Room # 105  
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# Student Disability Services

**The University of  
the Incarnate Word**



**Learning  
Disabilities**

**Administration Building  
Room 105**

Telephone: 210-829-3997

## Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities (LD) is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and the use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical skills. Learning disabilities may occur along with other difficulties or with extrinsic influences (cultural difference, inadequate instruction), but they are not the result of these conditions or influences.

In order to diagnose LD, or to define a learning deficit as LD, certain factors must be excluded as the primary cause: psychological disturbances, mental retardation, inadequate educational experiences, environmental deprivation, and sensory or neurological disease. A marked discrepancy between ability and achievement must also be established. A person does not outgrow a learning disability. Learning disabilities span all levels of intelligence, from average to gifted. Because LD usually has no outward manifestations of disability, students may experience credibility problems when they ask for assistance or accommodation. However, learning disabilities are as real as visible physical disabilities and maybe incapacitating.

Although learning disabilities make academic achievement difficult, the student's capacity for learning is intact. The difference is manifested in the means by which information is processed.

Having a learning disability does not mean being unable to learn. It does mean that the person may have to use adaptive methods to process information so that learning can be accomplished. A learning disability exists when information is absorbed through the senses

information is absorbed through the senses but inaccurately transmitted to the brain or inappropriately expressed. Students with learning disabilities must receive and transmit information in forms that work best for them.

Many students with LD develop unconventional methods of learning because traditional methods may not work effectively for them (tutoring in spelling and math is often beneficial). Students with learning disabilities can generally learn better when as many senses as possible are engaged in the teaching and learning process: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile.

Information-processing deficits are found in the following areas:

- Auditory processing
- Visual processing
- Information-processing speed
- Abstract and general reasoning
- Memory (long-term, short-term, visual, auditory)
- Spoken and written language skills
- Reading skills
- Sequencing skills
- Mathematical skills
- Motor skills, hand/eye coordination
- Planning

## Instructional Strategies

- Prepare handouts and review technical terms used in your class
- Point out the organizational items in textbooks (e.g., chapter summaries, subheadings, graphic design, charts, maps, and indexes)
- Give all assignments and courses expectations in both written and oral form
- Incorporate hands-on and lab experiences as well as demonstrations when they are appropriate
- Let students with LD sit in the front row
- Give students a clearly written syllabus, listing tests and assignments with due dates noted
- Break down difficult concepts into steps or parts
- Outline the day's lecture on the chalkboard or in a handout
- Give a brief review of the material presented and emphasize key points
- Include a time for questions and answers
- Provide study questions for exams that demonstrate the format as well as the content of the test and an explanation of what constitutes a good answer and why
- Encourage students to take advantage of Student Disability Services, tutoring services, and other student support services
- Suggest that students arrange to have written work proofread
- Extend the time allowed to complete assignments when appropriate