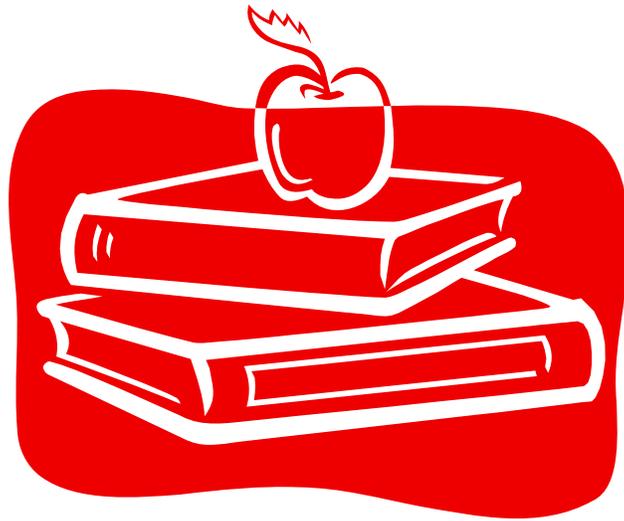


NEBRASKA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



ACCOMMODATIONS GUIDELINES
FOR THE INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT
OF
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

MARCH 2006

**DEVELOPED IN COLLABORATION WITH THE STATE COLLABORATIVE ON ASSESSMENT
AND STUDENT STANDARDS ASSESSING SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS (SCASS ASES)**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 1	INCLUDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN STARS.....	2
	Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004	
PART 2:	ACCOMMODATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT.....	4
	What are Accommodations?	
	Description of Accommodations Categories	
	Modifications or Alterations vs. Accommodations	
PART 3:	SELECT ACCOMMODATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION AND	
	ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS.....	6
	Documenting Accommodations on a Student’s IEP	
	Involving Students in Selecting, Using, and Evaluating Accommodations	
	Questions to Guide Accommodations Selection	
PART 4:	ADMINISTER ACCOMMODATIONS DURING INSTRUCTION	
	AND ASSESSMENT.....	10
	Accommodations During Instruction	
	Accommodations During Assessment	
	Ethical Testing Practices	
PART 5:	EVALUATE AND IMPROVE ACCOMMODATIONS USE.....	12
	Questions to Guide Evaluation of Accommodations Use at the School or District Level	
	Level Questions to Guide Evaluation at the Student Level	
PART 6:	PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATIONS.....	14
PART 7:	RESPONSE ACCOMMODATIONS.....	18
PART 8:	SETTING ACCOMMODATIONS.....	22
PART 9:	TIMING AND SCHEDULING ACCOMMODATIONS.....	24
PART 10:	EXAMPLES OF ACCOMMODATIONS BASED ON STUDENT	
	CHARACTERISTICS.....	26
PART 11:	DO’S AND DON’TS WHEN SELECTING ACCOMMODATIONS.....	32

PART 1

INCLUDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN STARS

(SCHOOL-BASED TEACHER-LED ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING SYSTEM)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

IDEA 2004 and Nebraska Title 92, Rule 51 specifically govern services provided to students with disabilities, including the participation of students with disabilities in state assessments. Developed on the basis of each child's unique needs, it is the role of the IEP Team to determine the type of assessment and specific accommodations required for this participation.

Section 612(b)(16) of the 2004 reauthorized IDEA states:

“(A) IN GENERAL.—All children with disabilities are included in all general State and districtwide assessment programs, ... with appropriate accommodations and alternate assessments where necessary and as indicated in their respective individualized education programs.

(B) ACCOMMODATION GUIDELINES.—The State (or, in the case of a districtwide assessment, the local educational agency) has developed guidelines for the provision of appropriate accommodations.”

PART 2

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

WHAT ARE ACCOMMODATIONS?

Accommodations are practices and procedures in the areas of presentation, response, setting, and timing/scheduling that provide equitable access during instruction and assessments for students with disabilities.

Accommodations are intended to reduce or even eliminate the effects of a student's disability; they do not reduce learning expectations. The accommodations provided to a student must be the same for classroom instruction, classroom assessments, and district and state assessments. It is critical to note that although some accommodations may be appropriate for instructional use, they may not be appropriate for use on specific standardized assessments. Schools should consult the information provided with standardized testing material. If accommodations are not allowed, another standardized test should be provided for students requiring accommodations.

Typically, accommodation use does not begin and end in school. Students who use accommodations will generally also need them at home, in the community, and as they get older, in postsecondary education and at work. Accommodations for instruction and assessment are integrally intertwined.

DESCRIPTION OF ACCOMMODATIONS CATEGORIES

Accommodations are commonly categorized in four ways: presentation, response, setting, and timing and scheduling:

- **Presentation Accommodations**—Allow students to access information in ways that do not require them to visually read standard print. These alternate modes of access are auditory, multi-sensory, tactile, and visual.
- **Response Accommodations**—Allow students to complete activities, assignments, and assessments in different ways or to solve or organize problems using some type of assistive device or organizer.
- **Setting Accommodations**—Change the location in which a test or assignment is given or the conditions of the assessment setting.
- **Timing and Scheduling Accommodations**—Increase the allowable length of time to complete an assessment or assignment and perhaps change the way the time is organized.

MODIFICATIONS OR ALTERATIONS VS. ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations do not reduce learning expectations or alter the content of the material to be mastered. Accommodations provide access to receiving information and expressing what has been learned.

