

Iowa Assessments Accommodations and Modifications

A testing accommodation, as the term is used here, refers to a change in the procedures for administering an assessment. The accommodation is intended to reduce as much as possible the effect of a student's special needs or limited English language proficiency on the assessment process, so that the student is assessed on an equal footing with all other students. Testing accommodations do not change the kind of achievement being measured; they change how that achievement is measured. If chosen appropriately, an accommodation will provide neither too much nor too little help to the student who receives it.

A testing modification is a change in the procedures for administering a test that may affect the constructs being measured. For example, reading aloud the Reading test represents a modification. A modification is sometimes necessary when an accommodation is not possible. A testing modification may lead to scores that differ in meaning between students who received the modification and those who did not receive it. Local, district, or state policy usually determines whether these scores should be interpreted differently.

Students with Special Needs

Some students have special needs that may make it difficult for them to demonstrate their true achievement through standard testing procedures. Nearly all of these students would have been identified as eligible for special education services and would have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), an Individualized Accommodation Program (IAP), or a Section 504 Plan. The IEP or other plan ordinarily indicates whether the student should receive testing accommodations during district-wide assessments and what the nature of those accommodations should be. **If the primary goal of using the Iowa Assessments is to obtain information that will have value for planning and implementing instruction, aspects of testing that might provide false readings of a student's achievement should be altered so that the best possible information can be obtained.** That is the goal of providing testing accommodations to students.

English Language Learners (ELLs)

The purpose of using accommodations with English Language Learners is to be able to measure skills and knowledge related to the curriculum without significant interference from their limited opportunity to learn English and use it during assessment. Local, district, or state guidelines should be followed when making decisions related to accommodations for ELL students.

Supplemental Coding for Accommodations and Modifications

Local, district, or state policy may require you to track the use of accommodations and modifications provided during testing. If required, your test coordinator will provide you with instructions for using the supplemental coding fields, located on the back page of the student's answer folder. Supplemental coding should be done after all testing has been completed. For more information about using the supplemental coding fields, refer to the Planning and Implementation Guide.

Typical Accommodations

The testing accommodations most frequently provided to students with IEPs or Section 504 plans, and accommodations sometimes provided to ELL students are as follows:

Read Aloud

Students with reading disabilities may need to have parts of tests or some complete tests read to them so their disabilities do not interfere with the measurement of their achievement. **Under no circumstances should the Reading test be read aloud or signed to a student as an accommodation.** To do so would drastically change what the test measures and what the student's score means. Test administrators should read all or part of other tests aloud when the student's IEP specifies this as an accommodation.

Tested Off Level

Out-of-level testing should be considered for students who, in most curricular areas, are working at an instructional level different from that of their grade peers. For example, a lower-level test may align better with some students' learning opportunities and experiences than the on-level test for their grade.

Repeated Directions

Directions may be read aloud as many times as is necessary to ensure that students understand what they are supposed to do. **Exceptions are the individual item scripts in Word Analysis and Listening at Level 9.** In addition, a test administrator who is fluent in the signing or cueing methods used by a student may need to repeat directions or certain portions of the test administration to clarify procedures for the student.

Assistance with the Answer Document

An assistant or proctor may record a student's answers on the answer document if the student is unable to do so because of physical impairment.

Extended Time

Some students may need to have time limits on some tests extended to reduce the effect of a slow work rate on their test performance. Those who use magnifiers, have attention disorders, or need help with word identification are examples. Guidance from the student's IEP should be followed where extended time is appropriate.

Separate Location

A separate room should be made available for students who might be distracted by the pace at which their peers work, who may need extra breaks, or who might be disruptive in a larger group.

Test Administered by ELL Teacher or Individual Providing Language Services

This accommodation allows the student to be tested in the environment that is most comfortable. Also, it makes other accommodations more readily available if their need was not anticipated at the outset of the test administration.

Provision of English/Native Language Word-to- Word Dictionary

Students may be permitted to use a glossary (no definitions) that translates an English word into the corresponding word in their home language. The need for this assistance is determined by the student's teacher and depends on whether such glossaries are routinely used by the student during classroom assessments.

Other Accommodations noted in a student's IEP but not included in this list may be used. However, they should be used only if doing so will not alter the nature of the achievement the test is intended to measure.