



## **Learning Disability Assessment Options for Adults in Calgary**

An assessment (typically referred to as a psycho-educational assessment) for a learning disability needs to be done by a Registered Psychologist. Psychologists are not medical doctors and therefore not covered by Alberta Health Services. You do not need a referral from anyone to see one; however, a good first step is always to ensure that you have talked to your doctor about your concerns to determine whether there is a medical explanation for your difficulties (vision, hearing, or other medical issues.)

Assuming that you've already determined that there isn't another health reason causing your issues, there are a few different ways to get an assessment done depending on your age and circumstances.

There are many **private psychologists** who have knowledge and experience doing assessments for learning disabilities. Attached is a list of psychologists who have this expertise in Calgary, or you can find one through the website [www.calgarypsychdirectory.ca](http://www.calgarypsychdirectory.ca) (There is a heading called 'learning disabilities' which lists psychologists who do educational assessments.) This list is incomplete, but may be a good place to begin.

Engaging a private psychologist gives you the most control over who does the assessment. It is also the most expensive option. Assessments can range from \$1,550 to approximately \$3,000. If you have access to private health care benefits, they may cover most or all of the cost of the assessment. Keep in mind that any cost not covered by health care benefits may be claimed as a medical expense on your income tax form.

If you are under 25, you may be able to qualify for a subsidized assessment done through the **CanLearn Society** ([www.canlearnsociety.ca](http://www.canlearnsociety.ca)) or contact Intake Services at 403.686.9300 x 102. Sometimes they have subsidies available for adults, so you could inquire about this.

**The Integrated Services in Education Clinic at the University of Calgary** offers assessments for \$1,350. You do not need to be connected to the university in any way to access this service. They are able to offer an assessment at less than the going rate because Masters and PhD level graduate students do the assessment. They are supervised by a Registered Psychologist in all their work. [www.werklund.ucalgary.ca/ise/](http://www.werklund.ucalgary.ca/ise/)

### **University of Alberta Clinical Services**

([www.edpsychology.ualberta.ca/CentresAndInstitutes/ClinicalServices/ServicesProvided.aspx](http://www.edpsychology.ualberta.ca/CentresAndInstitutes/ClinicalServices/ServicesProvided.aspx)) operates a clinic similar to the U of C. If you are able to travel to Edmonton,



they offer an assessment for only \$500. Assessments are done between September and April only.

If you are currently a student at any of the publicly funded post-secondary institutions in Alberta, you can make an appointment to see someone in their **Disability Service office**. This office can go by different names at different schools but all perform the same sorts of services. If they feel that an assessment is needed, they can make a referral to a Registered Psychologist and in this case the cost of the assessment will be paid for by the government. Sometimes you need to pay up-front and are reimbursed by a government grant later. The Canada Student Grant may cover 75% of the Learning Assessment fee up to a maximum of \$1,200 per loan year. The assessment cannot be dated earlier than six months before the start of the program and must include a diagnosis of a Learning Disability. (The Learning Assessment Fee is not available to students diagnosed with ADHD).

If you are currently unemployed and looking for work OR are working but fear losing your job and have a history that would suggest your learning disability has interfered with your work performance, you may be able to access an assessment that is paid for by the Alberta government. In Calgary, there are several career centres that may be helpful:

- **Champions Career Centre** - connects employers with persons with disabilities.  
<http://www.championscareercentre.org/>
- **Momentum – Entrepreneurs with Disabilities** program will provide the training, financing and support while clients bring the creativity and ambition.  
<http://www.momentum.org/myability/>
- **Prospect** – An organization that provides a diverse range of community and employment supports to a variety of client groups, including people with disabilities.  
<http://www.prospectnow.ca/?p=2539>
- **The Worx** - A brand-new employment center concept, designed specifically to increase access to job search support tools and services for persons with disabilities.  
<https://theworx.org>

You can make an appointment at the nearest Alberta Employment and Immigration office (AE&I). When you make the appointment, make sure that you request to speak with someone about getting a “Specialized Assessment” (this is AE&I lingo for a psycho-educational assessment). A counselor will meet with you to determine if there is evidence in your history that you might have a learning disability. Any referral for a specialized assessment is made after meeting with a counselor.

It would be good to bring with you any evidence that points toward a learning disability. This could be old report cards or any old assessments that were done when you were a child. If you are going to Alberta Employment & Immigration, you should be prepared to tell them which strategies you’ve already tried to accommodate your disability. You can



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also complete this interactive checklist: <http://www.nclid.org/publications-a-more/checklists-worksheets-a-forms/organizing-your-concerns-about-school-related-problems-worksheet>. The checklist can't tell you whether you have a learning disability or not, but it should show you whether there are one or more areas where you have indicated that you are having difficulties and might point towards there being reason to assess further.