

**National Dental Hygiene
Certification Board**

**GUIDELINES REGARDING
TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS
FOR
CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES**



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INTRODUCTION

Candidates with disabilities are entitled under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and/or provincial Human Rights legislation to reasonable testing arrangements that provide for fair and valid assessment. Organizations administering tests are accountable for responding to requests for testing accommodations while ensuring the integrity of the examination. In order for an assessment to be valid, the examination must accurately test the knowledge, skills, or whatever it is intended to measure, rather than the candidate's disability. In other words, testing accommodations should be made to ensure the accurate measurement of a candidate on the dimensions of interest, not the functional limitations caused by the candidate's disability.

However, the accommodations provided should not place candidates with disabilities at an advantage or disadvantage in comparison to other candidates.

The National Dental Hygiene Certification Board (NDHCB) supports reasonable and appropriate modifications to the NDHCB examination procedures and/or materials in order to accommodate candidates with disabilities.

The purpose of this document is to provide details on various possible examination procedures and/or materials, as appropriate, offered to ensure fair and valid assessment of candidates with disabilities. It is designed for use by candidates with various disabilities who would like to request special accommodations for the Exam.

Before using the guidelines to determine what modification(s) could be made to testing conditions, it is essential that individuals involved in such requests be familiar with the:

- registration/licensure/certification requirements;
- examination eligibility criteria and the procedures for the administration of the examination.

NOTE: WHEREVER THE FEMININE IS USED, IT SHALL BE CONSTRUED AS REFERRING ALSO TO THE MASCULINE IF THE CONTEXT SO REQUIRES.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- A. The candidate and the educational program should reasonably determine prior to admittance into a dental hygiene program that the candidate's disability does not constitute an obstacle with a regulatory body.
- B. The examination is one of the measures on which a candidate's eligibility for registration/licensure/certification is based. It is used to assess the candidate's overall knowledge of theory and practice and is meant to supplement the other information a regulatory authority collects about a candidate.
- C. The candidate is required to meet eligibility criteria in order to write the examination.
- D. The determination of whether a testing accommodation is appropriate will be based on:
 - 1) whether the disability disadvantages the candidate in the standard test taking task;
 - 2) whether the test-taking task that is being accommodated by the modification is critical to performance in the work-place;
 - 3) the extent to which the same or a similar accommodation is likely to be needed or made available in the work-place;
 - 4) whether the accommodation alters the skills and abilities that are measured, and at the level at which they are assessed; and
 - 5) whether the accommodations provided give the candidate with a disability an unfair advantage over other candidates.
- E. The NDHCB will modify the examination procedures and/or the examination material, as appropriate, to meet the needs of disabled candidates, while protecting the integrity of the examination.
- F. Candidates with disabilities are informed in advance that they can request appropriate testing accommodations.

DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

Candidates with disabilities are individuals who:

- i) have any temporary or permanent physical impairment, or any persistent cognitive, psychological, sensory or learning impairment; and/or
- ii) believe that they would be considered disadvantaged in relation to other candidates for testing purposes.

**CATEGORIES
OF DISABILITIES
AND COMMON
TESTING
ACCOMMODATIONS**

The following classification has been made according to testing accommodations for candidates with various types of disabilities. This classification is not exhaustive nor does it provide the decisions that should be made regarding the appropriate accommodations for specific individuals.

The classification is designed to provide direction regarding typical accommodations. It should be noted that the same accommodation may be used by individuals with different disabilities, and individuals with the same disability may use different accommodations. The great variety of disabilities makes it close to impossible to generalize rules for testing accommodations. Each request for accommodations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Decisions regarding appropriate accommodations will be based on the nature of the disability and its impact on the candidate's ability to perform the tasks involved in taking a multiple-choice examination.

