

*An Overview for Applicants:*

# What Does My Evaluator Need to Do?

## Documenting Learning Disabilities, ADD/ADHD, and/or Psychiatric Disabilities

**A critical part of your request for accommodations is the professional evaluation and report.** To facilitate this process, we provide these detailed instructions for you to give to your evaluator. It is also important, however, that you have a general understanding of the evaluation requirements. If you find you have any questions or would like additional information, you can contact us at [accommodations@aamc.org](mailto: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?

In brief, the following conditions must be met:

1. **The evaluator** must:
  - a. Be qualified to administer the tests
  - b. Include his or her name, title, and professional credentials in the documentation along with a statement regarding formal training and experience in the specific disability for which you are seeking accommodations. (This may be in the form of his or her Curriculum Vitae).
2. **The report** must:
  - a. Be current (see below).
  - b. Include all scores of tests administered by the evaluator. \*
  - c. Show evidence of a significant current impact on functioning in a major life activity.\*\*
  - d. Demonstrate that alternative explanations for the condition have been investigated.\*\*
  - e. Be signed by the evaluator.

*\*If the Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational battery (WJ-III) was administered, the report should include a Compuscore printout of scores.*

*\*\*Please see chart on page 3 for more information.*

## II. How Current Must the Evaluation Be?

Your evaluation must be “current” – conducted within a specific timeframe prior to the MCAT exam – in accordance with your specific disability.

- To document learning disabilities and/or

If your evaluation is older than we require, but you have limited funds to obtain updated documentation, please review the information regarding eligibility for [Financial Assistance](#) from the AAMC.

ADD/ADHD, the evaluation should have been administered **no more than three years** prior to the anticipated MCAT date.

- To document psychiatric disabilities, the evaluation should have been administered **no more than six months\*** prior to the anticipated MCAT date.

*\*Documentation that is between six and 24 months old will be accepted if it is accompanied by a letter 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.*

### III. What Elements Should the Diagnostic Report Contain?

Although specific elements of the diagnostic report will vary depending upon the nature of the disability, in general all reports should include the following components:

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 date of the evaluation, age at the time of the evaluation, and grade and school (if applicable).
2. **History and Background.** The report should include:
  - a. A description of the condition(s)
  - b. Relevant developmental and psychosocial history
  - c. Relevant school and academic history, including performance on prior standardized exams
  - d. Relevant family history
  - e. Relevant medical history
  - f. Relevant employment history
  - g. Results of any previous psychological, psychoeducational, or neuropsychological testing
3. **Diagnostic Testing Conditions.** The report should specify the test conditions (e.g., location, time of day), affirm that all tests were administered according to the test publisher's directions, and indicate that scores are based on age-norms, not grade norms (except when unavailable from the test publisher).
4. **Behavioral Observations.** This is an important component, as the clinician is in a position to document the impact of the disability as it presents itself during the evaluation. *Potential* issues might include an examinee's level of motivation and cooperation during the diagnostic testing, anxiety level, attention, and oral language or social communication problems.

## IV. What Areas Should Be Evaluated?

The specific areas that should be evaluated and information that must be provided vary according to the disability for which you are seeking accommodations. We summarize these for you below. In all cases, however, the evaluator's report should list the tests that were administered, with accompanying scores and a detailed interpretation. In addition, the evaluator should fully describe your *functional limitations* due to the impairment, including the potential impact on your ability to take the MCAT exam under standard testing conditions.

Learning Disabilities	ADHD	Psychiatric Disabilities
<p><b>Intelligence</b> The evaluation should include measurement of intellectual ability.</p>	<p><b>Intelligence</b> The evaluation should include measurement of intellectual ability.</p>	<p><b>Evidence of a psychiatric disorder</b> Three types of evidence are required – <b>historical</b> (e.g., academic records, evidence of the impact of your condition in other settings in the past), <b>objective</b> (e.g. individually-administered tests designed to measure emotional functioning and personality), and <b>subjective</b> (your own report and/or the reports of professionals who have worked with you).</p>
<p><b>Academic achievement</b> The evaluation should include multiple measurements of academic achievement (such as, language, reading, writing, spelling, and math) that are relevant to your impairment and the demands of the exam. Timed and untimed tests in these areas are required.</p>	<p><b>Academic achievement</b> The evaluation should include multiple measurements of academic achievement (such as, language, reading, writing, spelling, and math) that are relevant to your impairment and the demands of the exam. Timed and untimed tests in these areas are required.</p>	<p><b>Demonstration of significant current impact on major life activity*</b> The report should provide evidence as to the current impact of your condition on a major life activity, such as your ability to learn. (This may include achievement testing.)</p> <p>In addition, if there is a recommendation for extended time on the MCAT exam, the evaluation should include timed as well as untimed tests in each academic area (reading, written language, and math), as well as evidence of processing speed or other cognitive deficits.</p>
<p><b>Demonstration of significant current impact on major life activity*</b> The report should provide evidence as to the current impact of your condition on a major life activity, such as your ability to learn. (This may include achievement testing.)</p>	<p><b>Demonstration of significant current impact on major life activity*</b> The evaluation must include <b>objective</b> measurement of attention (i.e., tests designed to measure attention) as well as <b>subjective</b> measurement of attention (i.e., self-report of attention problems). Current evidence of the impact of your condition could also come from academic records, reports from employers, or other professionals who have worked with you.</p>	
<p><b>Processing abilities</b> A processing deficit – in areas such as auditory or visual processing, memory or reasoning abilities, or processing speed – must be demonstrated using multiple tests.</p>	<p><b>Demonstration of early impact</b> Consistent with diagnostic criteria for ADHD, the report should address the presence of attention problems prior to the age of 12 (even if the disorder was not formally diagnosed until later).</p>	
<p><b>Impact of the processing deficit(s)</b> The report should describe the relationship between the processing deficit and one or more areas of underachievement.</p>	<p><b>Demonstration of impact in multiple settings</b> The report should demonstrate how the symptoms of ADHD impact you in two or more settings (e.g., at school, at work, at home).</p>	
<p><b>Alternative explanations</b> Other possible explanations for the underachievement must be investigated and ruled out, such as emotional factors, or limited exposure to English.</p>	<p><b>Alternative explanations</b> Other possible explanations for the attention deficits must be investigated and ruled out, such as emotional factors.</p>	<p><b>Alternative explanations</b> Other possible explanations for the condition must be investigated and ruled out, such as learning disorders or other psychiatric disorders</p>

\*Major life activities include, among other activities and functions: caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, breathing, learning, reading, communicating and working.

Note: If you are thought to have two or more disorders, such as a learning disability and ADHD, the diagnostic report should clearly describe the **unique impact of each**, and the evaluation guidelines for each disorder should be met.

## V. What Else Should the Report Include?

The report should also include the following three elements:

1. **Integrative Analysis.** The report should include a detailed, individualized analysis that integrates findings from previous testing, historical information, current test results, and clinical impressions.
2. **Diagnosis.** The report should include a specific diagnosis using standard diagnostic codes.
3. **Evaluator's Recommendations.** The evaluator must provide recommendations that:
  - are individualized to you,
  - recommend *specific* accommodations and/or assistive devices, and
  - 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.

## VI. 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)."