

# NBCE Examinee Handbook

For Disability Accommodation and Exception Requests

*This handbook contains information about how to apply for accommodations from the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners. It also includes guidelines for acceptable documentation and disability specific documentation requirements.*



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# Introduction

The NBCE seeks to ensure that our exams are fully accessible to all qualified examinees; therefore, we welcome applications for reasonable and appropriate accommodations on our exams in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other federal guidance.

Through an individualized assessment of the examinee's functional limitations and exam-related barriers, the NBCE will determine what, if any, accommodations are appropriate for each of the NBCE examinations. To aid in this process, examinees should provide documentation that clearly aligns with the NBCE guidelines.

The NBCE encourages examinees to carefully read through this handbook. You will find instructions and guidelines to assist you in submitting a complete request. Any accommodation or exception requested must be supported by the examinee's documentation and personal statement.

If you have any questions or technical difficulty completing or submitting the *Test Accommodation Request* or supporting documentation, please contact NBCE Accommodations Advocate at (970) 356-9100, extension 160.

## How to Apply for Accommodations

### Elements of the Request for Accommodations

All first-time requests for accommodations must include the following:

1. A *Test Accommodation Request (TAR)*, submitted through examinee's MyNBCE account
2. A personal statement

*Provide a written statement describing the disability for which you are requesting accommodations including:*

- How the disability affects your academic, occupational, social and other major life activities
- How the disability interferes with your ability to access the examination under standard conditions
- How the requested accommodation(s) will remove barriers to the exam and lessen the functional limitations caused by your disability

3. Documentation from a qualified examiner

*All documentation must include:*

- Provider's name
- Title
- Credentials (including license number)
- Area(s) of specialization
- Date and signature of provider
- Letters and reports should be on provider's letterhead
- Providers may not be near relatives of examinee

## Application Information for Specific Exams

### ***NBCE Part I / First-time Requests:***

For Part I and all examinees requesting accommodations for the first time from the NBCE:

- Complete an online *Test Accommodation Request (TAR)*.
- Submit acceptable documentation before the published deadlines. We recommend early submission to allow time for an appeal, if needed.
- Submit a personal statement describing your disability.

### ***NBCE Part II, Part III, and Physiotherapy Exams***

Examinees who have previously been approved for accommodations for NBCE exams and are requesting the same accommodations need only submit an online *TAR*. Documentation and personal statements are not necessary for subsequent requests.

Examinees who are requesting accommodations for the first time or who are requesting additional accommodations must follow directions for Part I/First-time Requests above.

### ***NBCE Part IV Exam***

For Part IV:

- Complete an online *Test Accommodation Request (TAR)*.
- Submit supporting documentation that identifies specific barriers to a clinical exam. We recommend that examinees submit requests 30-60 days in advance of the exam deadline.
- Submit a new personal statement describing your disability as it pertains to accommodations on a practical exam.

Failure to follow these instructions or failure to submit a complete application, including comprehensive documentation that follows guidelines, will result in delays. The NBCE will only make determinations on complete applications. Examinees are encouraged to apply 30-60 days in advance of the exam deadline to allow adequate time for appeal, if needed.

## Test Format

### ***NBCE Exams***

The NBCE exams consist of four parts and an optional subject (Physiotherapy). Parts I, II, III, and Physiotherapy are computer-based, multiple-choice exams. Part IV is a practical exam that includes a paper-based, multiple-choice section, along with an objective structured clinical exam that seeks to simulate the clinical environment and includes patient interaction.

### ***Format Description for Computer-Based Exams***

- Part I and Part II each consist of three sessions, administered over a 5-hour morning or afternoon appointment and include 300 standard, multiple-choice questions.
  - Session 1 is 84 minutes of testing time, with additional time allotted for introductory information, followed by an optional 15-minute break.
  - Session 2 is 84 minutes, followed by an optional 15-minute break.
  - Session 3 is 84 minutes.

- Part III consists of two sessions, administered over a 4-hour and 30-minute morning or afternoon appointment and includes 110 standard, multiple-choice questions and 5 case vignettes.
  - Session 1 is 2 hours and 15 minutes (15 minutes of introductory material and 2 hours of testing), followed by an optional 15-minute break.
  - Session 2 is 2 hours.
- Physiotherapy appointments are 90 minutes, and include 75 minutes of testing time with time for introductory material. Physiotherapy includes 90 standard, multiple-choice questions.

### **Format Description for Practical Exam**

The NBCE Part IV Practical Exam consists of 3 major clinical sections: Diagnostic Imaging, Case Management and Chiropractic Technique. Accommodations for the Diagnostic Imaging section are determined independent of the other sections.