Candidates with Visual Disabilities

The profession may be able to accommodate professionals with some visual impairment. As for all request for testing accommodations, each request for accommodations due to visual disabilities will be dealt with on an individual basis. Reasonable accommodations may include:

- Recorded version of test material;
- Reader (individual who reads test instructions and questions);
- Recorder (individual who fills in answers);
- Large print test booklets and/or large print answer sheets;
- Mechanical enlarging/magnifying equipment;
- Use of technical aids (e.g., talking computer);
- Special lighting;
- Additional time;
- Separate testing room.

Candidates with a Hearing Impairment

These candidates usually have to receive information through printed material or oral/sign language. Reasonable accommodations may include:

- Written instructions;
- Oral/sign language interpreter;
- Special seating to allow candidate to view person giving oral instructions;
- Additional time;
- Separate testing room.

Candidates with Motor Disabilities

These candidates have reduced mobility. Reasonable accommodations may include:

- Recorder (individual who fills in answers and can turn exam

TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

- book pages);
- Additional time;
- Separate testing room.

Candidates with Learning Disabilities

These candidates are disabled in processing information from the printed page. Reasonable accommodations may include:

- Reader (individual who reads test instructions and questions);
- Recorded material;
- Additional time;
- Separate testing room.

Candidates with Limited Physical Tolerance

These candidates have limited physical tolerance due to physical, psychological, or cognitive disabilities. Reasonable accommodations may include:

- Special timing with frequent breaks;
- Additional time;
- Separate room.

Writing Centre

When selecting writing centres, NDHCB ensures that the sites are accessible (e.g., ramps, railings, etc.) in order to meet the needs of candidates with limited mobility. If some writing centres are not accessible, an alternate site which is accessible should be provided upon request.

Separate Room

Because of their disability, some candidates may require a testing environment that minimizes distractions resulting from noise, movement, or both. Conversely, other candidates compensate for their disability to process information by talking aloud and will require a separate room so that they do not disturb other candidates taking the examination. A separate room should normally be provided when using a reader, or a recorder.

Additional Time

Extending the time to take a non-speeded test is frequently used to accommodate a variety of disability-related conditions and is often provided in combination with other accommodations. It should normally be provided when accommodations include a reader, or a recorder.

The standard extension is time-and-one-half (e.g., 3 hours is extended to 4.5 hours). However, decisions regarding the provision of additional time will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Recorder

The use of an individual (selected by the NDHCB) to fill in the answers may be appropriate for candidates who have difficulty writing independently. The role of the recorder is strictly limited to writing what is dictated by the candidate.

For the examination, the recorder will be asked to complete the information portion of the answer sheet and to fill in the ovals indicating the candidate's answers to each question. The candidate will be requested to sign a CANDIDATE DECLARATION FORM which waives the recorder, the NDHCB for unintentional errors in recording the candidate's answers and other information provided. Steps can however be taken to minimize potential errors (e.g., have recorder read response after recording it). Specific instructions for recorders are provided in the "Forms" section of this document. Since the candidate will most likely be taking the examination in a separate room, the person invigilating the examination could also act as the recorder. The recorder will also have to sign a SECURITY DECLARATION FORM.

Reader

The provision of reader services is a traditional means of supplying accommodations to candidates whose disability precludes independent reading of the test material. The role of this individual (selected by the NDHCB) is simply to read, not to interpret, what is presented.

The NDHCB will select a reader who is a native speaker of the language of the examination and someone who reads well and articulates clearly.

Since the candidate will most likely be taking the examination in a separate room, the person invigilating the examination could also act as the reader. The candidate will be requested to sign a CANDIDATE DECLARATION FORM which waives the reader and the NDHCB for unintentional errors in reading the examination and other information provided. The reader will also have to sign a Statement of Understanding form regarding security/confidentiality of the exam.

Interpreter

Some candidates with a hearing disability may request to have an interpreter who has proficiency in sign language, or an oral interpreter who speaks in a way that enables the candidate to lip-read accurately.

