

The Definitive Guide to

Requesting ACT Accommodations



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Part One

AN INTRODUCTION



Introduction

Successfully applying for testing accommodations on the ACT adds another wrinkle to an already stressful situation. This eBook attempts to make that process easier to understand and complete. We will discuss eligibility requirements, how to apply for accommodations, the different types of accommodations, and what to expect on test day.

Definitions and Abbreviations

This eBook makes use of the following terms:

IEP: Individualized Educational Program—a plan used in public schools in the United States to ensure that students with a variety of different diagnoses (including “specific learning disabilities” such as dyslexia, “other health impairments” such as ADHD, and Autism Spectrum Disorder, among many others) receive appropriate accommodations at school, including the possibility of extra time on school exams.

504 plan: Similar to an IEP with minor differences in scope and qualifying diagnoses.

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

Note: There are international equivalents to the IEP and 504 plans that will be discussed later.

Part Two

**ELIGIBILITY &
DOCUMENTATION**



Eligibility

In determining a student's eligibility for testing accommodations, the ACT strives to follow four principles:

1. **Fairness:** Considerations of requests for accommodations must ensure fairness both for students seeking accommodations and for students not seeking accommodations.
2. **Consistency:** Accommodations that are granted must be consistent with the ADA.
3. **Validity:** Accommodations that are granted cannot “fundamentally alter that which the test is designed to measure.”
4. **Professionalism:** The documentation provided in support of accommodations must reflect appropriate standards set by qualified professionals.

The ACT's decision on whether or not to provide accommodations to a student is consistent with the ADA's definition of a disability as a “mental or physical impairment that substantially limits a major life activity compared to the average person in the general population.” Requests for accommodations must establish the impairment and demonstrate that the requested accommodations are appropriate and reasonable for the documented disability.

Documentation

Necessary Documentation

If you wish to apply for accommodations on the ACT, you must first demonstrate whether or not you currently receive accommodations for your regular school exams. If you do receive accommodations at school, include your IEP, 504 plan, or official accommodations plan. If you do not attend high school in the United States, you will not have an IEP or 504 plan. In this case, simply provide as much relevant information as you can get from your school, establishing why you were granted accommodations and what those accommodations are.

If you do not currently receive accommodations at your school, the ACT requires you to “include a detailed explanation of why no accommodations were used in the past and why accommodations are needed at this time.”

Finally, complete diagnostic information and documentation (see below) may be necessary to demonstrate a need for accommodations on the ACT. This is especially true when accommodations for exams at school have only recently been granted. We will discuss the situations in which full documentation is likely needed in more detail later, as well as how to submit the appropriate documentation.

Criteria for Documentation

If full documentation is required by the ACT, the documentation must meet the following criteria:

- It must be administered by a qualified diagnostician whose professional credentials must be clearly stated.

- It must state the specific diagnosis.
- The diagnosis must have been made within three calendar years.
- The documentation must describe the impairment of a “major life activity.”
- The documentation must explain how the specific accommodations requested address the limitations stemming from the diagnosis, and it must include the results of the comprehensive assessments used to arrive at the diagnosis.

The following is a list of some broad categories for which the ACT routinely grants accommodations:

- Learning disabilities
- Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Psychiatric disorders—mood or anxiety disorders or persistent mental illness
- Visual or hearing impairments
- Autism, Asperger’s disorder, and autism spectrum disorder
- Speech and language disorders
- Physical medical conditions
- Traumatic brain injuries

The specific documentation for each of these categories varies. For more information on what type of documentation is needed for specific disabilities, consult the ACT website [here](#).

Part Three

APPLYING FOR ACCOMMODATIONS



Applying for Accommodations

The accommodations that the ACT supplies fall into two categories: National Testing and Special Testing. Each student must choose which of these two categories he or she falls into. Select National Testing if all of the following applies to you:

1. You can take the exam at a test center in the U.S., Canada, or Puerto Rico.
2. You are capable of using a standard-font or large type test booklet.
3. You do not need more than a 50% time extension.