Modifications refer to practices that change or reduce learning expectations and content. Modifications may increase the gap between the achievement of students with disabilities and expectations for proficiency at a particular grade level. Examples of modifications include:

- requiring a student to learn less material (e.g., fewer objectives, shorter units or lessons, fewer pages or problems),
- reducing assignments and assessments so a student only needs to complete the easiest problems or items,
- revising assignments or assessments to make them easier (e.g., crossing out half of the response choices on a multiple-choice test so that a student only has to pick from two options instead of four), or
- giving a student hints or clues to correct responses on assignments and tests.
- giving students out-of-grade level materials or assessments

Assessments with modifications must be reported at the “beginning level” of the grade in which the student is enrolled.

Providing modifications to students during classroom instruction and/or classroom assessments may have the unintended consequence of reducing their opportunity to learn critical content. Not only will those students not have access to critical, assessed content, they may not meet graduation requirements according to individual district policies.

PART 3

SELECT ACCOMMODATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS

To assure students with disabilities are engaged in standards-based instruction and assessments, every IEP team member must be knowledgeable about the state and district academic content standards and assessments. Effective decision-making about the provision of appropriate accommodations begins with making good instructional decisions. In turn, making appropriate instructional decisions is facilitated by gathering and reviewing good information about the student's disability and present level of performance in relation to local and state academic standards. In essence, the process of making decisions about accommodations is one in which members of the IEP team attempt to "level the playing field" so that students with disabilities can participate in the general education curriculum. IEP team meetings that simply engage people in checking boxes on a state or local "compliance" document are neither conducive to sound decision-making practices, nor do they advance equal opportunities for students to participate in the general education curriculum.

DOCUMENTING ACCOMMODATIONS ON A STUDENT'S IEP

For students with disabilities served under IDEA, determining appropriate instructional and assessment accommodations should not pose any particular problems for IEP teams that follow good IEP practices. With information obtained from the required summary of the student's present level of educational performance (PLEP), the process of identifying and documenting accommodations should be a fairly straightforward event. The PLEP is a federal requirement in which IEP team members must state "how the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum—the same curriculum as non-disabled children" [Sec. 614 (d) (1) (A) (i) (I)].

Depending on the design and overall format of a typical IEP, there are potentially three areas in which accommodations can be addressed:

1. "Consideration of Special Factors" [Sec. 614 (d) (3) (B)]. This is where communication and assistive technology supports are considered
2. "Supplementary Aids and Services" [Sec. 602 (33) and Sec. 614 (d) (1) (A) (i)]. This area of the IEP includes "aids, services, and other supports" that are provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with non-disabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.
3. "Participation in Assessments" [Sec. 612 (a) (16)]. This section of the IEP documents accommodations needed to facilitate the participation of students with disabilities in general state and district-wide assessments.

INVOLVING STUDENTS IN SELECTING , USING , AND EVALUATING ACCOMMODATIONS

It is critical for students with disabilities to understand their disabilities and learn self-advocacy strategies for success in school and throughout life. Some students have had limited experience expressing personal preferences and advocating for themselves. Speaking out about preferences, particularly in the presence of “authority figures”, may be a new role for students, one for which they need guidance and feedback. Teachers and other IEP team members can play a key role in working with students to advocate for themselves in the context of selecting, using, and evaluating accommodations.

The more students are involved in the selection process, the more likely the accommodations will be used, especially as students reach adolescence and the desire to be more independent increases. Self-advocacy skills become critical here. Students need opportunities to learn which accommodations are most helpful for them, and then they need to learn how to make certain those accommodations are provided in all of their classes and wherever they need them outside of school.

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE ACCOMMODATION SELECTION

Selecting accommodations for instruction and assessment is the role of a student’s IEP team. Use the questions provided below to guide the selection of appropriate accommodations for students receiving special education services:

- What are the student’s learning strengths and areas of further improvement?
- How do the student’s learning needs affect the achievement of grade-level content standards?
- What specialized instruction (e.g., learning strategies, organizational skills, reading skills) does the student need to achieve grade-level content standards?
- What accommodations will increase the student’s access to instruction and assessment by addressing the student’s learning needs and reducing the effect of the student’s disability? These may be new accommodations or accommodations the student is currently using.
- What accommodations are regularly used by the student during instruction and assessments?
- What are the results for assignments and assessments when accommodations are used and not used?
- What is the student’s perception of how well an accommodation “worked”?
- Are there effective combinations of accommodations?
- What difficulties did the student experience when using accommodations?

- What are the perceptions of parents, teachers, and specialists about how the accommodations worked?
- Should the student continue to use an accommodation, are changes needed, or should the use of the accommodation be discontinued?

Of the accommodations that match the student's needs, consider

- the student's willingness to learn and use the accommodations, and
- the opportunities to learn how to use the accommodations in classroom settings.

Plan how and when the student will learn to use each new accommodation. Be certain there is ample time to learn to use instructional and assessment accommodations before an assessment takes place. Finally, plan for the ongoing evaluation and improvement of the student's use of their accommodations.

PART 4

ADMINISTER ACCOMMODATIONS DURING INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

ACCOMMODATIONS DURING INSTRUCTION

The student must be provided the selected accommodations during instructional periods that necessitate their use. **Accommodations may not be used solely during assessments.**

ACCOMMODATIONS DURING ASSESSMENT

Planning for Test Day

Once decisions have been made about providing accommodations to meet individual student needs, the logistics of providing the actual accommodations during state and district assessments must be mapped out. It is not uncommon for members of the IEP team, most often special education teachers, to be given the responsibility for arranging, coordinating, and providing assessment accommodations for all students who may need them. Thus, it is essential for all IEP team members to know and understand the guidelines for the use of accommodations in Nebraska's STARS Assessment process. It is important to engage the appropriate personnel to plan the logistics and provisions of assessment accommodations on test day.

