

Testing Accommodations Guidelines



Accommodations and Accessibility Guidelines

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) www.aph.org and the National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM) www.wgbh.org 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.

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 choices, except when taking a test of reading comprehension. This would interfere with the construct being measured (for test takers who require a read aloud for a disability other than visual impairment/blindness)
- 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

(continued on next page)

- Use of screen reader assistive technology and supplemental tactile graphics test booklets for visually impaired/blind test takers
- Use a talking calculator for math tests (continued)
- Allow breaks while testing
- Extend test-taking time
- Allow flexible test scheduling
- Provide a distraction-free testing space

Accessibility

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 – for all learners

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

- 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 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/

Testing Accommodations for Visual Impairment/Blindness

Materials for Test Takers with Visual Impairment/Blindness:

CASAS offers Supplemental Test Administration Manuals (TAMs) for proctors and a Tactile Graphics/braille test booklet supplement for test takers with visual impairment/blindness for the following test series. Math GOALS

- Reading GOALS
- Life and Work Reading, Levels B/C
- Reading STEPS
- Listening STEPS
- Math GOALS 2

These are not separate tests, they are materials that are supplemental to the regular series TAM (for the test proctor) and regular test booklets (for the test taker). Order materials and download updated screen reader documentation at www.casas.org.

These materials are developed in partnership with American Printing House for the Blind (APH). Some test items are not fully accessible to a person with visual impairment/blindness without a tactile graphic. Tactile graphics are images that use raised surfaces so that a test taker with visual impairment/blindness can feel them. They convey non-textual information such as maps, graphs, and diagrams. The Supplemental Test Administration Manuals provide alt text for images. This alt text describes the visual display in text format and is part of the script. CASAS test forms are compatible with screen readers.

Screen Readers

Screen reader software is assistive technology that is activated at the beginning of a CASAS eTests session and allows the test-taker to listen as the screen reader “reads” a description of the display prompt, test question, and answer options. The test taker can also independently navigate the testing environment using quick keys on the keyboard. See the Disability Support Services office and technical support at the agency or

district to learn more about downloading the JAWS screen reader onto a testing computer or accessing the Microsoft Narrator screen reader.

CASAS also offers:

- CASAS Braille Reading Assessment Level A/B, a customized life and work skills test for those who are proficient reading Grade 2 Braille (contractions, not alphabet)
- Large-Print Test Booklets and Answer Sheets for all CASAS test form (minimum 18-point text)

Extended Time

To allow for extended time according to a student's accommodation documentation, the test administrator can select an Accommodations Testing Session. Using these default sessions will ensure the appropriate modality timing for locators, appraisals, and test forms. Call Technical Support at 1-800-255-1036 ext. 2 or email at techsupport@casas.org.