# Template for NBME USMLE Accommodation Request Process

## Important Notes:

* As not all testing sites can provide accommodations, you will have to request accommodations and receive approval ***prior*** to scheduling your exam. If you have a particular site in mind (or area need) you will want to submit your accommodations as early as possible (6 months prior to the desired test date).
  + FYI: When you register for the USMLE exam it will ask you if you are intending on seeking accommodations. If you respond yes (as you should), it will pause your registration until you complete the accommodation request process.
* The NBME can take 6-8 weeks to respond to requests for accommodations and can take longer during peak testing times. This timeline can be delayed by further by incomplete documentation or information.
* If you are interested in receiving detailed support with your personal statement and a comprehensive letter of support from DGSOM Disability Services (supplemental letter beyond the Certificate of Prior Test Accommodations), it is advised to connect at least 4 months prior to your desired testing date.
  + DGSOM Disability Services will do their best to provide personal statement support for requests made with less notice, but might be limited by schedule availability and bandwidth
* Your requested accommodations should match the accommodations you have been approved for at DGSOM
  + Note: If you are approved for added extended time in place of time accommodated breaks – this will have to be requested as additional time with breaks and/or extended breaks.
    - EX:
      * DGSOM approved accommodation: 75% additional time, Distraction Reduced Exam Environment (50% for processing, focus, etc + 25% to account for time accommodated breaks).
      * NBME request would be: 1.5x (50%) additional time, Reduced Distraction Environment, additional breaks and/or extended breaks
* In general, personal statements are 1.5 – 3 pages long, unless a student has a complicated history or were late diagnosed with a disability.

## Checklist Items

* Ask your providers if they feel comfortable providing supporting documentation of your disability that outlines/reinforces the need for your requested accommodations. This is an essential first step as your provider must be able to speak to the severity, frequency, and duration of the disability impacts.
  + Resources to share with your providers:
    - USMLE Guidelines: <https://www.usmle.org/step-exams/test-accommodations/guidelines>
    - Clifford, G.C. (2022) BWC Presentation: *Documenting Disabilities in Medical Education* and “Documentation Needs for the NBME Tip Sheet”
* Request your official academic transcripts
  + You will need **official** transcripts from your undergraduate institution and DGSOM
    - Note: If you still have access to the documents you submitted to DGSOM during the medical school application process, it should contain official transcripts for your high school and undergraduate institution
    - DGSOM Registrar Site: <https://medschool.ucla.edu/education/md-education/current-students/registrar>
      * Current Student Document Request Form: <https://medschool.ucla.edu/sites/g/files/oketem306/files/media/documents/CurrentStudentDocumentRequest.pdf>
        + Note: if you elect to have it emailed via PDF there is no fee
* Request copies of your high stakes testing score reports
  + You will need score reports for any high stakes testing you have completed (SAT/ACT/GRE/MCAT) with or without accommodations
    - [ACT](https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/scores/sending-your-scores.html#:~:text=Currently%2C%20you%20may%20not%20request,in%20MyACT%20will%20be%20available.) Process
    - [SAT](https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/sat/scores/send-scores-to-colleges/sending-archived-sat-scores) Process
    - [GRE](https://www.ets.org/gre/test-takers/general-test/scores/get-scores.html) Process
    - [MCAT](%09https:/students-residents.aamc.org/mcat-scores/mcat-scores#:~:text=To%20request%20MCAT%20scores%20from,at%20mcat%40aamc.org.) Process
* Gather the documentation you have related to your disability and history of accommodations
  + You can review whatever documentation you have on file with CAE with DGSOM Disability Services to determine if it would be helpful to submit
  + Examples (this is not an exhaustive list):
    - Individualized Education Plans (IEP)/504 plans from K – 12
    - Accommodation letters or statement of accommodations letter(s) from your undergraduate/graduate institution(s) outlining your approved and utilized accommodations
    - Approval letters for accommodations on high stakes exams (SAT/ACT/GRE/MCAT)
      * Note: if you applied but were denied, please share that letter with DGSOM Disability Services. It will assist them in crafting your supplemental letter of support.
    - Hospital discharge paperwork
    - Medical documentation or visit printouts

## Personal Statement Guidance

* First paragraph:
  + “My name is [Name, USMLE ID #], and I am [YEAR] medical student at the David Geffen School of Medicine/Charles R. Drew School of Medicine and Science writing to request reasonable accommodations on the USMLE Step [#] exam. Specifically, I am requesting [state requested accommodations] due to my [list diagnoses] diagnoses .”

