USMLE Step 1 and Step 2 CK Request for Test Accommodations Fact Sheet

The National Board of Medical Examiners' (NBME) Disability Services reviews requests for test accommodations for the USMLE Step exams. Reasonable and appropriate accommodations are provided in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended in 2008, for individuals with documented disabilities.

Eligibility for Test Accommodations

A diagnosis alone does not qualify you. Under the ADA, a disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (e.g., reading, concentrating, thinking) compared to most people. Medical documentation should demonstrate:

- A physical or mental impairment.
- Your current functional limitations, based on an individualized assessment.
- The impact of those limitations under standard testing conditions.
- A clear rationale for each requested accommodation.

Never used accommodations before? The NBME notes that circumstances and needs change; you may still apply.



WesternU COMP students practicing manipulation techniques

USMLE

United States Medical Licensing Exam

Required Application Materials

Check the test accommodations box on your Step exam application. Checking the box does not start an accommodation request; you must submit it in the MyUSMLE℠ Portal.

A complete USMLE accommodation request generally includes:

- Request for Test Accommodations (New Request) submitted in the MyUSMLE℠ Portal.
- Personal statement using the NBME's prompts.
- Clinical documentation from a qualified, licensed professional.
- Certification of Test Accommodations (CPTA) form completed by HFCDHP if appropriate (link in the portal).
- Letter of support from HFCDHP (optional).
- Accommodation decision letters from prior tests (e.g., MCAT, SAT, ACT,) and records of other approved accommodations (e.g., 504 plans/IEPs, college accommodation memorandums).
- Other objective evidence: score reports (e.g., MCAT, SAT, ACT), college transcripts, and evaluations.
- Any additional documentation requested by NBME's Disability Services.

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Application Timing and Deadlines

The NBME does not have a set deadline. You must have a **current, completed Step exam registration** (within a three-month eligibility period) when you submit. Submit **as early as possible**.

- Allow approximately 60 business days for a decision once your file is complete (about **14 business days** for a "Subsequent Request" option or a break-time-only request).
- Example: for a June-August eligbility period, submit **no later than early March**.
- Registration opens in September for the following calendar year, so you can register about one year ahead.
- If more information is needed, you are typically notified by email within about two weeks.
- Your scheduling permit is on hold during review. Requests are processed in order of receipt and cannot be expedited.

USMLE Testing Accommodations

Every request is reviewed individually and may be approved in full, in part, or denied. Examples on usmle.org include:

- Additional testing time (may be less than requested).
- Additional break time, including with standard testing time.
- A separate testing room (not guaranteed to be distraction-free).
- Breast pump use or extra break time to express milk.
- Visual representation of sound for audio items.
- Items not on the Pre-Approved Items list.

No request needed: Zoom (up to 2.2x), reverse contrast, noise-reducing headphones, foam earplugs, and pre-approved items (e.g., inhaler, glucose monitor, etc.).



WesternU COMP student taking a mock board exam.

Healthcare Provider Documentation

Your evaluating or treating professional should be licensed and experienced in diagnosing and treating adults in your area of disability.

Documentation should include:

- How diagnostic criteria are currently met, with current symptoms (onset, frequency, severity, duration) and relevant assessment results.
- The full extent of current functional limitations in daily life and under standard testing conditions.
- A recommendation and clear rationale for why each accommodation is necessary.
- Refer to the NBME's guidelines for ADHD, learning, vision, hearing and other conditions.

Tip: The NBME does not speak with providers directly, so ask your provider to review NBME's guidelines and link your limitations to each accommodation requested.

Writing Your Personal Statement

No length requirement. Follow the NBME's prompts:

- **History:** onset, diagnosis, and past accommodations.
- **Current functioning:** your current symptoms and limitations.
- **Rationale:** how each accommodation provides access, and why it is needed.

Tips for a Strong Application

- Register and submit early.
- Upload legible, typed, complete documents (certified English translations if needed).
- Do not upload duplicate documents.
- Keep copies of everything you submit.

Meet with HFCDHP Before Submission

Schedule an appointment with HFCDHP to review your request:
disabilityaccommodations@westernu.edu

Submit to NBME & Resources

You will submit through the MyUSMLE℠ Portal. For more information, review the Quick Guide to the USMLE Accommodations Portal.

NBME Disability Services
disabilityservices@nbme.org
(215) 590-9700
3750 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-3102

Test Accommodations
Guidelines
FAQs

HFCDHP Letter of Support

Students enrolled with HFCDHP may request a letter of support verifying their approved accommodations and rationale for each. Contact HFCDHP early so it is ready when you submit.

If Your Request is Denied

You may request **one (1) reconsideration per active registration** in the MyUSMLE℠ Portal before your permit expires. Submit new, substantive documentation; do not re-send prior documents.

Step 2 CK After Step 1

To maintain the same accommodations approved for the USMLE Step 1, use the Subsequent Request option when you register. If you are requesting new or additional accommodations, select the New Request option, follow the prompt to complete and submit the request. Please note that you will need to submt new supporting documentation that wasn't previoulsy submitted.



WesternU COMP student viewing lecture material while attending a lecture.

Note: USMLE accommodation policies, procedures, and documentation requirements may change. Always review the current requirements on usmle.org before submitting a request. Approved accommodatins are not noted on USMLE score reports or transcripts.