

## CMS-A Disability Accommodation Policy

The Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas welcomes all individuals who can fulfill the essential duties of a professional sommelier to participate in CMS-A programming and examinations.

*Essential duties of a professional sommelier include, but are not limited to: opening bottles of still and sparkling wine, as well as other beverages, in a safe and efficient manner, serving glasses and bottles of wine and other beverages effectively to a table in a restaurant setting, deductively tasting and making a verbal assessment of a wine in a professional and coherent manner, and making sound recommendations to a guest with regard to food pairings, wine selection, or other topics that may come up in the day-to-day operations of a restaurant. These tasks are expected to be completed in a restricted time frame to replicate the pace and demands of restaurant service.*

In compliance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA), the CMS-A is committed to provide accommodation to enable a candidate with a disability(s) to successfully participate in courses and examinations.

An accommodation is a change, alteration, or modification to our examination or teaching process that provides candidates and students with an equitable opportunity. **Accommodation cannot be made if it eliminates an essential requirement of the role of a professional sommelier (i.e., eliminating the examination requirement to deductively taste wine due to a candidate's loss of their sense of taste).**

Examples of accommodation may include:

- Reasonable extension of allotted examination time
- Permitting the attendance of a sign language interpreter
- Secluded room for written examination
- Allow an acceptable adaptation in order for the candidate to do service

To request accommodation(s) due to disability, at the time of registration for a course or examination please provide a letter of verification from your health care provider. That letter must:

1. State the specific diagnosis using a professionally recognized nomenclature e.g., American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV-R) or International Classes of Diseases (ICD-10).
2. Be current. Because the provision of accommodation is based on the current impact of the disability on the testing activity, the evaluation should have been conducted no more than three years prior to the request for accommodation.

3. Clearly describe the specific diagnostic criteria and name the diagnostic tests used, including date(s) of evaluation; list specific test results; and provide a detailed interpretation of the test results in support of the diagnosis. Be sure to include all relevant educational, developmental and medical history.
  4. Give a detailed description of the applicant's current functional limitations due to the diagnosed disability and an explanation of how the diagnostic test results relate to the identified functional limitations. Fully describe how the disability impairs current physical, perceptual and/or cognitive functioning.
  5. Recommend specific accommodations including assistive devices. Provide a detailed explanation of why these accommodations or devices are needed and how they will reduce the impact of the identified functional limitations on the specific examination for which they are requested.
  6. Report any accommodations the applicant currently uses in daily functioning, especially professional and work-related activities and any past accommodations the applicant received on examinations because of the disability.
  7. Provide contact information and credentials of the professional evaluator that qualify him/her to make the diagnosis, including information about professional license or certification and specialization in the area of the diagnosis. The report dated must be written on the professional evaluator's letterhead and clearly indicate the name, address, telephone number and qualifications of the professional. The evaluator should present evidence of comprehensive training and direct experience in the diagnosis and treatment of adults in specific areas of disability.
  8. The documentation should include any record of prior accommodation or auxiliary aid, including any information about specific conditions under which the accommodation was used and whether or not it was effective. Please note that a prior history of accommodation, without demonstration of a current need, does not in and of itself warrant the provision of similar accommodation.
- ❖ ***If no prior accommodation has been provided, the qualified professional expert should include a detailed explanation as to why no accommodation was given in the past and why accommodation is needed now.***

Qualified health care providers must be unrelated to the student, and cannot include parents, siblings, relatives, or close family friends outside of their treatment role. Personal narratives from third parties, including IEPs/504 plans may be included, but will not be accepted in lieu of medical documentation.

## **Review of Requested Accommodations**

CMS-A will consider requests for examination accommodation following receipt of an examination application and all required documentation in support of the request. While documentation of prior approved accommodation(s) in an educational or academic institution or other testing organizations will be considered, an applicant's prior receipt of academic or testing accommodations does not in and of itself guarantee approval of the requested accommodation(s). The applicant will be sent a notification of CMS-A decision regarding the requested accommodation(s).

The CMS-A may explore alternate accommodations if a requested accommodation imposes a fundamental alteration to the CMS-A programming, or causes undue hardship to the CMS-A. No alternative accommodation will be provided without consulting the individual making the request.

Should accommodation be provided, the applicant will be required to sign a document outlining the accommodation to be provided and acknowledge that the accommodation is reasonable and it provides equitable examination experience.

All requests and letters of verification will be kept confidential. Please email requests or questions to [klewis@mastersommeliers.org](mailto:klewis@mastersommeliers.org).