

Why is Documentation Required?

To receive testing accommodations, a student must have a documented disability that substantially limits their ability to participate in College Board tests. The student should also show a need for the specific accommodation(s) requested. Because a student's needs on College Board tests, which are primarily written tests, may differ from their needs in the classroom, a student's receipt of accommodations in school does not in itself substantiate the need for accommodations on College Board tests. Documentation may be requested to assist the College Board in understanding the nature of the student's disability, and in determining whether specific accommodations are appropriate for the student. The following explains why specific types of documentation may be requested.

1. Academic Achievement and Cognitive Ability Tests

Academic Achievement and cognitive ability tests help the College Board understand the nature of the student's disability, and the specific types of accommodations that are required. In conjunction with other information, such as the student's educational and developmental history, and observations by school personnel and clinicians, the test scores are utilized by our panel of professionals in determining the impact of the disability on the student's ability to take College Board tests. While they are particularly important for learning disabilities, they may also be requested for other types of disabilities to determine how the accommodation affects the student in a testing setting and which specific accommodations are appropriate for the student. For example,

- When extended time is requested, academic achievement tests conducted under timed and untimed/extended time conditions assist the College Board in determining whether a student's disability causes difficulty with testing under timed conditions;
- An academic test of reading is requested to demonstrate that a student with a disability requires a reader;
- When use of a computer is requested, an academic test of writing and documentation of a fine motor problem may be requested to demonstrate that the student's disability affects writing. (A visual-motor impairment, without an effect on writing, is not sufficient to support the need for a computer).

2. Psychiatric Evaluation and Update

Psychiatric evaluations are usually needed to support requests for accommodations for psychiatric disabilities. The evaluation helps the College Board determine the nature of the psychiatric disability and impact of the disability on the student's ability to take College Board tests. The College Board provides many different types of accommodations, and the evaluation helps in the determination of which accommodations are most appropriate for the student.

If the initial psychiatric evaluation was conducted more than 12 months prior to the request for accommodations, an evaluation update should be provided. Because the manifestation of psychiatric disabilities often changes over time, a current update is important in the determination of the current impact of the student's disability. This helps in the determination of which specific accommodations are appropriate for a student. If the update was not a complete evaluation, it is often helpful to provide both the initial report, and a current impact.

3. Eye examination records and visual measurements

When a student requests accommodations for a visual disability, eye examination records and visual measurements may be requested and may be sent to a visual expert for review. While it is understood that visual disabilities can vary in nature, the documentation should contain sufficient information to allow an expert in ophthalmology to assess the nature of the visual disability and the need for specific accommodations requested.

4. Medical evaluation

Where accommodations are requested for a physical or medical disability, documentation from a medical

evaluation may be requested and sent to a medical expert for review. The documentation should provide sufficient, current, information that would help a doctor determine the nature of the disability and the need for the specific accommodations that are requested.

5. Neurological Evaluation/ Pediatric evaluation

Where a student is requesting accommodations for ADHD, or for a neurological disorder, a neurological evaluation or pediatric evaluation may provide important information regarding the nature of the student's disability. Please note that in many cases, additional information (such as academic achievement tests) may also be necessary to support the need for specific accommodations (e.g., extended time).

6. Audiological evaluation/Statement of deafness or hearing loss

Students with hearing impairments should provide documentation indicating the severity of their hearing impairment, and its impact on the student's ability to take College Board tests. Note that most College Board tests are written tests. It is important that the documentation demonstrate why the specific accommodations that are requested (e.g., extended time) are needed for a written test.

7. Teacher observations

Detailed teacher observations provide information about the impact of the student's disability on their daily activities and their ability to take College Board tests. Teachers surveys can be downloaded from the College Board website, and can be a source of information regarding how the accommodation is being used in school. This assists in the determination of whether a specific accommodation, such as extended time, is required.

8. Rational for each accommodation

In order to be approved for College Board tests, students must demonstrate not only that they have a disability, but also that they need the specific accommodation that is requested. Because it is not always evident why specific accommodations are required, the documentation should include a rationale for the requested accommodations.

9. Historical information about the student's impairment

Most disabilities over time. Historical information about the student's disability, such as when was first diagnosed and how it has impacted the student over time, provides helpful information regarding the nature of the student's disability and its impact on the student's ability to participate in College Board tests.

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