

**BAR
STANDARDS
BOARD**

REGULATING BARRISTERS

Bar Course Aptitude Test (BCAT)

Reasonable adjustments (accommodations) policy and procedures

1. Introduction

The Bar Standards Board is committed to making reasonable adjustments (accommodations) in order to remove or reduce substantial disadvantage for disabled people undertaking the BCAT. This policy applies to all candidates who are applying to sit the BCAT.

2. What are reasonable adjustments?

2.1 Reasonable adjustments are reasonable steps taken to prevent a disabled person suffering a substantial disadvantage compared with people who are not disabled. This applies to any disadvantage caused by a provision, criterion or practice or any physical feature of premises. Reasonable adjustments can be made through the provision of equipment, auxiliary aids or changing processes or procedures to meet the needs of disabled candidates.

3. Candidates who are entitled to request reasonable adjustments

3.1 The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This means that, in general:

- the person must have an impairment that is either physical or mental;
- the impairment must have adverse effects which are substantial; i.e. more than minor or trivial;
- the substantial adverse effects must be long-term i.e. 12 months or more.

3.2 Candidates requesting reasonable adjustments will need to submit relevant documentary evidence to the BSB to confirm that they have a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010 and to confirm what reasonable adjustments are required.

4. The reasonable adjustments which are available

4.1 The BSB will consider all requests for reasonable adjustments; applications will be considered on an individual basis and decisions may vary according to the exact nature of a candidate's needs.

Types of reasonable adjustments commonly requested

4.2. All Pearson VUE test centres will provide as standard the following reasonable adjustments to BCAT candidates who have gone through the agreed process and received approval from the BSB:

- extension of time to complete the BCAT – 25%, 50%, 75% and 100%.
- adjustable / larger fonts / different colours.

All candidates can select font sizes up to 18pt and the following screen and font colour combinations before starting the test. (These examples are for illustration purposes only.)
Black text on White background
Black text on Light Yellow background
Black text on Yellow background
Blue text on White background
Blue text on Yellow background
White text on Black background
White text on Blue background
Light Yellow text on Black background
Yellow text on Black background
Yellow text on Blue background

Other adjustments available in selected test centres

4.3 Other reasonable adjustments that will be available, in the majority of centres, include:

- a separate / private room;
- a reader who can read the items to the candidate;
- a recorder who can record responses for the candidate on the computer.

4.4 This is not an exhaustive list and other adjustments may be considered on an individual basis.

4.5 Candidate enquiries regarding reasonable adjustments should be sent to BCAT@barstandardsboard.org.uk.

5. How to apply for reasonable adjustments

5.1 The Procedure

- Candidates who require reasonable adjustments must complete a *reasonable adjustments (accommodations) request form*, available from the [BCAT page of the website](#).
- Candidates who require reasonable adjustments should contact the BSB:
 - at least **six weeks** before the date they intend to take the BCAT for adjustments such as a reader, recorder or a Braille test.
 - at least **two weeks** before the date they intend to take the BCAT for adjustments such as extra time or a separate room.
- The completed *reasonable adjustments (accommodations) request form* should be submitted, together with the relevant documentary evidence, to the BPTC Team at BCAT@barstandardsboard.org.uk.
- The candidate will receive email confirmation of receipt of their *reasonable adjustments (accommodations) request form* from the BPTC Team.
- The BSB will review the *reasonable adjustments (accommodations) request form* and, where necessary, will contact the candidate for further information.
- The BSB will consider each reasonable adjustments request in line with the *BCAT reasonable adjustments (accommodations) policy and procedures* and will aim to communicate their decision to the candidate within 10 working days.
- Once approval is granted, the BSB will notify Pearson VUE and Pearson VUE will contact the candidate (usually via telephone) to schedule the candidate's test. Candidates should **not** book their BCAT online.

Documentary evidence required

5.2 It is vital that any request for reasonable adjustments is supported by documentary evidence from an appropriate recognised professional – for example, an educational psychologist’s report, or a letter from a GP or psychiatrist or other recognised medical professional such as a consultant, a psychotherapist, a nurse or a physiotherapist. For dyslexia or Specific Learning Difficulties, an educational psychologist’s report will be required. The documentary evidence **must** confirm the reasonable adjustments that should be put in place.

5.3 Where appropriate, the information should be recent evidence (within 3 – 5 years of the diagnosis).

6. Disclosure and Confidentiality

6.1 Information about the number and type of reasonable adjustments made in relation to the BCAT will be used to inform the BSB Equality Strategy and may be used to inform the evaluation of the test.

6.2 The BSB will record and evaluate all candidate requests, outcomes and feedback to ensure consistency.

6.3 The BSB will keep in confidence all correspondence and documentation received from a candidate in accordance with the [BSB Data Protection Policy](#).

7. Comfort Aids and permissible items / equipment in test centres

7.1 The below items are comfort aids available or allowed into all test centres and do **not** require pre-approval from the BSB; once you have scheduled your test please contact your Pearson VUE test centre directly to notify them before your test date. Comfort aids listed below will be allowed in the testing room upon visual inspection by the Testing Centre staff.

Comfort Aids
Earplugs
Noise Cancelling Headphones

7.2 The below medical items are allowed into test centres and do **not** require pre-approval from the BSB; once you have scheduled your test please contact your Pearson VUE test centre directly to notify them before your test date. Medical devices and medicine listed below will be allowed into the testing room upon visual inspection by the Testing Centre staff.

Medicine & Medical Devices
Bandages
Braces- Neck, Back, Wrist, Leg or Ankle Braces
Casts - including slings for broken / sprained arms and other injury-related items
Cough Drops - must be unwrapped and not in a bottle / container.
Eye Drops
Eye patches
Eyeglasses (without the case)
Handheld (non-electronic) magnifying glass (without the case)
Hearing aids
Inhaler
Medical Alert Bracelet - including medical alert bracelets with USB ports.
Medical device attached to a person; including Insulin pump, TENS Unit, or spinal cord stimulator
Medical / Surgical face mask
Pillow / Cushion
Pills - i.e. Tylenol or aspirin must be unwrapped and not in a bottle / container. Candidates may bring pills that are still in the packaging if the packaging states they MUST remain in the packaging, such as nitro glycerin pills that cannot be exposed to air. Packaging must be properly inspected.

7.3 The below items are mobility devices that all test centres can accommodate access for; once you have scheduled your test please contact your Pearson VUE test centre directly to notify them before your test date.

Mobility Devices:
Canes
Crutches
Motorized Scooters / Chairs
Walkers
Wheelchairs