Diagnostic Imaging (DIM) consists of 20 stations which are allotted 2 minutes per station. During the DIM section, examinees will view digital diagnostic images. This section is a multiple-choice exam that requires the examinee to use a pencil to bubble in small ovals on a Scantron answer sheet. Although the testing time is only 40 minutes, the examinee may be sequestered for up to 4 hours to ensure test security.

The Case Management (CAM) and Chiropractic Technique (TEC) sections are given together and require approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes of testing time. They may require up to an additional 7 hours of sequestration for test security. Accommodation requests for the Case Management/Chiropractic Technique are made together.

CAM consists of 20 stations with 5 minutes allotted to complete each station, and one minute and 30 seconds between stations. The examinee will enter a room and then be asked to perform a case history, physical examination, or orthopedic or neurological test on a standardized patient. The examinee will also be required to read instructions, review clinical information, and use a pencil to bubble in small ovals on a Scantron answer sheet.

TEC consists of 5 stations with 5 minutes allotted to complete each station, and one minute and 30 seconds between stations. During the TEC section, the examinee will enter a room, read instructions, and then set up for two spinal or two extremity adjustments on a standardized patient.

## **Privacy**

Information received in support of requested disability accommodations, including the application, the personal statement and accompanying documentation are securely stored on NBCE servers. Information will be shared with NBCE test accommodations personnel only for the purpose of determining eligibility for test accommodations. This includes any contracted content experts needed for a comprehensive review. Privacy and limits to sharing are subject to any legal requirements to provide information or to the sharing of information with attorneys and third parties in the event of any legal action taken against the NBCE as a result of an accommodation decision. General demographics and any identified categorical data will be used for benchmarking in research purposes only.

## **Request for Reconsideration**

The NBCE will notify you if your **Test Accommodation Request** is denied. To appeal the NBCE's decision, you may request reconsideration by e-mailing [accommodations@nbce.org](mailto:accommodations@nbce.org). You must provide substantive supplemental documentation and clearly articulate the basis of the appeal, linking it to the documentation that supports your request. Requests for an appeal must be submitted at least one week prior to the deadline for the desired test date.

If you are unable to meet the deadline:

- You may schedule your exam without accommodations.
- You may reschedule your exam for a later administration.

## Non-Standard Testing Conditions

Examinees who have a medical need for non-standard testing conditions or temporary accommodations should follow the guidance provided below relative to their need.

### Temporary Disabilities

Examinees with temporary injuries or need for accommodation due to temporary illness should complete a *Test Accommodation Request* and submit a letter from their physician documenting the need for an accommodation. Examinees with temporary disabilities need not submit a personal statement.

If you have a need for an accommodation that does not require additional time, you may use the form *Request for Non-Standard Testing Conditions*.

### Personal Items

Examinees with ongoing medical needs may require specific devices during testing. While examinees do not need permission to utilize these devices, testing center staff will inspect devices before examinees enter the secured testing area. These include medicines and medical devices, communications aids, and mobility devices.

Please visit the MyNBCE website for a list of personal items that are allowed at the test site. If you have a need for any other personal item for medical reasons, please submit the form *Request for Non-Standard Testing Conditions*.

### Test Conflict with Religious Observances

If an examinee is unable to schedule a computer-based test that avoids conflicts with their religious observance, they must complete a *Request for Non-Standard Testing Conditions*. Please note that there are limited seats available; the NBCE recommends submitting requests 30 days prior to the deadline.

Examinees must also complete *Request for Non-Standard Testing Conditions* to ensure their schedule of a Friday/Saturday or a Friday/Sunday rotation on Part IV. The NBCE must receive the request by the application deadline for the current Part IV administration.

Examinees who are requesting a religious exemption for the first time must also submit a confirmation form signed by their religious leader.

### Nursing Mothers

Nursing mothers should notify registration staff upon arrival at the test site. They may bring a breast pump and a small cooler (which will be inspected) and may access these items only during scheduled breaks and when sequestered during Part IV. (See times below.)

- Part I and Part II: two optional 15-minute breaks during a 5-hour appointment
- Part III: one optional 15-minute break during a 4.5-hour appointment
- Physiotherapy: no scheduled breaks during a 1.5-hour appointment
- Part IV Diagnostic Imaging: testing time 40 minutes, sequestration time up to 4 hours
- Part IV Case Management and Chiropractic Technique: testing time 2 hours and 45 minutes, sequestration time up to 7 hours

Nursing mothers who require additional break time for pumping must complete a *Test Accommodation Request*. Nursing mothers requesting only additional break time need not submit a personal statement or documentation.