Prior to assessments, be certain assessment administrators and proctors know what accommodations each student will be using and how to administer them properly. For example, test administrators and proctors need to know whether a student will be allowed extra time to complete the test and when the testing time is ended, what plan exists for the student to continue working.

ETHICAL TESTING PRACTICES

Ethical testing practices must be maintained during the administration of assessments. Unethical testing practices relate to inappropriate interactions between test administrators and students taking assessments. Unethical practices include coaching students during testing, editing student responses, or giving clues in any way.

PART 5

EVALUATE AND IMPROVE ACCOMMODATIONS USE

Accommodations must be selected on the basis of the individual student's needs and must be used consistently for instruction and assessment. Collecting and analyzing data on the use and effectiveness of accommodations are necessary to ensure the meaningful participation of students with disabilities in state and district-wide assessments. Data on the use and impact of accommodations during assessments may reveal questionable patterns of accommodations use, as well as support the continued use of some accommodations or the rethinking of others. Examination of the data may also indicate areas in which the IEP team, 504 plan committee, teachers and test administrators need additional training and support.

In addition to collecting information about the use of accommodations within the classroom, information also needs to be gathered on the implementation of accommodations during assessment. Observations during the assessment process, interviews with test administrators, and discussions with students after testing sessions will likely yield data that can be used to guide the formative evaluation process at the school/district level and at the student level. Accommodation information can be analyzed in different ways. Here are some questions to guide data analysis at the school and district level and the student level.

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE EVALUATION OF ACCOMMODATION USE AT THE SCHOOL OR DISTRICT LEVEL

1. Are students receiving accommodations as documented in their IEP plans?
2. Are there procedures in place to ensure that test administrators adhere to directions for the implementation of accommodations?
3. How many students with IEPs are receiving accommodations?
4. What types of accommodations are provided and are they appropriate to the student's identified disability?
5. How well do students who receive accommodations perform on state and local assessments? If a student is not meeting the expected level of performance, is it due to 1) the student not having access to the necessary instruction, 2) the student not receiving the accommodations specified on their IEP, 3) the student was not trained properly in the use of the accommodations or 4) the chosen accommodations were not effective?

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE EVALUATION AT THE STUDENT LEVEL

1. What accommodations are used by the student during instruction and assessments?

2. What is the student's performance level on classroom assignments and assessments when accommodations are used versus when accommodations are not used? If a student did not meet the expected level of performance, is it due to not having access to the necessary instruction, not receiving the accommodations, or using accommodations was ineffective?
3. What is the student's perception of how well the accommodation worked?
4. What combination of accommodations seems to be effective?
5. What are the difficulties encountered in the use of accommodations?
6. What are the perceptions of teachers and peers about the use of accommodations?

These questions can be used to formatively evaluate the accommodations used at the student level, as well as the school or district levels. School and district-level questions can be addressed by a committee responsible for continuous improvement efforts, while the student-level questions need to be considered by the IEP team. It is critical to stress that formative evaluation is not the responsibility of just one individual. The entire IEP team should contribute to the information gathering and decision-making processes.

PART 6

PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATIONS

WHAT ARE PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATIONS?

Presentation accommodations allow students to access instruction and assessments in ways that do not require them to visually read standard print. These alternate modes of access include auditory, tactile, visual, and a combination of auditory and visual accommodations.

WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATIONS?

Students who benefit most from presentation accommodations are those with print disabilities, defined as difficulty or inability to visually read standard print because of a physical, sensory, or cognitive disability. This would include a learning disability in reading.

ACCOMMODATIONS CONDITIONS

VISUAL PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATIONS	Instruction	Assessment
Large Print Large print editions of tests and instructional materials are required for some students with visual impairments. It is recommended that regular print materials be manipulated to reformat test items and enlarge or change the font as needed. All text and graphic materials—including labels and captions on pictures, diagrams, maps, charts, exponential numbers, notes, and footnotes—must be presented in at least 18-point type for students who need large print. Students, working with their teachers, need to find an optimal print size and determine the smallest print that can still be read. (Copyright issues may need to be addressed). It is important for the print to be clear, with high contrast between the color of the print and the color of the background. When using large-print classroom material, consider the weight, size, and awkwardness of books. Large-print books are now available that look very similar to the same books in standard print.	X	X
Magnification Devices Some students with visual impairments read regular print materials and enlarge the print by using magnification devices. These include eyeglass-mounted magnifiers, free standing or handheld magnifiers, enlarged computer monitors, or computers with screen enlargement programs. Some students also use Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) to enlarge print and display printed material with various image enhancements on a screen.	X	X

