

TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES HANDBOOK



NABNE®

NORTH AMERICAN BOARD OF NATUROPATHIC EXAMINERS

Ensuring the Professional Qualifications of NDs

AUGUST 2024 NPLEX® TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES HANDBOOK

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PURPOSE

The North American Board of Naturopathic Examiners (NABNE) is committed to providing all examination candidates an equitable opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities in the examination setting. NABNE provides reasonable and appropriate testing accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in the United States (US) and in accordance with applicable human rights and accessibility legislation in Canada.

Testing accommodations should remove barriers to examinee performance. They should neither advantage nor disadvantage any examinee. Testing accommodations are purposely designed to remove obstacles that are presented by an individual's disability, without modifying the nature or level of the qualification that is being assessed and without compromising the reliability or validity of the Naturopathic Physicians Licensing Examination (NPLEX). Regulatory authorities rely on NABNE to provide reliable and valid examination results.

If a candidate has a disability that impairs their equal access to the NPLEX, the candidate may request testing accommodations to provide equal access. NABNE will consider testing accommodations requests for the NPLEX from eligible candidates who have a demonstrated disability and need for accommodation if the requests are:

- Reasonable and properly documented
AND
- Do not fundamentally alter the examination
AND
- Do not jeopardize exam security or validity

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Testing accommodations are purposely designed to remove obstacles that are presented by an individual's disability, without modifying the nature or level of the qualification that is being assessed and without compromising the reliability or validity of the NPLEX.

Testing accommodations should neither advantage nor disadvantage any examinee.

UNDERSTANDING THE STANDARD TESTING CONDITIONS AND ENVIRONMENT

The NPLEX Part I - Biomedical Science Examination is administered in two (2) sections (morning and afternoon) on the same day. Examinees are allowed 2½ hours (150 minutes) to complete each 100-question section. There is a 1-hour break between the morning and afternoon sections of the examination.

The NPLEX Part II – Core Clinical Sciences Examination is administered in three (3) sections over a period of three (3) days, one section each day. Examinees are allowed 3 ½ hours (210 minutes) to complete each 135-question section.

The NPLEX Part II – Clinical Elective Examinations (Acupuncture, Elective Pharmacology, Minor Surgery, and Parenteral Medicine) are administered on separate days. Examinees are allowed 1½ hours (90 minutes) to complete the 75 questions in each Part II – Clinical Elective Examination.

Examinees then indicate their answer to the question by filling in bubbles on an answer sheet with a pencil.

NABNE allows examinees to bring a closed container with a non-alcoholic beverage into the testing room. Please refer to the [NABNE Examinee Handbook](#) for more details about what is allowed into the standard testing room and what is not allowed.

At any time during the testing session, NABNE allows examinees to use the restroom, access water, food, medications, or other supplements outside of the testing room; however, the testing clock does not stop. Examinees will not be given additional time for breaks taken during the testing period either inside or outside of the testing room.

COURTESY MODIFICATIONS

Courtesy modifications minimally alter the standard testing environment, if at all. Please note that courtesy modifications must be requested in advance.

Some examples of a courtesy modifications include:

- Bringing a pillow, stool, or other equipment for physical comfort
- Requesting a noise-reducing headset issued by NABNE
- Being seated in a particular area (e.g., near the door, or in the back) of the standard testing room
- Wearing a continuous glucose monitor or another medical device implanted in an examinee's body that has external communication capability (Bluetooth, wireless, cellular, etc.)¹
- Using a wheelchair, walker or other mobility apparatus in the testing room
- Bringing a magnifying glass

¹ A letter will be required if the examinee has an implanted medical device that has external communication capability. **No later than the deadline**, the letter should be emailed directly to NABNE at testingaccommodations@nabne.org by the treating professional on office letterhead and signed by the applicant's fully licensed practicing physician or other qualified professional. The letter should be dated, have the applicant's name, and explain the necessity of the implanted device being connected to external communication during the testing session, or that the implanted device's external communication capability may be turned off for the duration of the testing session.