Select Special Testing if any of these apply:

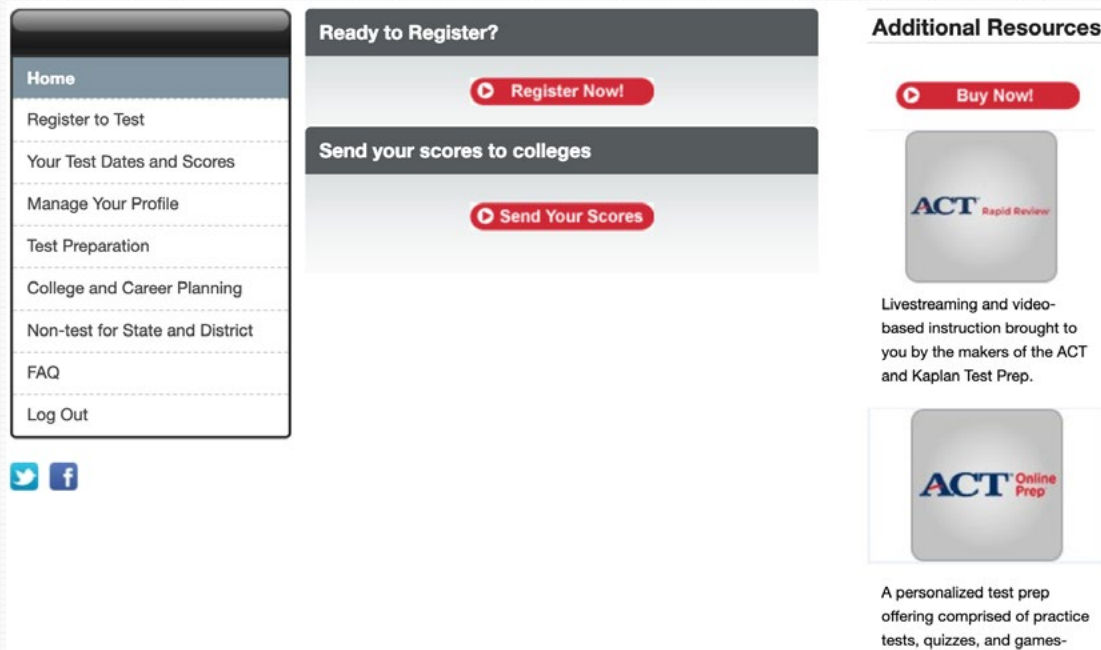
1. You are requesting more than a 50% time extension.
2. You need alternative test formats, such as Braille, DVDs, or a test reader.
3. You want to test over the course of multiple days.
4. You require the use of a computer.
5. You would like to take the test outside of the U.S., Canada, or Puerto Rico.

Please note that some of the ACT's published material is somewhat misleading or confusing with regards to international test takers. All students testing outside of the U.S., Canada, or Puerto Rico must select Special Testing.

Steps for Initiating Application for Accommodations

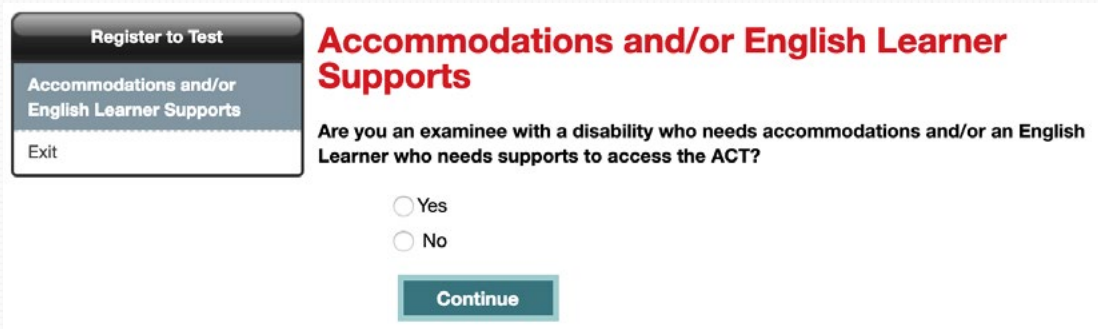
In order to apply for accommodations on the ACT you first must select a test date and register for the exam as any student would.

