



Testing Accommodations

What is an Accommodation?

An accommodation is a change in the administration of an assessment, such as presentation format, response mode, setting, timing/scheduling, or any combination of these that does not change the construct intended to be measured by the assessment or the meaning of the resulting scores. Accommodations provided to a student during assessments must also be provided during classroom instruction, classroom assessments, and district assessments; however, some instructional accommodations are not appropriate for use on statewide assessments and/or college readiness exams, for example, calculators may not be used on all sections of an assessment even if they are used consistently in the classroom.

Accommodation use is not solely limited to school. Students who use accommodations often need them at home, in the community, and as adults, in post-secondary education and at work. Accommodations are changes that the student requires in order to access the assessment.

General Classroom Accommodations

Accommodations should be based on individual student need.

For students requiring special education services, it is the IEP Team's responsibility to determine how each student who receives special education services will participate in the general education classroom. For students with 504 Plans, accommodations must be provided based in individual need as long as the accommodations do not invalidate the assessment.

Minnesota Assessments

The purpose of the statewide assessments is to understand how well Minnesota students have met the Minnesota Academic Standards that educators have determined to be essential for all students. Most students can show what they know and can do under standard testing conditions, but for some students with disabilities or special language needs, it is both fair and appropriate to make adjustments, or accommodations, to the test. Accommodations for students with IEPs or 504 Plans reduce or even eliminate the effect of a disability on their test performance without lowering our expectations for their learning.

Making effective decisions about accommodations begins with making sound instructional decisions. These decisions are facilitated by gathering and reviewing information about the student's specific needs and current levels of performance in relation to the Minnesota Academic Standards. Careful consideration should be given to each accommodation selected rather than assuming that "more is better" and selecting accommodations that may actually be counterproductive. It is the IEP Team's responsibility to determine how each student who receives special education services will participate in the Minnesota Assessments.

The following supports are available to all students on the MCA, MTAS, ACCESS and Alternate Access:

Timing/Scheduling

Extended testing time

Different time of day

Setting

Special settings (e.g. certain lighting, acoustics, seating arrangements)

Individual or small group setting

Music or noise buffer (provided by the school, individual on/off volume control)

Presentation

Repeated directions or written directions

Different monitor size and resolution

Classroom materials (provided by the school, e.g. highlighter, color overlay, place marker, pencil grips, magnifier, templates to reduce visual print field, low-vision aide)

Tools embedded in online assessments

Voice feedback devices/whisper phones or student reading the test out loud (must not be audible to other students, must not read out loud to the test monitor)

Amplification devices

Response

Calculator use (except where specifically prohibited)

Scratch paper

Lattices, diagrams, or charts

Mathematics manipulatives and abacus for grade 11 Mathematics MCA

Accommodations for students with an IEP or 504 Plan:

Timing/Scheduling

Extended testing time or sections/segments over multiple testing sessions

Presentation

Braille

Large print

Scripts for mathematics (paper test) or science (online or paper test)

Accommodated text-to-speech for mathematics and science

Signed interpretation of mathematics or science scripts

Signed interpretation of test directions

Handheld calculator (paper test, grades 3-8)

Regular print test books for Reading and Mathematics MCA (or 12-point)

Assistive technology (communication device, device as scratch paper or calculator, internet disabled)

Recording a reading test

Mathematics manipulatives and an abacus (paper test, grades 3-8)

Response Format

Assistive technology (communication device, device as scratch paper or calculator, internet disabled)

Audio recording for transcription

Braille or other note-taking device

Scribe (with transcription into the test book or online test)

If an IEP or 504 Plan team decides to use an accommodation not on this list, contact the Minnesota Department of Education at mde.testing@state.mn.us for approval.