

Procedures for Applying for ACT Test Accommodations – Spring 2012 Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE)

Your ACT-Approved Accommodations receipt deadline is **Friday, January 27, 2012.**

Your State-Allowed Accommodations receipt deadline is **Friday, March 9, 2012.**

OVERVIEW

ACT provides test accommodations in accordance with *Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. Schools provide accommodations under different regulations. Thus, having a diagnosis and receiving accommodations in school do not guarantee ACT approval of those accommodations.

Note: If the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) chose, as part of their contract with ACT, the option of Plus Writing, that information is easily identified throughout these procedures as Writing Test only. ISBE recommends that schools apply for writing accommodations for students as applicable in case the ACT Writing test is reinstated for this year.

You may photocopy the accompanying accommodations forms or download forms from the PSAE website: <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/psae.htm>. Two different forms are available to request accommodations for the ACT (PSAE Day 1). Review the information below to determine which one of these forms to complete for each student.

1. ACT-Approved Accommodations. Complete an *Application for ACT-Approved Test Accommodations* for students with diagnosed disabilities who are receiving special education services described in a current Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. Only students who have an IEP or Section 504 Plan are eligible to apply for ACT-Approved Accommodations. ACT-Approved Accommodations are not available for students solely on the basis of limited English proficiency. **ACT must receive the forms by the ACT-Approved Accommodations receipt deadline of Friday, January 27, 2012.**
2. State-Allowed Accommodations. Students who do not meet the eligibility requirements stated below (or whose application for ACT-Approved Accommodations is denied or additional accommodations are needed beyond what was approved by ACT) may request State-Allowed Accommodations by submitting a *Request for State-Allowed Accommodations* by the **State-Allowed Accommodations receipt deadline of Friday, March 9, 2012**. Scores earned with State-Allowed Accommodations will be used for PSAE purposes but will **not** be reported by ACT to colleges, scholarships agencies, or any other entities.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be considered for ACT-Approved Accommodations, students must meet **ALL** of the following requirements:

1. Professionally Diagnosed Disability. The student's disability must have been professionally diagnosed by a qualified professional, or team of professionals, whose credentials are appropriate to the disability. Current written diagnostic documentation of the disability must be on file at school and must meet **ALL** the "Guidelines for Documentation" listed in this document.
 - If diagnosed for the FIRST time before September 2008, reconfirmation is required within the last 3 years. A current IEP or 504 Plan on file at the school may serve as reconfirmation, provided the initial diagnosis was made by a qualified professional(s).
 - If FIRST diagnosed within the last 3 years, submit complete written diagnostic documentation *with* the application form.
2. The current IEP or 504 Plan must document ALL accommodations applied for are provided in school. Submit a copy of the student's *current* IEP or *current* 504 Plan that supports the need for all requested accommodations due to the disability. The student's name and effective dates of the IEP or 504 Plan must appear on all pages submitted. If the plan has been in place less than 3 years, full diagnostic documentation is required.

AUTHORIZATION TO PROVIDE CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTATION

Schools are required to provide the necessary information and documentation to support applications for test accommodations. ISBE has authorized ACT to collect and review this documentation. All documentation provided to ACT will be kept confidential and will not become part of the student's ACT score record.

EXAMPLES OF TEST ACCOMMODATIONS

Extended Time and/or Alternate Formats. If the student's professionally diagnosed and documented disability requires one or more of the accommodations below, the school must submit a completed application form:

- more than standard time
- testing over multiple days
- additional or stop-the-clock breaks
- alternate test formats such as Braille, cassettes or DVDs, or a reader, and/or alternate response modes
- Large type test booklet: If a student requires a large type test booklet (18-point) but can test with standard time limits (including the standard break(s) allowed), the school must submit a completed application form specifying the accommodations requested. Refer to Section E on the application.
- Writing Test only: Use of a scribe or computer for the Writing Test (typically for disabilities that prevent students from writing independently).
- Writing Test only: Extended time on the Writing Test only (students with developmental writing disorder, written expression, or dysgraphia).

Local Decision Accommodations. If a student can test in a single session with standard time limits (including the standard break(s) allowed) and use a regular (10-point) test booklet, but the disability requires other accommodations, **the school may make such arrangements without prior consultation with ACT**. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- assignment to a wheelchair accessible room,
- permission for diabetics to eat snacks (requires a separate room),
- permission to use Irlen filters or color overlays,
- marking answers in test booklet (no extended time).

Examples of accommodations for students with hearing impairments that do not require time extensions or ACT approval include:

- a sign language interpreter (not a relative) to sign all spoken instructions (not the test items),
- seating near the front of the room to lipread spoken instructions,
- a written copy of spoken instructions with visual notification from testing staff of test start, five minutes remaining, and stop times.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

To be considered for testing, applications and all required documentation for ACT-Approved Accommodations must be **received by ACT no later than the ACT-Approved Accommodations deadline of Friday, January 27, 2012**. The Test Accommodations Coordinator at each school is responsible for gathering all completed forms and submitting them as a group to arrive by the deadline *with a completed* Test Accommodations Coordinator Header to:

ACT State Test Accommodations
301 ACT Drive
PO Box 4071
Iowa City, IA 52243

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM AND PROVIDING REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

A school official such as a counselor, special education teacher, or principal is to complete a form for **each** student for whom accommodations are requested. **The form may be photocopied as needed**. The application form will **not** be processed if it is missing required information or signatures or is received after the deadline. If any of the information provided is false, ACT reserves the right to cancel scores.