To request a *Courtesy Modification Request Form*, please contact NABNE by emailing testingaccommodations@nabne.org. The completed form may be submitted to NABNE by email at testingaccommodations@nabne.org **no later than May 31st for the August NPLEX** administration or **no later than November 30th for the February NPLEX** administration.

Please note that devices that have external communication capability such as cellular, wireless, Bluetooth, etc., may be excluded from the testing room unless approved as a courtesy modification. This also applies to devices that may sound audible alerts, vibrate, or otherwise emit sounds.

While NABNE aims to grant courtesy modifications to individuals who request them, approval is not guaranteed.

UNDERSTANDING NABNE TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

DEFINITION OF TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

A testing accommodation refers to any modification to the standard administration of the NPLEX to address an examinee's disability. Testing accommodations are designed to remove obstacles that are presented by an individual's disability without modifying the nature or level of the qualification and competencies that are being assessed.

AVAILABLE TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

Candidates may request testing accommodations to facilitate equal access to the NPLEX. Testing accommodations that may be provided include, but are not limited to:

- Off-the-testing-clock breaks – additional break time but unchanged total testing time
- Assistive technology or personnel
- Access to medication in the testing room
- Additional testing time
- Private or semi-private testing space
- Assignment to a wheelchair-accessible room
- An exam booklet in large-point font
- Printed copy of spoken instructions with visual notification of start time, time remaining, and stop times.

Examinees are not permitted to provide their own readers, recorders, or interpreters.

WHICH CANDIDATES SHOULD REQUEST TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS?

Candidates who have a qualifying disability that impairs their equal access to the NPLEX should consider applying for testing accommodations. NABNE defines a “qualifying disability” as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity (US) or as defined by applicable human rights legislation (Canada). Please note that all requests for testing accommodations must be supported by appropriate documentation, as outlined on pages 7 and 8 in this Handbook.

- ❑ Candidates must initiate the request for testing accommodations themselves. Requests for testing accommodations from third parties (e.g., naturopathic medical programs, instructors, healthcare providers, or relatives) are not accepted.
- ❑ Modifications to the testing environment will not be considered or approved at the test site on the day of the NPLEX administration.
- ❑ NABNE does not assess additional fees to candidates who request testing accommodations.

QUALIFYING DISABILITIES

To receive testing accommodations, an applicant must have a qualifying disability pursuant to the ADA or applicable disability legislation in Canada. That is, there must be a *documentable* physical or mental impairment that meets NABNE’s definition *AND* objective evidence that the disability impairs their equal access to the NPLEX.

Some conditions, such as complete blindness or deafness, are always substantially limiting. A variety of other impairments might be disabling for some individuals, though not for others, depending on the impact on their major life activities.

Testing accommodation requests require documentation from a qualified professional supporting the existence of a disability that impairs access to the examination and the need for the requested accommodation. For the purposes of testing accommodations for the NPLEX, candidates must demonstrate they have a disability that impairs their ability to take a multiple-choice examination that requires examinees to be able to read and comprehend text. The examinations do not require math calculations, oral fluency, or writing.

The focus and purpose of supporting documentation is to have an adequate description of the nature and extent of impairment to determine appropriate accommodations.

REQUESTING TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

REQUIRED FORMS

To request reasonable accommodations, the following must be completed and submitted to NABNE:

1. A completed and signed *NABNE Testing Accommodations Request form*. This is to be provided by the applicant; and
2. A completed and signed *NABNE Testing Accommodations Applicant Checklist*. This is to be provided by the applicant; and
3. A completed *NABNE Evaluator's Report Form (NERf)* and required documentation. This is to be signed by and sent by a qualified professional.

Requests for testing accommodations will not be considered until items 1, 2, and 3 above are received. NABNE will not consider incomplete requests.

Requests for testing accommodations will not be considered until items 1, 2, and 3 above are received. NABNE will not consider incomplete requests.

The information requested on the NABNE forms may be withheld at the applicant's discretion.

OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE REQUIRED

NABNE requires objective evidence in support of testing accommodations requests. The *NERf* is designed to help the qualified professional submit the information NABNE requires to appropriately assess the testing accommodations request.

