

# A Guide to Assessing College Readiness

**For College-Bound Students with Learning Disabilities or AD/HD**



[www.paulsmiths.edu](http://www.paulsmiths.edu)

Paul Smiths, New York

# Paul Smith's College

## Guide to Assessing College Readiness

For College-Bound Students with Learning Disabilities or AD/HD

Do you aspire to attend college? There are five essential foundations that are particularly critical for students with learning disabilities or AD/HD in order to succeed in a traditional higher education setting. Understanding these core areas can help you recognize the challenges you will face in college and identify areas where additional support and development may be needed.

This guide is designed as a first step in helping you understand the complex sets of skills, abilities, and practices associated with these five foundation areas. Scores obtained using this guide provide an opportunity for discussion; they are not intended to predict or limit your potential, or provide a diagnosis.

At the end of the questions, you will find a brief discussion about each of the five foundations and steps you can take to improve in that area, based on Landmark College's (see back page) nearly quarter-century of experience focusing exclusively on educating students with learning disabilities and AD/HD.

## **DIRECTIONS**

For each of the foundation areas, you will find five questions. If you answer “yes”, check the number of the question. Write the number of checks on the line after “Total from this section”.

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### **Academic Skills**

- 1) Can you read up to 200 pages in a week?
- 2) Do you have a system for taking notes?
- 3) Can you write a paper of 10 or more organized pages that refers to two or more sources?
- 4) Do you have a system for preparing for tests and exams?
- 5) Can you clearly summarize a college-level reading assignment?

**Total from this section:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Self-Understanding (Metacognition)**

- 1) Can you define and describe your diagnosis of a learning disability?
- 2) Have you read your psychoeducational testing?
- 3) Do you know your academic strengths?
- 4) Do you know which academic tasks give you the most difficulty?
- 5) Can you identify the academic supports you need to be successful?

**Total from this section:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Self-Advocacy**

- 1) Do you know your legal rights as a student with a learning disability or AD/HD?
- 2) When you run into difficulty, do you ask for help?
- 3) Do you schedule your own appointments with doctors, advisors, and counselors?
- 4) Do you have access to your psychoeducational testing?
- 5) If a school or college refused to provide you with an appropriate accommodation, would you contest the decision?

**Total from this section:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Executive Function**

- 1) Do you have a system for keeping track of your projects, books, and papers?
- 2) Do you have a system for scheduling and managing your time?
- 3) Are you able to ignore difficulties and focus on the task at hand?
- 4) Are you able to complete all the steps of a project in a timely manner?
- 5) Do you have a strategy for completing tasks that you find boring?

**Total from this section:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Motivation and Confidence**

- 1) Do you have an academic subject that you find interesting?
- 2) Do you know what you want to get out of your first year of college?
- 3) Do you know that you can succeed?
- 4) When you think about what you have to do in college, are you excited?
- 5) Can you imagine your life in ten years?

**Total from this section:** \_\_\_\_\_

## HOW TO SCORE THE GUIDE

- Transfer the total for each foundation area into the spaces provided below. (You may have significant strengths in some foundation areas, yet still struggle in one or more.)
- Add these totals together and record that number in the “Skills Total” box on the next page.
- Multiply the total number of answers marked “yes” by four (4) to get the “Foundation Percentile”.

### Foundation Area

### Indications

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#### Academic Skills

*A student must be able to read and write with a high level of independence.*

Scoring below three in this area indicates that you would benefit from explicit instruction (including direct explanation, guided practice, and feedback in Academic Skills). Further testing can help identify specific skills needing development.

At Paul Smith’s College, our goal is to help you work independently at the college level.

**Total Score** \_\_\_\_\_

#### Self-Understanding (Metacognition)

*A student must be intimately aware of test their strengths and challenges in learning.*

A score lower than three in this area suggests that you would benefit from further development of metacognition — your awareness and understanding of your own learning profile. The first step is to meet with the psychologist or neuropsychologist who conducted the testing — or another qualified provider — for a thorough explanation of results.

At Paul Smith’s College, we can help you identify the supports you need to be successful.

**Total Score** \_\_\_\_\_

#### Self-Advocacy

*A student must independently ask for services and support.*

Scoring less than three in this area indicates you would benefit from instruction in the laws and regulations regarding individuals with disabilities and higher education. Because college students are adults, you cannot be compelled to use services and accommodations.

At Paul Smith’s College, you personally request accommodations, submit documentation which supports your request, notify your faculty of your request, and inform them when accommodations are not working.

**Total Score** \_\_\_\_\_

#### Executive Function

*A student must be able to keep track of assignments, organize books/materials, and manage time independently.*

A score below three in this area suggests that you would benefit from focused instruction on executive function skills such as organization and time management.

At Paul Smith’s College, you will most likely need to use techniques externalizing executive functions such as a weekly planner and e-mail calendar system. It is essential to establish clear structures and strategies for managing various projects and to determine the next actions required to move each project forward.

**Total Score** \_\_\_\_\_

## Foundation Area

## Indications

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### Motivation and Confidence

*A student must have clear set goals and believe they can succeed.*

Scoring below three in this area suggests you cannot clearly visualize successfully completing a college education. College students who would rather be somewhere else — working for a living, attending trade or technical school, pursuing dreams such as sailing around the world — are unlikely to take advantage of the resources necessary to complete a college degree. Furthermore, students who do not believe they are capable of doing the required work are likely to give up, even skipping classes or finals.

Engaging in studies at the level needed for college involves a constant struggle with self-doubt and insecurity. We know the best antidote is success, but many students need a great deal of encouragement to complete that first semester. Paul Smith's students often benefit from individual coaching provided by the Center for Accommodative Services to visualize their own success, establish goals, and create a plan they can use to achieve those goals.

**Total Score** \_\_\_\_\_

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Total number of questions marked “yes”.

**Skills Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

Multiply the above Skills Total by four (4) to get the overall percentile. **Foundation Percentile:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS

This guide is intended for use as a starting point for discussion. Understanding the areas where you might struggle can help determine the appropriate supports. Scores developed through the questionnaire should provide a good sense of the various challenges you will face.

For each Foundation Area, there is a brief definition followed by an explanation of implications associated with the score. These scoring implications for each Foundation Area are considered more important and informative than the overall percentile.

However, scoring 80 percent or higher suggests you are likely to succeed independently at Paul Smith’s College. Scoring below 50 percent suggests you are likely to struggle.

If you have any questions about this guide or disability services provided by Paul Smith’s College, contact the Center for Accommodative Services at (518) 327-6414 or email [accommodativeservices@paulsmiths.edu](mailto:accommodativeservices@paulsmiths.edu).

**Paul Smith's College wishes to thank  
Landmark College  
for this  
Guide to Assessing College Readiness.**

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