

Part I Test Accommodation Instructions

NBEO Part I ABS Examination Computer-Based Test (CBT) Given at Pearson VUE Test Centers

ADA-Eligible and Non-ADA-Type Disability Test Accommodations

Summary of Sections:

1. General Information for **All** Candidates with Disabilities (**ADA-Eligible, Non-ADA-Type**)
2. Information Specific for Candidates with **ADA-Eligible** Disabilities
3. Information Specific for Candidates with **Non-ADA-Type** Disabilities
4. Comparison and Examples of **ADA-Eligible** and **Non-ADA-Type** Disability Processes

Section 1: General Information for ALL Candidates with Disabilities

- A. In accordance with the following guidelines consistent with the **Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA)**, the National Board will provide reasonable test accommodations for all qualified Part I candidates. A diagnosis of **ADA-eligible** or **non-ADA-type** impairment by itself is not sufficient to warrant testing accommodations. There also must be compelling evidence that there is a substantial limitation in a major life activity when compared with the average person in the general population. The need for test accommodations must be adequately justified in all cases. The goal is to provide reasonable test accommodations to all disabled candidates who qualify for them while at the same time avoiding the dispensation of accommodations to unqualified candidates. The NBEO strives to provide a fair testing environment for all examination candidates.
- B. **It is best to register and apply for ADA-eligible test accommodations early, preferably as soon as registration opens.** Note that the final **ADA-eligible** deadline for submitting an accommodation application for the August 2019 Part I exam is **Friday, June 7, 2019**, the same date as the registration deadline.
- C. Candidates request both **ADA-eligible** and **non-ADA-type** disability test accommodations by completing the **Request for Test Accommodation Form** and submitting it to the NBEO by email at nbeo@optometry.org. **This request form should be sent by the candidate.**
- D. All accommodation request forms must be complemented by the delivery to the NBEO of current, written, qualified disability documentation supporting the accommodation requested. **The supportive documentation must address specific components that are listed in the Documentation Guidelines/Requirements and must be prepared by appropriate, well-credentialed professionals.**
- E. **Evaluations performed by trainees are accepted only if accompanied by a cover letter prepared, signed, and dated by the trainee's professional psychoeducational supervisor.** This letter must:
 - 1) certify that the document provides a valid assessment of disability;
 - 2) attest that all aspects of the evaluation have been reviewed and repeated where necessary;
 - 3) itemize the supervisor's test accommodation recommendations; and
 - 4) state that all components of the assessment have been approved by the supervisor composing the letter.
- F. The **National Board reserves the right to obtain, and typically does obtain, an expert psychoeducational professional's review of candidates' disability information.** The NBEO reserves the right to request additional justifying disability records prior to making an accommodation decision. The source of any disability documentation may be verified by the NBEO.
- G. **Any non-standard item that a candidate wishes to bring into the exam room on test day is considered a test accommodation and will not be permitted in the exam room without prior approval through the test accommodation process.** This would include crutches, infusion pumps, pillows, and the like. **Any such belongings brought to the test site will be inspected by the exam proctor when the candidate checks in to take the exam.**

Disability documentation can be sent to the NBEO via email at nbeo@optometry.org

Section 1: General Information for ALL Candidates with Disabilities (continued)

H. **ADA-eligible** and **non-ADA-type** disability request parameters are differentiated below, each in their own section.