VISUAL PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATIONS	Instruction	Assessment
<p>Sign Language</p> <p>Sign language interpreters may be required for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Sometimes an interpreter is only needed or allowed to sign instructions and to assist in communication. Some students may need all print materials interpreted while learning to read print. Interpreters need to be able to translate in the same method of sign language typically used by the student (e.g., American Sign Language, Cued Speech). Interpreters must not paraphrase, clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance with the meaning of words, intent of test questions, or responses to test items. Graphic materials may be described but should also be available in print or tactile formats. A standard video presentation of a test in sign language may be used to increase quality, consistency, pacing, and accuracy.</p>	X	X
<p>Braille</p> <p>Braille is a method of reading a raised-dot code with the fingertips. Not all students who are blind read Braille fluently or choose Braille as their primary mode of reading. Even if they use it as their primary mode of reading, Braille users should also build skills in using audiotape, compact discs, and speech synthesis. Decisions also need to be made about whether a student will use contracted or uncontracted Braille. Check to see if practice tests are available in Braille. Although still uncommon, “refreshable Braille displays” are electronic devices used to read and write text. The device is connected to a computer and produces Braille output on the Braille display. The Nemeth Braille Code is a system of Braille that makes it possible to convey technical expressions in a written medium to students who are blind or visually impaired. The Nemeth Braille Code contains numerous technical symbols that occur in mathematics and science.</p>	X	X
<p>Tactile Graphics</p> <p>Tactile graphic images provide graphic information through fingers instead of eyes. Graphic material (e.g., maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, illustrations) is presented in a raised format (paper or thermoform). Tactile sensitivity (recognizing graphic images through touch) is less discriminating than visual reading, making many diagrams too complicated to understand without significant additional information. Additional information can be created through word descriptions.</p>	X	X
<p>Human Reader</p> <p>A qualified person may be provided to read orally to students who are unable to decode text visually. Readers should use even inflection so that the student does not receive any cues by the way the information is read. It is important for readers to read test items/questions and text word for word exactly as written. Readers may not clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance to students. Readers need to be familiar with the terminology and symbols specific to the content. This is especially important for high school mathematics and science. Graphic materials may be described but should also be made available in print or tactile formats. Readers must be provided to students on an individual basis—not to a group of students. A student should have the option of asking a reader to slow down or repeat text. This cannot occur when a person is reading to an entire group of students.</p> <p>* A reader may be used for all curriculum areas during assessment with the exception of Reading. In Reading Assessments, readers may only read the instructions and questions, not the content of the assessment.</p>	X	X SEE * IN DETAILS TO THE LEFT

VISUAL PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATIONS	Instruction	Assessment
<p>Audiotape or Compact Disk</p> <p>Written tests and instructional materials are prerecorded on an audio cassette or compact disk (CD) that a student accesses by listening. Classroom directions, assignments, and lectures could also be recorded. When taping lectures, students should sit near the front of the classroom, use a small microphone, and tape only parts of the class that can clearly be replayed (e.g., turn the tape recorder off during small group discussions). Advantages include ease of operation and low costs. The greatest difficulty with an audio cassette is rewinding if a student wants to repeat material. This is not as difficult with a CD that can be programmed. Audio versions of tests and other written materials need to be supplemented with a print or Braille version of the text so a student can have access to complicated graphic material. When using a two-sided cassette tape, students may need to be reminded to play the other side. Spot check audio formats before use to make certain everything is working properly. Copyright issues may need to be addressed. Audiotapes and CDs must be signed out, collected, and kept in a secure location.</p>	X	X
<p>Books on Tape</p> <p>Books on Tape is a service provided by Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic for which students and schools can apply. Students call a toll-free number to borrow textbooks for a specified period of time. A special tape player may also be needed.</p>	X	X
<p>Recorded Books</p> <p>Recorded Books are produced on tape or CD and can be borrowed from libraries or purchased from bookstores. Many online bookstores also carry recorded books, making access even easier. Some of the tapes contain the full book and some are abridged (e.g., Reader's Digest version). These tapes play on standard cassette or CD players. Tapes or CDs for children often include a book for following along. Students who can see print may want to obtain a print copy of a taped book to follow along.</p>	X	X
<p>Audio Amplification Devices</p> <p>Some students may require audio amplification devices in addition to hearing aids to increase clarity. A teacher may use an amplification system when working with students in classroom situations that contain a great deal of ambient noise.</p>	X	X
<p>Videotape and Descriptive Video</p> <p>Many books have been made into movies, giving students a visual and auditory way to access literature. Videotapes are now often closed-captioned. Captions are visible when activated by a decoder. Built-in decoders are required on all 13-inch or larger television sets. Descriptive video is a descriptive narration of key visual elements, making television programs, feature films, home videos, and other visual media accessible to people who are visually impaired. Key visual elements include actions, gestures, facial expressions, and scene changes. Inserted within the natural pauses in dialogue, audio descriptions of important visual details help to engage viewers with the story.</p>	X	X

VISUAL PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATIONS	Instruction	Assessment
<p>Screen Reader</p> <p>A screen reader is a computer application that converts text to synthesized speech or to Braille (read with an auxiliary Braille display). Computer literacy is essential for screen reader use. Screen reading software allows students to listen to text as it is displayed on a computer screen. Students can choose to listen to any text multiple times. Some products work by having a student lay a page on a scanner. When a student activates the machine, it reads the text aloud using an optical character recognition (OCR) system. Mathematic formulas are normally displayed on screen as graphics that cannot be read by a screen reader.</p>	X	X
<p>Visual Cues</p> <p>Students who are deaf or hard of hearing need visual cues in the classroom. Teachers should keep their faces visible to the class when speaking, pass out printed material before class, repeat questions asked by other students, and summarize classroom discussion.</p>	X	X
<p>Notes, Outlines, and Instructions</p> <p>Written notes may be taken by another student and copied. A teacher could provide a print copy of instructions and assignments. Students could also be given a detailed outline of the material to be covered during the class period and an outline of material to be covered (syllabus) at the beginning of each grading period.</p>	X	X
<p>Talking Materials</p> <p>Many classroom materials are now available with auditory components. These include calculators, “talking” clocks, thermometers, timers, and voltmeters.</p>	X	X

