

An Overview for Applicants:

What Does My Evaluator Need to Do?

Documenting Physical Disabilities

A critical part of your request for accommodations is the professional evaluation and report. To assist you and your evaluator in understanding the information that is required to support your request, we have outlined the necessary components of the evaluation in this document. If you find you have any questions or would like additional information, you may contact us at accommodations@aamc.org.

Why a Professional Evaluation is Required

The Association of American Medical Colleges is committed to providing appropriate accommodations to individuals with disabilities as defined by the American with Disabilities Act. At the same time, the Association must protect the validity of the MCAT exam by offering accommodations only when they are supported by appropriate evidence.

I. What are the General Requirements of the Evaluator?

In brief, the evaluator must:

1. Be a qualified medical professional and personally examine and evaluate the applicant
2. Include his or her name, title, and professional credentials in the documentation, along with a statement regarding formal training and expertise in the specific medical condition for which you are seeking accommodations. (This may be in the form of his or her Curriculum Vitae).

II. How Current Must the Evaluation Be?

To document a physical disability or condition, your medical evaluation should have been administered no more than **six months** prior to the application submission date, except for conditions that are life-long such as, diabetes or cerebral palsy. Documentation that is older than six months may be sufficient if it is accompanied by a letter (from an assessment conducted within the past six months) from your doctor that provides an update on the diagnosis, current level of functioning, changes since the previous evaluation, current treatment, and continued rationale for the requested accommodations.

If your evaluation requires an update and you have limited funds to obtain that assessment, please review the information regarding eligibility for [Financial Assistance](#) from the AAMC.

III. What Must the Evaluation Report Include?

Although the specifics of the report will vary according to your medical condition, in general the following components should be included:

1. Identifying Information.

The first page of the report should be printed on the evaluator's letterhead, and should include the examinee's name, date of birth, the medical evaluation date(s), age at the time of evaluation, and grade and school (if applicable).

2. A Comprehensive Evaluation and Clinical Impressions.

The report should include a detailed description of a comprehensive medical evaluation, including:

- a. Relevant background information, including your academic history and any educational impact of your disability
- b. Discussion of the history of your condition
- c. Discussion of the current treatments for your condition
- d. Discussion of the prognosis of your condition
- e. Evidence of a significant physical impairment using relevant metrics
- f. Discussion of the functional impact of your condition on a major life activity*
- g. A summary that integrates previous test results, relevant history, current test results, and clinical impressions and includes a diagnostic statement (see more below)
- h. A discussion of the potential impact of your condition on your ability to take the MCAT exam
- i. Specific recommendations for MCAT accommodations (see more below)

3. Diagnosis.

The diagnosis must (a) be based on relevant history, test results, level of current functioning, and clinical judgment, and (b) use standard diagnostic codes. If you are thought to have two or more disorders, the diagnostic report should clearly describe the **unique impact of each**, and the documentation guidelines for each disorder should be met.

IV. What Requirements Must the Evaluator Meet in Making Recommendations?

The evaluator must provide recommendations that:

1. Are individualized to you,
2. Recommend *specific* accommodations and/or assistive devices and,
3. Describe the rationale for each accommodation and/or device.

If additional time is requested, the evaluator should specify a specific amount of additional time along with a rationale for the specified amount of time. Requests for an untimed exam or “extra time” are not sufficient.

V. Is There Anything Else of Which I Should be Aware?

Finally, it will be helpful if you understand two concepts associated with the provision of accommodations. We describe these briefly for you below:

1. **Benchmark.** To be covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the “benchmark” is how well you are able to perform compared to **most people** in the general population.
2. **Purpose of Accommodations.** Pursuant to 28. C.F.R. § 36.309(b)(1)(i), the purpose of testing accommodations is to ensure, in a reasonable manner, that the “examination results accurately reflect the individual’s aptitude or achievement level or whatever other factor the examination purports to measure, rather than reflecting the individual’s impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills (except where those skills are the factors the examination purports to measure).”