WONDERLIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY: REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION AND ATB TESTING

OVERVIEW
This document provides assistance and guidelines for determining reasonable and appropriate ATB testing accommodations for students with disabilities.

SOURCES

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 (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.

For ATB purposes, the U.S. Department of Education defines an individual with a disability as a “person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.” Note: the test anxiety that is commonly reported by test takers typically does not rise to the level of a disability under the ADA.

TEMPORARY IMPAIRMENT VS. DISABILITY

Under the ADA, an impairment is only a disability if it reaches the level of substantially limiting a major life activity. However, the Department recognizes there are other temporary impairments that may require some special testing accommodations.

Examples of common temporary impairments include:

- A test taker has broken her writing hand and is unable to mark her answers quickly or accurately with her other hand.
- Recent eye surgery has made it difficult for a test taker to read for extended periods or mark their answers fluidly.

GENERAL 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. Requests for accommodations should typically be addressed prior to the date of the test. Upon evaluation of the student’s documentation, the school will determine whether an accommodation or accommodations are warranted.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION AND THE WONDERLIC BASIC SKILLS TEST™

Reasonable accommodations should only be provided for those individuals who are protected by the ADA or have a temporary impairment that would prevent them from fluidly responding to the questions on the WBST. Most individuals who have a disability or temporary impairment will request an accommodation before the test is scheduled. This is not always the case, so Wonderlic trains ATB test administrators to begin the test session with a specific script that will allow a student with a disability to determine whether they should seek an accommodation. As a starting point, the test administrator should otherwise provide all test takers with a description of the WBST and how it will be administered. 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. The test is divided into two sections and you will be provided with 20 minutes to complete each section. 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.”

They should then note that individuals who will require special accommodations in order to complete the test must request special accommodations before the test begins. They should inform the test taker(s) that this may result in rescheduling their testing session.

**DOCUMENTATION OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION**

If a test taker requests reasonable accommodation in the testing process based on the information provided, the test administrator will require that the test taker document the fact that she or he has a disability as defined by the ADA and therefore is entitled to reasonable accommodation. The documentation must contain current information concerning the functional limitations that are caused by the disability and the degree to which they may impact the individual’s ability to take a standardized test. Such documentation is required because since reasonable accommodation should be provided for only those individuals who meet the requirement of being disabled or having a temporary impairment that affects their ability to fluidly respond to test questions. The actual process that a student must follow to request an accommodation and/or document a disability will likely vary somewhat across situations.

For example, if a prospective student states that she will have problems reading the WBST because of dyslexia, the test administrator may request documentation reflecting that the issue with respect to reading stems from such an impairment, rather than other factors (e.g., lack of education). The administrator may also require that the prospective student provide documentation concerning the functional limitations that are caused by the disability.

Per Federal regulations, documentation of an individual’s disability may be satisfied by:

“(i) A written determination, including a diagnosis and information about testing accommodations, if such accommodation information is available, by a licensed psychologist or physician; or

(ii) A record of the disability from a local or State educational agency, or other government agency, such as the Social Security Administration or a vocational rehabilitation agency, that identifies the individual's disability. This record may, but is not required to, include a diagnosis and recommended testing accommodations.”

This documentation may also be presented in the form of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that was prepared for the test taker in grade school or secondary school.

An institution must maintain a record for each individual who took an ATB test. Per Federal guidelines, if the individual who took the test is an individual with a disability who requested or required testing accommodations the record must include—“documentation of the individual’s disability and of the testing arrangements provided in accordance with Sec. 668.153(b)” As noted above, ATB test administrators must ensure that documentation of the disability is present BEFORE granting any accommodation that alters the standard testing procedures, including extended testing time. This also applies to accommodations granted to address temporary impairments.
Additionally, any time an accommodation is granted, the test administrator must document the nature of the accommodation (i.e., “Provided additional testing time with scoring adjustment due to temporary impairment”), again taking precautions against disclosing protected personal information.

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.

Test administrator training and qualifications are highly varied, and ensuring the privacy of test takers’ medical records is very important. Therefore, an ATB test administrator’s responsibility is generally limited to ensuring that requests for testing accommodations are supported by documentation; reviewing the documentation and determining whether the requested accommodation is appropriate should be limited to trained school personnel and/or Wonderlic psychologists.

Once it has been determined that the prospective student has a disability that is covered by the ADA, the school and the test administrator should initiate discussions with the test taker and/or Wonderlic 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 WBST
- Providing rest breaks for test takers
- Providing basic 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.

These are appropriate for both disabilities and temporary impairments. Also, please note that in the case of an extended time test administration, a scoring adjustment would normally be applied; the school must determine whether such an adjustment is appropriate when such an accommodation is provided to a test taker with a disability. If it would not be appropriate, please contact Wonderlic for instructions on how to have the test scored without an adjustment.
IMPORTANT -- DO NOT provide any accommodation not listed above or in the Wonderlic Accommodations Policy without prior written approval from Wonderlic. Additionally, DO NOT provide any testing accommodations without verifying the presence of supporting documentation.

Some examples of accommodations that are not allowed without Wonderlic’s written approval include:

- Use of a calculator
- Use of a reader
- Creating a large print copy of a test booklet

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 AND ATB TEST ADMINISTRATORS

Test administrators should discuss accommodations for taking the WBST 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 WBST following standard procedures.

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