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# Oregon State Board of Nursing Frequently Asked Questions— Accommodations for NCLEX® Testing

## Introduction:

The Board of Nursing and the National Council of State Boards of Nursing are committed to providing accessible examinations to qualified candidates with documented disabilities that may affect success on the National Council Licensing Examination (NCLEX®). The FAQs presented below will assist nursing programs and applicants in processing requests for accommodation.

- Q:** I have a documented disability that impacts testing situations. How can I request accommodations for NCLEX® testing?
- A:** Complete the “Request for Testing Accommodations” form ([LIC-614](#)), in addition to the application for licensure by examination ([LIC-103](#)).
- Q:** What documentation must be submitted to the Board of Nursing to process a request for testing accommodation?
- A:** Two documents are required in addition to the application for the license: 1) **Form LIC-614 “Request for Testing Accommodations”** describing the disability and specifying what accommodation(s) will be needed for testing; and 2) **Documentation from a qualified healthcare provider** on official letterhead stating the diagnostic studies/analysis completed, confirmed diagnosis (including the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) code and/or the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual code), the specific type of disability diagnosed and the accommodations that are needed associated with the diagnosed disability. The documentation must include the original signature of the healthcare provider with their title and contact information. The requested accommodation(s) must align in the two documents. If the candidate requests different accommodations than the healthcare provider designates are needed, the documents will need to be re-submitted.
- Q:** Who would be considered a qualified healthcare provider?
- A:** A healthcare provider with specific training and experience in assessing learning/mental/cognitive disabilities and/or diagnosing conditions associated with learning skills. Some examples would include educational psychologists, psychologists with training in this area, psychiatrists, pediatricians with training in this area, other specialists focusing on learning and cognitive development. ***A physician/nurse practitioner may or may not be qualified to test for and diagnose learning disabilities.*** At many colleges a student learning resource center is in place to assist students with learning challenges. These centers can often direct students to the appropriate healthcare providers to assess and diagnose learning disabilities. Specific testing must be completed to diagnose learning disabilities. A diagnosis of a condition requiring testing accommodations cannot be made through a short visit to a primary care physician or family nurse practitioner.

- Q:** What type of documentation validates the need for accommodation?
- A:** The documentation needs to include the tests completed, the diagnosis(es) confirmed through those tests, and the accommodations recommended for the diagnosis(es).
- NOTE: The tests completed to diagnose a learning disability are typically extensive and the reports are anywhere from 5-20 pages in length. Commonly administered test names are: Woodcock-Johnson, Weschler Adult Intelligence Scale, and Differential Ability Scales. A healthcare provider cannot diagnose a learning disability through a short office visit that includes only talking with the student.**
- Q:** I went to my primary care provider and told them I needed help to do better on tests. The provider agreed to give me a letter saying I needed accommodation. Is this acceptable?
- A:** No. The healthcare provider must conduct tests to determine the disability that requires accommodation. In most cases the diagnosis of a learning disability requires multiple tests of cognitive and mental processing ability. **Test anxiety is not a recognized medical diagnosis.**
- Q:** I have been told I may have test anxiety. Does this qualify me for testing accommodations?
- A:** No. **Test anxiety is not a recognized medical diagnosis** that indicates the need for testing accommodations. Test anxiety is not a learning disability that qualifies an individual for accommodation. Those with test anxiety may benefit from pharmacologic or non-pharmacologic treatment for these symptoms, however. The particular symptoms should be discussed with your primary care provider.
- Q:** I have a medical condition that may cause me to need extra breaks from testing. Does this have to be submitted as an accommodation?
- A:** No, the exam candidate may take breaks, as needed. Scheduled breaks are offered during the exam but additional breaks can be taken by indicating the need to the exam center proctor.
- Q:** English is not my first language which causes me to need longer to read test questions. Can I submit an accommodation request for this reason?
- A:** No. The fact that English is a second language may impact the speed of reading but this is not recognized as a learning or testing disability that has a diagnosis code.
- Q:** Does requesting accommodation impact my ability to get a testing appointment?
- A:** Testing centers usually have only one private room for testing. If a private room is needed for testing, it may take longer to get a testing appointment in some testing centers. Information on needed accommodations is provided to the testing center by the Board of Nursing to allow for scheduling the most appropriate appointment time/place. Those with approved accommodations will schedule with Pearson VUE via telephone. Instructions are provided in the Authorization to Test e-mail the candidate will receive.
- Q:** How will I know if I have been approved for testing accommodation?
- A:** The Licensing Technician will notify the applicant if the request and/or documentation **does not** meet National Council of State Boards of Nursing criteria for accommodation. If additional information is needed from the applicant to process the request, the Licensing Technician will inform the applicant of what is needed. When the Authorization to Test comes via e-mail to the applicant, it will show the accommodations that have been granted.

- Q:** My accommodations in school allowed for double time to take examinations. Will I need double time for the NCLEX®?
- A:** It is unlikely any candidate will need double the allowed time to complete the NCLEX®. The current average time to complete the exam is approximately 2.5 hours. A very small percentage of testers run out of time for exam completion. For the NCLEX-RN® all candidates are allowed at least 6 hours to complete. For the NCLEX-PN® all candidates are allowed at least 5 hours to complete. With the average number of questions being around 118, candidates generally have plenty of time to test with no additional time or with 1.5 times the allowed time (one full day of testing totaling 8-9 hours). If double time is requested for testing, the testing extends over two days. If double time is needed for testing, this accommodation is granted.
- Q:** My accommodations in school included having paper/pencil tests rather than computerized tests. Can the NCLEX® be administered as a printed test?
- A:** No. The NCLEX® is a computer adaptive test which is a unique test designed for each person based on how each question is answered. A paper/pencil test cannot be constructed in this way or scored in a comparable way.
- Q:** I had extra time for tests during school because of test anxiety. Why won't I receive more time to complete the NCLEX®?
- A:** Test anxiety is a commonly used term but is not a recognized medical condition. As noted above, those with test anxiety may benefit from some medical interventions. A university or college may grant accommodations for various reasons that may not be part of the recognized learning disabilities that allow for accommodations on the NCLEX®.

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