

# What you need to know about requesting accommodations on the ACT.

**September 21, 2022**

**ACT Accessibility and Accommodations**



**ACT**<sup>®</sup>

# Accessibility and Accommodations Overview

Accommodations are authorized adaptations to the standardized testing procedures intended to reduce and/or eliminate the effects of an examinee's disability. They should never reduce learning expectations by reducing the scope, complexity, or rigor of a test.

## Policy for Requesting Accommodations for the ACT Test

<https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration/accommodations/policy-for-accommodations-documentation.html>

ACT provides access to the ACT® test for individuals with disabilities through appropriate, allowable accommodations based on the examinee's demonstrated needs. To assist examinees in demonstrating a need for accommodations, ACT has established guidelines regarding submission of **documentation of an examinee's disability and *history of using accommodations***. ACT approves accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and in alignment with determinations made by school officials pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 Rehabilitation Act (Section 504).

# ADA definition of a disability

- Qualified person with a current impairment
- Qualified person with a record of impairment
- Qualified person regarded as impaired
  
- Significant impairment of a **major life activity** when compared to the average person in the general population



# Standardized Testing

- Taking a standardized test as a major life activity is legally vague
- ACT is looking for impact in *additional* major life activities



# Educational Team

Educational teams familiar with an individual student's needs should follow a systematic and data-based selection process for identifying required accessibility supports and accommodations.

Educational teams should include:

- educators,
- school staff,
- parents/guardians,
- and the student.

These individuals combine their knowledge, experience, and commitment to design an educational program that allows the student to access the same curriculum and instruction as their peers without disabilities.

The title, function, policies, and procedures of these educational teams is defined by the local educational agency and, for some students, in accordance with state and federal law.



# Accommodations Plan

- Accommodations are available only for examinees with disabilities *as documented in an IEP, 504 plan, or similar accommodations/supports plan and/or other documentation that substantiates a disability, as defined by the ADA.*
- Accommodations provided for the ACT should be used regularly in the academic environment; they should not be introduced just prior to taking the ACT.



# Accommodation Plan

- Accommodation should be specifically listed

<b>Good</b>	<b>Better</b>
Extra Time	50% Extra Time
Testing in Resource Room	Individual Testing or Testing in a smaller group





## Allowable ACT Accommodations and English Learner (EL) Supports

ACT has a list of accommodations that does not change what the test is designed to measure.

<https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/Allowable-ACT-Accommodations-and-English-Learner-Supports.pdf>

### Allowable ACT Accommodations and English Learner (EL) Supports

The information below is intended to assist students, families, and school staff in planning to take the ACT test with accommodations or EL Supports. Students must register to take the ACT test and work with a school official to submit a request for accommodations or EL supports via the Test Accessibility and Accommodations System (TAA) by the registration deadline for their preferred test date. If a student needs an accommodation not listed below, they should work with their school official to request the accommodations in TAA and ACT will consider the request on an individualized basis.

Students testing with approved accommodations or EL supports will test at a national test center or through Special testing (at their home school during a designated two-week window). The specific accommodations or EL supports needed to access the test and approved by ACT determine the location. The lists below describe what allowable accommodations are available via National or Special testing.

Please see the document [National vs. Special](#) (pdf) for high level differences between National and Special testing. This document provides additional details.

# Presentation Accommodations

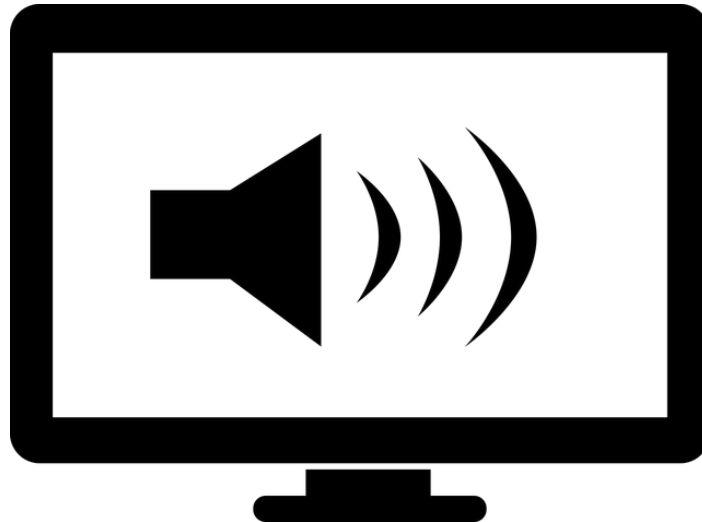
- Audio Amplification
- Braille - Contracted
  - UEB
  - UEB + Nemeth
  - EBAE
- Color Contrast/Overlay
- Human Reader
- Large Print (18 pt. font)
- Magnifier
- Pre-recorded Audio
- Printed Copy of the Verbal Instructions
- Screen Reader Software
- Sign Language Interpreter for Verbal Instructions (ASL, SEE, CASE, Cued Speech)
- Sign Language Interpreter for the Entire Test (SEE, Cued Speech)
- Tactile Graphics (Stand Alone)



