



Testing Accommodations: Promoting Access for Students with Disabilities

**WACAC: Share, Learn, and Connect
SFSU Downtown Campus
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Western Region, The College Board**

Our Mission

The College Board's mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. We are a not-for-profit membership organization committed to excellence and equity in education.

Breaking News

- Concordance for SAT-ACT
- CollegeKeys Compact
- Validity Studies in SAT Writing

Objectives

- What types of accommodations are available from the College Board?
- Navigating the SSD Process
- Understanding functional limitation and documentation process

Some examples of disabilities

- Learning disability
- ADHD
- Blind/visually impaired
- Traumatic brain injury
- Tourette's syndrome
- Physical impairments
- Psychiatric disabilities
- Autism and Asperger syndrome

Some examples of accommodations...

- Extended time
- Breaks
- Medical management
- Change of setting
- Scribe
- Large block answer sheet
- Write answers in test booklet
- Computer for essays
- Braille
- Large print tests
- Colored overlay
- Cassette/reader
- Written copy of oral instructions

2007.08 In Review

- Nearly 70,000 students requested accommodations on College Board tests last year.
- Approximately 80 percent of all requests were approved.

When are accommodations appropriate?

- Student must have a documented disability
- Functional impact needs to be demonstrated. Mere presence of a disability does not necessarily mean student qualifies for testing accommodations.
- Must show need for the specific accommodation being requested

What you need to know first:

1. Only the original *Student Eligibility Form*, completed and signed in pencil, can be processed by the College Board. Copies of the *Instructions for Completing the Student Eligibility Form* and the form have been sent to all schools.

Need to Know Continued

2. So students need to pick up forms at their school. If they are not available, they can go to another school. It's good to develop relationships with testing coordinators in your area!

THE PROCESS

- **Step 1:** Students/parents complete Section I of the Student Eligibility Form and forward it to the student's school.
- **Step 2:** School officials complete Sections II and III and send all three sections to the College Board (detailed guidance for all sections is provided in the *Instructions*).

Process Continued

- **Step 3**
- It takes 5 weeks from the point that the *Form* information is complete
- When College Board needs to review the documentation, it takes 7 weeks from the point that the *Form* is complete
- Deadlines are established prior to the first test the student wishes to take

Process Continued

- **Step 4**
- A student/parents and his/her school officials will receive copies of the Eligibility Letter that identifies approved accommodations and SSD Identification Number (SSD Eligibility Code), or explains why the requested accommodations are not approved for College Board tests.

Process Continued

- **Step 5**
- When students register for a College Board test with their approved accommodations, they provide their SSD Eligibility Code
- The testing sites (usually their home school) will make the appropriate testing arrangements (e.g., setting; proctor; materials).

Process Continued

- **Step 6**
- Students go to the testing site identified for their tests and test with the designated accommodations.

Can students apply directly?

- **Yes**, students may send their *Student Eligibility Form* completed through Section I and disability documentation directly to the College Board.
- The College Board will review the documentation to determine if it meets the *Guidelines* and if the requested accommodations are substantiated.
- Students and parents can find directions in the *Instructions* and the school need not be involved in providing direct information.

UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS

Two ways a student can be determined eligible for accommodations:

- 1. School Verification:** Student, parent and official school representative complete the form; school verifies student meets the 3 eligibility criteria; and student's documentation meets CB's *Guidelines for Documentation*.

UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS

2. DOCUMENTATION REVIEW: College Board reviews a student's documentation to determine if it meets the *Guidelines*. This way is available for students who request the College Board directly to make a determination, or when a school cannot verify that the student's documentation meets the *Guidelines*.

When is review process necessary?

When some of the questions on the Eligibility Form are responded to affirmatively:

- No current **formal plan** is in place
- Student has been declassified
- Formal plan in place for less than 4 school months
- The testing is not current, specific to the disability

When is review process necessary?

- School documentation fails to include results from both cognitive and achievement testing
- Accommodations the student is requesting based on disability have NOT been provided and/or used on school tests for the past 4 school months.

What happens then?

- The College Board will determine the level of documentation review needed to ensure that the documentation meets the *Guidelines* and supports the need for the requested accommodations.
- When the College Board reviews documentation, it is very thorough.

And then...

- A **panel of experts** in educating and assessing students with disabilities reviews the documentation and advises whether the *Guidelines* are met.
- Two “experts” review each student’s documentation and make a recommendation.
- College Board makes the final decision.

Documentation Guidelines for Computer

- 3 ways to qualify:
 2. Physical disability (include medical documentation)
 3. Dysgraphia – The documentation needs to establish that the fine motor issues are due to dysgraphia and that because of this the student's written expression skills are substantially impaired.
 4. Language-based learning disability – Because of a language-based learning disability, the student is unable to organize his/her thoughts effectively and elaborate on concepts using a paper and pencil.

What if the accommodations are denied?

- Students can appeal, which means the documentation will (usually) be sent to 2 additional “experts.” Suggestions for appeals:
 2. Have the person who did the testing write a rebuttal to the rationale provided by College Board for denying accommodations.

Appeals

1. It helps if the school writes a letter making it clear that they support the student's request for accommodations.
2. It helps if teachers state that they provide the student with the requested accommodations AND believe that the student needs them. (A Form for this available on CB web site.)

Functional Limitations?

- The College Board considers a **specific diagnosis** of a disability and description of **functional limitations** as fundamental components for approving accommodations.
- **Functional limitations** consist of the impact on learning resulting from the disability.

Functional Limitations?

- In other words, how the student's daily academic functioning is impacted.
- Historical information and standardized tests using national norms **MUST** support both the diagnosis and functional limitations.
- Teachers' observations can support the functional limitations in classroom setting

Example

A student was diagnosed with ADHD years ago and wants extended time on tests, but:

- Cognitive testing and achievement testing are at comparable levels.
- There is no indication in test results that the student processes information slowly or needs extra time to finish tests.

Example Continued

- The examiner recommended extended time on all tests **BECAUSE** of ADHD diagnosis, **NOT** because the student is unable to complete tests in standard time.
- Accommodations are granted only on the basis of a disability causing a functional limitation.
- Accommodation must be tied to the specific functional limitation.

Guidelines for Documentation

1. State the specific disability
2. Be current
3. Provide relevant educational, developmental, and medical history
4. Describe the comprehensive testing and techniques
5. Describe the functional limitations

Guidelines Continued

6. Describe the specific accommodations requested **and state why the disability qualifies the student for such accommodations on standardized tests**
7. Establish the professional credentials of the evaluator

Contacting the College Board...

- Services for Students with Disabilities
 - 609-771-7137 (voice)
 - 609-882-4118 (TTY)
 - 609-771-7944 (fax)
 - SSD Coordinator Hotline: 800-257-5123
 - <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/testing/ssd/forms>