The use of a qualified interpreter for interpreting test instructions and to assist in communication between the candidate and the person invigilating the examination is appropriate; however, it may or may not be necessary. Alternative methods of conveying the information may be arranged between the candidate and the person invigilating the examination.

**INFORMING
CANDIDATES**

If interpretation is required, it is more than likely that the candidate will take the examination in a separate room. The person invigilating the examination should always address the instructions to the candidate rather than to the interpreter.

Modification of Test Material

For some candidates it may be appropriate to modify the test presentation in order to accommodate them. The modifications will be made to the format/presentation of the examination material and not to the content of the examination. Each request will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, keeping in mind the type of accommodation being requested and the disability involved.

Candidates are informed through the NDHCB website and on the application form of the process, procedures and deadlines for requesting accommodations to write the certification examination so that appropriate arrangements can be provided.

Thus, if accommodations are not requested at the time of the Examination application, NDHCB cannot guarantee that the special accommodations will be available.

**DOCUMENTATION
OF DISABILITY**

In order to protect the integrity of the testing process and avoid unnecessary preparation for testing accommodations, the NDHCB requires documentation of eligibility and advance notification of disability-related needs.

The purpose of documentation is to substantiate the request for accommodations and to provide information as to what is required. Requests for documentation of disability are limited to establishing the need for accommodation. For those candidates who have observable disabilities (for example, those who have a fractured arm), there is no need for further documentation of the existence of the disability except a physician's note. For those candidates with hidden disabilities (for example, a learning disability), appropriate documentation of the need for accommodation is required. The candidate is required to bear the cost of providing the requested documentation.

Diagnosis of Disability

The candidate has to submit a formal detailed diagnosis of the specific disability. Unless the candidate has recently been disabled, the candidate should already have obtained such documentation in the past. The documentation should be completed and signed by a professional (e.g., physician, psychologist, rehabilitation counsellor, special educator, or other professional), familiar with the candidate's disability and, if possible, includes the required accommodations.

Diagnostic information related to the candidate's disability is highly confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties.

COST OF TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

GUIDELINES FOR REQUESTING TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

History of Testing Accommodations in the Academic Setting

Unless the candidate has recently been diagnosed or disabled, the candidate should also provide documentation of having previously received the same or similar accommodations in a testing situation as there is likely to be a history of accommodation in an academic setting. Persons involved in providing the accommodations, such as educators from the special education department, can provide the necessary documentation.

Testing accommodations are provided at no cost to the candidate with a disability. The NDHCB will be responsible for all costs associated with providing accommodations to candidates.

Guidelines for the Candidate

1. The candidate must submit a "Testing Accommodations—Candidate Application Form" to the NDHCB (see "publications & Forms" on the NDHCB Website) by the deadline indicated on the application form.
2. The candidate may be required to submit, with the request for testing accommodation:
 - a. a formal detailed diagnosis of the specific disability from an appropriate professional; **and/or**
 - b. supporting documentation citing the need for modifications and what accommodations the candidate has received during past educational settings.
3. The candidate may be required to submit additional documentation with the request for testing accommodations and to bear the cost of providing the required documentation.
4. The candidate must complete a "CANDIDATE DECLARATION FORM" if a recorder or reader is required by the candidate.

Commitment by the NDHCB

1. Review all written requests for testing accommodation that are received.
2. See that the required forms are completed and that the supporting documentation, if necessary, is submitted by the candidate.
3. Determine if it can support the request for testing accommodation.
4. Maintain a record of all accommodations that have been provided.

5. Inform the candidate in writing that it supports the request or not. If the request is approved the NDHCB will submit to the candidate the specifics of the accommodations that are approved. In the event the NDHCB does not approve the request for testing accommodations, the decision and rationale will be documented and a copy sent to the candidate.

The NDHCB will arrange for the provision of the approved accommodations and is responsible for all costs associated with the provision of these testing accommodations.

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