



Cornerstone Psychological Services

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When Do I Need to Get an Updated Assessment for College or University?

This question comes up very often, so when is the best time?

If a student has never had an assessment before and requires accommodations (e.g. more time, quieter room, etc.), testing is needed. Even if he/she received these informally at their high school, testing is required to validate whether or not he/she still will be eligible for accommodations at the post-secondary level. Likewise, if an assessment is more than 5 years old, a re-evaluation may be necessary to update the information.

Around Grade 11 (and once a student is 16) is an ideal time to consider a reassessment. This is because clinicians can use “adult” based testing which schools tend to prefer. Moreover, students find it less stressful to be tested before the crunch of Grade 12. This, too, permits the student and family enough time to get the testing done well in advance of having to select a program. Indeed, often the results of an assessment can be used to help guide decision making with respect to schools and to help them find the “best fit” given the individual’s learning profile. *Nonetheless, if a student is struggling in the earlier parts of high school (and clarity is needed with respect to how to support him/her) testing should not be postponed as this may place the student at risk of mounting problems with achievement and mental health.* Indeed, Cornerstone practitioners are very willing to speak with colleges/universities to try and extend assessments for post-secondary consideration and, to date, we have been quite successful.

For families, particularly, without benefits, assessments are an expensive proposition. While we offer financing, another option is for students to receive a letter from Cornerstone, which summarizes past reports and accommodations and which appeals to the school to provide interim accommodations (for a semester or two). Once a student is accepted into a program, the family can then approach the Financial Department at the new school to seek OSAP/BSWD funding toward a new psychological assessment. Also, if a student qualifies as an individual with a disability (e.g. learning disability, ADHD, Autism, mood/anxiety disorder, etc.), he/she may be eligible to get additional bursaries through the OSAP Students with Disabilities program (e.g. for mental health, technology, etc.).

Of note, the universities and colleges DO NOT require an updated assessment for *application* purposes. Historical information about IEP/accommodations and previous assessments is not reviewed as part of the application process to ensure that the

applicant is treated fairly. However, at the same time that students are applying for schools (and before they choose their school), students are encouraged to meet with someone at the Accessibilities/Student Success Office to discuss how the school would handle their required accommodations. Any information exchanged is considered confidential and not shared with the Registrar.

Finally, if you still are not clear about when is the best time to get an updated assessment, we encourage you to call the universities/colleges to ask what they require. If you are getting “conflicting advice”, please contact our team to see if we can help sort things out on your behalf.