TEST ACCOMMODATIONS APPLICATION GUIDELINES

In accordance with the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) and other applicable laws in the United States and Canada, CIDQ does not discriminate against people with disabilities in providing access to its examination program. CIDQ provides reasonable accommodations for its examinations for individuals with documented disabilities who demonstrate a need for accommodations. In the United States, the ADAAA defines a person with a disability as someone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities such as walking, standing, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating or working.

The purpose of accommodations is to provide equal access to the NCIDQ Examination for all individuals. Accommodations will align with the identified functional impairment or disability so that the area of impairment is relieved by an adjustment to the testing procedure, while still providing a fair and equal testing environment. Functional impairment refers to the behavioral manifestations that interfere with an individual’s ability to function or perform as an average exam candidate might.

The purpose of documentation is to validate that an applicant for test accommodations is a disabled individual as defined by the ADAAA or other applicable laws and to provide guidance in determining effective accommodations. Comprehensive information provided by a qualified professional is necessary to allow CIDQ to understand the nature and extent of the applicant’s disability and the resulting functional impairment that limits access to its examinations. It is essential that an applicant’s documentation provide a clear explanation of the functional impairment and a rationale for the requested accommodation.

While presumably the use of accommodations in the test activity will enable the individual to better demonstrate his/her knowledge mastery, accommodations are not a guarantee of improved performance, test completion or a passing score. No candidate shall be offered a modification which would compromise the NCIDQ Examination’s ability to test accurately the skills and knowledge it purports to measure.

It is important to note that the objectives of the multiple-choice and practicum (design) examinations are different: the multiple-choice examination tests the examinee’s cognitive knowledge relevant to Interior Design; the practicum examination tests the ability to utilize that knowledge in the technical and judgmental situations related to design development. Therefore, no candidate shall be excused from either the multiple-choice or practicum (design) examination or offered a modification which would compromise either examination’s ability to test accurately the skills and knowledge it purports to measure. Similarly, no auxiliary aid or service will be provided which will fundamentally alter either examination or will result in an undue burden to CIDQ.
Confidentiality

CIDQ strictly adheres to a policy of confidentiality and does not disclose names of candidates with disabilities or information concerning the application or accompanying documentation. Examinations administered with accommodations are not identified to scorers (or to third party score recipients) and therefore are scored no differently than other examinations.

How to Request Testing Accommodations

An individual requesting testing accommodations for the exams must submit a complete Test Accommodations Application with the required documentation and personal statement, by the published deadline date, prior to scheduling their exam appointment with Prometric.

Please follow the instructions below in preparing and submitting your application:

1. Read the Guidelines for Documenting a Request for Testing Accommodations (page 3 of this document) along with applicable guidelines if your disability is a learning disorder or ADHD, and share them with the professional who will be preparing your documentation.
2. Complete the Test Accommodations Application. The application form should indicate the nature of the disability and the test accommodations needed.
3. Attach documentation of the disability and the need for accommodation. A qualified professional must provide the information outlined in the application to verify the disability or impairment. Compare your documentation with the information listed in the Guidelines for Documenting a Request for Testing Accommodations to ensure a complete submission. Incomplete documentation will delay the processing of your request.
4. Submit a complete Test Accommodations Application with the required supporting documentation after you have registered for a specific exam administration. CIDQ must receive the complete submission by the registration deadline indicated on the CIDQ website for the desired exam administration. However, CIDQ encourages candidates to submit their Test Accommodations Application with the accompanying documentation at the beginning of the registration cycle to facilitate processing and accommodation delivery.
5. Retain a photocopy of the Application and documentation submitted.
6. Accommodation requests by a third party (such as a state or provincial board, evaluator, employer, etc.) will not be accepted or considered.
7. All documents must be in English. You are responsible for providing certified English translations of foreign-language documentation.
8. Candidates will be notified in writing whether their accommodation request has been approved.
Guidelines for Documenting a Request for Testing Accommodations

Candidates must provide detailed, comprehensive documentation from a qualified professional describing their disability or functional impairment, explaining the need for the requested accommodations.

The report should:

- **State a specific diagnosis of the disability using professionally recognized nomenclature**, e.g., American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders; International Classification of Diseases.

- **Be conducted as an adult**. Because the provision of accommodations is based on the current impact of the disability or impairment on the testing activity, the evaluation should have been conducted as an adult (18 years or older). If you are requesting accommodations based on a developmental disorder, such as a learning disorder (LD) or attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), you must also include records from childhood.

- **Be verified**. If the evaluation is less than 3 years old, it must be verified as still current by the professional.

- **Clearly describe the specific diagnostic criteria and name the diagnostic tests used**, including date(s) of evaluation, list specific test results and provide a detailed interpretation of the test results in support of the diagnosis. The report should include all relevant educational, developmental and medical history.

- **Give a detailed description of the candidate’s current functional limitations due to the diagnosed disability** and an explanation of how the diagnostic test results relate to the identified functional limitations. Fully describe the current impact of the disability on physical, perceptual and cognitive abilities. You must document current functional limitations in activities beyond test taking and include verification of your functional impairment by impartial third-party individuals who have observed you in day-to-day functioning or in professional situations.