OPTIONAL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

The applicant may submit documentation of testing accommodations granted by the applicant's academic institutions, and/or testing accommodations on another standardized examinations (e.g., SAT, ACT, MCAT, USMLE, COMLEX, NCLEX), the documentation must be dated, signed by an appropriate representative, on office letterhead, and include the applicant's name.

The applicant may provide NABNE a personal statement that specifically describes how the applicant's functional limitations impact their ability to take a standardized, multiple-choice examination like the NPLEX. This statement is not required and is intended to give the applicant an opportunity to provide relevant information that might not be provided by the qualified professional.

CURRENCY OF THE EVALUATION AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

All documentation should reflect current functioning.

Testing accommodations are assessed based on the current impact of the applicant's disability on the testing activity. It is in the applicant's best interest to provide recent documentation because the manifestations of a disability may vary over time and in different settings. Certain conditions such as some physical and psychiatric conditions are subject to change and should be updated to reflect current functioning. Contact NABNE at testingaccommodations@nabne.org to find out if a current evaluation is required, as "current" depends on the nature of the impairment.

EVALUATOR'S DOCUMENTATION - WHO IS A "QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL"?

Applicants requesting testing accommodations must arrange for a qualified, appropriate professional who is familiar with the *current* impact of the applicant's disability on the applicant's ability to perform on the NPLEX or other similar timed, standardized examinations to complete and sign *NABNE Evaluator's Report form (NERf)* and provide supplemental supporting documentation. At a minimum, the professional must have demonstrated expertise *and* recognized credentials (e.g., licensure, certification, or specialized training) in the diagnosis and assessment of the disability or impairment in question. For example, for a cognitive/developmental/psychological disability, qualified evaluators must be trained to administer and interpret psychoeducational assessments and typically have a PhD or PsyD or equivalent training or experience in psychology. A relative, employer, friend, or member of the same household of the applicant will not be considered a qualified professional.

The applicant's qualified professional must perform an individualized assessment of the applicant, complete, sign, and submit the *NERf* and the requested supplemental supporting documentation directly to NABNE. Recommendations made by qualified professionals are taken into consideration by NABNE; however, testing accommodations are not guaranteed.

SUBMITTING A REQUEST FOR TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

DEADLINES

All requests for testing accommodations must be supported by appropriate documentation, as outlined above, and be received **by May 31st for the August NPLEX** administration or **Nov 30th for the February NPLEX** administration. Before a request for testing accommodations will be considered by NABNE, the applicant must be registered for the current administration of the NPLEX and, all forms and required documentation must be completed and submitted. Failure to complete and submit the required documentation by the deadline will result in no testing accommodations being provided on the day of examination(s) for that applicant.

Before a request for testing accommodations will be considered by NABNE:

- 1. The applicant must be registered for the current administration of the NPLEX**
- AND**
- 2. All forms and required documentation must be completed and submitted.**

NABNE strongly encourages applicants to submit their testing accommodations requests as early in the registration window as possible.

NABNE will initiate review of testing accommodations requests once an applicant has registered and submitted all the completed forms and required documentation. If time allows, NABNE strives to inform applicants where additional information is needed in order to make a determination. NABNE *strongly encourages* applicants to submit their testing accommodations requests as early in the registration window as possible. Doing so may allow time for NABNE to review the submissions and notify applicants with deficient accommodations requests so that they might submit additional or clarifying information prior to the deadline.

If any of the completed forms or required supporting documentation is not received by the deadline, the request for testing accommodations will not be considered. NABNE must receive all the completed forms and required documentation no later than the deadline in order to properly assess the request.

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NABNE must receive all the completed forms and required documentation no later than the deadline in order to properly assess the request.

If the documentation submitted to NABNE by the deadline is incomplete or not sufficient to establish the need for the requested accommodation, the applicant has the choice to either: 1) take the examination(s) without the requested accommodations, or 2) cancel their registration and be refunded according to the NABNE’s cancellation policy.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all necessary information is submitted to NABNE. It is not NABNE’s responsibility to ask for the required information. Ultimately, the applicant is responsible for testing accommodations requests; it is **not** NABNE’s responsibility to follow up to obtain the required information.