Note: The most frequent reason accommodations are not approved is incomplete or inaccurate information on the application form. Please read and follow instructions carefully.

Side 1 of the *Application for ACT-Approved Test Accommodations form*

- A. Student Information.** Student address is required. If not available, school address may be used.
- B. Previous Approval of the Same Accommodations on the ACT.** Mark the appropriate answer. If no, complete both sides of the application and submit required documentation.
- C. Diagnosed Disability.** Check all applicable disabilities as stated in written documentation on file at the school. Pay attention to those diagnoses that require full documentation for approval. Include FSIQ where requested. Writing Test only: Students with developmental writing disorder, written expression, or dysgraphia apply for extended time on the Writing Test only.
- D. Test Format Requested.** The type of materials applied for must be supported by the accommodations plan at school or on a previous "ACT Accommodations Approval" letter for this student. Documentation of a visual disability is required to support requests for large type test booklets. Both scannable and large block answer sheets are provided with each large type booklet. If no test format is selected, regular type will be assigned.
Important—Students using cassettes/DVDs may test as a group. Students must use their own headphones and begin each test at the same time. Before requesting DVDs, work with technical personnel at your school. Order the practice ACT tests on DVDs so that you can test them on your equipment. Also have students take the practice tests so they will be comfortable using DVDs on test day. ACT will provide usage guidelines and track listings with each set of DVDs.
- E. Time Requested.** Mark the option most similar to the accommodations normally provided at school. ACT will assign a timing code based on the disability and approved test format.
- F. Other Accommodations Requested.** If needed due to the disability, explain in detail and submit supporting documentation. Complete only if other accommodations are requested. Writing Test only: If a student is unable to produce independent writing, list the accommodations normally provided at school for writing tests (e.g., use of a scribe or computer).

Side 2 of the *Application for ACT-Approved Test Accommodations form*

- G. Specific Disorder or Condition.** Must be specific. Follow the instructions on the form. The following terms are **not** sufficiently specific: specific learning disabilities (SLD), other health impaired, perceptual communication disorder, processing disorder, etc. For learning disabilities, please use the DSM-IV diagnosis, if available, as stated on the documentation from the diagnosing professional.
- H. History of Diagnosis.** The diagnosing professional's credentials must be appropriate to the disability. If the disability was identified by an IEP team, list relevant titles and specializations.
- H-a.** If **FIRST** diagnosed before grade 9, complete only the "age or grade of student" when diagnosed. **If FIRST diagnosis was within the last 3 years, submit complete diagnostic documentation with the application form** (see "Guidelines for Documentation" section).
- H-b.** If **recently re-confirmed, there must be a re-confirmation within the last 3 years** by a psychologist, learning disabilities specialist/team, or other qualified professional, or team of professionals, with direct knowledge of the student's disability. A current IEP or 504 Plan on file at the school may serve as reconfirmation.
- I. Current IEP or 504 Plan on File at School.** Indicate the type of accommodations plan now on file at the school, and attach the required copy. The student's name and effective dates of the IEP or 504 Plan must appear on all submitted pages.
- J. School Official's Signature.** Read and sign the statement. A relative of the student may *not* sign.
- K. Student/Parent Signature.** *If the student is 18 or older, the student must sign. If the student is younger than 18, his/her parent or legal guardian must sign. School official may sign for the parent if approval has been obtained by phone; note "per phone call" and initial.*

ACT Guidelines for Documentation

Documentation must be written by the diagnosing professional and must meet **ALL** of these guidelines:

1. **States the specific impairment** as diagnosed
2. **Is current** (no older than September 2008)
3. **Describes presenting problem(s) and developmental history**, including relevant educational and medical history
4. **Describes the comprehensive assessments** (neuropsychological or psychoeducational evaluations), including evaluation dates, used to arrive at the diagnosis:
 - *For learning disabilities*, must provide test results (including subtests), **with standard scores** and percentiles, from
 - a) an aptitude assessment using a complete, valid, and comprehensive battery,
 - b) a complete achievement battery,
 - c) an assessment of information processing, **and**
 - d) evidence that alternative explanations were ruled out.
 - *For ADD/ADHD*, must include
 - a) evidence of early impairment,
 - b) evidence of current impairment, including presenting problem and diagnostic interview,
 - c) evidence that alternative explanations were ruled out,
 - d) results from valid, standardized, age-appropriate assessments, **and**
 - e) number of applicable DSM-IV criteria and description of how they impair the individual.
 - *For visual, hearing, psychological, emotional, or physical disorders*, provide detailed results from complete ocular, audiologic, or other appropriate diagnostic examination.
5. **Describes the substantial limitations (e.g., adverse effects on learning, academic achievement, or other major life activities) resulting from the impairment**, as supported by the test results
6. **Describes specific recommended accommodations** and provides a rationale explaining how these specific accommodations address the substantial limitations
7. **Establishes the professional credentials of the evaluator**, including information about licensure or certification, education, and area of specialization

Complete details about ACT's policies for documentation of requests for test accommodations are available at: www.act.org/aap/disab/policy.html

RELATED INFORMATION

Application forms are processed in the order they are received at ACT.

