

## Understanding the Review Process

Each application for accommodations on the MCAT® exam receives an individualized and comprehensive review. The review process is holistic, meaning that all of the materials you have submitted in support of your request are considered. It is particularly important for you to include documentation of your specific **diagnosis**, related **impairments**, and how those impairments would limit your ability to function if you were to take the MCAT® exam under standard conditions.

Applicants sometimes approach the accommodations request process assuming that having a diagnosis automatically results in the provision of a certain accommodation or that having received an accommodation in the past necessarily means that the same accommodation will be approved for the MCAT® exam. While this may occur in some cases, it is actually your current **functional limitations** (in combination with the demands of the activity you will be undertaking) that determines the appropriateness of a requested accommodation. For example, if you have a diagnosis of specific learning **disability** in written expression resulting in an impairment in writing fluency, you may need the accommodation of additional testing time and/or a scribe when completing an essay format exam on paper. However, you may not need additional testing time or a scribe for a multiple choice test administered via computer. In this case, having a learning disability does not automatically result in the need for additional time for test taking or a scribe due to the change in the demands of the task and environment. In some cases, the accommodations approved for you on the MCAT® exam may differ from those approved for you in other settings due to these differences in task demands and/or environments.

## WHAT DOES THAT TERM MEAN?

**Diagnosis:** The identification (e.g., name, term, description) given to an illness or group of symptoms. (e.g., traumatic brain injury)

**Impairment:** Any loss or abnormality of physiological, psychological, or anatomical structure or function. (e.g., memory impairment)

**Functional Limitation:** Restriction in the performance of activities; not performing in an efficient, typically expected, or competent manner. (e.g., slow to respond to questions)

**Disability (ADA):** A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

## Make sure your evaluator addresses the components listed in this chart in your documentation:

