DARE acceptable report content for diagnosis of specific learning difficulty (SpLD)

In the senior cycle students should be assessed on age appropriate tests as specified by the age range and age limit of each test. Students who are 17 years and above should be assessed using age appropriate tests.

Background information: Referral information; family, developmental and educational history; any relevant medical information and the student's perceptions of his/her challenges. Any previous assessments should be summarised. Where English is spoken as a second or additional language, details of the student's language history and current levels of competence should be included.

General Level of Intellectual Ability: Measures of verbal, non-verbal and overall ability should be reported as standard scores or percentile points, age equivalent scores are not acceptable. Descriptive terms and score ranges alone are not sufficient. The FSIQ or GAI or equivalent must be recorded. Profiles of scores should be discussed, with particular reference to any significant discrepancies between verbal and non-verbal ability.

Cognitive Processing: Where a full assessment of cognitive ability has been obtained, these may have been reported in the previous section. Performance in tests of motor control and/or attentional functioning may be included.

Attainments in Literacy: Reading performance should include fluency, reading speed and ability to extract information from text. Information about spelling should come from a standardised and age appropriate spelling test and from a piece of free writing, which will also yield information about written expression, writing speed and legibility of handwriting. Performance should be reported as standard scores and percentile points; descriptive terms and score ranges alone are not sufficient.

Attainments in Arithmetic: Should be included if the student has difficulties in this area or is undergoing assessment for dyscalculia. Reporting should include evidence of reduced mathematical attainment, numerical operations, maths reasoning, calculation, maths fluency, problems and quantitative concepts. Performance on standardised tests of maths ability should be reported as standard scores and percentile points; age equivalent scores are not acceptable.

Conclusion: It should be stated whether or not the student has a SpLD and the effects of SpLD on the student's literacy and study skills should be outlined, taking account of compensatory strengths.

Recommended Support: A brief statement about the type of support which might help the student should be made here, particularly in relation to study skills tuition.

Appendix: including a list of tests used in the assessment (with references) and scores achieved in these test, and a table of results identifying the scores and percentile points. These should also be reported in the Psycho-educational Summary Sheet.

A completed Psycho-educational Summary Sheet will be a compulsory requirement from 2013.