



All About Accommodations For Testing

Debbie Bergtholdt

COABE Conference 2018

Phoenix

Agenda

- Overview
- JAWS Demonstration
- Testing Accommodations
- Documentation
- How can you help
- Questions



JAWS – Job Access With Speech

- Now available with an accommodation approval
- Candidates need to be JAWS proficient
- All candidates approved for JAWS will receive:
 - A link to a free JAWS practice test
 - A keyboard shortcut reference



Accommodations Overview

- The purpose of accommodations is to provide candidates with full access to their test
- Accommodations are not a guarantee of improved performance or test completion
- Test accommodations are individualized and considered on a case-by-case basis
- All candidates requesting accommodations must provide appropriate documentation



What is NOT a Disability?

- ESL
- “Slow Learner”
- Active substance abuser
- Test anxiety
- Homemade diagnoses
 - “Spelling Disorder”
 - “Math Fluency Disorder”
 - “Cognitive Impairment NOS”



Disability Types

- Intellectual Disabilities
- Learning and Other Cognitive Disabilities
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Psychological and Psychiatric Disorders
- Physical Disorders and Chronic Health Conditions



Accommodation vs Accessibility

- **Accommodation** = modifications based on a disability
- **Accessibility** = always on features
 - Universal Access features adjustable font, highlighting, and color contrast



Commonly Requested Accommodations

- Extra time (25%, 50%, 100%)
- Extra “stop-the-clock” breaks
 - 30 minutes testing/5 minute break
 - 45 minutes testing/10 minute break
- Separate room
- Reader/recorder



Assistive Technology

- **Universal Access features** (e.g., adjustable font, highlighting, and color contrast)
- **Adaptive equipment** (e.g., special keyboards, trackball mouse)
- **Magnification: ZoomText**
- **JAWS** – speech reading



Trends in Accommodations and Accessibility

- Accommodation vs Fundamental Alternation
- Accommodations vs Security
 - Bluetooth-enabled devices – hearing aids, glucose monitoring
- Non-standard requests – Standing workstations, low light



Threats

Pearson VUE and GEDTS take test taker and test center safety very seriously.

- Candidate misbehavior in the test center
- Candidate's documentation indicates they could be of danger to self or others

How We Review at GEDTS

- Team of expert reviewers and external consultants
- Post our documentation guidelines online
- Review and consider all documentation provided
- Continual calibration to ensure consistent determinations
- Provide written explanations to the test taker about incomplete and denied accommodation requests



How can you help your students?

- Comfort aid list
- Lower cost testing clinics
- Assist with paperwork
- Encourage students to start the process early
- Act as an advocate



Incomplete Documentation



Reviewing for Completeness

- Top 3 reasons a request is incomplete
 - There is no (or minimal) supporting documentation with the request
 - There are missing pages from the documentation
 - The documentation is outdated

Unclear or Inappropriate Requests

- Candidate wants to take the test at home
- Candidate wants his father to proctor the exam
- Candidate wants to use friend as the reader
- Candidate wants to test on her laptop
- Candidate asks for “unlimited time”
- Candidate asks for “extra time”



Evaluator is Unqualified

- Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist diagnosed ADHD
- Pastoral Counselor diagnosed Bipolar Disorder
- School Counselor diagnosed a learning disability
- Family physician diagnosed a learning disability
- Teacher
- Parent
- Neighbor



Outer Limits of Accommodations

- The accommodation cannot be so extreme that test validity is compromised
 - 6X standard time
- The accommodation cannot fundamentally alter the test's purpose
 - Waiving a portion of the test
- The accommodation cannot jeopardize test security or the safety of staff/others
 - Testing at home
 - Administer medical care

Questions?



Contact Information:

Debbie Bergtholdt
Manager, Accommodations

Debbie.Bergtholdt@pearson.com

accommodations@ged.com

Helpdesk: 952-681-4907