Additional ideas that may be helpful:				
Provide students with math formula cards	Increase space between items on a page	Simplify language in directions	X	X
One complete sentence per line in reading passages.	Key words or phrases in directions highlighted	Read directions to the student and have student repeat directions	X	X
Provide a language interpreter	Read multi-step directions in small portions	Provide clear copies of assignments and assessments	X	X
Cues (arrows, stop signs) on answer forms.	Templates to reduce visible print	Allow student to quietly read aloud	X	X
Provide useful strategies for decoding, vocabulary, or comprehension			X	X

PART 7

RESPONSE ACCOMMODATIONS

WHAT ARE RESPONSE ACCOMMODATIONS?

Response accommodations allow students to complete assignments, tests, and activities in different ways or to solve or organize problems using some type of assistive device or organizer.

WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM RESPONSE ACCOMMODATIONS?

Response accommodations can benefit students with physical, sensory, or learning disabilities (including difficulties with memory, sequencing, directionality, alignment, and organization).

ACCOMMODATIONS CONDITIONS

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSE ACCOMMODATIONS	Instruction	Assessment
Scribe A scribe is someone who writes down what a student dictates by an assistive communication device, pointing, sign language, or speech. Much skill is involved in being a scribe, skill that requires extensive practice. A scribe may not edit or alter student work in any way and must record word for word exactly what the student has dictated. Scribes should request clarification from the student about the use of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling key words, and must allow the student to review and edit what the scribe has written. Individuals who serve as a scribe need to carefully prepare to assure they know the vocabulary involved and understand the boundaries of the assistance to be provided. The role of the scribe is to write only what is dictated, no more and no less.	X	X
Word Processor A student types on a word processor. This option may increase a student's independence and reduce the need for a trained scribe. Research has found that students who complete better work on computers than by handwriting are students who are very familiar with computers and have good keyboarding skills. Assistive technology that can be used for typing includes customized keyboards, mouth or headstick or other pointing devices, sticky keys, touch screen, and trackball.	X	X
Speech to Text Speech-to-text conversion or voice recognition allows students to use their voices as input devices. Voice recognition may be used to dictate text into the computer or to give commands to the computer (e.g., opening application programs, pulling down menus, or saving work). Older voice recognition applications require each word to be separated by a distinct space. This allows the machine to determine where one word begins and the next stops. This style of dictation is called discrete speech. Continuous speech voice recognition allows students to dictate text fluently into the computer. These new applications can recognize speech at up to 160 words per minute. While these systems do give students system control, they are not yet hands-free.	X	X

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSE ACCOMMODATIONS	Instruction	Assessment
<p>Braille</p> <p>A Braille keyboard is a Braille keyboard used for typing Braille that can then be printed in standard print or Braille (embosser). The Braille keyboard is similar to a typewriter or computer keyboard. Paper is inserted into the Braille keyboard and multiple keys are pressed at once, creating Braille dots with each press. Through an alternative computer port, newer Braille keyboards can simultaneously act as a speech synthesizer that reads the text displayed on the screen when paired with a screen reading program.</p>	X	X
<p>Note Takers</p> <p>Students may have another student take notes or use an electronic note-taking device. Portable note-taking devices are small, lightweight devices equipped with a Braille or typewriter-style keyboard for input and synthetic voice. Some note takers also contain a Braille display (between 18 and 40 characters) for output. Note takers are excellent tools for recording notes in school, at home, or at work. They often have additional features such as a calculator and a calendar function. Newer models have a built-in modem, which allows the user to access e-mail as well as surf the Web. When these models are connected to a PC, files can be exchanged or information can be sent from the note taker to a Braille embosser or to an ink printer. When linked to a computer using a screen reader, note takers equipped with a Braille display can act as a Braille output device.</p>	X	X
<p>Tape Recorder</p> <p>A student uses a tape recorder to record class work or test responses rather than writing on paper.</p>	X	X
<p>Responding in Test Booklet</p> <p>This accommodation allows a student to write directly in a test booklet rather than on an answer sheet (e.g., scanable “bubble” sheet).</p>	X	X
MATERIALS OR DEVICES USED TO SOLVE OR ORGANIZE RESPONSES		
<p>Calculation Devices</p> <p>If a student’s disability affects mathematics calculation but not reasoning, a calculator or other assistive device (e.g., abacus, arithmetic table, manipulatives, or number chart) may be used. It is important to determine whether the use of a calculation device is a matter of convenience or a necessary accommodation. It is important to know the goal of instruction and assessment before making decisions about the use of calculation devices. For example, if students are learning subtraction with regrouping, using a calculator would not give a student an opportunity to show regrouping. On the other hand, if students are learning problem solving skills that include subtraction (e.g., bargain shopping for items with a better value), the use of a calculation device may be a valid accommodation. Calculators may be adapted with large keys or voice output (talking calculators). In some cases, an abacus may be useful for students when mathematics problems are to be calculated without a calculator. The abacus functions as paper and pencil for students with visual impairments.</p>	X	X
<p>Spelling and Grammar Devices</p> <p>The use of a dictionary may be allowed on assignments that require an extended response or essay. Spelling and grammar can also be checked with pocket spell checkers. Students enter an approximate spelling and then see or hear the correct spelling or correct use of a word. Students who use a word processor may be allowed to use a spell-check or other electronic spelling device. Some states require spell-check and grammar-checking devices to be turned off for writing tests.</p>	X	X

