



REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION AND STUDENT TESTING

OVERVIEW

To provide assistance and guidelines for determining reasonable and appropriate testing accommodations for students with disabilities.

SOURCES

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) Amendments Act of 2008.

PURPOSE

Testing accommodations are tools and procedures that help provide equal access to assessments for students with disabilities. They are meant to ameliorate the impact of the applicant’s disability without doing any of the following:

- Fundamentally altering the nature of the assessment or the ability of the assessment to determine whether the applicant possesses the essential skills and/or aptitudes that the assessment is designed to measure
- Imposing an undue burden on the school
- Compromising the security of the assessment
- Compromising the integrity, reliability, or validity of the assessment

Designed to “level the playing field” for students with disabilities, accommodations are generally grouped into the following categories:

- Presentation (e.g., repeat directions, read aloud, use of larger bubbles on answer sheets, sign language interpretation)
- Response (e.g., mark answers in book, use reference aids, point, use of computer)
- Timing/Scheduling (e.g., extended time, frequent breaks)
- Setting (e.g., study carrel, special lighting, separate room)
- Assistive Technology/Modifications (e.g., calculators, magnifying aids, Braille forms)

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Reasonable accommodation has long been recognized as an essential component of the testing process. Additionally, it is legally mandated under the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”). While the ADA does not define reasonable accommodation, it provides a list of examples of what might constitute a reasonable accommodation. With respect to testing, the ADA requires that tests be given to people with impaired sensory or manual skills in a format and manner that minimizes the impact of any impaired skill on test results, unless the test is designed to measure that particular skill. Additionally, a major gist of the ADA is that reasonable accommodation is not effectively addressed by a general policy; rather accommodations are best addressed only on a case-by-case basis. Test taking accommodations must ensure fairness for test takers with or without a disability, and should be consistent with accommodations that a particular individual is granted throughout their academic career. Finally, an accommodation may be refused if it would fundamentally alter what the test measures.

POLICY

Students who believe they have a current and essential need for disability accommodations are responsible

for requesting appropriate and reasonable accommodations and providing required, current documentation to the school department in charge of such requests, per individual school policy. Such requests must be made in advance of scheduled testing. Upon evaluation of the student's documentation, the school will determine whether an accommodation or accommodations are warranted.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION AND WONDERLIC ASSESSMENTS

As noted above, a student will ideally request an accommodation prior to the scheduled test date. This is not always the case, so Wonderlic provides a specific script for proctors or Independent Test Administrators (ITAs) to begin the test session with that will allow a student with a disability to determine whether they should seek an accommodation. As a starting point, the test administrator should provide prospective students with a description of the test being given. Commonly employed language is as follows:

“You will be taking a paper and pencil test. Test items are included in a test booklet and you will need to record your answers to these items on an answer sheet by filling in bubbles. If you have a disability that would impact your ability to participate in the testing process, I invite you to seek reasonable accommodation. You will need to discuss this matter prior to taking the test.”

Regardless of whether a prospective student requests reasonable accommodation on or before the scheduled test date, the school/test administrator may require the prospective student to provide current documentation of the fact that s/he has a disability as defined by the ADA and therefore is entitled to reasonable accommodation. The test may be postponed until the student provides this information. Accordingly, the prospective student may be required to provide documentation from an appropriate professional. Per the U.S. Department of Education, “Documentation of a student's impairment may be satisfied by:

- A written determination, including a diagnosis and recommended testing accommodations, by a licensed psychologist or medical physician.
- A record of such a determination by an elementary or secondary school or a vocational rehabilitation agency, including a diagnosis and recommended testing accommodations.”

For example, if a prospective student states that she will have problems reading the test because of dyslexia, the school/test administrator may request current documentation from a qualified professional reflecting that the issue with respect to reading stems from such an impairment, rather than other factors (e.g., lack of education). The school/test administrator may also require that the prospective student provide documentation concerning the functional limitations that are caused by the impairment/s and the degree to which they may impact the individual's ability to take a standardized test. The school/test administrator is entitled to such documentation since they should be providing reasonable accommodation for only those individuals who meet the requirement of being disabled. The actual process that a student must follow to request an accommodation and/or document a disability will likely vary somewhat across situations.

Once it has been determined that the prospective student has a disability that is covered by the ADA, the school/test administrator should initiate discussions with the student to help identify an appropriate reasonable accommodation. While it is important to recognize that this must be an interactive process, the

school/test administrator is not required to provide the prospective student the specific accommodation requested. Certainly the prospective student's request should be given primary consideration, but the school/test administrator's duty is only to provide an accommodation that effectively alleviates the impact of the impairment when taking a standardized test (i.e., the accommodation must be warranted by the documentation that is provided by the test taker).

Appropriate accommodations are best determined on an individual basis; common accommodations for disabled students are listed below:

- Providing extra or unlimited time to complete the test
- Providing rest breaks for test takers
- Providing reading aids such as a magnifying lens or large print to test takers with visual impairments
- Assuring that the test site is accessible to a person with a mobility issue
- Providing small group or individual testing sessions.

SELECTING THE APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATION

As previously referenced, the reasonable accommodation process should be very individualized and interactive. A school/test administrator should contact one of Wonderlic's psychologists at 800.323.3742 in the event they:

- Require assistance in this process
- Have questions about the listed accommodations
- Are presented with a request for an accommodation that is not listed. Requests for accommodations should typically be addressed prior to the date of the test.

Confidentiality

All information provided by a prospective student regarding reasonable accommodation must be kept confidential by the test administrator. This confidential information may only be shared with an authorized Wonderlic representative solely for the purpose of determining a reasonable accommodation for the test taker.

Wonderlic Score Reports will not include any specifics about a test taker's disability or the accommodations provided.

Important Note to Schools/Test Administrators

Test administrators should discuss accommodations for taking and of the Wonderlic tests only after an applicant has requested an accommodation. It is not appropriate to assume that an applicant needs an accommodation, nor is it appropriate to suggest specific accommodations to an applicant prior to a formal request or notification of the need for an accommodation from the applicant. Until an applicant informs you of their need for an accommodation the applicant should be assumed to be capable of completing the standard procedures.