



ODAI Guide: USMLE Step Exam Accommodations

Please note that accommodations approved by ODAI are not automatically applied to Step exams. USMLE maintains a separate process for requesting accommodations on these exams. This document is designed to summarize their application process to help you understand what to expect, but it is not intended to replace [guidance provided directly by USMLE](#).

Types of Requests

First, check [USMLE's Pre-Approved Items](#), as certain requests are permitted without approval. Otherwise, below, we explain the four different types of accommodation requests. All requests are made online, through your [MyUSMLE Portal](#). New Requests are the most common and complex, so this document currently only breaks down this type of request in further detail; however, if you need support with a different request type, please email ODAI at testing@cuanschutz.edu or schedule a Board Exam Support meeting in your AIM portal.

1) New Request

This is for students who have not requested accommodations from USMLE for any Step exam. The subsequent sections of this guide will breakdown this request type in further detail.

2) Subsequent Request

This is for students who previously received accommodations on a Step exam and are requesting the exact same accommodations for the next Step exam. In your MyUSMLE Portal, you can select the "Subsequent Request" option and follow the prompts to complete and submit your request. If you need different accommodations than you previously received on a Step exam, then you will need to submit a New Request.

3) Additional Break Time Only Request

This is for students who have standard testing time but need additional break time. This can be helpful for nursing mothers or for those with medical conditions such as diabetes who may need extra time to manage their condition.

4) Reconsideration Request

This is for students who have been denied their requests by USMLE and would like to appeal the decision. You can only submit one of these requests per active registration and should only do so if you have "new and substantive supporting documentation." In the "Accommodations" tab in your MyUSMLE Portal, click on the "Actions" button and then select "Request Reconsideration." Proceed to fill out the form and upload new documentation.

Summary of New Request Application

To start a New Request, login to your [MyUSMLE Portal](#) and then follow the directions on this [Quick Guide to the MyUSMLE Accommodations](#) document. Once created, you can come back to it later by clicking “Save and Close” or cancel it by clicking “Cancel Request.” In addition to filling out several empty fields in the form, you will be prompted in the “Supporting Documentation” section to upload documents related to the following components.

Personal Statement

Applicants are required to write a Personal Statement pertaining to their need for accommodations, so please review [USMLE’s Guidelines & Requirements](#) and reference [ODAI’s Guide to Crafting a Personal Statement](#). If you would like someone to review and provide feedback on your draft, please attach it in an email to ODAI (testing@cuanschutz.edu) and we will get back to you within 1-2 weeks.

Certification of Prior Test Accommodations (CPTA)

This document should be signed by ODAI to certify your approved accommodations at CU Anschutz. Please download this form, fill out your personal information (name and USMLE ID#), then attach it in an email to ODAI (testing@cuanschutz.edu). ODAI will complete the remainder of the form and send it back to you as soon as possible.

Clinical / Medical Documentation

Insufficient documentation of a disability is most commonly why a request is denied, so please review [USMLE’s Guidelines & Requirements](#) and consider sharing these with your provider if they are writing new documentation. While USMLE no longer explicitly states a time limit for documentation, they have historically required a diagnostic evaluation within three years from when you submit the application. If you need an evaluation, we suggest asking your current provider for recommendations, as well as referencing [ODAI’s List of Evaluation Options](#).

Other Supporting Documentation

This is a broad term, encompassing many possible items, so please review [USMLE’s Guidelines & Requirements](#). You should upload relevant School Records (e.g., written verification of accommodations, such as an IEP or 504 Plan). You should also upload MCAT scores, whether you received accommodations or not. Other standardized exam scores (e.g., scores on SAT/ACT as well as any letters approving accommodations on them), should also be uploaded. Finally, consider uploading any other documents that contribute to the timeline of you needing accommodations or explain how your daily functioning is impaired (accommodation letters from K-12 or undergraduate institutions, letters of workplace accommodations, etc.)

Timeline & Checklist

**Note: The timeline below is based on an example of an applicant planning to take Step 1 in December – January of their third year of medical school. If your exam dates differ, you should adjust the months accordingly. If you find yourself off track from this timeline, don't panic, but please feel free to consult with ODAI for support. While there is flexibility in timing, postponing these steps can create a greater workload in a shorter period. Regardless, to receive a decision before your exam, treat 60 business days (~3 months) in advance as your deadline.*

9-12 Months Prior to Exam (January – April)

- ☐ Consider meeting with the ODAI team in case you need support outside of this document.
- ☐ Review your personal clinical documentation. Traditionally, USMLE has preferred a formal diagnostic evaluation (i.e., psychological/neuropsychological evaluation), so if you don't have this or need an updated report, we recommend exploring options for clinical documentation. If you need suggestions on where to get an evaluation, please contact your provider or explore [ODAI's list of common evaluation clinics](#) (*Note: it is your responsibility to verify if your insurance covers any of these suggestions).
- ☐ Request an official copy of your MCAT scores if you do not have one saved already.
- ☐ Begin drafting your Personal Statement.
- ☐ Collect other supplemental documentation, as necessary. This can include accommodations in K-12 schooling (such as an IEP or 504), accommodations from past universities, other standardized assessment scores (such as ACT/SAT, GRE), letters from your workplace, etc.

6-9 Months Prior to Exam (April – June)

- ☐ Submit your Personal Statement to ODAI for review, if you wish. Send it as an attachment to testing@cuanschultz.edu and we will get back to you within 1-2 weeks.
- ☐ Create an [myUSMLE Portal](#) account. Your program should send an informational email to students in your cohort with details on how to do this.
- ☐ Send your USMLE ID# and a copy of the CPTA form to testing@cuanschultz.edu so we can sign it and send it back to you.

3-6 Months Prior to Exam (June – September)

- ☐ Submit your application on your myUSMLE portal. USMLE can take up to 60 business days (~90 consecutive days) to process your application, and reconsideration requests (appeals) can also take considerable time.
- ☐ Track the status of your application on the landing page of your MyUSMLE Portal and await a formal decision. If approved, your scheduling permit will be taken off hold, and you can schedule your exam. If denied, decide whether you want to submit a Reconsideration Request and connect with ODAI if you need assistance.

Additional Resources

USMLE Resources

- USMLE's Website: [Test Accommodations](#)
- USMLE's Pre-Approved Items: [Permitted Items Without Accommodations](#)
- USMLE Portal: [MyUSMLE Portal](#)
- USMLE Guide: [Quick Guide to the MyUSMLE Accommodations Request Portal](#)
- USMLE's Email: disabilityservices@nbme.org
- USMLE's Phone Number: (215)-590-9700
- USMLE's FAQs: [Commonly Asked Questions](#)

ODAI Resources

- ODAI's Website: <https://www.cuanschutz.edu/odai>
- ODAI's Email: testing@cuanschutz.edu
- ODAI's Phone Number: (303)-724-5640
- ODAI's Location: Strauss Health Sciences Library, First Floor, Office 1409
- Meet with ODAI for Board Exam Support: [Directions to Schedule a Meeting](#)