TIMELINE FROM SUBMISSION TO DECISION

	February NPLEX Administration	August NPLEX Administration
Submission of testing accommodations requests begins	October 1 of the previous year	April 1 of the same year
Deadline for submitting testing accommodations requests	November 30 of the previous year	May 31 of the same year
NABNE consideration of requests	December 1 to 31 of the previous year	June 1 to 30 of the same year
Notification of NABNE decisions	Approximately four (4) weeks prior to the scheduled exam date.	Approximately four (4) weeks prior to the scheduled exam date.

CONSIDERATION OF TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS REQUESTS

Requests are assessed on a case-by-case basis. All decisions are based on current NABNE policies and protocols applicable to all applicants and in accordance with all applicable laws, including the ADA in the United States and the principles of applicable human rights and accessibility legislation in Canada.

There is no guarantee that NABNE will grant the requested testing accommodations.

WITHDRAWAL OF REQUEST FOR TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

An applicant may withdraw their request for testing accommodation at any time.

If an applicant chooses to cancel their registration for the NPLEX examination, then their request for testing accommodations will be withdrawn. Applicants should email testingaccommodations@nabne.org to notify the testing accommodations team of their cancellation of registration.

If an applicant chooses to withdraw their request for testing accommodations without cancelling their registration, the applicant must send an email to testingaccommodations@nabne.org stating that the applicant is making an informed decision to take the examination without testing accommodations.

APPROVAL OF REQUEST FOR TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

If a request is approved, NABNE will email the applicant a Decision Letter with further instructions to confirm and accept the approved testing accommodations. Approval of testing accommodations is applicable only to the current examination administration.

NABNE will arrange to provide the approved testing accommodation(s) at the selected test site.

DENIAL OF REQUEST FOR TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

If a request is denied, the applicant will receive a Decision Letter detailing the rationale for the NABNE's decision.

If the testing accommodation request is denied, the applicant may 1) take the exam without testing accommodations or 2) cancel the registration and be refunded according to NABNE's current refund policy. Additionally, the applicant may also appeal the decision.

APPEALS REGARDING TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS DECISIONS

If an applicant wishes to appeal a decision, the applicant must submit an appeal to NABNE in writing, addressed to the Testing Accommodations Review Committee of the NABNE Board. Please send the appeal letter via email to testingaccommodations@nabne.org. Because of the short time frame between accommodations decisions and the exam administration, the Board will not be able to respond before the upcoming exam administration, but NABNE will seek to provide a response to the appeal within ten (10) weeks of its receipt.

SUBSEQUENT ADMINISTRATIONS OF THE NPLEX AND TESTING ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS

A candidate must submit a new *NABNE Testing Accommodations Request Form* every time the candidate registers to take the NPLEX and requests testing accommodations.

A *NERf* and supporting documentation from a qualified professional does not need to be resubmitted IF:

- The applicant's previous request for testing accommodations was approved **within the past year.**

AND

- The same testing accommodations are requested.

AND

- The applicant certifies that their degree of impairment is the same or substantially similar to that when the testing accommodation was granted.

Submission of a new *NERf* and supporting documentation may be required IF:

- The applicant's previous request for testing accommodations was approved more than one year ago.

OR

- The applicant is requesting additional or different accommodations.

OR

- The applicant's previously submitted documentation does not reflect current functioning.

OR

- The applicant does not satisfy all of the criteria listed above in the event testing accommodations were approved within the past year.

Some impairments are not subject to improvement, in which case, NABNE may not require a new *NERf* for subsequent administrations of the examinations. NABNE will consider the applicant's circumstances when deciding if a new *NERf* and supporting documentation will be required. Please contact NABNE at testingaccommodations@nabne.org to inquire.

If a request for testing accommodations was previously denied, applicants seeking future accommodations should submit a new request for a future exam administration, along with additional documentation or new information that is responsive to the feedback provided in the Decision Letter.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION RELEASES

All information related to the request for testing accommodations will remain confidential and be used solely for the purpose of determining the need for testing accommodations in the administration of the NPLEX.

APPLICABILITY OF NABNE POLICIES

Nothing in this Testing Accommodations for Disabilities Handbook shall diminish the applicability of the policies and procedures outlined in the [NABNE Examinee Handbook](#).