

## **Supporting Student Accommodation Requests for Boards, Bar Exams, Licensing, Entrance Exams, and Other High Stakes Gateway Tests**

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# Agenda

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- Importance of supporting students/graduates with high stakes exam (HSE) accommodation requests
- Review of common licensing/board exams
- Methods for supporting students in the process
- Navigating appeals
- Q and A



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# Learning Objectives

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- Understand the general application process for high stake exam (HSE) accommodation requests
- Understand how applications are typically reviewed by testing entities
- Analyze/Evaluate what data students should submit to support their requests and build a strong application
- How to craft letters of appeal if the student's accommodation request is denied or only partially approved

# Common Board/HSE Accommodation Request Processes

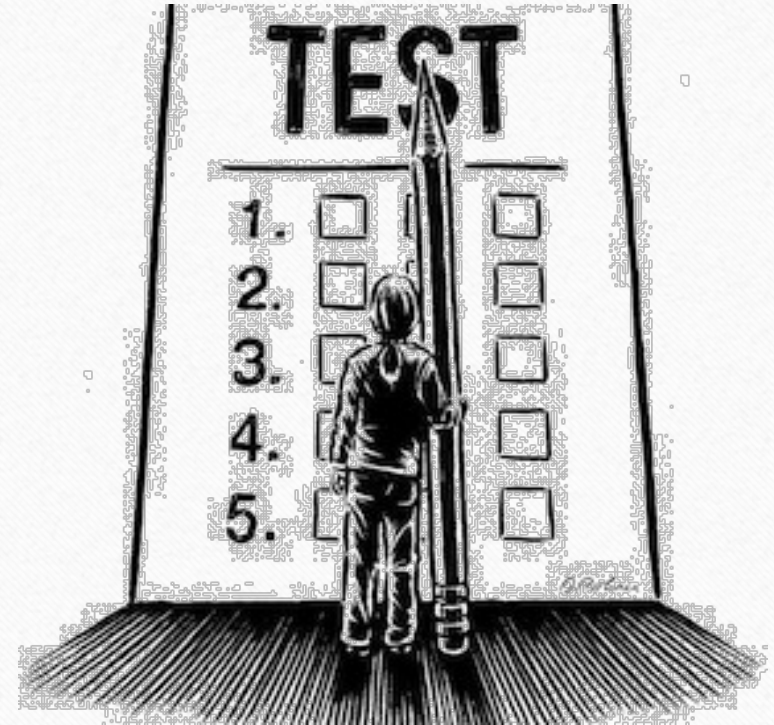
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- [NCBE/MPRE](#) (Law)
- BAR (Law)
- [LSAC/LSAT](#) (Pre-Law)
- [GRE](#)
- [GMAT](#)
- [Pearson VUE](#)
- [ASWB](#) (Social Work)
- [MCAT](#) (Pre-Med)
- [DAT](#) (Pre-Dental)
- [USMLE Step 1, 2, 3](#) (Medical School)
- NCLEX (Nursing)
- [JCNDE](#) (Dental Boards)
- [PANCE](#) (PA Boards)
- [NPTE](#) (PT/PTA Boards)
- [NBCOT](#) (OT/OTA Boards)
- [NAVLE](#) (Vet Med Boards)