1. Go to this [website](#) to sign in or create an account. You will see a screen like this:



The screenshot shows the ACT website's home page. On the left is a navigation menu with the following items: Home, Register to Test, Your Test Dates and Scores, Manage Your Profile, Test Preparation, College and Career Planning, Non-test for State and District, FAQ, and Log Out. Below the menu are social media icons for Twitter and Facebook. The main content area is divided into three sections: 'Ready to Register?' with a 'Register Now!' button, 'Send your scores to colleges' with a 'Send Your Scores' button, and 'Additional Resources' which includes a 'Buy Now!' button, a 'ACT Rapid Review' video player, and a 'ACT Online Prep' video player. The 'ACT Online Prep' section includes the text: 'A personalized test prep offering comprised of practice tests, quizzes, and games-'

2. Select "Register to Test." The first question you are asked is this:



The screenshot shows the 'Register to Test' registration process. The left sidebar has 'Accommodations and/or English Learner Supports' selected. The main content area has the heading 'Accommodations and/or English Learner Supports' and the question: 'Are you an examinee with a disability who needs accommodations and/or an English Learner who needs supports to access the ACT?'. Below the question are two radio button options: 'Yes' and 'No'. At the bottom is a 'Continue' button.

3. After you select “yes,” you will see this screen. Select either National Testing or Special Testing.

The screenshot shows a web interface for registering for accommodations. On the left is a navigation menu with 'Register to Test' at the top, 'Accommodations and/or English Learner Supports' selected, and 'Exit' below. The main content area has a title 'Accommodations and/or English Learner Supports' in red. Below the title is a question: 'Are you an examinee with a disability who needs accommodations and/or an English Learner who needs supports to access the ACT?'. There are two radio buttons: 'Yes' (selected) and 'No'. Below this is a paragraph: 'Please select the type of accommodation and/or supports you need. To assist you in choosing between National and Special testing, click [here](#).' There are two radio buttons: 'National Extended Time/National Standard Time with accommodations and/or supports.' and 'Special Testing.'. Under 'National Extended Time...' is a sub-heading 'Select this option if you can do all of the following:' followed by a bulleted list: 'Test at a test center in the United States, U.S. territories, or Puerto Rico.', 'Use standard time or up to time-and-a-half for tests in school.', 'Use a regular (10-point type) or large (18-point type) test booklet.', and 'Test with an approved bilingual dictionary.'. Under 'Special Testing.' is a sub-heading 'Select this option if one of these examples apply to you.' followed by a bulleted list: 'You need more than 50% time extension or you require testing over multiple days.' and 'You use alternate test formats such as braille, DVDs or a computer for essays.'. At the bottom is an 'IMPORTANT:' notice: 'Instructions to complete your request will arrive from noreply@act.org within 24-48 hours. You must share this email with your school official who will submit your request for accommodations and/or supports. All requests must be reviewed and approved by ACT by the registration deadlines.' At the very bottom is a green 'Continue' button.

4. From here, follow the instructions on the screen. You will mostly enter the same biographical information that any student enters.
5. Submit your registration and pay any applicable fees.

