



## **HRPA's Examination Accommodations Policy July 31, 2020**

HRPA conducts examinations in the context of its certification processes. This Examination Accommodation Policy applies to all exams administered by, or on behalf of, HRPA in the context of any of its certification programs:

- The CHRP Knowledge Exam
- The CHRL Knowledge Exam
- The CHRP Employment Law Exam
- The CHRL Employment Law Exam
- The various Challenge Exams administered as coursework equivalency

HRPA is committed to providing access to its programs and services to individuals with documented disabilities. HRPA complies with relevant accessibility laws including the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and Ontario Human Rights Code. HRPA is also guided with all professional standards in matters of certification exams.

A disability is any physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities<sup>1</sup>.

An accommodation is any variance to the standard examination administration procedure which the intent is to remove the specific hindrance stemming from the disability without compromising the security, integrity, and validity of the examination.

The following information is provided for exam candidates, evaluators, educators, and others involved in the process of documenting a request for exam accommodations. We strongly recommend candidates requesting an exam accommodation share this information with their evaluator, therapists, physicians, and other parties of interest so the appropriate documentation can be assembled to support an accommodation request.

The information you provide will be used only to assist HRPA in making a fair determination as to your circumstances and your request for an examination accommodation and in understanding the nature of the accommodation you are seeking and its relationship to the resources HRPA has at its disposal. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Only individuals who are directly involved in processing your request for accommodation and in providing the accommodation will have access to your information<sup>2</sup>.

In some situations, HRPA will engage with candidates to seek a mutually acceptable solution. Candidates are expected to participate in this interactive process in a timely way. The decisions of HRPA's Examinations Manager are appealable to HRPA's Appeal Committee.

### **Background: What Are Examination Accommodations?**

An accommodation is any variance to the standard examination administration procedure which the intent is to remove the specific hindrance stemming from the disability. The purpose of exam accommodations is to provide candidates with access to the exam and an opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate his or her knowledge or proficiency as assessed by the examination. The purpose of accommodations is not to assure improved performance, a passing score, exam completion, or other specific outcome(s).

<sup>1</sup> A more detailed definition can be found on the Ontario Human Rights Commission's website <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-ableism-and-discrimination-based-disability/2-what-disability>

<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to Section 62 of the *Registered Human Resources Professionals Act, 2013*, all individuals who have knowledge of this information are subject to an enforceable duty of confidentiality.



Exam accommodations are individualised and considered on a case-by-case basis. Exam accommodations are about functional limitations, not diagnosis. Individuals seeking disability-related accommodations must provide evidence, that, regardless of their diagnosis, their condition rises to the level of a disability and provide information about functional limitations in areas central to daily life. Having a diagnosis or demonstrating that one meets certain diagnostic criteria for a particular disorder does not automatically mean that one is necessarily entitled to exam accommodations. HRPA does not require a diagnosis. It does, however, require evidence that an individual's disability may have a significant impact on their ability to attempt an examination.

Individuals with a disability can usually demonstrate a significant impact in a variety of different settings, such as school, the workplace, and other daily life activities. If you are working in a job, it is helpful for us to see verification of workplace accommodations that are required in accommodating your disability.

Accommodations must be appropriate to the specific task and setting involved. Accommodations that may (or may have been) appropriate in a different setting for a different purpose (such as a classroom in an academic setting) may not always be appropriate in the examination context. An accommodation is valid only for one examination or administration. A candidate must submit a new request for accommodation for each examination or administration.

### **Steps to take - How to Apply**

Except in unusual circumstances, such as a recent injury, requests for accommodation must be received by HRPA at least 20 calendar days prior to the registration deadline for your exam. If requests are received after this deadline, HRPA will not be able to conduct a thorough, individualised review of the request, and have sufficient time to ensure that any approved accommodations are available at the exam centre.

1. When you register for any exam, answer 'Yes' if you plan to request accommodations for the examination. For HRPA to provide an individualised review of all requests and supporting documentation, we recommend that you register for your examination and request accommodations as far in advance as possible. This way, if your request is incomplete, you will have time to provide us with the necessary documentation prior to the deadline.
2. After you have registered for your examination, please read the rest of the information on this page, then read the [Documentation Guidelines](#). You should also share these guidelines with any professional who is providing you with supporting documentation.
3. After you have carefully read the [Documentation Guidelines](#), complete the Exam Accommodations Request Form, then email this form, along with all supporting documentation, to: [exams@hrpa.ca](mailto:exams@hrpa.ca).
4. If you are registering for a Challenge Examination, please email all supporting documentation to: [exams@hrpa.ca](mailto:exams@hrpa.ca). Accommodated candidates for Challenge Examinations will be scheduling their examination with Examity and not with Prometric, our examinations vendor for the Knowledge Exams or Employment Law Exams.
5. Do allow ten business days for HRPA to contact you with our determination, unless your request is unusually complex (in which case we will keep you posted about the status of your request). Upon receipt of the Exam Accommodations Request Form and all supporting documentation, HRPA will proceed with its review of the accommodations requested.