## Guidelines for Acceptable Documentation

These guidelines are provided to assist you in documenting a need for test accommodations. Examinees are required to submit documentation of their disability to support a need for test accommodations based on an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

### Documentation Format

Healthcare providers should complete the *NBCE Disability Verification and Recommendation Form* for all disability categories except learning disabilities. In lieu of this form, healthcare providers may submit a letter (on professional letterhead) with the information required in the *NBCE Disability Verification and Recommendation Form*.

#### ***Learning Disabilities***

Examinees may choose to submit one of the following in support of their request:

- Psychoeducational report
- Neuropsychological report
- Letter from the provider that addresses all general and LD specific criteria

#### ***ADHD, Chronic Health/Physical, Sensory (Visual and Hearing) and Psychological Disabilities***

Examinees may choose to submit one of the following in support of their request:

- An *NBCE Disability Verification and Recommendation Form*
- A letter from the provider that addresses all category criteria for the respective disability.

All letters and reports must be:

- On the provider's letterhead
- Dated
- Signed by the provider

\* *Handwritten or unsigned letters, notes on prescription pads, or verification by phone from physicians or evaluators will not be accepted.*

### Elements of All Documentation

Documentation must be:

- **Comprehensive**
  - A statement of the presenting problem and *relevant* background history  
*If there is no prior history of accommodations, the qualified professional should describe why accommodations have not been required or provided in the past and why they are needed for this examination.*
  - A description of the onset, frequency, intensity, and duration of relevant symptoms (those that impact examinees access to exam)
  - A statement regarding the extent to which the symptoms impact the individual's daily functioning across multiple environments (e.g. social, academic, occupational, etc.)

- A description of the assessment techniques or diagnostic tests administered to develop a diagnosis including:
  - Results of assessments (e.g., standard Scores, percentiles and either grade or age level equivalents) of all diagnostic procedures and tests utilized in the evaluation
  - Informal or non-standardized assessment methods, if used, should be described in enough detail that other professionals in the field can understand their significance in the diagnostic process

### **High Quality**

- The evaluating professional should have training and direct experience in the diagnosis and treatment of adults in the specific area of disability.
- The diagnostic methods used should be appropriate to the specific disability and current professional practices within the field.
- The evaluation report should adhere to current professional standards.
- The diagnosis should be based on criteria outlined in the most current edition of:
  - *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*; or
  - *The International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD)*.

### **Timely**

- The documentation must be timely enough to establish the examinee's current need for accommodation.
  - More recent documentation may be necessary for relapsing/remitting conditions or conditions that can change because of time or treatment.
- We recommend submitting documentation that has been completed within the last 3 to 5 years.
  - Individuals whose documentation is dated over 5 years may submit multiple evaluations that demonstrate a life-long history of impairment relative to high stakes exams.
- Reports must reference the latest version of any clinical instruments that were used at the time of the assessment.

### **Provide a Clear Rationale**

- The documentation must supply a clear rationale for the recommended accommodations or assistive devices, including:
  - A description of the full extent of the individual's functional limitations
  - A description of how the individual's functional limitations impact access to the exam under standard testing conditions: impact on setting and format (e.g., computer-based examination; clinical or performance-based examination) compared to most people in the general population

*Note: NBCE testing centers can provide some ergonomic equipment and assistive software. Please contact the NBCE to request these accommodations.*



## Disability Specific Requirements

In addition to the criteria for all disabilities, the following categories of disability require additional information as outlined.

### ***Specific Learning Disorders***

Examples of qualified examiners for individuals with **learning disorders** include:

- Clinical, educational, or school psychologists, licensed clinical social workers
- Neuropsychologists
- Psychiatrists
- Learning disability specialists
- Medical doctors trained or experienced in the differential diagnosis of LD

In addition to the information described in *Elements of All Documentation*, a request for test accommodations based on a specific learning disorder should include the following:

