



Special Examination Accommodations Policy

Oct. 22, 2020

The National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) and the Center for Credentialing & Education, Inc. (CCE) approve appropriate special examination accommodations for individuals with disabilities, and with respect to other qualifying circumstances. NBCC/CCE have adopted this Policy to resolve candidate/applicant (examinee) requests for accommodations related to the NBCC and CCE examination administrations.

NBCC/CCE examinations are administered in either of the following two (2) testing venues: (a) fixed testing sites administered by the NBCC/CCE testing services provider (test center administrations); or, (b) internet-based testing at a site selected by the examinee (examinee site administrations). Approved accommodations related to disability, and for those examinees who use English as a second language, will only be available to examinees at the test center administrations. Such accommodations are not available, and therefore cannot be provided, for examinee site administrations due to significant technical limitations associated with internet-based delivery, and the inability to regulate or adjust the administration of the examination through this testing venue.

A. DISABILITY AND IMPAIRMENT (ADA) ACCOMMODATIONS

1. ADA Disability Accommodation Requests. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a disability as a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits an individual's major life activity, or major bodily function. An individual is substantially limited in a major life activity if the impairment causes a significant physical or mental activity restriction when compared with most people in the general population.

Examinees taking an examination at a test center administration, and who have a qualifying disability as defined in the ADA, may apply to NBCC/CCE for appropriate accommodations related to that disability. Requests for accommodation must be submitted to NBCC/CCE in writing with examination registration materials, and must include the information and documentation specified in this Policy. In order to qualify for a special examination accommodation, the accommodation request must include: a completed NBCC/CCE Examination Accommodation Request form; and, required documentation of the disability, which explains the need for the requested accommodation(s). Appropriate documentation will vary depending on the nature of the examinee's disability and the requested accommodation.

2. Disability Accommodation Documentation Requirements. The minimum documentation supporting the accommodation request must include: an individualized assessment of the examinee by a qualified professional; and/or, appropriate written confirmation that the examinee was previously provided with an examination accommodation based on the same disability diagnosis/assessment.
 - a. Qualified Professional Documentation Requirements. A qualified professional is an individual, who is licensed or otherwise properly credentialed, and possesses appropriate expertise in evaluating and assessing the disability for which the accommodation is sought. Documentation from a qualified professional must include the following information:
 - The examinee's full name.

- The specific, diagnosed disability and impairment of the examinee. Concerning temporary disabilities (e.g., sprains, fractures, or medical emergencies), the documentation must clearly indicate the current limitation(s) of the examinee and the anticipated length of recovery.
- The substantial limitations of the examinee, including the adverse effects on major life activities resulting from the disability and impairment, as supported by test results or examination.
- The specific examination accommodation(s) requested related to the disability and impairment.
- Why the recommended accommodation(s) is needed, including information explaining how the accommodation(s) addresses the substantial limitation.
- The relevant credentials of the qualified professional, including his/her licensure or certification, other credentials, education, and area(s) of practice or specialization related to the disability.

The documentation submitted must be signed by the qualified professional. NBCC/CCE may request additional documentation at any time from the examinee regarding the requested accommodation(s) before a determination is made.

- b. Previous Examination Accommodations Requirements. If the request is supported by documentation indicating that the examinee received a previous accommodation(s) related to other high-stakes and/or standardized tests, such as the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), the examinee must submit documentation of such prior examination accommodation(s). This required information must include official documentation from the academic institution or test administration organization, including: an explanation of the accommodation(s) provided; and, the reason(s) such accommodations were provided, as determined by a qualified professional or evaluator.

In the event that the same or a similar accommodation request was denied previously by an academic institution or test administration organization, the examinee must provide a detailed explanation concerning the basis for the denial of the accommodation request, and why the accommodation(s) is needed at this time.

B. ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) ACCOMMODATIONS

1. ESL Accommodation Requests. NBCC/CCE may provide certain examination accommodation(s) to test center administration examinees who do not use the English language as their primary spoken and written language, i.e., examinees who use English as a second language (ESL). Most ESL examinees first learned to speak, read, and/or write in a language other than English. ESL is not considered to be a disability, and such accommodations may be subject to legal requirements. State law may limit ESL examination accommodations for licensure examinations. Examinees should review the relevant State laws prior to submitting such an accommodation request.