6. HRPA is unable to process incomplete requests. If your request is incomplete, meaning that it does not provide us with enough information to be able to make a decision, we will notify you of the information that is missing. The ten business-day timeline for reviewing requests does not begin until we have a complete request.
7. Please note that many accommodations requests are reviewed by an independent external expert.
8. If HRPA does not agree with the requested accommodation, HRPA will work with you to arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution. At his or her discretion, HRPA's Examinations Manager may seek the advice of an independent exam accommodation expert to review the case and make recommendations. It may be that HRPA will propose a meeting between experts to hopefully arrive at a mutually acceptable accommodation. Candidates are strongly encouraged to provide any additional information which may have been omitted from the original request.
9. HRPA's Examinations Manager will make a final accommodation proposal on behalf of HRPA.
10. Acknowledgement. If you agree with the proposed exam accommodations, you must sign the Acknowledgement to the Accommodations Provided form. Once you have acknowledged the details of the accommodations to be provided, HRPA will provide you with instructions for how to schedule your examination.
11. If you do not agree with the proposed accommodation, you may appeal the proposed accommodation to the Appeal Committee. Please refer to information on HRPA's appeal process in this regard.

## **Documentation Guidelines for Examination Accommodations**

### **Background Information**

The following information is provided for test candidates, evaluators, faculty, and others involved in the process of documenting a request for examination accommodations. To avoid delays, we strongly encourage you to share this information and the Documentation Guidelines with professionals who provide you with supporting documentation.

**Note:** These Guidelines also apply to individuals with temporary conditions such as injuries, recuperation from surgery, or specific requirements due to pregnancy or childbirth.

**It is important to remember that not every diagnosed condition will rise to the level of a disability.** Many (if not most) adults in our society have been diagnosed with some sort of condition—everything from high blood pressure to acid reflux disease to near-sightedness. Not all these individuals are disabled.

**HRPA does not require information about your diagnosis.** However, regardless of diagnosis, you must provide evidence that you are disabled, and information about functional limitation in areas central to daily life. Individuals who are disabled usually can demonstrate a significant impact in a variety of different settings, such as school, the workplace, and other daily life activities. If you are working in any job, even if it is part-time, it is helpful for us to see verification of workplace accommodations that you need due to your disability.



Examples of functional impacts due to disabling conditions include:

- Inability to hold a driving licence due to inattentiveness or distractibility
- Receiving disability benefits from your employer or the government
- Inability to find or keep employment due to your disability
- Needing accommodations at work in order to participate fully
- Having a modified housing situation due to access needs
- Inability to participate in sports or other activities due to your disability

### **Guidelines**

1. **Functional limitations and relevancy to the examination.** Your supporting documentation should:
  - Provide information about functional limitations in areas central to daily life (i.e., how your disability affects your day-to-day functioning).
  - Be appropriate to the task and setting. Keep in mind that accommodations that may have been appropriate in previous settings for other types of tasks may not be appropriate on a credentialing examination.
  - Be intended to provide access to the examination (not to enhance performance or attain a specific desired outcome).
  - Not compromise the integrity, security, or validity of the examination or its results.
2. **Evidence.** You will need to provide evidence that demonstrates that:
  - Regardless of your diagnosis, you are a person with a disability, and that your functioning is limited due to the disability. Simply describing symptoms of a disorder or condition is insufficient.
  - You have functional limitations that would prevent you from accessing the examination without accommodations. You should provide a detailed rationale for each accommodation that you are requesting. Note that naming your diagnosis is not a rationale for your request.
3. **Current documentation.** Be sure your documentation is current. Regardless of its age, your supporting documentation must reflect your current levels of functioning and current functional limitations.
4. **Format.** Your supporting documentation should be on letterhead, signed, dated, and legible. Documents that have missing portions or missing pages will not be accepted. All documents should be printed in either English or French.
5. **Prior accommodations.** Evidence of previous accommodation approvals by other institutions is helpful to see and will be considered. However, historical evidence of accommodations use is insufficient per se. It is HRPA's responsibility to carefully consider your current functional limitations in the context of the current task and setting, which may be different from the task or setting for which prior accommodations were granted.
6. **In writing.** All accommodations requests must be made in writing. We do not discuss or accept accommodations requests (or appeals) over the phone.
7. **Workplace accommodations.** It is helpful to see evidence of any accommodations you receive in your place of employment.



8. Personal statement. It is helpful for you to provide your own personal statement that explains how your disability affects your functioning in life activities or activities of daily living (work, home, school, etc.).

### **Specific Circumstances**

1. Attention problems. If your documentation indicates that you have difficulty sustaining your attention over time, or that your attention tends to wane over time, yet you are requesting longer seat time on the examination, you must explain why this accommodation would be appropriate.
2. Temporary disabilities or circumstances. A temporary disability, such as a broken arm, or temporary circumstances, such as pregnancy, will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
3. Medical conditions (including diabetes) requiring assistive devices. If you use assistive devices (other than ordinary eyeglasses) such as diabetes testing equipment, a cochlear implant, hearing aids, or a wheelchair, you must submit a written request for accommodations along with appropriate documentation from your health care provider.
4. Anxiety. It is perfectly normal to be anxious during your examination (“test anxiety”). However, accommodations are not provided for this circumstance, because “test anxiety” cannot be seen as a functional limitation to ordinary life activities.
5. Lack of language proficiency. If your native language is not English or French, this is a life circumstance, not a disability. We do not provide disability-related accommodations to individuals based on lack of proficiency with English or French.
6. Deaf. If you are deaf or hard-of-hearing, a written copy of the test centre’s check-in procedures and rules can be provided to you. However, since the examination itself is entirely written, with nothing to listen to, you should not need a sign language interpreter during the examination. We do not translate the examination into any other language at the test centre, including ASL. As indicated above, accommodations must be relevant to the specific task and setting.

Not every Prometric test centre is equipped to implement every accommodation at every test centre. In unusual circumstances, a candidate may be required to travel to a different test centre outside of their preferred location in order for Prometric to deliver your approved accommodation