



National Knowledge Exam (NKE)

ACCOMMODATION HANDBOOK FOR WRITERS

Information for Accessibility and Accommodations Requests for NKE Writers

Introduction

Writers with protected characteristics (e.g., disability, family status, religion) are entitled under provincial human rights legislation to reasonable accommodation in testing arrangements that provide for fair and valid assessment. CPHR Canada will consider any testing accommodation requests while ensuring the integrity of the National Knowledge Exam (NKE) and ensuring that the NKE tests the required competencies. CPHR Canada supports reasonable and appropriate modifications to the NKE in order to accommodate writers under the applicable human rights legislation.

The accommodations provided should not place the writer with protected characteristics at an advantage or disadvantage in undertaking the NKE as compared to non-accommodated individual.

Accessibility and Special Accommodation

Through its provincial associations, CPHR Canada provides reasonable one-time accommodations to writers who have documented disabilities (physical, mental or learning impairments) within the definition provided by the Human Rights Code. The accommodations granted are valid for one examination session only. Writers must submit a new request for any future examination session and may need to supply additional documentation upon submitting a request for a subsequent exam (including if writers choose to defer their registration to a future sitting).

It is important to note that not every diagnosed condition will rise to the level of a disability and being diagnosed with a condition is not sufficient to demonstrate that an individual is disabled. Therefore, in order to be considered for examination accommodations, regardless of a diagnosis received, an applicant must demonstrate that they have a disability by providing evidence of their functional limitations. Please note that generic statements such as forgetfulness, anxious in crowds, or slow processing speed are not evidence of actual functional limitations.

Accommodation requests are assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure equal opportunity for writers to fully demonstrate their qualifications without altering the nature or level of the qualification being assessed. CPHR Canada will consider each case after carefully reviewing the submitted documentation. However, submitting a request does not guarantee receiving an accommodation.

All requests and documentation must be submitted to the provincial member association at the time of exam registration or, if not received at the time of registration, by the exam registration deadline. Requests for pre-existing conditions that are made following the registration deadline will not be accepted. In exceptional circumstances where an unexpected circumstance arises, a request for accommodation may be considered after the deadline but cannot be guaranteed.

Examples of special accommodations that may be provided:

- Permitting timed rest breaks during the exam (if more than the two washroom breaks that are provided are required).

- Allowing a medical device in the examination room, such as an inhaler or diabetic equipment.
- Access to food/snacks due to medical condition.
- Possibility of having a reader or scribe/typist.
- Increasing time permitted for the examination.
- Washroom breaks required due to medical condition (if more than the two washroom breaks that are provided are required).
- Providing a distraction-reduced space.
- Providing a private space.

Accommodation requests are carefully reviewed by CPHR Canada, and may be less than what may have been awarded by postsecondary institutions. The CPHR profession is obligated to protect the public and therefore has differing objectives from post-secondary institutions, who are required to ensure academic success. CPHR Canada and the provincial member associations need to ensure the competence of their members and thus may set standards higher than those that exist in the post-secondary institutions.

Documentation

Where the accommodation request relates to disability, supporting documentation and information satisfactory to CPHR Canada must be provided to the provincial exam coordinator by a qualified regulated health care professional (see examples in chart below). The qualified regulated health professional must have specific training and expertise with respect to the condition(s) for which accommodation is being requested and be certified or licensed to practise in their field.

The documentation provided should confirm the existence of a disability and describe in detail the impact of the disability as it relates to completing the NKE, the writer's specific needs and the proposed accommodation, with an explanation of how the requested accommodation will mitigate the impact of the disability in completing the NKE.

Disabilities	Qualified Health Care Professional
Learning Disability/Specific Learning Disorder/Dyslexia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neuropsychologist • Psychologist specialized in learning disabilities
ADHD/ADD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neuropsychologist • Psychologist specialized in learning disabilities • Psychiatrist
Concussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neuropsychologist • Psychologist specialized in learning disabilities
Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neuropsychologist • Psychologist specialized in learning disabilities • Psychiatrist

Vision disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ophthalmologist • Optometrist
Hearing disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audiologist
Physical disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physiotherapist • Medical Doctor specialized in the given physical disability • Occupational Therapist • Physiatrist • Chiropractor • Neurologist • Nurse practitioner

Application Process

All accommodation requests must be submitted by the writer to the provincial member association at the time of exam registration or, if not at the time of registration, by the exam registration deadline.

Writers are responsible for covering any cost of obtaining the required supporting documentation from a qualified health professional.

Failure to provide requests and required documentation by the deadline may result in the rejection of a request. Plan ahead, as appointments with many health professionals are not easy to obtain and obtaining the necessary documentation may be a lengthy process.

All requests will be reviewed by CPHR Canada. CPHR Canada will attempt to meet all reasonable requests, however, submitting a request does not guarantee receiving an accommodation. Writers will receive confirmation from their provincial member association regarding the status of their request.

For exams being conducted in test centres, CPHR Canada reserves the right to assign writers to a test centre where the applicable accommodation(s) can be offered which may require travel (including related expenses).

Application Checklist

Complete following accommodation request form:

1. NKE Accommodation Request Form
2. Health care practitioner documentation
3. Current psychological assessment (if applicable)
4. Any additional supporting documentation outlining how your condition impacts your daily life/functioning, such as an employer letter or proof of disability benefits.

Application Guidelines

1. Evidence of a disability. Regardless of a diagnosis, the applicant must provide evidence that their functioning is limited due to a disability. Only describing symptoms of a disorder or naming a diagnosis is not sufficient.

