



## **Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems Accommodations and Accessibility Guidelines**

### **Assessment Accommodations**

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CASAS is committed to creating a standardized testing program inclusive of all learners. Assessment accommodations are part of the overarching goal of achieving fairness in testing. Accommodations provide examinees who have disabilities with an opportunity to demonstrate their skills and abilities in educational assessments. Ultimately, the objective is to eliminate potential barriers to the measurement of the intended construct for those who require accommodations (AERA, et al., 2014). Assessment accommodations target a need associated with a specific disability by modifying how test content is presented or modifying the tools a test taker uses to navigate the testing environment and respond to test questions (International Test Commission and Association of Test Publishers, 2022). Standard provisions should be implemented that document how accommodations will be monitored and implemented (AERA, et al., 2014). These adjustments allow learners to demonstrate their true ability level on standardized tests without changing what a test is intended to measure and how scores are interpreted. Any accommodation must be available across pre- and post-testing to ensure that the interpretation of learner performance on each assessment is comparable. It is important to note that not all learners with disabilities will need testing accommodations. CASAS consults with the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) <https://www.aph.org/> and the National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM) <https://www.wgbh.org/foundation/what-we-do/ncam> to ensure that the accommodations available are responsive to the needs of the widest range of students.

### **Legislation Related to Accommodations**

The accountability standards in the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) include the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998. WIOA, effective July 2015, focuses on learners most in need, such as those with a low level of literacy skills, English language learners, and those who have disabilities. Other legislation addresses provisions related to testing accommodations including the ADA Amendments of 2008, Section 504 (equal opportunity) and 508 (comparable access to and use of electronic information technology)

in the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 2008, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.

### **Local Agency Responsibility**

CASAS describes standard conditions under which tests should be administered to a wide range of students within the target population. This information is in the Test Administration Manuals (TAMs) for each test series. Decisions about changes to these standard conditions, such as how students access, interact, and respond to test content will be made by appropriately trained individuals at the local agency or district level. The following guidelines provide support in making those decisions.

Local agencies are responsible for providing fully accessible services and reasonable accommodations for learners with documented disabilities. Adult learners with disabilities are responsible for requesting accommodations and for submitting documentation of their disability at the time of registration, program entry, or after diagnosis. Official records such as the Individual Education Plan (IEP) document the need for accommodations. The documentation will show that the disability interferes with learners' abilities to demonstrate their skills on assessments. Information detailing a disability and accommodation sometimes also comes from a doctor's report, a diagnostic assessment from a certified professional, and other clinical records. If no documentation is available, adult education agencies can often contact the local division of vocational rehabilitation or the learner's secondary school to request documentation of a disability.

### **Testing Accommodations**

For learners who have documented disabilities, appropriately trained local assessment staff may provide accommodations in test administration procedures based on student documentation.

Some common examples of testing accommodations for CASAS assessments:

- Read aloud, sign, or translate test directions word-for-word
- Read aloud or sign test display, question and answer choice (generally for tests other than reading tests)
- Use a scribe
- Use an adaptive input device to respond to the test

- Use a magnifier for paper-based tests
- Use large-print paper tests and answer sheets
- Use a reading tracker/highlighter tool
- Use of screen reader assistive technology and tactile graphics test booklets
- Use a talking calculator for math tests
- Allow breaks while testing
- Extend test-taking time
- Allow flexible test scheduling
- Provide a distraction-free testing space

## Accessibility

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Although the term “accessibility” was once associated with test accommodations for students who have disabilities, today it is a consideration for all learners and includes universal test design and any accessibility supports available to all test takers (International Test Commission and Association of Test Publishers, 2022). Accessibility is a part of every phase of the test development process at CASAS. This ensures assessments are inclusive and do not include features that would compromise any test taker from demonstrating their true ability in any modality. CASAS consults with the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) and the National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM) to ensure all assessments are accessible.

### Universal Test Design

CASAS adheres to Universal Test Design (UTD) principles in item and test development, with the guiding principle to develop tests accessible to the widest range of students within the target population. This practice aims to ensure valid results and interpretations of test results.

Universal test design principles integral to the CASAS item and test development process include (*Universal Design of Assessments, n.d.*):

- Inclusive assessment population
- Precisely defined constructs
- Accessible, non-biased items
- Amenable to accommodations
- Simple, clear, and intuitive instructions and procedures

- Maximum readability and comprehensibility
- Maximum legibility

## Accessibility Features in CASAS eTests Online

The following features are available to all test takers using CASAS eTests Online:

- Preset text sizes (default, large, very large) of question stems and answer sets, toolbar, navigation features and directions
- Preset background and text color combinations
- Text and image magnification tool
- Customizable volume setting for listening tests
- Touch screen compatibility
- Keyboard-only accessible (tab, enter, etc.)
- Content masking (toolbar, including timer)

## References

American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association & National Council on Measurement in Education (2014). Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing. Washington, D.C.

International Test Commission and Association of Test Publishers (2022). *Guidelines for technology-based assessment*. <https://www.intestcom.org/page/28> and <https://www.testpublishers.org/white-papers>

*Universal Design of Assessments*. (n.d.). National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO). [https://nceo.info/Assessments/universal\\_design/](https://nceo.info/Assessments/universal_design/)

Contact CASAS at 1-800-255-1036 or go to [CASAS Assessment Accommodations](#) on the CASAS website for further information.

\*For information about compatibility of CASAS eTests with screen reader software, go to [Accommodations Materials for Test Takers with Visual Impairment/Blindness](#) on the CASAS website.

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