2. ESL Accommodation Requirements. In order to be eligible for an ESL accommodation, an examinee must show that s/he has difficulty in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language, and provide documentation that the examinee:
 - Has limited English language proficiency, as demonstrated by the results of an appropriate English language assessment completed by the examinee within ten (10) years of the accommodation request;
 - Received an ESL accommodation(s) on tests taken with respect to undergraduate or graduate studies, within ten (10) years of the accommodation request, which may include a formalized accommodation plan; and/or,
 - Has been found eligible for, or is participating in, an English as a second language (ESL) or English Language Learner (ELL) program within ten (10) years of the accommodation request.
3. ESL Accommodation Documentation Requirements/Available Accommodations. Requests for an ESL accommodation must be submitted to NBCC/CCE in writing with the relevant examination registration materials. The request for an accommodation must be supported by appropriate documentation, such as an ESL or ELL Plan, or an official academic support or accommodation plan issued by an authorized representative of an educational institution.

One (1) or more of the following accommodations may be provided to examinees whose ESL accommodation has been approved by NBCC/CCE:

- Extended time, not to exceed time and a half; and/or,
- Use of an approved word-to-word bilingual dictionary without definitions or sentences, which must be provided by the examinee and is subject to inspection by the test administrator.

C. RELIGIOUS BELIEF ACCOMMODATIONS

1. Sincerely Held Religious Belief Request Requirements. NBCC/CCE will make reasonable efforts to accommodate examinees whose sincerely held religious belief or practice conflicts with a particular test administration policy or procedure.

Requests for religious accommodations must be submitted to NBCC/CCE in writing with the examination registration materials. NBCC/CCE will evaluate the request, determine whether such a conflict exists, and whether a reasonable accommodation is appropriate and available.

2. Religious Belief Accommodation Documentation Requirements. In order to be eligible for a religious accommodation request, an examinee must provide documentation to NBCC/CCE showing that s/he holds a sincere religious belief, which conflicts with a particular NBCC/CCE examination policy or procedure. Such documentation must include:

- A notarized statement or similar document(s) from the examinee which includes: a clear explanation of the conflict that the examinee believes exists between his/her religious belief or practice, and the specific NBCC/CCE policy or procedure; information regarding when the examinee accepted or adopted the religious belief or practice; and, a clear explanation of the examinee's requested accommodation(s); and,
- A written statement from an individual who has knowledge that the examinee has accepted or adopted the religious belief or practice related to the accommodation request, such as a religious leader or advisor.

D. ACCOMMODATION REQUEST REVIEW/ CONFIDENTIALITY

Examination accommodations are individualized, and considered on a case-by-case basis. NBCC/CCE reserves the right to request additional, relevant information concerning an accommodation request, consistent with this Policy and applicable law. All documentation supporting an accommodation request must be prepared and furnished at the examinee's expense.

All documentation submitted to NBCC/CCE will be considered to be confidential information, and will be used solely to determine an examinee's eligibility for a special examination accommodation. All application and accommodation request materials become the property of NBCC/CCE.

E. ACCOMMODATION DECISIONS/ APPEALS

All NBCC/CCE special examination accommodation decisions will be communicated to the examinee in writing. An examinee may appeal an accommodation denial decision by submitting a written appeal to NBCC/CCE at accommodations@cce-global.org, within twenty (20) calendar days of the date of the decision. The appeal must include a detailed explanation of: the reason(s) that the examinee believes that the accommodation request was improperly denied; and, the reason(s) that the request should be granted. In addition, the appeal may include additional, relevant information that the examinee would like NBCC/CCE to consider concerning the appeal, so long as the examinee explains how the information supports the appeal. All NBCC/CCE appeal decisions are final.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Appeals and issues related to the provision of approved accommodations during an examination are resolved pursuant to the NBCC/CCE Examination Appeals Policy, published at [www.nbcc.org/Assets/Policies/NBCC CCE Examination Appeals Policy.pdf](http://www.nbcc.org/Assets/Policies/NBCC_CCE_Examination_Appeals_Policy.pdf).