# Screen Reader Software

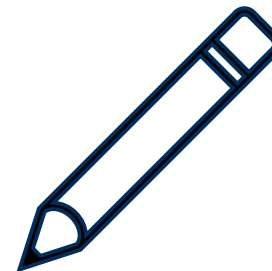
Software that allows examinees with visual impairments to navigate and interact with the ACT test. Screen readers provide access via a speech synthesizer or braille display to on-screen text, alternative text for graphics, and navigation.

JAWS and NVDA



# Response Accommodations

- Abacus/Accessible Calculator (Math only)
- Answer Masking
- Answer Eliminator
- Assistive Devices
- Brallier/Braille Note Taker
- Computer for Writing
- Responds in Alternate Method (pointing, eye gaze)
- Highlighter
- Mark Answers in Test Book
- Mark Answers for Review
- Scribe
- Speech-to-Text Software
- Spell Checker
- Work on Scratch Paper



# Timing Accommodations

- Breaks As Needed (Standard Time)
  - One and One-half Time, single session
  - One and One-half Time, multiple days
  - Double Time, multiple days
  - Double Time, for writing only
  - Triple Time, multiple days
- 
- Personalized Notification of Time Remaining
  - Time of Day



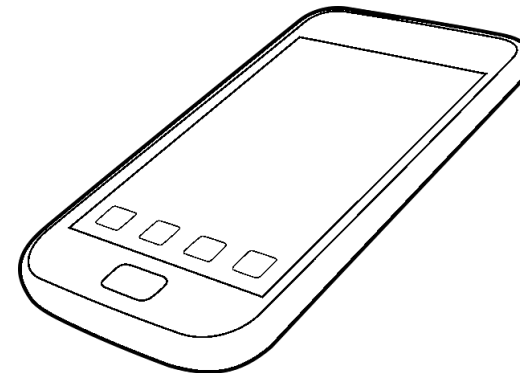
# Setting Accommodations

- Audio Amplification/FM System
- Background Music
- Countdown Timer
- Fidget Device
- Food, Drink, Medication (medical)
- Individual Administration
- Medical Monitoring Device
- Noise Buffer/Ear Plugs
- Preferential Seating
- Small Group
- Standing/Walking/Pacing
- Test Location, Home (homebound) or Care Facility
- Visual Environment (lighting, etc.)



# Medical Monitoring Devices

- Medical devices that are physically attached to an examinee such as a continuous glucose monitor (CGM), hearing aide, cochlear implant, heart monitor, or insulin pump do not need to be approved for use.
- Cell phones or other device used to *monitor* medical devices, must be requested and authorized by ACT in advance.



# English Learner Supports

- Bilingual/Word-to-Word Dictionary
- Translated Test Directions
- Small Group
- One and One-half Time



- Arabic
- Brazilian Portuguese
- Chinese, simplified and traditional (for Mandarin and Cantonese)
- French
- German
- Haitian Creole
- Hmong White (also called White Miao, Hmong Daw, or Hmong Der)
- Japanese
- Korean
- Navajo
- Russian
- Samoan
- Somali
- Spanish
- Tagalog
- Tongan
- Vietnamese



# Other Requests

To preserve test validity, not all instructional accommodations are allowable for use on the ACT.

You can ask for any reasonable accommodation on the student's plan; however, ACT must evaluate if it is allowable. This evaluation may involve the research team and content team to determine if the accommodation alters test construct.