Within 48 hours, you will receive an e-mail with additional instructions to complete your accommodations request. It is the ACT’s stated policy that you must work with your school to complete your application for accommodations. The e-mail you receive with instructions from the ACT will direct you to the relevant official who coordinates testing accommodations at your school. It is this person who will provide the ACT with your IEP, 504 plan, or official accommodations plan. You will need to provide this school official with the form that [gives consent to release information to the ACT](#). Your school official should submit this information to the ACT online, via the Test Accessibility and

Accommodations System (TAA). The link for your school official to access the TAA will be given in the e-mail you receive. The e-mail will look similar to this:

Thank you for registering to take the ACT test! You indicated that you require accommodations to access the ACT. This email contains important information to complete your request.

Your Next Steps

1. You must work with your school (e.g., accommodations coordinator, school counselor, etc.) to submit the request and supporting documentation.
2. Forward this email to your school official (e.g., accommodations coordinator, school counselor, etc.) and a completed Consent to Release Information to ACT form at <http://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/TAA%20Consent%20to%20Release%20Information%20to%20ACT.pdf>
3. Forwarding this email and providing a completed form initiates the accommodations request process.

Please note: If your accommodations request has not been submitted by the late registration deadline for your preferred test date, your request will not be processed for that date. In that case, please contact ACT at 319.337.1332 (option 2) to request a test date change or refund of your testing fees.

Based on availability of extended time seats, your test center location may be reassigned if your accommodations request is approved. Check your admission ticket for any changes to your reporting location upon confirmation of your accommodations.

Your School's Next Steps

1. Receive request from Sueann for accommodations. The student should provide you with the Student Registration details, e.g.:
 - a. Request: National Testing April 8, 2017
 - b. Student ACT ID: -48182914
2. Sign in or create an account (<https://readiness.act.org>) in the Test Accessibility and Accommodations System (TAA).
3. Requests must be submitted through TAA by the published late registration deadlines for the student's preferred test date (refer to the ACT website for ACT test dates and deadlines).
<http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/taking-the-test.html>
4. National Testing: Request for accommodations at a national test center will provide the student with a registration for a standard time seat at the selected test center until the accommodations request has been submitted and approved by ACT.
5. Upon receiving the Accommodations Decision Notification, please notify your student as they will not receive notification from ACT.

Thank you.
ACT Customer Service

Have a question or need help?

- * Email us anytime: actaccom@act.org
- * Call us: (319) 337-1332

Phone Availability
M-F 8:30 AM to 5PM CT

You may register for the ACT and submit your initial request for National Testing or Special Testing up until the normal registration deadline for that test date. However, ACT suggests applying at least six weeks before your intended test date.

Decision-Making Process

After you have forwarded the email you received to your school official, the ACT will work with your school official to complete the request for accommodations on your behalf. In the vast majority of cases, the student's IEP, 504 plan, or accommodations plan is sufficient evidence to establish the need for accommodations. Exceptions to this rule will be handled on a case-by-case basis by the ACT and your school official. Of the possible reasons that extra documentation might be needed, the two most common cases are that similar accommodations are not provided to you at school or that accommodations have only recently been provided. The type of documentation necessary in these cases varies by disability. The overwhelming majority of students who receive extra time on school exams will be approved for extra time on the ACT.

Part Four

NATIONAL TESTING VS. SPECIAL TESTING



National Testing vs. Special Testing

What are the differences in process?

There are two crucial differences in applying for National Testing versus Special Testing. Remember that all students wishing to test outside of the U.S., Canada, or Puerto Rico automatically fall into the Special Testing category. For these international students, the following stipulations apply:

1. You are not confined to choosing an official “ACT test center.” This means that you can test at any school, even if that school does not usually administer the ACT. Your first option, most likely, would be to try to test at whatever school you attend. It has been our experience that many European high schools are hesitant to allow students to take the official exam at their home school. The reasons given for this are usually that “there is too much paperwork,” “we would have to certify as a test center,” or “then everyone would be able to test here.” None of those is true. The process for submitting paperwork through TAA is remarkably easy and in 95% of cases, no extra documentation is needed. Schools who allow students to do Special Testing do not have to become test centers and do not have to allow any student—even standard-time testers—to test. It is in your best interests to convince your school to allow you to test there. The only responsibilities for your school are to submit your application through TAA on your behalf and to provide a proctor on test day. The proctor is compensated financially for his or her time by the ACT.