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSE ACCOMMODATIONS			Instruction	Assessment
Visual Organizers Visual organizers include graph paper, highlighters, place markers, scratch paper, and templates. Students may not be allowed to write in books owned by the school. Photocopying parts of written text allows a student to use a highlighter and write in the margins.			X	X
Graphic Organizers Graphic organizers help students arrange information into patterns in order to organize their work and stay focused on the content. Graphic organizers are especially helpful for writing reports and essays. Semantic mapping software is now available to enable students to understand a narrative story or writing elements through graphics.			X	X
Additional ideas that may be helpful:				
Student-made personal dictionaries for misspelled words	Multiple-choice questions followed by answer down side with bubbles to the right.	Student points to answers, adult records	X	X
Student writes directly on assessment booklet, adult transfers answers to answer sheet	Use pencil grips and large pencils		X	X

PART 8

SETTING ACCOMMODATIONS

WHAT ARE SETTING ACCOMMODATIONS?

Setting accommodations change the location in which a student receives instruction or participates in an assessment, or the conditions of an instructional or assessment setting. Students may be allowed to sit in a different location than the majority of students in order to reduce distractions to themselves or others, or to increase physical access or access to special equipment. Some students may need changes in the conditions of an instructional setting. Every instructional and assessment setting should have good lighting and ventilation, with a comfortable room temperature, and be as free as possible from noise, traffic, and other interruptions. Chairs should be comfortable and tables set at an appropriate height with sufficient room for materials. Staff should check that all needed materials and equipment are available and in good condition.

WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM SETTING ACCOMMODATIONS?

Setting accommodations, which are changes in instructional and assessment locations, can benefit students who are easily distracted in large group settings and who concentrate best in a small group or individual setting. Changes in location also benefit students who receive accommodations (e.g. reader, scribe, frequent breaks) that might distract other students. Students with physical disabilities might need a more accessible location, specific room conditions, or special equipment.

ACCOMMODATIONS CONDITIONS

DESCRIPTION OF SETTING ACCOMMODATIONS	Instruction	Assessment
Reduce Distractions to the Student A setting accommodation to reduce distractions would allow a student to do individual work or take tests in a different location, usually in a place with few or no other students. Changes may also be made to a student's location within a room. For example, a student who is easily distracted may not want to sit near windows, doors, or pencil sharpeners. Sitting near the teacher's desk or in the front of a classroom may be helpful for some students. Physically enclosed classrooms (classrooms with four walls) may be more appropriate than open classrooms, and study carrels might also be helpful for students who are easily distracted. Students with low vision may prefer to sit in the part of a room that has the best light. Some students concentrate best while wearing noise buffers such as earphones, earplugs, or headphones.	X	X

DESCRIPTION OF SETTING ACCOMMODATIONS	Instruction	Assessment
<p>Reduce Distractions to Other Students</p> <p>Some students use accommodations that may distract other students, such as having a reader or scribe. In addition, some students might perform better when they can read and think out loud or make noises that distract other students. Distractions to other students are reduced by using these accommodations in individual settings.</p>	X	X
<p>Change Location to Increase Physical Access or to Use Special Equipment</p> <p>Occasionally a setting might be changed to increase physical access for a student. For example, a student who uses a wheelchair with a specially designed tabletop and assistive technology may not have adequate space in an auditorium with theater seating. Other students may need equipment that requires specific locations for learning and assessment. For example, a student who uses a computer for word processing might need to complete assignments and take tests in a computer lab. A student who uses large-print materials may need to sit at a table rather than at a desk with a small surface area. Another student might benefit from a standing work station. Keep aisles clear, and do not leave doors or cupboards half open to increase access for students with visual or physical disabilities. Provide space for a guide dog, and explain to other students that the dog is working and should be ignored. Make certain the school is accessible for students with mobility impairments. Students should have access to the building, cafeteria, classrooms, media center, restrooms, and playground. In essence, they should be able to access any room or space on the school grounds used by students in general. Some students may need to receive educational services and participate in assessments in home or hospital settings.</p>	X	X

PART 9

TIMING AND SCHEDULING ACCOMMODATIONS

WHAT ARE TIMING AND SCHEDULING ACCOMMODATIONS?

Timing and scheduling accommodations change the allowable length of time to complete assignments, assessments, and activities. There may also be a change in the way time is organized. Timing accommodations give students the additional time and the breaks they need to complete activities, assignments, and assessments. Other changes might include the particular time of day, day of the week, or number of days over which a particular activity, assignment, or assessment takes place.

WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM TIMING AND SCHEDULING ACCOMMODATIONS?

Timing and scheduling accommodations are most helpful for students who need more time than generally allowed to complete activities, assignments, and assessments. Extra time may be needed to process written text (e.g., a student with a learning disability who processes information slowly), to write (e.g., a student with limited dexterity as a result of arthritis), or to use other accommodations or equipment (e.g., assistive technology, audiotape, scribe).

Students who cannot concentrate continuously for an extended period or who become frustrated, or stressed easily may need frequent or extended relaxation breaks. It may also help to schedule in the morning those classes and tests that require the greatest concentration for students who have difficulty concentrating and staying on task as the day progresses. Scheduling changes might also be helpful for students on medications that affect their ability to stay alert or who have more productive times of the day.