I. Test Accommodation Request Outcomes

- 1) **Request Approval:** When the National Board determines that an **ADA-eligible** or **non-ADA-type** accommodation is justified and appropriate, the candidate will be notified by the ADA Coordinator of the approved accommodation.
- 2) **Request Denial:** When the National Board denies a request for accommodation, the candidate will be notified in writing by the ADA Coordinator with an explanation of the reason(s) for denial. The candidate may **APPEAL** the denial decision if time permits before the disability deadline expires in **ADA-eligible** cases (June 14, 2019), or before the exam date arrives in **non-ADA-type** cases. All **ADA-eligible** and **non-ADA-type** test accommodation appeals may be initiated by use of the **Appeal Form** found on the National Board website at: <http://www.optometry.org/appeals.cfm>.
 - a) **ADA-ELIGIBLE DISABILITY APPEAL:** An Appeal Form must be completed and submitted to initiate a staff-level appeal. The form must be accompanied by additional supportive **ADA-eligible** disability documentation sent to NBEO from the information provider. In the event of a staff-level appeal denial, the candidate may choose to initiate a judicial-level appeal by completing a second Appeal Form and providing additional evidence of disability. The Appeal Form(s) and all new disability records must be submitted prior to 11:59 p.m. on the **ADA-eligible** deadline for the Part I exam (June 14, 2019).
 - b) **NON-ADA-TYPE DISABILITY APPEAL:** Assuming there is adequate time prior to Test Day following this type of accommodation request denial, the same appeal process that is described above applies to this disability category. Unfortunately, last-minute non-ADA-type disability requests and/or appeals may be denied due to the considerable time involved in processing test accommodations from initial request to final implementation. In addition, the reserved Pearson VUE testing center may or may not be able to accommodate the special testing circumstances needed with a limited time resource.

Section 2: Information Specific to ADA-Eligible Disabilities

- A. Part I candidates do not need to be registered for the Part I exam before requesting **ADA-eligible** test accommodations (unlike those requesting **non-ADA-type** accommodations, who MUST be registered with the NBEO before applying for test accommodations).
- B. Only completed applications received in accordance with the **ADA-eligible** deadline (see the red box below) will be considered for accommodation of **ADA-eligible** disabilities. Examples of **ADA-eligible** conditions include, but are not limited to, a wide variety of long-term learning disabilities, ADHD, visual limitations, and hearing loss.

Significant Dates for August 2019 Part I ABS Examination Test Accommodations

For ADA-ELIGIBLE Disability Test Accommodation:

<u>Recommended Application Date</u>	<u>Opening Registration Date</u>	<u>Final ADA Application Deadline</u>	<u>Final ADA Documentation Deadline</u>
Now	April 1, 2019	June 7, 2019	June 14, 2019

For Non-ADA-Type Disability Test Accommodation:

<u>Earliest Appearance of Temporary Disability Symptoms</u>	<u>Earliest Application Date</u>	<u>Final Non-ADA-Deadline</u>
June 8, 2019	July 9, 2019	none

Section 2: Information Specific to ADA-Eligible Disabilities (continued)

- C. As mentioned earlier, the final **ADA-eligible** deadline for submitting an accommodation application for the August 2019 Part I exam is **Friday, June 7, 2019**, the same date as the registration deadline. **However, candidates should apply for accommodations far in advance of this date.** The final deadline for submitting any documentation related to an ADA-eligible request or for appealing a staff level or judicial level appeal is June 14, 2019. Because follow-up documentation is often needed, a candidate who applies on or near the June 7, 2019 deadline runs the risk of not having time to submit the requested follow-up documentation. In addition, anyone who applies on or near the June 7, 2019 deadline is not likely to have time to appeal a staff decision should the candidate's application be denied.
- D. **Separate test accommodation requests must be submitted prior to each NBEO Part I ABS exam.** Previously submitted, current, acceptable evidence of disability typically does not have to be re-sent to the NBEO from the information sources though additional evidence of disability may be needed to support the requested accommodation.