1. **Notification of PSAE Day 1 Accommodations Approval.** ACT will send an authorized accommodations letter for each student approved for accommodations on the ACT to the school's Test Accommodations Coordinator. If a student's *Application for ACT-Approved Accommodations* is not approved, ACT will send written notification to the Test Accommodations Coordinator, with these options:
 - a. **Submit Additional Documentation.** ACT will notify the Test Accommodations Coordinator at the school if additional documentation is needed to support the student's application. Documentation must be submitted in writing – a fax reply will assist in meeting deadlines. Refer to your *Checklist of Dates* for the deadline to submit this additional documentation.
 - b. **Request State-Allowed Accommodations.** If a student's *Application for ACT-Approved Accommodations* is not approved, you may request State-Allowed Accommodations instead, using the *Request for State-Allowed Accommodations* form. Refer to your *Checklist of Dates* for the deadline to submit this request. If a request to test with State-Allowed Accommodations is not received for a student, the student **is expected to** test with standard time limits and use a regular type (10-point) test booklet *without* accommodations.
 - c. **Test Standard Time.** If you fail to submit additional documentation when it is requested and by the deadline you are given, the student **may** test with standard time limits and use a regular type (10-point) test booklet *without* accommodations or may request State-Allowed accommodations.
2. **Determining Day 2 Accommodations.** ACT's approval of accommodations applies to PSAE Day 1 administration of the ACT only. However, schools will need to order from Pearson's *PSAE TestSites Online* system the quantity and type of alternate formats needed for the PSAE Day 2 administration.
3. **Assignment of Test Materials.** ACT assigns specific test materials (by serial number) to each student for PSAE Day 1. **Only the authorized student may use the materials; they may not be used by another student, or transferred to another test site. If ACT procedures are not followed, the resulting scores will be cancelled.** PSAE Day 2 accommodations materials ordered are not assigned to specific students.
4. **Timing Codes.** ACT will provide specific instructions and will assign a timing code to each student approved for ACT-Approved Accommodations. **Students with different timing codes may not test in the same room; students approved for a reader's script must test individually; and ACT-Approved Accommodations must be administered separate from State-Allowed Accommodations.** You will receive an ACT-Approved Accommodations roster and a State-Allowed Accommodations roster. Do NOT mix these two groups in a room together. If ACT procedures are not followed, the resulting scores may be cancelled.
5. **Sequence of the Tests.** A student must complete all PSAE Day 1 tests before beginning PSAE Day 2 tests. If ACT procedures are not followed, the resulting scores may be cancelled.
6. **Preparing for the ACT.** A copy of *Preparing for the ACT*, which includes information about the tests, test-taking strategies, and complete practice tests, is available. Schools have a supply of this free regular type booklet for distribution to students. Many schools have previously ordered a copy of a practice test in Braille, large type, or on cassettes or DVDs for their libraries. If your school does not have copies available, you may order library copies of these alternate format practice tests directly from ACT at no charge. Refer to ACT's website on Services for Students Disabilities at www.act.org/aap/disab/index.html for more information. You will receive *Preparing for the ACT Special Testing* with each alternate format ordered; it contains the scoring keys.

ACT REPEAT TESTING

Students approved for accommodations may, at their option, apply to take the ACT again with the same approved accommodations.

1. During Spring 2012. ACT has adjusted its usual 60-day ACT retest restriction for the state administration. Grade 11 students who wish to take the ACT with extended time more than once during the spring may do so, as follows:
 - Students who can test with regular type or large type materials with up to 50 percent additional time may request to test with accommodations **once** during the State Testing window **and** may also apply for ACT Extended Time National Testing on any National Test Date.
 - Students whose disabilities require Special Testing (e.g., more than 50 percent additional time, alternate formats, or testing over multiple days) may request to test with accommodations **once** during the state testing window **and** may also apply for and test via ACT Special Testing during the months immediately before or after the statewide administration. To apply, students must submit a completed *Request for ACT Special Testing*.
2. During 2012-2013. Students who have been approved for ACT accommodations for the spring statewide administration and wish to retake the ACT with accommodations during the 2012-2013 academic year are eligible for a streamlined request process. These students will first need to determine which of the following options is appropriate to their disabilities:
 - ACT Extended Time National Testing for students who normally use up to 50 percent additional time and regular type or large type test booklets; **or**
 - ACT Special Testing for students who normally use more than 50 percent additional time, test over multiple days, or need alternate test formats (e.g., Braille, cassettes or DVDs, or a reader).

These students will need to submit the appropriate 2012-2013 ACT request form with only Side 1 completed, along with a copy of their authorized accommodations letter from the statewide administration of the ACT. Requests for additional or different accommodations require a new request form completed in full with documentation to support the new accommodations.