For example:

A calculator for the Science test is not allowed as it has been determined this accommodation will fundamentally alter what is being measured



# Documentation:

<https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration/accommodations/policy-for-accommodations-documentation/criteria-for-diagnostic-documentation.html>

## Documentation by Type of Disability

Each request for accommodation is evaluated on a case-by-case basis using appropriate documentation. If a particular element of documentation is not provided, the diagnostician must explain why it is not included in the submission. The above information may be strengthened by the submission of letters from teachers discussing specific ways in which the condition affects the examinee in the classroom and in testing situations, or submission of completed [Teacher Survey Form \(PDF\)](#).

Learning Disabilities



Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder



Psychiatric Disorders



Visual Impairment



Hearing Impairment



Autism, Asperger's, Pervasive Developmental, or Autism Spectrum Disorders



Speech and Language Disorders



Medical Conditions



Traumatic Brain Injuries



# Learning Disability

The applicant must provide the results of age-appropriate diagnostic testing performed by a qualified professional **within the past three years**. Documentation must address the following:

1. Description of the presenting problem(s) and its (their) developmental history, including relevant educational and medical history
2. Neuropsychological or psychoeducational evaluation which includes results of an intellectual assessment using a complete and comprehensive battery
3. Results of a complete achievement battery
4. Other appropriate assessments for consideration of a differential diagnosis from co-existing neurological or psychiatric disorders
5. Specific diagnosis and evidence that alternative explanations were ruled out
6. Description of the functional limitations supported by the test results and a rationale for the recommended test accommodations specific to those functional limitations



# Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

The applicant must provide diagnostic results from an evaluation by a qualified professional **within the past three years**. Documentation must address the following:

1. Original diagnosis (e.g. date/age/grade, diagnosing professional, symptoms/impairment, course of treatment, and educational/behavioral/social interventions)
2. Evidence of childhood **onset before age 12** (symptoms of inattention, hyperactivity, or impulsivity demonstrated in two or more settings)
3. Evidence of **current impairment**, including:
  1. A statement of presenting problems (e.g. academic failure or significant struggle, poor social/familial functioning, relationships, behavioral problems)
  2. A diagnostic interview
4. A ruling out of alternative diagnoses and explanations
5. Relevant testing using reliable, valid, standardized, and age-appropriate assessments to determine functional limitation (e.g. intellectual, achievement, neuropsychological, and rating scale measures from multiple sources)
6. Number of applicable DSM-IV or DSM-5 criteria and a description of how the criteria impair the examinee (e.g. measurable impairment in academic achievement, social functioning, sports, extracurricular activities, employment, clubs, daily adaptive functioning, and/or executive functioning. Failure to finish timed tests cannot be used in isolation to demonstrate impairment.)
7. Specific ADHD diagnosis (ADHD-Predominantly inattentive, ADHD-Predominantly hyperactive/impulsive, ADHD- Combined, ADHD-NOS, or Unspecified)

# Psychiatric Disorders

The applicant must provide diagnostic information from an evaluation by a qualified professional **within the past year**. Documentation must address the following:

1. Specific diagnosis
2. Age of onset and the course of the illness
3. Psychological tests used
4. The history of treatment for the disorder, including medication and/or psychotherapy
5. Evidence of current impairment, including a statement of presenting problems (e.g. academic failure or significant struggle, poor social/familial functioning, behavioral problems)
6. In addition, please tell us how the examinee's impairment affects his/her functioning across settings. Observations and/or rating scales of the examinee's functional limitations in academic achievement, behavior, mood, and/or adaptive functioning may be helpful.

**Due to the variable nature of these conditions, documentation of a psychiatric disorder must be within the past year.**



# Visual Impairment

The applicant must provide diagnostic results from a complete ocular examination performed by an optometrist or ophthalmologist within **the past year**. Documentation must address the following:

1. Specific ocular diagnosis
  2. Record of complete, current (within past 12 months) ocular examination including: chief complaint, history of illness, eye health, visual acuity both at a distance and near point, complete ocular motility exam (versions, tropias, phobias, stereopsis), slit lamp exam, visual field, pupil exam, optic nerve, and retina
  3. History of treatment for the disorder, including any evaluations or therapy notes (e.g. vision therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy), and a statement about whether or not the condition is stable or progressive, and whether the examinee needs extended testing time, or the opportunity to take vision breaks during testing.
- If the diagnosed condition is **purported to affect reading, results of a measure of reading** (decoding, rate, and comprehension) **are required**. Examples of acceptable measures of reading include the WIAT-III and GSRT. Assertions of poor reading speed (or other conditions requiring additional time) made by vision professionals must be corroborated by educational and/or psychometric data. Letters from an eye care professional and/or a Visa graph score are not acceptable as evidence of reading problems requiring extended time on the ACT.



