

Defining and Documenting Intellectual Disability for TPSID and CTP Participation

The Higher Education Opportunity Act, in Section § 668.231, defines a student with an intellectual disability. The term "student with an intellectual disability" means a student—

(A) with a cognitive impairment, characterized by significant limitations in—

(i) intellectual and cognitive functioning; and

(ii) adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills; and

(B) who is currently, or was formerly, eligible for a free appropriate public education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.].

See page 2 of this document for more information on the definition of intellectual disability.

Documentation of Intellectual Disability from the HEOA Regulations

The institution must obtain a record from a local educational agency that the student is or was eligible for special education and related services under the IDEA. If that record does not identify the student as having an intellectual disability, as described in paragraph (1) of the definition of a student with an intellectual disability in § 668.231, the institution must also obtain documentation establishing that the student has an intellectual disability, such as—

(1) A documented comprehensive and individualized psycho-educational evaluation and diagnosis of an intellectual disability by a psychologist or other qualified professional; or

(2) A record of the disability from a local or State educational agency, or government agency, such as the Social Security Administration or a vocational rehabilitation agency, that identifies the intellectual disability.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1845–NEW4) (Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1091)

The TPSID FAQ page on the US Department of Education website provides the following clarification re: students with autism in TPSID or CTP programs

<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/tpsid/faq.html>

7. Does the definition of intellectual disability (ID) include individuals with autism spectrum disorder?

The comprehensive transition and postsecondary program is targeted at providing access to postsecondary education to those students with intellectual disabilities who traditionally have been unable to participate in higher education. If a student with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) also has a co-occurring documented intellectual disability (significant cognitive impairment with significant limitation in cognitive functioning, and limitations in adaptive behavior, and who was formerly or currently eligible for IDEA services), that student DOES meet the definition of an eligible student under the TPSID program.

If a student with ASD does not have a co-occurring documented intellectual disability..., that student does NOT meet the definition of an eligible student under the TPSID program.

The definition of intellectual disability included in the Higher Education Opportunity is based on this definition from AAIDD.

What is ID and how is ID diagnosed?

American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD)

Definition: <https://www.aaid.org/intellectual-disability/definition>

ID is a developmental disability. Each person with ID will have their own strengths and weaknesses and will require lifelong supports of a personalized level, intensity, and duration to optimally engage in their environment.

Clinical judgment plays an important role in all aspects of the determination of ID. As described in more detail in the Manual, a clinician will consider evidence concerning each of the three diagnostic criteria, including any potential sources assessment or measurement error:

Significant limitations in intellectual functioning

Significant limitations in adaptive behavior

Onset of both of the above limitations during the developmental period, which means that significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior in the individual have manifested before the age of 22.

As described in more detail in the Manual, all test results must be interpreted within the context of their administration and any potential sources of testing error. In making a determination of ID, evidence in addition to test scores will inform the diagnostician's clinical judgment of the person's overall functioning.

For more information on the diagnosis of ID, consult the AAIDD manual. The "Twenty Questions" document also contains useful information concerning diagnosis, classification, and clinical judgement.

Text excerpted from Frequently Asked Questions on Intellectual Disability (AAIDD)
<https://www.aaid.org/intellectual-disability/faqs-on-intellectual-disability>

[Twenty Questions and Answers Regarding the 12th Edition of the AAIDD Manual](#)

[Intellectual Disability: Definition, Diagnosis, Classification, and Systems of Supports \(12th ed.\)](#)