Section 3: Information Specific to Non-ADA-Type Disabilities

- A. **Candidates MUST register for the Part I exam BEFORE requesting non-ADA-type test accommodations** (unlike those requesting **ADA-eligible** accommodations, who DO NOT need to be registered with the NBEO to take the Part I exam before applying for test accommodations).
- B. Candidates with physical conditions not covered under the **Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA)** but which limit functionality may also request test accommodations for the Part I ABS exam. Examples of a **non-ADA-type** condition include, but are not limited to, a broken bone that would require the use of crutches in an exam room, or a temporary bladder problem that would necessitate extra restroom breaks, or use of a pharmaceutical infusion pump to assist with temporary medical circumstances. **Newly acquired or temporary conditions of this nature must be of recent onset relative to Test Day (must have become a limiting factor after the ADA application deadline).** Because these conditions will not have existed prior to the ADA disability deadline date, a different time frame is observed for submission of accommodation requests, documentation, appeals, and supplemental assessment materials.
- C. For a **non-ADA-type** of limitation, the candidate must complete and email to the NBEO at nbeo@optometry.org the **Request for Test Accommodation Form no more than 28 days before Test Day** (see the red box on Page 2). Application timing is of the essence as the test date approaches since it can take considerable time to arrange accommodations, when assigned. Due to the recent-onset nature of a **non-ADA-type** of disability and the subsequent late date of accommodation application, the need may arise to exchange a scheduled Pearson VUE test seat to a different Pearson VUE test center that is able to provide the required accommodation.
- D. Detailed assessment documentation from an appropriate healthcare provider must be submitted to the NBEO at nbeo@optometry.org. Essentially, this report of **non-ADA-type** disability must include, but is not limited to, a clear description of the condition and functional limitation; its date of onset; how the disability limits the performance of tasks as compared to average individuals within the general population; and an explanation of the specific accommodation that is recommended by the healthcare professional. The healthcare provider's reference to the **Documentation Guidelines/Requirements** is necessary to ensure that a comprehensive disability report is prepared by the professional disability evaluator.
- E. Though these conditions may have presented somewhat in advance of the 28-day application period, **non-ADA-type disability evaluations must be conducted no more than 28 days prior to Test Day** to document that the disability remains a limiting factor as the Part I test date approaches.
- F. While there is a defined application interval for **non-ADA-type** accommodation requests, there is no deadline for this category of disability. However, to allow the NBEO adequate time to process the **non-ADA-type** accommodation request, the **Request for Test Accommodation Form** and ALL documentation should be submitted as soon as possible within 28 days before the candidate's Test Day. Failure to present all application material in timely fashion likely will result in the NBEO's inability to provide accommodations for the functional limitation. Again, the candidate may find it necessary to reschedule at another Pearson VUE test venue due to the inability of some test centers to provide the approved accommodative conditions.
- G. Regarding test accommodation re-application rules for subsequent Part I exams, because of the **temporary or recent-onset** nature of **non-ADA-type** disabling conditions that qualify for NBEO consideration, any Part I test accommodation decision applies only to the original test date identified on the Request for Test Accommodation Form. Because this class of disability is **temporary in nature**, each separate **non-ADA-type** request for test accommodations must be accompanied by **updated documentation of limitation** (evaluation performed less than 28 days before Test Day) in order to initiate NBEO re-consideration of and potential preparation for any **non-ADA-type** test accommodation that may be granted.

Section 4: Comparison and Examples of ADA-Eligible and Non-ADA-Type Disability Processes

Disability Type

Parameters

ADA-eligible:

Application: apply EARLY; final DEADLINE is June 7, 2019.

Example of Disability: reading disability; CHRONIC condition of LONG-TERM DURATION

Accommodation Example: extra 30 minutes of test time

Documentation: psychoeducational evaluations related to ADA-eligible conditions must have been conducted within the past three years; physical limitation evaluations related to ADA-eligible conditions must have been conducted no more than 3 months before the final deadline since manifestations of disability may change over time

Non-ADA-type:

Application: apply within 28 days of the test date, but as soon as possible within that time interval

Example of Disability: broken ankle bone; TEMPORARY condition of RECENT ONSET (must have begun after the ADA application deadline)

Accommodation Example: extra chair next to exam table for leg elevation during exam to avoid ankle swelling

Documentation: All medical/physical conditions causing non-ADA-type limitation require documentation of the treating physician's examination and test accommodation recommendations; exam must be conducted within 28 days of Test Day to indicate that condition is likely to remain a limiting factor on the Part I ABS exam date