

Documentation Requirements for MCAT Accommodations

Documenting Physical Disabilities

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction.....	2
	Requirements for all examinees who are requesting accommodations	
II.	General Requirements of the Medical Evaluation.....	3
III.	Structure of the Medical Evaluation.....	3
	A. Identifying Information	
	B. Test results, clinical impressions, and conclusions	
	C. Diagnosis	
	D. Evaluator’s Recommendations	
IV.	Additional Requirements for ADA & ADAAA.....	4

Documentation Requirements for MCAT Accommodations

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I. Introduction

All examinees who are requesting accommodations on the MCAT, regardless of the nature of their condition or disability, must provide two (2) copies of each of the following:

1. Personalized cover letter. Include a detailed description of your disability and indicate specifically the accommodations you believe are necessary for you to take the MCAT.

2. Accommodations Request Form (downloadable from the website).

3. Relevant medical or academic records. Relevant records detailing difficulties in elementary, secondary and post-secondary education should be included. Records such as grade reports, Individual Education Plans, 504 Plans, transcripts, teachers' comments will serve to substantiate self-reported past and current academic difficulties.

4. A detailed written report from an evaluator (see more below)

- a) The report must be on the evaluator's letterhead
- b) The evaluator must be qualified
- c) The evaluation must be current
- d) The report must contain comprehensive, relevant historical information
- e) The report must include all scores and test scores
- f) The report must show evidence of a significant current impact on functioning (in a major life activity)
- g) The report must demonstrate that alternative explanations for the condition have been investigated and ruled out
- h) The report must include a specific diagnosis
- i) The report must include specific recommendations
- j) The report must be signed by the evaluator.

Keep in mind the following critical points:

1. All documentation must be submitted together. Do not ask your doctor to send documentation separately.

2. All documentation should be received by the Office of Accommodated Testing Services **no less than 60 days** prior to your anticipated MCAT date.

3. Many requests that we review are **incomplete**, and many of these examinees are unaware that their requests are incomplete. Whenever possible, AAMC documentation specialists will indicate what (if any) specific pieces of documentation are missing in order to make an informed decision about testing accommodations. Time permitting, candidates who submit documentation that is outdated, incomplete, or otherwise insufficient may be asked to update and/or supplement their documentation. For these reasons, it is in your best interest to submit your documentation as early as possible.

4. Your request and documentation will not be returned to you. We advise you to retain copies of everything you submit.

5. Please send two (2) copies of your documentation.

6. Give a copy of these Documentation Requirements to your evaluator, and ask him/her to carefully read this important information prior to your evaluation.

II. General Requirements of the Medical Evaluation

All examinees who are requesting accommodations based on a diagnosis of a physical or medical disorder must provide us with a copy of a comprehensive evaluation.

1. Any diagnosis of a physical disability must be based on the aggregate of relevant history, test results, level of current functioning, along with clinical judgment.
2. A qualified medical professional must personally examine and evaluate the applicant. An individual is deemed to be qualified to conduct a medical or health-related evaluation if s/he has had comprehensive training and experience in the relevant medical specialty, and has appropriate licensure/certification.

The name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator must be clearly stated in the documentation, along with evidence of formal training and experience in the relevant specialty. The evaluator should present evidence of comprehensive training and direct experience in the diagnosis and treatment of adolescents and/or adults with physical disabilities. The MCAT Office of Accommodated Testing Services reserves the right to request evidence from an evaluator of their professional qualifications. Diagnoses and documentation provided by family members will not be accepted.

3. Currency: For many individuals, the emergence of a physical impairment is of relatively recent onset; for others, there is a long-standing disability. Moreover, the course and effectiveness of treatments can vary significantly.

The medical evaluation should be administered no more than **six months** prior to the anticipated MCAT date. If your evaluation is older than six months, but you have limited funds to obtain updated documentation, please review the eligibility requirements for [financial assistance](#) from the AAMC.

*Documentation that is 6-24 months old will be accepted if it is accompanied by a letter from a qualified professional that provides an update on the diagnosis, the examinee's current level of functioning, changes since the previous evaluation, current treatment, and continued rationale for the requested accommodations.

The medical evaluation should be administered no more than six (6) months prior to the anticipated MCAT date.

Reports of diagnostic assessments that are older than 24 months will be helpful in establishing history and precedent, but will not be acceptable in establishing *current* impact. The written report must include the dates of the testing.

III. Structure of the Medical Evaluation Report

A. Identifying Information

The first page of the report should be printed on the evaluator's letterhead and should provide relevant identifying information, including the individual's name, date of birth, the evaluation dates, age at the time of the evaluation, and grade and school (if applicable).

B. Test results, clinical impressions, and conclusions

1. The report should include a summary of a comprehensive medical evaluation that includes relevant background information. This includes relevant historical information regarding the individual's academic history, with emphasis on the previous educational impact of the disability (if any).
2. The report should provide objective evidence from medically-relevant testing of the existence of a significant physical impairment.

Documenting Physical Disabilities

3. The report should provide evidence of the current impact on a major life activity (such as hearing or seeing).
4. The report should include discussion of how the physical impairment impacts a variety of domains, with the understanding that rarely does a physical disability impact only test-taking ability.
5. The report should provide evidence that other impairments with symptom-overlap have been investigated and ruled out.
6. The report should describe relevant employment history (if any) and discussion of where the physical disability has impacted job performance (if applicable).
7. The report should specifically discuss the potential impact of the disability on the person's ability to take the MCAT.
8. Integrative summary: the report should include a detailed, individualized integration of previous test results, relevant history, current test results, and clinical impressions. Computer-generated reports are not acceptable.

C. Diagnosis

The evaluator must establish that the examinee in fact has a physical impairment based on diagnostic criteria that are generally and widely accepted. For example, diagnostic criteria for medical conditions are found in the International Classification of Diseases-Tenth Edition (ICD-10).

NOTE: In situations where an individual is thought to have two or more disorders, such as a learning disability and a vision disorder, the diagnostic report must clearly describe the unique impact of each disorder, and diagnostic criteria must be met for each disorder.

D. Evaluator's Recommendations

The report should recommend reasonable modifications and/or specific accommodations (if appropriate), along with a specific rationale for each. The evaluator should recommend specific accommodations and/or assistive devices.

If additional time is requested, the evaluator must specify a precise amount of additional time (e.g. 25 percent additional time or time-and-a-half). The rationale for each requested accommodation should be included, based on the evidence from the testing. A request for an untimed exam, or simply "extra time", is not sufficient.

The doctor's report should include specific recommendations for accommodations, with an evidence-based rationale for each.

IV. Additional Requirements for ADA & ADAAA

Having a diagnosed impairment does not automatically entitle someone to accommodations on the MCAT. To receive accommodations on the MCAT, an applicant must not only demonstrate that s/he has an impairment, but that the impairment is a disability within the meaning of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA).

In order to establish a disability, an individual's performance in a major life activity must be compared to that of the average person in the general population. For example, it is not sufficient to demonstrate that an individual's reading achievement is significantly below IQ; the reading ability must also be substantially limited relative to an average person in the general population. Major life activities include caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, thinking, reading, concentrating, communicating, and working.