Some students with health-related disabilities may have functioning levels that vary during the day because of the effects of medications or diminishing energy levels. For example, blood sugar levels may need to be maintained by eating several times a day at prescribed times. These students could be accommodated by scheduling tests and activities around the eating schedule, or by allowing food to be taken to the classroom or testing site. Students who fatigue easily may need to take some academic classes and tests before rather than after a physical education class or recess, or may need to reduce physical activity.

ACCOMMODATIONS CONDITIONS

DESCRIPTION OF TIMING AND SCHEDULING ACCOMMODATIONS	Instruction	Assessment
<p>Extended Time</p> <p>Extended time may require a student’s IEP team to determine a fairly specific amount of extra time to complete assignments, projects, and assessments. For timed tests, a standard extension may be time and one half. This means that a student is allowed 90 minutes to take a test that normally has a 60-minute limit. Double time may also be allowed. Decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis, keeping in mind the type of accommodations being provided, the disability involved, and the type of assignments, assessments, and activities. Usually “unlimited” time is not appropriate or feasible. Sometimes students who request extended time end up not needing it because of the reduction in anxiety of simply knowing that plenty of time is available. Students who have too much time may lose interest and motivation to do their best work.</p>	X	X
<p>Multiple or Frequent Breaks</p> <p>Breaks may be given at predetermined intervals or after completion of assignments, tests, or activities. Sometimes a student is allowed to take breaks when individually needed. Sometimes test booklets are divided into shorter sections so students can take a break between sections of a test (sometimes referred to as “short segment test booklets”). If the length of a break is predetermined, a timer might be used to signal the end of the break.</p>	X	X
<p>Change Schedule or Order of Activities</p> <p>If possible, schedule assessments and activities that require focused attention at the time of day when a student is most likely to demonstrate peak performance. Sometimes students are allowed to complete activities and take tests over multiple days—completing a portion each day. This is usually done to reduce fatigue.</p>	X	X

PART 10

EXAMPLES OF ACCOMMODATIONS BASED ON STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

STUDENT CHARACTERISTIC: BLIND, LOW VISION, PARTIAL SIGHT		
Category	Accommodations to Consider for Instruction	Accommodations to Consider for Assessments
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large print • Magnification devices • Braille • Nemeth Braille code • Tactile graphics • Human reader • Audiotape or compact disk (CD) • Screen reader • Large print or Braille notes, outlines, and instructions • Descriptive video • Talking materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large print • Magnification devices • Braille • Nemeth Braille code • Tactile graphics • Human reader • Audiotape or CD • Screen reader
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express response to a scribe through speech • Type on or speak to word processor • Type on Braille • Speak into tape recorder • Use calculation devices (e.g., talking calculator with enlarged keys, abacus) • Use personal note taker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express response to a scribe through speech • Type on or speak to word processor • Type on Braille • Speak into tape recorder • Use calculation devices (e.g., talking calculator with enlarged keys, abacus)
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change location so student does not distract others • Change location to increase physical access • Change location to access special equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change location so student does not distract others • Change location to increase physical access • Change location to access special equipment
Timing and Scheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended Time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended Time

STUDENT CHARACTERISTIC: DEAF; HARD OF HEARING		
Category	Accommodations to Consider for Instruction	Accommodations to Consider for Assessments
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign language • Audio amplification devices • Screen reader • Visual cues • Written notes, outlines, and instructions • Videotape and descriptive video • Provide advanced organizers and outlines of lectures for student to follow • Use gestures (e.g., point to materials) • Repeat questions and responses from classmates • Allow student to copy notes from classmate • Use captioned versions of instructional films and include script when possible • Give interpreter instructional materials in advance • Learn manual signs and teach them to hearing classmates • Allow student to use telecommunication device 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign language • Audio amplification devices • Screen reader
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express response to scribe or interpreter • Type on or speak to word processor • Use spelling and grammar assistive devices • Use visual organizers • Use graphic organizers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express response to scribe or interpreter • Type on or speak to word processor • Use spelling and grammar assistive devices • Use visual organizers • Use graphic organizers
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change location to reduce distractions • Change location so student does not distract others • Change location to increase physical access (e.g., minimize background noise, face student when speaking, speak to student and not to interpreter, and increase wait time for interpreter to finish) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change location to reduce distractions • Change location so student does not distract others • Change location to increase physical access (e.g., minimize background noise, face student when speaking, speak to student and not to interpreter, and increase wait time for interpreter to finish)

STUDENT CHARACTERISTIC: WEAK MANUAL DEXTERITY; DIFFICULTY WITH PENCIL; DIFFICULTY WITH KEYBOARDING		
Category	Accommodations to Consider for Instruction	Accommodations to Consider for Assessments
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express response to a scribe through speech, pointing or by using an assistive communication device Type on or speak to word processor Speak into tape recorder Use thick pencil or pencil grip Use written notes, outlines, and instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express response to a scribe through speech, pointing or by using an assistive communication device Type on or speak to word processor Speak into tape recorder Use thick pencil or pencil grip
STUDENT CHARACTERISTIC: COMMUNICATION DISORDER		
Category	Accommodations to Consider for Instruction	Accommodations to Consider for Assessments
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen reader
STUDENT CHARACTERISTIC: READING DISABILITY; DIFFICULTY DECODING		
Category	Accommodations to Consider for Instruction	Accommodations to Consider for Assessments
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human reader Audiotape or CD Screen reader Videotape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human reader in all content areas with the exception of reading. In reading, can be used for the directions and answer choices. Audiotape or CD Screen reader
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change location so student does not distract others Use written notes, outlines, and instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change location so student does not distract others
STUDENT CHARACTERISTIC: WRITING DISABILITY; DIFFICULTY WITH SPELLING		
Category	Accommodations to Consider for Instruction	Accommodations to Consider for Assessments
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express response to a scribe through speech Type on or speak to word processor Speak into tape recorder Use spelling and grammar assistive devices (e.g., electronic spelling device, spell check on computer) Use written notes, outlines, and instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express response to a scribe through speech Type on or speak to word processor Speak into tape recorder Use spelling and grammar assistive devices (e.g., electronic spelling device, spell check on computer)