2. Evidence of an access need. Documentation should clearly reflect how the accommodation request is intended to facilitate access to an examination, not to enhance performance or achieve any particular outcome. Please note that the mission of post-secondary institutions is different than CPHR Canada's mission which is public protection and ensuring safe and ethical competence to practice human resources.

3. Rationale. Documentation should provide a detailed rationale for each accommodation being requested. The rationale must make sense and be directly related to ensuring access to the examination. For example, if an applicant has severe pain with prolonged sitting, or has difficulty sustaining attention over time, it would not make sense to request extra writing time on an exam. If requesting extra time, it must be explained why this accommodation is appropriate.

4. Appropriateness. CPHR Canada will not approve any examination accommodations that could jeopardize its mission of public protection. Requested accommodations must not compromise the validity, integrity or security of an exam, the exam process or the exam results. In all cases, the requested accommodation should not compromise the standards that CPHR Canada has set for evaluating exam writers' competency and ability to practice human resources in a safe and ethical manner, consistent with the organization's mission. For example, requests to waive portions of the exam, alter examination questions, or requests to otherwise modify the content or nature of an examination will not be approved.

5. Current documentation. An accommodation request must adequately describe an applicant's current functional limitations. Although an underlying diagnosis may not have changed over time, the levels of functioning may have changed, which may require more, less, or different accommodations than may have been previously provided or approved. Documentation should illustrate how an applicant will be functioning on an examination day, and how an applicant's limitations may be hindered by specific barriers on the exam.

6. Format of documentation. Supporting documentation should be on official letterhead, signed by the medical professional who prepared the document, dated, and legible. Documents that have missing portions or missing pages will not be reviewed.

7. Professionalism. Communications should be courteous and professional. Any applicant (or an advocate of an applicant) who engages in verbal abuse, uses profanity or threatening language, or otherwise is unprofessional, may forfeit their right to participate in any CPHR services or programs, regardless of disability status.

Accommodation Application Submission Process and Resources

1. Follow the submission instructions outlined on the request form.
2. You will receive an email upon receipt of your application.
3. You will receive an email outlining the decision shortly after the Panel's next meeting date.

Additional resources to assist with the application process are available:

- Learning and Cognitive Disabilities Guidelines (refer to Appendix A)
- Physical and Systemic Disabilities Documentation Guidelines (refer to Appendix B)

Applicants who do not submit a request for accommodation on or before the deadline for the applicable exam may have to defer to a future sitting of the exam (many accommodations require supports to be arranged and set up, rendering late requests unable to be implemented until the next sitting). Typically, applicants will receive a decision within 30 days after the request is complete, unless the request is unusually complex (in which case the applicant will be notified on the status of the request).

Accommodations requests are reviewed in the order in which they are received. To be fair to all applicants, CPHR Canada does not "expedite" requests.

Appendix A: Learning and Cognitive Disabilities Guidelines

If you are seeking accommodations due to a cognitive or learning disability, or due to a neurological disorder that affects your cognitive abilities, you must submit a comprehensive psychoeducational assessment report or neuropsychological assessment report as part of the accommodation request in order for your case to be fully reviewed.

CPHR Canada does not require a diagnosis per se. However, if providing a diagnosis, evidence must be provided that the diagnosis conforms to standard DSM-5 guidelines and should include evidence as to how all DSM-5 diagnostic criteria were met.

Please note: If you were granted accommodations while at a post-secondary institution, you will need to demonstrate a current need to receive an accommodation for the NKE.

The psychoeducational or neuropsychological assessment should include clinical findings.

- The applicant must be an adult when testing is done. In most cases, this means testing has been conducted when the applicant was at least 18 years of age or within the past five years.
- The testing must be performed by a qualified professional. Documentation should include the professional's academic credentials and qualifications that allows them to confirm the nature of the disability and make an accommodation recommendation based on the nature of the NKE.
- The testing must include a battery of tests. It is not acceptable for the professional to administer only one test, nor is it acceptable for the professional to base a diagnosis on only one of several subtests.

The documentation provided by the professional should:

- Provide actual test scores and standard scores and percentiles on an age-adjusted, rather than education-adjusted, norm. It is helpful to list the test data in a summary score sheet.
- Document the impact of the disability on the applicant's ability to write the NKE. Test results should clearly support this claim.
- Include clear and specific evidence and identification of the nature of the disability. Individual "learning styles" and "learning differences" do not by themselves constitute a learning disability. It is important that the assessment rule out alternative explanations for problems in learning, such as emotional or attention problems that may interfere with learning but do not, in and of themselves, constitute a disorder in learning.
- Explain why each recommended accommodation is necessary, referring to specific test results or clinical observations. We will consider recommended accommodations that give the test writer a fair chance.
- List current medications and existing (not possible) side effects that may impact your ability to write the exam.

Appendix B: Physical and Systemic Disabilities Documentation Guidelines

Physical and systemic disabilities have a definitive physical cause and can significantly restrict a test writer's physical ability to write the NKE under standard conditions.

Supporting documentation must be comprehensive and current. Professionals conducting assessments and making recommendations for appropriate accommodation(s) must be those who are qualified to do so. The documentation provided:

- Should discuss functional limitations caused by the disability and its impact on the applicant's ability to write the NKE under standardized conditions.
- Should list current medications and existing (not possible) side effects that may impact the applicant's ability to write the exam.
- Should recommend accommodation(s) to compensate for the identified functional limitations.