## Body Content Areas

* **History of Disability and Accommodations Related Prompts**
  + What are your current diagnoses?
  + When were you diagnosed with your disability/disabilities?
  + What provider(s) diagnosed your disabilities?
    - Include information regarding provider credentials
    - Include reference to any testing conducted vs. self report
  + What led to referral/seeking diagnosis?
  + Was the diagnosis a surprise?
    - If there is a family history of disability, it is helpful to include that information in this section
    - It is also helpful to discuss signs of the disability that may have gone unnoticed previously, or misinterpreted
  + What recommendations did the diagnosing provider make regarding management/support?
    - Did they recommend medication management?
    - Did they recommend medical intervention/therapy?
    - Did they recommend seeking accommodations?
      * If so, what did they recommend specifically?
  + Did you receive accommodations?
    - If, so when and in what environments?
      * Include: K-12, undergraduate program, graduate programs, high stakes testing (SAT/ACT/MCAT)
        + Include specifics about the accommodations approved
    - If delayed in seeking accommodations, why?
    - What was the difference pre and post accommodation in your functioning?
* **Late Diagnoses Related Prompts [if applicable]**
  + What are the personal, financial, cultural, familial, etc factors that may have prevented an earlier diagnosis?
  + What are signs of the disability that went unnoticed? OR when did the onset of symptoms begin?
  + What are some methods of self-accommodation that may have prevented early detection of the disability?
  + Did you receive any informal or “off book” accommodations directly from instructors in your earlier education or in undergraduate/graduate programs? (if applicable)
  + How did you manage without accommodations until medical school?
  + What was the impact of managing without accommodations until medical school?
  + How did you do on the MCAT without accommodations?
    - What mechanisms did you utilize to succeed on the MCAT without accommodations?
      * Example: Did you take a gap year to study for the MCAT? Did you take multiple prep courses to prepare? Did you take the MCAT multiple times?
    - If you took the MCAT multiple times, did your score increase/decrease/stay the same?
    - Why is it not possible to use the same approaches you utilized on the MCAT on the USMLE Step exams?
* **Disability Impact to Life Related Prompts**
  + Academic
    - How does your disability impact you in the following environments/situations?
      * Classroom
        + Note taking
        + Paying attention in class
        + Processing new information
      * Studying
        + Reading
        + Focus/attention
        + Processing new information
        + Comprehension
        + Time management
      * Clinical
        + Focus/attention
        + Processing information
        + Completing patient notes
  + Personal
    - How does your disability impact you in the following environments/situations?
      * Home
        + Cleaning/organizing
        + Completing projects
        + Paying bills
        + Completing activities of daily living
        + Getting places on time/keeping appointments
      * Relationships
        + Maintaining relationships
        + Being attentionally present during conversations
        + Keeping appointments/promises
        + Navigating social situations
  + Professional (if applicable)
    - Organization
    - Completing tasks/projects
    - Staying on task
    - Multitasking
    - Focus/attention
    - Collaborating with colleagues
    - Getting places on time/keeping appointments\
    - Meeting deadlines
* **Final paragraphs:**
  + “As my personal statement clearly outlines, my disabilities create significant functional limitations in my academic, personal, [and professional] life. Without reasonable accommodations, I will not have an equitable opportunity to demonstrate my mastery of the material. With this in mind, I am requesting the reasonable accommodations of [restate requested accommodations] for the USMLE Step [#] exam.

With these accommodations in place, I am confident that the score received will be an accurate reflection of my skills and abilities and not my disability by placing me on a level playing field with my non-disabled peers. I appreciate your time and consideration. Should you require additional information about the impact of my disability on my day-to-day functioning or my eligibility for disability accommodations under the ADA, please reach out to me anytime.”