STUDENT CHARACTERISTIC: MATHEMATICS DISABILITY		
Category	Accommodations to Consider for Instruction	Accommodations to Consider for Assessments
Response	Use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculation devices • Visual organizers • Graphic organizers • Math tables and formula sheets 	Use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculation devices • Visual organizers • Graphic organizers • Math tables and formula sheets
STUDENT CHARACTERISTIC: PHYSICAL DISABILITY		
Category	Accommodations to Consider for Instruction	Accommodations to Consider for Assessments
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express response to a scribe through speech, pointing, or by using an assistive communication device • Type on or speak to word processor • Speak into tape recorder • Write in test booklet instead of on answer sheet • Use augmentative devices for single or multiple messages (e.g., BIG Mack, Jelly Bean switch, or Dynovox) • Use written notes, outlines, and instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express response to a scribe through speech, pointing, or by using an assistive communication device • Type on or speak to word processor • Speak into tape recorder • Write in test booklet instead of on answer sheet • Use augmentative devices for single or multiple messages (e.g., BIG Mack, Jelly Bean switch, or Dynovox)
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change location to increase physical access • Change location to access special equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change location to increase physical access • Change location to access special equipment
Timing and Scheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended time • Multiple or frequent breaks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended time • Multiple or frequent breaks

STUDENT CHARACTERISTIC: EASILY DISTRACTED; SHORT ATTENTION SPAN

Category	Accommodations to Consider for Instruction	Accommodations to Consider for Assessments
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use books on tape or recorded books to help focus on text • Give short and simple directions with examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give short and simple directions with examples if provided in the assessment to other students
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write in test booklet instead of on answer sheet • Monitor placement of student responses on answer sheet • Use materials or devices used to solve or organize responses • Use visual organizers • Use graphic organizers • Highlight key words in directions • Have student repeat and explain directions to check for understanding • Use template • Use graph paper to keep numbers in proper columns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write in test booklet instead of on answer sheet • Monitor placement of student responses on answer sheet • Use materials or devices used to solve or organize responses • Use visual organizers • Use graphic organizers • Highlight key words in directions • Have student repeat and explain directions to check for understanding • Use template • Use graph paper to keep numbers in proper columns
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit in front of room • Change location to reduce distractions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit in front of room • Change location to reduce distractions
Timing and Scheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use short segment test booklets (when available) • Allow for multiple or frequent breaks • Schedule tests in the morning • Cue student to begin working and stay on task • Change testing schedule or order of subtests • Limit reading periods • Schedule activities requiring more seat time in the morning and more hands-on and physical activities in the afternoon • Divide long-term assignments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use short segment test booklets (when available) • Allow for multiple or frequent breaks • Schedule tests in the morning • Cue student to begin working and stay on task • Change testing schedule or order of subtests

PART 11

DO'S AND DON'TS WHEN SELECTING ACCOMMODATIONS

Do...make accommodation decisions based on individualized needs.

Don't...make accommodations decisions based on whatever is easiest to do (e.g., preferential seating).

Do...select accommodations that reduce the effect of the disability to access instruction and demonstrate learning.

Don't...select accommodations unrelated to documented student learning needs or are intended to give students an unfair advantage.

Do...be certain to document instructional and assessment accommodations on the IEP or 504 plans.

Don't...use accommodations that have not been documented on the IEP or 504 plans.

Do...be familiar with the types of accommodations that can be used as both instructional and assessment accommodations.

Don't...assume that all instructional accommodations are appropriate for use on assessments.

Do...be specific about the “Where, When, Who, and How” of providing accommodations.

Don't...simply indicate accommodations will be provided “as appropriate” or “as necessary.”

Do...refer to state accommodations guidelines and understand implications of selections.

Don't...check every accommodation possible on a checklist simply to be “safe.”

Do...evaluate accommodations used by the student.

Don't...assume the same accommodations remain appropriate year after year.

Do...get input about accommodations from teachers, parents, and students, and use it to make decisions at IEP team or 504 planning committee meetings.

Don't...make decisions about instructional and assessment accommodations alone.

Do...provide accommodations for assessments routinely used for classroom instruction.

Don't...provide assessment accommodations for the first time on the day of a test.

Do...select accommodations based on specific individual needs in each content area.

Don't...assume certain accommodations, such as extra time, are appropriate for every student in every content area.

For additional information, please contact:

**The Nebraska Department of Education
Special Populations or State Assessment Departments
301 Centennial Mall South
P.O. Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987**

(402) 471-2471 or 471-2495

**To download additional copies please visit:
www.nde.state.ne.us/SPED/sped.html**