

## Appendix C: Topic Prompts for Personal Statements<sup>1-2</sup>

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*Note: Respond only to the prompts that are relevant to your circumstances.*

### **Explain the nature of your disability and why you are requesting accommodations.**

- Describe how it affects you in medical school (reading, writing, studying, in the classroom, lab, clinic)
- Include a description of the day-to-day impact of your disability (outside med school):
  - interpersonal relationships
  - personal organization
  - driving record
  - financial management
  - prior employment
  - reading for pleasure

### **Explain your history of using accommodations in all settings.**

- K-12
- Undergraduate
- Other graduate programs
- Previous standardized testing (MCAT, SAT, AP exams, other)
- Employment
- Medical school
  - What accommodations did you use?
  - What worked, what didn't?
  - What additional challenges did you face in the environment?

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<sup>1</sup>Jain N, Bisagno J. Supporting students' accommodation requests on high stakes exams. Presented at: 3rd Annual Disability in Health Science and Medicine Symposium; April 2016; San Francisco, CA. Used with permission from Neera Jain.

<sup>2</sup>Jain NR, Meeks LM, Lewis C. Requesting accommodations on certification, licensing, and board exams: Assisting students through the application. Equal Access for Students with Disabilities: The Guide for Health Science and Professional Education. 2020 Dec 15:153.

- Were any accommodations provided informally that aren't documented? What were they, and why aren't they able to be formally documented?

## **If you do not have a long history of accommodations or have never used accommodations in the past:**

Explain what is different now. Why are accommodations necessary at this time for this exam?

- Is this exam different from others you have taken before? How?
- Is your diagnosis recent? If so, how did the diagnosis come about?
  - What were the circumstances of your upbringing and/or early education that may help the evaluators to understand your late diagnosis/lack of accommodations?
  - What challenges did you face in your life before you were diagnosed?
    - In education
    - In your personal life
- What strategies did you use to succeed in school and your personal life in the absence of formal diagnosis, treatment, and accommodations?
- Is medical school different from your previous academic settings? How?
- How did you get by before you had accommodations?
  - What strategies, services, and supports did you use?
  - What were the challenges and successes associated?
  - How are they insufficient for the medical school setting, particularly the USMLE exam?

## **Did you request but were denied accommodations on previous standardized exams (e.g., MCAT)?**

- If so, how did you ultimately succeed sufficiently to gain admittance to medical school despite not having accommodations for this exam?
- What strategies and preparation were involved in your journey to medical school to bolster your application?

## **Provide a rationale for each accommodation you are requesting.**

- What barrier does the exam pose, and how is it tied to your disability?
- If you have an example of a difference in performance with and without the accommodation, provide this information.