- A comprehensive psychological, psycho-educational, or neuropsychological evaluation that adheres to current professional standards
- The report of evaluation should generally include the following:
  - Relevant aspects of the individual's developmental, family, medical, and other history including linguistic history, if English is not the first language
  - A summary of the individual's educational history, experiences, and achievements, quality of instruction, and language of instruction at each level, and trends in academic performance
  - History of prior academic interventions and classroom or test accommodations
  - A review of documentation from third-party sources when available (e.g., academic records, scores from prior standardized exams, previous evaluations, feedback from teachers/faculty, tutors, academic advisors, or others, etc.)
  - Data and information from a comprehensive battery of standardized, norm-referenced tests and measures used to assess the individual's cognitive and academic functioning in keeping with current professional standards
    - Brief exams, screening tools and stand-alone reading assessments, in the absence of a full assessment of intelligence/achievement are not comprehensive and therefore are not considered acceptable if used as the sole measure of reading ability or academic skills
  - Actual scores obtained for each subtest and/or measure administered reported as age-based standard scores when available from the test publisher
  - The specific version of each test (e.g., 4th Edition, etc.), along with the specific norms used for scoring (e.g., age-based norms)
  - A summary integrating the obtained test and assessment data with relevant background/historical information, previous and current manifestations of the learning impairment, and current academic, occupational, and other life functioning
  - A differential diagnosis with discussion of how each possible alternative explanation for the learning difficulty has been systematically ruled out (e.g., inadequate match between the individual's ability and instructional demands; cultural or linguistic factors; poor motivation and/or study skills; problems of attention, mood, or anxiety; sensory impairments; etc.)

## **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder**

Examples of qualified examiners for individuals with **ADHD** include:

- Clinical, educational, or school psychologists, licensed clinical social workers
- Neuropsychologists
- Psychiatrists
- Medical doctors trained or experienced in the differential diagnosis of ADHD

In addition to the information described in the *Elements of All Documentation*, a request for test accommodations based on ADHD should include the following:

- Relevant aspects of the individual's developmental, educational, family, medical, psychosocial, educational, occupational, and other personal history
- A history of the individual's presenting symptoms, with detailed information about how the symptoms have manifested in the home, school, work, and other settings over time
- Measures used to diagnose ADHD including self-report symptom checklists, behavior rating scales, and continuous performance tests
- Supporting information that verifies symptoms or history of symptoms from other sources (e.g., parent, teacher, spouse, employer, supervisor)
- Examples of current functional impairment in more than one setting (e.g., school, working, home, social, etc.)
- Any reviews of third-party documentation, to establish a history of impairment that goes beyond self-report (e.g., review of academic records, scores from prior standardized exams, previous evaluations or treatment records, feedback from teachers/faculty, advisors, supervisors, etc.)
- A differential diagnosis with a discussion of how each possible alternative explanation for the identified problem(s) has been systematically ruled out

## **Chronic Health Conditions/Physical Disabilities**

Examples of qualified examiners for individuals with **chronic health conditions** include:

- Medical doctors trained or experienced in the diagnosis of examinees disability
- This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Rheumatology
  - PM&R
  - Oncology
  - Internal Medicine
  - Gynecology
  - Neurology
  - Infectious Disease
- In addition to the general criteria stated above, disability documentation for chronic health must include:
  - The symptoms that currently or historically contribute to functional impairment
  - A list of any symptoms or functional limitations resulting from the side-effects of medication and/or treatment

## **Visual Disabilities**

Examples of qualified examiners for individuals with **visual disabilities** include:

- Optometrist
- Ophthalmologist
- Optometrist

In addition to the information described in the *Elements of All Documentation*, a request for test accommodations based on a visual disability should include the following:

- Relevant history and course of the presenting symptoms and whether the condition is stable or could be expected to change over time
- Detailed discussion of how the specific symptoms and assessment results meet professionally recognized diagnostic criteria for the identified visual impairment
- Where relevant to the diagnosis and the examination for which accommodations are requested, comprehensive documentation should include detailed information about:
  - The health of the eye(s)
  - Visual fields
  - Binocular functioning
  - Accommodative functioning
  - Oculomotor functioning
- Actual scores and results from all tests, procedures, measurements, and scales administered to demonstrate the level of impairment to visual functioning
- A specific recommendation for all accommodations requested, including low vision aids, and an explanation of how the accommodations will reduce the impact of the identified functional limitations relevant to the specific examination setting and context

## **Hearing Disabilities**

Examples of qualified examiners for individuals with **hearing disabilities** include:

- Audiologists
- Otorhinolaryngology, Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT)

In addition to the information described in the *Elements of All Documentation*, a request for test accommodations based on hearing disabilities should include the following:

- A copy of the most recent audiogram or audiometric study that reflects the examinee's current functional impairment
- Information concerning the current impact of the hearing impairment on the individual's daily life functioning
- A statement about how the impairment is expected to impact the examinee's ability to access the examination
- A rationale for each recommended test accommodation relevant to the specific examination setting and context

## **Psychological Disabilities**

Examples of qualified examiners for individuals with **psychological disabilities** include:

