

Documentation Guidelines for Evaluators – Long Term Physical Disabilities and Chronic Health Conditions

Introduction

The Appraisal Institute is committed to ensuring access to the test for all individuals with disabilities.

The Appraisal Institute provides reasonable and appropriate accommodations to individuals with documented disabilities who demonstrate a need for accommodations. For example, applicants may request someone to record answers, a separate testing room, extra testing time, or presentation of the material in large print.

Purpose of Accommodations

The following technical information is provided for the evaluators who prepare documentation for Candidates as part of their request for test accommodations. Candidates requesting test accommodations are asked to share these guidelines with their evaluator so that appropriate documentation can be assembled to support the request for test accommodations.

Requests for test accommodations are inherently individualized and need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Consequently, no single type of accommodation (i.e., extra time) would necessarily be appropriate for all individuals with disabilities. Moreover, simply demonstrating that an individual meets diagnostic criteria for a particular disorder does not mean that the person is automatically entitled to accommodations.

The purpose of accommodations is to provide Candidates with an opportunity to have full access to the test. However, accommodations are not a guarantee of improved performance or test completion.

Specific accommodations should be related to the identified *functional limitations* so that the impairment is mitigated by the requested auxiliary aid or adjustment to the testing format. For example, a functional limitation might be mobility, resulting in wheelchair use. An appropriate accommodation might be a height-adjustable computer workstation. It is essential that the documentation provide a clear explanation of the current functional limitation and a rationale for the requested accommodation.

Detailed Documentation Requirements

Candidates who are requesting accommodations based on a diagnosis of a long-term physical disability or chronic health condition must provide a report of a current, comprehensive medical evaluation. The diagnosis of ADHD and recommended accommodations must be based on the aggregate of relevant history, levels of current functioning, clinical judgment, and optionally, objective test results.

Note that meeting diagnostic criteria for a particular disorder does not necessarily mean that the individual will be found to be disabled.

The evaluation must:

1. Be performed by a qualified evaluator (see Note #1 of page 2).
2. Be current (< 1 year; see Note #2 of page 2).

The detailed letter or report must:

1. Include identifying information:
 - a. The first page of the detailed letter or report should be printed on the evaluator's letterhead, and should provide relevant identifying information, including the examinee's name, date of birth, the examination dates, age at the time of testing, and grade and school (if applicable).
 - b. The last page of the report should be signed by the evaluator.

2. Include a comprehensive history:
 - a. Age that symptoms of the disorder first appeared.
 - b. Relevant educational history.
 - c. Relevant psychosocial history.
 - d. Relevant medical history.
 - e. History of the condition.
 - f. History of the *impact* of the condition (not just past use of accommodations).
3. Include a detailed discussion of the current presentation, including current treatments (e.g., medications) and their effectiveness, current test results, and the current impact of the disorder on academic performance, employment (if relevant), and other daily activities
4. Include a discussion of the expected duration and prognosis of the condition.
5. Include specific recommendations for accommodations (see Note #3 below).
6. Include a specific rationale for each recommended accommodation.

NOTES

#1 A qualified professional must administer the tests in the evaluation. An individual is deemed to be qualified to assess an individual for a physical or health-related disability if s/he has had extensive graduate-level training in the area of medical assessment of adults. In most cases, the evaluator should have an M.D., O.D., or D.O. degree. The name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator must be clearly stated in the documentation. The Appraisal Institute reserves the right to request evidence from an evaluator of their professional qualifications. Assessment by family members, even if otherwise qualified, will not be accepted.

#2 Currency: Because the provision of reasonable accommodations is based on assessment of the *current impact* and *current functional limitations* caused by the applicant's disability, the Appraisal Institute requires current documentation. The medical evaluation must have been administered no more than one (1) year prior to the anticipated test date.

#3 Examples of specific recommendations for accommodations may include 50% extra time, one extra 10-minute break for each test-section, or use of a large-print test booklet. Non-specific recommendations such as "extra time" or "the maximum allowable time" are not acceptable. Note that the purpose of extra time is not to ensure that the Candidate finishes the test (many non-disabled test-takers do not finish the test).

NOTE: In situations where an individual is thought to have two or more disorders, such as a learning disability and a visual impairment, the diagnostic report must clearly describe the unique impact of each disorder, and Documentation Requirements must be met for each disorder.