- **Recommend specific accommodations** including assistive devices. Provide a detailed explanation of why these accommodations or devices are needed and how they will reduce the impact of the identified functional limitations on the NCIDQ Examination.

- **Report any accommodations the candidate currently uses in daily functioning, especially professional and work-related activities** and any past accommodations the candidate received in an educational setting or on examinations because of the disability.
• Provide contact information and credentials of the professional evaluator that qualify him/her to make the diagnosis, including information about professional license or certification and specialization in the area of the diagnosis. The dated report must be written on the professional evaluator’s letterhead and clearly indicate the name, address, telephone number and qualifications of the professional. The evaluator should present evidence of comprehensive training and direct experience in the diagnosis and treatment of adults in the specific area of disability.

• The documentation should include any record of prior accommodation or auxiliary aids, including any information about specific conditions under which the accommodations were used and whether or not they were effective. However, a prior history of accommodation, without demonstration of a current need, does not in and of itself, warrant the provision of a similar accommodation.

• If no prior accommodations have been provided, the qualified professional expert should include a detailed explanation as to why no accommodations were given in the past and why accommodations are needed now.

**Additional Information for Learning and Cognitive Disabilities**

The evaluation must be conducted by a qualified professional with comprehensive training in the field of learning disabilities. Testing conducted as part of the comprehensive psychoeducational assessment should be no more than three years old. A developmental disorder such as a learning disability originates in childhood and, therefore, school history and other information which demonstrates a history of impaired functioning should be included. Wherever possible, actual school records, psychological reports and other objective historical information should be provided.

Documentation must be comprehensive. It is not acceptable to base a diagnosis on only one or two subtests. The report should include a comprehensive history-taking with relevant background information and appropriate test data to support the diagnosis, including:

- description of the presenting problem(s);
- developmental history;
- relevant academic history including results of prior standardized testing, school reports and notable trends in academic performance;
- relevant medical and family history, including primary language of the home and current level of fluency in English;
- differential diagnosis, exploring and ruling out possible alternative or co-existing mood, behavioral, neurological and/or personality disorders which may impact the individual’s learning;
- comprehensive battery of age-appropriate, normed diagnostic tests;
- diagnosis based on a convergence of all test data, history and level of current functioning.
Problems such as test anxiety, English as a second language, slow reading without an identified underlying cognitive deficit or failure to achieve a desired outcome on a test are not learning disabilities and are not covered under the ADA Amendments Act of 2008.

Additional Information for Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

The evaluation must consist of more than patient observations and self-report. Information from third party sources is critical in the diagnosis of adult ADHD. The evaluation and report should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- history of presenting attentional symptoms, including evidence of ongoing impulsive/hyperactive or inattentive behavior that has significantly impaired functioning over time;
- developmental history;
- family history for presence of ADHD and other educational, learning, physical or psychological difficulties deemed relevant by the examiner; relevant medical and medication history, including the absence of a medical basis for the symptoms being evaluated;
- relevant psychosocial history and any relevant interventions;
- a thorough academic history of elementary, secondary and postsecondary education; evidence of impairment in several life settings (home, school, work, etc.) and evidence that the disorder significantly restricts one or more major life activities;
- relevant employment history;
- description of current functional limitations relative to an educational setting, including test taking, that are presumably a direct result of the described problems with attention;
- a discussion of the differential diagnosis, including alternative or co-existing mood, behavioral, neurological and/or personality disorders that may confound the diagnosis of ADHD;
- test scores or subtest scores from a neuropsychological or psychoeducational assessment that may be helpful in determining the individual’s pattern of strengths or weaknesses and in determining whether there are patterns supportive of attention problems. However, test scores alone cannot be used as the sole basis for the diagnostic decision.

The report must include a specific diagnosis of ADHD based on the DSM-IV diagnostic criteria. Individuals who report problems with organization, test anxiety, memory and concentration only on a situational basis do not fit the diagnostic criteria for ADHD. Given that many individuals benefit from prescribed medications and therapies, a positive response to medication by itself is not supportive of a diagnosis, nor does the use of medication in and of itself either support or negate the need for accommodation. Because of the challenge of distinguishing AD/HD from normal developmental patterns and behaviors of adults, including procrastination, disorganization, distractibility, restlessness, boredom, academic underachievement or test failure, low self-esteem or chronic tardiness, a multi-faceted evaluation must address the intensity and frequency of the symptoms and whether these behaviors constitute an impairment in a major life activity.
Other Functional Impairments

Candidates with other reasons for test accommodations beyond a disability should also submit an application. Documentation should be specific as to the type of accommodation(s) requested and reasons the accommodation is needed.

Testing Accommodations Review

The application to be considered for accommodations must be completed in its entirety. All applications will be thoroughly reviewed. No single individual will make the decision on providing accommodations. Candidates will be given an opportunity to provide additional documentation if what was provided is inconclusive.

If necessary, CIDQ will request an external committee review the application in order to avoid the perception of bias. CIDQ is committed to ensuring that all candidates receive a fair and equal testing environment.