- Clinical psychologists
- Licensed clinical social workers
- Neuropsychologists
- Psychiatrists
- Medical doctors trained or experienced in the treatment of psychological disorders:
  - Family medicine physician
  - Internal medicine physician

In addition to the information described in the *Elements of All Documentation*, a request for test accommodations based on a psychological disability should include the following:

- A comprehensive psychiatric or psychological evaluation using the DSM-5 criteria and should include the following:
  - A description of the presenting problem(s) and symptoms, with details about the onset and history of symptoms as relevant to the requested accommodations
  - Frequency, severity, and duration, of symptoms
  - Impact of disability on daily functioning across multiple domains (e.g., school, working, home, social)
- Assessment data and findings from all diagnostic tests and measures administered. Examples of common tests and measures include:
  - Structured diagnostic interviews/clinical interviews (e.g., Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-5)
  - Standardized norm-referenced measures of cognitive or neuropsychological functioning
  - Current versions of behavior or symptom rating scales
  - Objective tests of effort (e.g., symptom validity tests)
- A thorough summary that integrates:
  - Relevant background/historical information
  - Assessment data
  - Clinical presentation
  - Behavioral observations
  - Current functioning
- Evidence of a differential diagnosis and a description of how each possible alternative explanation for the identified problem has been systematically ruled out
- A clear description of how the identified impairment and related symptoms are relevant to the specific examination setting and context
- A rationale for each recommended test accommodation

## Supplemental Documentation

In addition to the required items listed previously, some examinees may find it helpful to submit supplemental documentation that supports their need for accommodation on the NBCE exams. While not required, submissions of this nature may be helpful in substantiating the student's need for accommodation or in making the application more robust. Below we offer examples of items that would be considered supplemental. This list is not exhaustive.

Supplemental documentation might include, but is not limited to:

- Historical evaluations, reports, or educational plans
- Historical medical records
- Written feedback from teachers or supervisors
- Official academic records and transcripts
- Official score reports for high stakes exams (e.g., SAT, ACT, GRE, GMAT)
- Official records verifying approved accommodations from testing agencies
- Official records verifying approved accommodations from educational institutions
- Performance evaluations from employers

## Examinee Personal Statement

Examinees requesting accommodations are required to submit a personal statement. This gives examinees the opportunity to describe how the disability uniquely affects them in a standardized testing environment.

In your *Personal Statement* you will be asked to describe your impairment(s) and how a major life activity (e.g. reading, walking, learning, speaking, listening, writing, etc.) is substantially limited. This is your opportunity to communicate how your disability substantially limits your current functioning in a major life activity and to describe how the disability impairs your ability to take the NBCE exams under standardized conditions.

The NBCE highly recommends crafting and saving your response in a separate document, then copying it into the online application.

## Test Accommodations Checklist

If you are taking Part I or requesting accommodations from the NBCE for the first time:

- Complete an online **Test Accommodation Request**.
- Upload documentation as specified in the *Guidelines for Acceptable Documentation*.
- Submit a personal statement of how your disability affects you in a standardized testing environment.
- Submit your request 30 days before the application deadline.
- Pay for and schedule your exam after your accommodations request is complete.

If you have already received accommodations from the NBCE and you are requesting the same accommodations:

- Complete an online **Test Accommodation Request**.
- Pay for and schedule your exam.

If you are taking Part IV:

- Complete an online **Test Accommodation Request**.
- Upload documentation as specified in the *Guidelines for Acceptable Documentation*.
- Submit a new personal statement of how your disability affects you in a practical exam setting.
- Submit your request 30-60 days before the application deadline.
- Pay for your exam after your accommodations request is complete.

If you have a temporary disability that requires additional time:

- Complete an online **Test Accommodation Request**.
- Submit a letter from your physician documenting the need for an accommodation.

If you are a nursing mother:

- Notify staff upon arrival at test site for security inspection of breast pump and cooler.
- Complete an online **Test Accommodation Request** if you need additional break time.

If you have a scheduling conflict due to a religious observance:

- Submit a **Request for Non-Standard Testing Conditions**.
- Submit a confirmation form signed by your religious leader (first-time request only).

If you have a medical need that requires you to bring personal items to the testing center:

- Consult the list of personal items pre-approved by the NBCE.
- If the item you require is not on the list, submit a **Request for Non-Standard Testing Conditions**.





901 54th Ave. / Greeley, CO 80634  
800-964-6223 / [www.mynbce.org](http://www.mynbce.org)

***For more information, e-mail [accommodations@nbce.org](mailto:accommodations@nbce.org)***