# Importance of Supporting Students/Graduates with High Stakes Exam Accommodation Requests

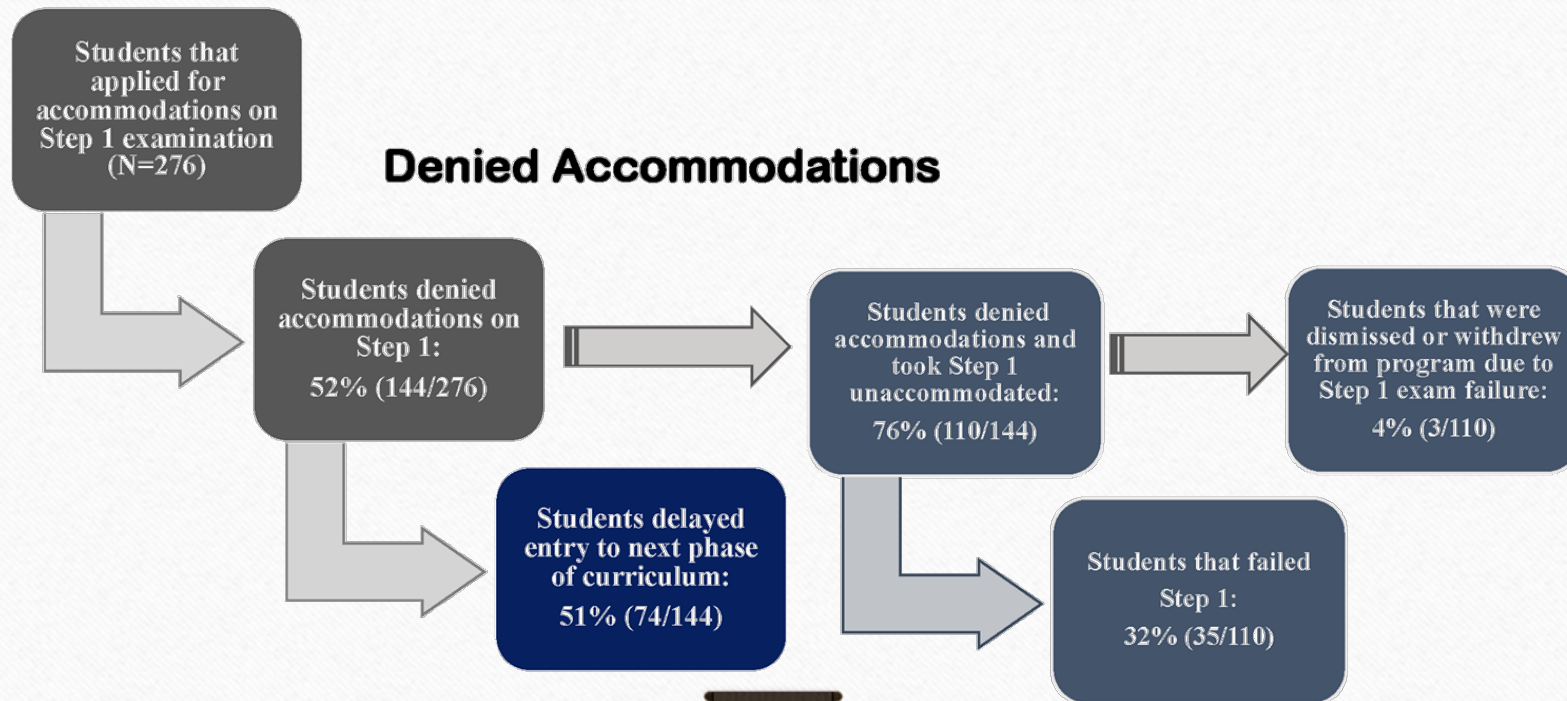
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- Varied and sometimes cumbersome processes
- Without support, many students forgo needed accommodations
- Impacts equitable access to exams
- Negative impact on retention/graduation of students
- Negative impact on diversity of the profession



# Impact of USMLE Step-1 accommodation denial on US medical schools: A national survey (Petersen et al, 2022)

## Applied for Accommodations



## Goal:

Create a compelling argument reflecting:

The student qualifies as disabled.

The disability acts as a barrier to the exam

Accommodations will level the playing field, making the exam accessible

Accommodations are necessary for testing entity to be in compliance with ADA

# When You Have To Do More with Less: Low Resource, High Impact Approaches

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- **Include information regarding HSE accommodation requests on your site**
  - Post relevant high stakes accommodation request links by program
  - Develop guidance handouts/templates to provide on your site
  - Conduct/record trainings on documenting for HSE for on-campus partners
- **Review HSE accommodation request processes in the intake meeting and in programmatic orientation sessions**
- **Focus your efforts on the appeal process**



# Assess Bandwidth – Advocate for Resources

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- **Assessing bandwidth**
  - Role
  - Case load
  - Size of office
- **Advocating for resources**
  - Graduation and retention tool
  - Importance of exam passage rate
  - JEDI – Disability as Diversity

# Assessing and Building Bandwidth: Low Bandwidth vs High Touch Approaches

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## Low Bandwidth

- Completing the provided form (req.)
- Creating a template email with links to forms and online resources
- Creating handouts/resources regarding the process

## High Touch

- Reviewing students current documentation for age/quality
- Assisting in the personal statement development process
- Offering training/insight to providers on documentation requirements
- Providing prospective letter of support in addition to required form
- Providing a letter of support for the appeal process

# 01

## Documentation Review

Gather and Assess



- History
- Age
- Quality
- Amount
- Prior accommodation approvals

# 02

## Personal Statement

Highlight Impact



- History
- Impact of disability
- Explanation of gaps
- Mitigating factors provided by accommodation
- Impact without accommodation

# 03

## CAE Letter of Support

Eligibility



- History
- Eligibility
- Explanation of gaps
- Mitigating factors provided by accommodation
- Equal access

# 04

## \*Appeal

Legality



- Response to denial
- Rebuttal of stated reasoning
- Additional documentation
- Letters of support
- Provider/CAE

## Appeals: Common Reasons for Partial Approval or Denial of Accommodations

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- No history of failure – “not disabled enough”
- Comparison of “substantially limited” to general population
- Past history of success without accommodations
- Recent diagnosis/request for accommodations



**DENIED**

# Appeals: Common Reasons for Partial Approval or Denials of Accommodations Continued

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- Documentation lacks specific objective measures
- Citing English as a Second Language (ESL) as the concern rather than a disability
- Highlighting particular phrasing or scores from provider or student in personal statement, documentation, or neuropsych evaluation
- “Documentation does not adequately support your request for accommodations” or “evidence is insufficient”

# When Should Students Consider Legal Action?

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- Step 1: Remember your role
- Student Considerations:
  - It is needed? Or are there other avenues?
  - Is the case strong enough?
  - Do I have a budget for this?
  - Can an attorney help me?



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# Session Handouts

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- Responses to common rationales for denials
- Case references
- “How to Talk to Your Provider”
- Documentation Guidance
- Tips for Writing Personal Statements
- DOJ Technical Assistance Publication on Testing Entities & Accommodations



**Question & Answer Time!**

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Thank you!





# References

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