If your school is not willing to host you, you need to find another school that is willing to. While there is no requirement that the host school be an established test center, it is probably easiest to start with a list of schools that are test centers, as these schools are more likely to be

familiar with the process of Special Testing. To do this, [go to this website](#) and select your country for a list of schools that regularly administer the ACT. Note that you need to secure a school that will host you before registering for the ACT and selecting Special Testing.

2. For Special Testing, you do not select a specific test date. Instead, there is a test window you select that roughly corresponds to the National Testing dates. For example, suppose the ACT is being offered on June 10. Students who do not need accommodations and students using National Testing take the test on that date and that date alone. However, for Special Testing, the equivalent window might be June 10–July 2. A student who is approved for Special Testing can take the exam on any day(s) during that timeframe. This is another reason that acting as a host is not a burden on a school. A student can test on a normal school day, eliminating the need for staff to be present on a weekend.

Part Five

**DOCUMENTATION REVIEW
& FINAL DECISION**



Documentation Review and Final Decision

The process for reviewing documentation and rendering a decision is as follows:

1. ACT officials review applications and, if necessary, request full documentation of disability. (Needing full documentation is rare.)
2. An accommodations decision notification is provided in TAA.
3. School official communicates decision to student.

The accommodations decision notification includes the student's name and information along with the specific accommodations that were approved or not approved. If accommodations were not approved, the ACT will provide its reasoning.

If you and your school official believe that the ACT has erred in its decision, you can appeal the decision *if you have additional documentation that is relevant to the reasons the ACT provided for its denial*. To do this, your school official selects "requests for reconsideration" in TAA. If you do not have additional documentation, the decision is final and you will need to test without accommodations.

Part Six

WHAT TO EXPECT ON TEST DAY



What to Expect on Test Day

If you are approved for National Testing, you need to print your admissions ticket and bring it, along with acceptable photo identification, to your test center on test day. If you were approved for accommodations via Special Testing, bring your admissions ticket and ID to your host school on the day when you arranged to take the test within the acceptable window. Forms of acceptable ID are listed on your admissions ticket. If you do not bring your ticket and ID, you will not be allowed to test.

Beginning in the fall of 2018, students who receive 50% extra time are not allowed to budget their time however they want. Students receive exactly 50% extra time on each of the sections of the exam. The allotted time for each section is as follows:

Section	Time
English	70 minutes
Mathematics	90 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Reading	55 minutes
Science	55 minutes
Break	5 minutes
Writing (optional)	60 minutes

If you receive 50% extra time on the ACT, you will likely be seated in a room with other students with a similar accommodation. Proctors should announce to

the room when there are five minutes left in each section, but you should verify this before the exam starts.

Students receiving 100% extra time complete the test over multiple days in a three-week period. Students who are approved for multiple-day testing should contact their test center directly as soon as they receive their accommodations approval.

ACT allows significant leeway in how multiple-day testing is administered. The only requirement is that the four sections of the exam be given in the identical order to same-day testing: English, Math, Reading, and Science. Other than that, students and test administrators are free to schedule testing sessions however they please. It is possible that particular testing centers have certain policies in place (for example, that all multi-day test takers complete the exam over the course of two consecutive days). However, students should feel free to inquire about alternatives or to request their own schedules. If a student feels most comfortable completing one section per day over the course of four consecutive days, she should ask her test center if that is possible.

For multiple-day test takers with 100% extra time, the allotted time for each section (not including breaks) is as follows:

Section	Time
English	90 minutes
Mathematics	120 minutes
Reading	70 minutes
Science	70 minutes
Writing (optional)	80 minutes

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

For more support or any questions you may have about ACT accommodations, contact an ArborBridge test prep expert at info@arborbridge.com.

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