

Principles and Rationale

Testing is a major factor in student success. For students with disabilities, writing tests is often a daunting experience because of extra challenges with reading, writing, math, and anxiety. By providing testing accommodations, students with disabilities are given the same opportunity for success as their peers. Test Accommodations do not guarantee successful test results. It is the student's responsibility to attend class, prepare for the test, and demonstrate his/her knowledge and skills.

This document outlines the standards of practice for testing accommodations. The procedures here pertain exclusively to students registered with Disability Services.

Why do only registered students receive testing accommodations?

Receiving testing accommodations is a legal entitlement for students with documented disabilities registered with Disability Services. To register with Disability Services, students need to provide recent medical documentation of a disability in which medical assessors indicate the barriers the student may face in a post-secondary setting. One of the accommodations available to the student may be Test Accommodations.

Students may also receive Test Accommodations for certification exams and other external exams. Disability Services is available to assist students registered with Disability Services with a request for Test Accommodations to the certifying organization. Requests for Test Accommodations are rarely approved for external certification exams if the student making the request is not registered with Disability Services and/or does not have current documentation and academic history to support the request.

How are testing accommodations decided?

There are a variety of Test Accommodations that may be recommended to a student if they are registered with Disability Services. Students meet with the Disability Resource Facilitator to create a Learning Plan. At this time, the student and DRF look at possible accommodations, and the DRF determines what accommodations the student will receive. Test Accommodations, including the specific type of Test Accommodation, are decided. The Learning Plan is a working document, so Test Accommodations can be added to or removed from the Learning Plan throughout the school year. Only the DRF can approve Test Accommodations, and only students registered with Disability Services are entitled to Test Accommodations.

Definitions

What are “barriers”?

It's important to remember that while two people may have the same disability, it may impact their learning in different ways. For this reason, accommodations are not assigned based on a student's disability, but rather their barrier to learning. When assigning accommodations, the DRF asks, “What barrier is this accommodation removing?” For example, a student with a learning disability may experience a barrier with comprehending written text. By providing a reader as a testing accommodation, the barrier with comprehending written text is removed. Another student with a learning disability may experience no challenges with comprehending written text. This is why we focus on the barrier when assigning Test Accommodations.

What are “outcomes”?

Outcomes are another important piece to Test Accommodations. While working with the Disability Services team, the student works to learn new strategies to improve their success with writing tests. Often these strategies are helpful in other academic and life areas as well. As you will see in the upcoming charts, the possible outcomes are ideas for outcomes for students to meet. The outcomes relate directly to the barrier the student struggles with.

Who can I contact for more information?

If you believe a student's barrier to learning may be a disability, you can refer them to your campus DRF.

If you have any questions about Test Accommodation and how they are determined, visit the Centre for Student Success and contact your

- campus Disability Resource Facilitator
- or Learning Support Assistant

Quiet Space

A separate space (quiet area) free of excess noise & visual distractions

This accommodation includes:	This accommodation doesn't include:
Supervision via regular checks during the testing period	Constant supervision
Quiet area away from visual and auditory stimulus	Absolute silence

When would this accommodation be recommended in the Learning Plan?

This accommodation is recommended to remove barriers presented by the documented disability. Often these barriers are present in students with ADHD, learning disabilities, anxiety, vision loss, or deaf students.

Barrier	Possible Outcomes
Testing anxiety, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxious writing with other people • Auditory stress • General anxiety 	Increase student use of anxiety management techniques including identifying triggers, breathing techniques, and coping strategies.
Difficulty concentrating, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual and auditory distractions • Reading and comprehension 	Self-awareness of challenges with concentrating and strategies to monitor concentration
Writing in the general classroom because of the use of a(n) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reader/Scribe • Interpreter • Assistive technology 	Increase use of test taking or organizational strategies as relates to the student's accommodation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arranging scheduling with faculty/LSA • Coming prepared for the test

Test Reader

A proctor will read to the student the test and supplemental materials (such as a Code book).

This accommodation includes:	This accommodation doesn't include:
Reading test questions	Giving answers
Re-wording test questions	Giving answers through context or word definition
Simplifying test questions	Changing the meaning or integrity of the question
Placing words and/or questions in context	Prompting by referring to previous work/study/assignments
Giving word definitions	Giving word definitions that supply the answer to the question

When would this accommodation be recommended in the Learning Plan?

This accommodation is recommended to remove barriers presented by the documented disability. Often these barriers are present in students with ADHD, learning disabilities, and vision loss.

Barrier	Possible Outcomes
Reading comprehension	Increase use of strategies such as underlining unknown words, reading aloud, etc Investigate use of text-to-speech assistive technology
Decoding/processing written words and text	Increase use of strategies, such as identifying word endings Investigate use of assistive technology to read tests
Low vocabulary	Increase use of strategies such as building word lists, dictionary use Investigate assistive technology including talking dictionary
Vision loss	Investigate the use of assistive technology such as Word Q/Speak Q, Dragon

Scribe

The student’s verbatim verbal response to questions given on the test/exam is written down. The response may be written by staff or assistive technology.

This accommodation includes:	This accommodation doesn’t include:
Clarifying context of questions	Giving answers Prompting for further information
Reading the student’s answers back to them for clarification or to make edits	Editing student answers
Writing the student’s response verbatim	Paraphrasing student answers

When would this accommodation be recommended in the Learning Plan?

This accommodation is recommended to remove barriers presented by the documented disability. Often these barriers are present in students with learning disabilities, vision loss, or physical disabilities that impact their ability to write.

Barrier	Possible Outcomes
Challenges with effectively expressing thoughts on paper including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization • Spelling • Grammar 	Self-awareness of writing practices Increased use of strategies such as mind mapping, outlines Exploring assistive technology resources
Physically unable or extreme difficulty in writing, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual impairment • Poor motor skills • Physical fatigue 	Ability to express information in written form using alternate methods – such as speech to text technology

Extra Time

The student receives time and a half to complete a test.
For example, the student receives 1.5 hours to write a 1 hour test.

This accommodation includes:	This accommodation doesn't include:
Time and a half maximum	Allowing more than time and a half or unlimited time
The inclusion of other accommodations as decided by the DRF (as written in the LP)	Negotiating with student for extra time or additional accommodations not in LP

When would this accommodation be recommended in the Learning Plan?

This accommodation is recommended to remove barriers presented by the documented disability. Often these barriers are present in students with ADD/HD, learning disabilities, anxiety, or physical disabilities. This accommodation may be required if the student is using other accommodations such as a scribe or test reader.

Barrier	Possible Outcomes
Challenges with reading comprehension, decoding, vocabulary, reading speed	Increase use of strategies such as reading aloud, reading contextual cues Investigation of text-to-speech assistive technology
Challenges with written expression, speed of answers,	Increase use of strategies, including outlines, mind maps, underlining; investigation of assistive technology including Inspiration or Word Q/Speak Q
Challenges with reading and expressing mathematical calculations	Increase use of strategies including math checklists, think alouds, etc Investigation of assistive technology including talking calculator, kitchen calculator
Anxiety triggered by writing tests	Strategy use including self-awareness of triggers, coping strategies, breathing techniques Decrease anxiety levels allowing some tests to be written in the regular classroom
Other accommodations lengthen the test, such as reader, scribe or assistive technology use	