# Hearing Impairment

The applicant must provide diagnostic results from a full hearing test performed by a qualified professional **within the past three years**. Documentation must also address the following:

1. Relevant medical history, including date of hearing loss
2. Specific diagnosis
3. Description of functional limitation (with and without any hearing aids or assistive devices or treatments)
4. Related educational history, including information regarding reading and language skills
5. Specific recommendation for accommodation(s) and accompanying rationale



# Autism Spectrum Disorders

The applicant must provide diagnostic results from an evaluation by a qualified professional within **the past three years**. Documentation must address the following:

1. Original diagnosis (e.g. date/age/grade, diagnosing professional, symptoms/impairment, course of treatment)
2. Current and prior psychoeducational or neuropsychological evaluations
3. A history of **special education interventions** (e.g. specialized instruction, self-contained classrooms or schools, one-to-one aides, exemptions from proficiency or graduation exams)
4. **Current information** regarding adaptive behavior, attention, executive functioning, language skills, and mental health
5. Rationale for accommodations, based on current impairment





# Speech and Language

The applicant must provide diagnostic results from an evaluation by a qualified professional **within the past three years**. Documentation must address the following:

1. Specific diagnosis and a description of the presenting problems
2. Developmental history including relevant educational history
3. Results of speech and language assessments, including measures of expressive and receptive language, and communication skills
4. Evidence that demonstrates **the current impact** of a speech and language disorder **on reading, written expression, and/ or learning**
5. Description of the functional limitations supported by the test results and a rationale for the recommended test accommodations specific to those functional limitations



# Medical Conditions

The applicant must provide complete medical documentation from the qualified treating professional **within the past year**. While medical conditions may cause problems in psychological and educational areas, objective evidence that such problems are present is a requirement.

Documentation must address the following:

1. Specific diagnosis and **age/date of onset**
2. Current and/or prior course of **medical treatment**, including the impact of medical treatment specific to the examinee
3. Current and/or prior therapy outcomes (e.g. physical, occupational and/or speech therapy, mental health counseling/psychiatric treatment)
4. Current impact on examinee's education (e.g. school absence, hospital and/or homebound status, reduced school schedule)
5. Current impact on academic functioning (e.g. psychoeducational or neuropsychological evaluations, grade reports, transcripts, and/or other standardized testing)

ACT does not require images or lab reports.



# Traumatic Brain Injuries

The applicant must provide complete medical documentation from the qualified treating professional within the past year. While medical conditions may cause problems in psychological and educational areas, objective evidence that such problems are present is a requirement.

Documentation must address the following:

1. **The date of accident**
2. Status and diagnosis upon hospital admission
3. Length of hospital stay
4. Discharge date, review of **type and outcome of outpatient therapy** (Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech Therapy), if applicable
5. **Length of school absence** and/or confirmation of any homebound service or reduced school schedule
6. Evidence of **continued educational impairment** and its relationship to the requested accommodations, as supported by objective data. Examples include:
  1. A complete evaluation of intellectual, neurocognitive, and academic skills, using acceptable batteries of assessment (impact results cannot be used in isolation to demonstrate psychological or neuropsychological impairment)
  2. Observations and/or rating scales of the examinee's functional limitations in academic achievement, behavior, mood, and/or adaptive functioning
  3. Interventions provided by the examinee's school

More information on accommodations for the ACT can be found in the



Accessibility Supports Guide for the ACT—National and Special Testing

[https://content.act.org/act\\_national/r/Accessibility\\_Supports\\_Guide\\_for\\_the\\_ACT\\_-\\_National\\_and\\_Special\\_Testing](https://content.act.org/act_national/r/Accessibility_Supports_Guide_for_the_ACT_-_National_and_Special_Testing)





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