

SPECIAL NEEDS ACCOMMODATIONS

Students who are members of special populations are often referred to as students with special needs. This includes students who may not necessarily have an IEP on file. In some cases, students who are members of special populations may need modifications made to the testing situation. The modifications should be made according to the student's individual needs.

Any time modifications are allowed in a standardized testing situation with a norm-referenced instrument, such modifications **must** be noted on the final test report and this information maintained intact with the scores, as it is critically important to the meaning of scores so derived.

Special populations include:

- Individuals with disabilities
 - o mental retardation
 - o hearing impaired, including deafness
 - o speech or language impaired
 - o visually impaired, including blindness
 - o seriously emotionally disturbed
 - o orthopedically impaired
 - o other health impairment
 - o specific learning disability
 - o autism
 - o head injuries
- individuals with disadvantages
 - o academically disadvantaged
 - o economically disadvantaged
- individuals of limited English proficiency
- individuals who participate in programs designed to eliminate sex bias
- individuals in correctional institutions (adult offender/juvenile offender)
- single parents/displaced homemakers
- single pregnant women
- dislocated workers

Individuals who fall into one of these categories may or may not need modifications made to the testing process. Those students likely to need modifications are individuals with disabilities. Some of the modifications that could be made during the testing situation to accommodate a student with disabilities include the following:

Time: This may include increasing the amount of time a student has to complete a test or shortening or breaking the length of time into shorter increments.

Verbal: This may include having the entire test read to the student. This could be done by the instructor, another student, or providing a tape recording of the test. Answers may also need to be provided orally. If so, the instructor may need to set aside a time to meet with the student to give the test, or the student may be able to take the test in a separate room, where the answers could be taped. The student may be able to give oral answers to another student and that student records the answers for them.

Visual: Visual clues may need to be provided in addition to written and verbal instructions. For instance, if the student is to record the answers on a scan sheet, the instructor may need to demonstrate how the answers are to be filled in on the chalkboard or on an overhead.

Seating: Seating arrangements may need to be carefully considered in a testing situation. Seating the student close to the instructor will enable the instructor to check the student periodically for difficulties the student may be having. For students who are easily distracted, it will allow the instructor to help the student stay on track. Special seating arrangements may also include allowing the student to take the test in a quiet, uncrowded corner of the room or even in the hall outside the room if the student chooses to. It could also mean providing a study carrel for the student to be seated at while taking the test. This helps reduce visual distractions for some students.

Test Length: For some students it may be appropriate to give only a few questions at a time for the student to respond to, or having the student respond to only the odd or even numbered questions. It may also mean putting fewer questions on one page.

Readability: The reading level of the test may need to be lowered. This may include shortening the length of sentences, avoiding abstract terms, or rewording questions. The test should remain representative of the instructor's intent.

Test Type: For some students it may be more appropriate to allow them to take an open book test or to give them a take home test. Others may need a different form of test, for instance, a multiple choice, true/false, or matching test rather than an essay test or short answer test.

Student Responses: The student may need to be allowed to use a typewriter or computer to provide written responses. In some cases, students are required to answer on a separate page. For students with disabilities, it may be necessary to allow the student to answer questions directly on the test, rather than on a separate sheet. The answers could be transferred later by the instructor.

Other: Other types of modifications may include allowing a student to use a calculator to figure math problems. It may also mean having a sign language interpreter available. Another modification may be to have the student respond to a certain number of questions, having the instructor check the student's responses to assure

the student has adequate understanding of the task, then having the student respond to another set of questions.

This is not an inclusive list and modifications will need to be made based on the student's individual needs. When in doubt, ask the student or a member of the student's IEP or IVP team.

Using the factors listed above, these are ways the modifications may need to be applied for students with disabilities in each of the disabling categories. Modifications are often overlapping between categories.

Mental retardation: Break the test into shorter segments; instructor checks for understanding upon completion of each segment.

Hearing impaired/deaf: Provide oral instructions given by the instructor in written form or having a sign language interpreter available.

Speech/language impaired: Provide visual clues with verbal and written instructions.

Visually impaired/blind: Allow student to answer questions directly on the test rather than on a separate sheet or to answer orally.

Seriously emotionally disturbed: Provide special seating arrangements.

Orthopedically impaired: Put a table on blocks so wheelchair will fit under the table.

Other health impairment: Allow movement or breaks as needed to accommodate condition. Allow a student with Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder to take a test while seated at a study carrel to reduce visual distractions.

Specific learning disability: Allow the student to use a calculator to figure math problems. Allow the student to use a marker card to follow lines in reading. Allow the student to take the test on a computer if possible.

Autism: Provide testing environment with little or no visual or auditory stimuli.

Head injuries: Provide student with oral exam; could be tape recorded for student.