

# Guidelines for Providing Accommodations Using CASAS Assessment for Learners with Disabilities

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## ► Purpose

The accountability standards in the 1998 Workforce Investment Act include the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 to improve access to adult programs and achieve employment outcomes for learners with disabilities. Other legislation addresses provisions related to testing accommodations for learners with disabilities, including the ADA Amendments of 2008, Section 504 in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. These laws ensure equal access for all learners in education programs, including learners with disabilities. Accommodations provide an opportunity for all test takers to demonstrate their skills and ability. The accommodations may alter test administration procedures without changing what the test is intended to measure. The following guidelines address methods for administering CASAS assessments using accommodations for learners with documented disabilities. The suggested accommodations for disability categories consist of the provisions below.

1. Accommodations in test administration procedures
2. Use of appropriate CASAS test forms

## ► Local Agency Responsibility

Local test administrators must consider the individual needs of the learner when they provide accommodations. The responsibility of fulfilling learner requests for accommodations is that of the local agency following state guidelines, not of CASAS. However, CASAS will work with state and local agencies to develop additional tests that are in a format reflecting the manner in which learners acquire and report information needed to function in everyday life. For example, if a learner is legally blind and reads information using Braille, then a standardized reading test in a Braille format is appropriate for testing. CASAS has developed a life and work skills assessment in Braille format that reflects functional literacy situations in the life and work of a person who is blind.

Local agencies are responsible for providing fully accessible services and have the responsibility to ensure that these services meet reasonable criteria. In addition, the agency administering the test must provide any necessary accommodations at no cost to the learner. Costs are negligible for most of the common accommodations that learners will request. The agency may wish to contact district or state rehabilitative or health and human welfare agencies for diagnostic services such as for learning disabilities.

Local agency, district, and state accountability data collection systems should include CASAS test results for learners with disabilities. However, all public reports of test results must follow

confidentiality laws and report scores without reference to name, address, or Social Security number of the learner. Local and state agencies may also want to collect accountability data on which and how many accommodations or alternate test forms are provided during test administration for program improvement purposes.

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. The need to use an accommodation should be documented in official learner records, such as the Individual Educational Plan (IEP), Individual Program Plan (IPP), or Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The information could come from a doctor's report, a diagnostic assessment from a certified professional, and other clinical records. Adult agencies can often contact the local division of vocational rehabilitation or a secondary school to request documentation of a disability. The documentation must show that the disability interferes with the learner's ability to demonstrate performance on the test.

Local agencies should provide the same accommodations when they administer CASAS assessment as they do for the learner during instruction and as documented in annual plans such as individual education plans. For example, if the learner acquires information and receives instruction with the assistance of a sign language interpreter, then an interpreter is also necessary to provide directions for standardized testing. However, interpreters *do not sign the test questions themselves* because the purpose of the assessment is to determine level of basic reading literacy skill.

It is important that a learner practice using the appropriate accommodation during instruction *before* using the accommodation during the assessment. Also, it is important to *ask learners* what accommodations will work best in their situation.

CASAS has a variety of standardized performance-based assessment instruments to use with learners who do not demonstrate their skills well on multiple-choice tests. Standardized performance-based instruments are available for special purposes such as demonstration of writing and speaking skills and functional life skills for adults who have intellectual disabilities.

## ► Accommodations in Test Administration Procedures

Local test administrators may provide or allow some accommodations in test administration procedures or environment for documented disabilities without contacting CASAS. Test administrators often use these same strategies as *test taking strategies* for other learners who do not have documented disabilities. Students may request to take only one test per day or to test in an alternate quiet room. Learners may also use a variety of strategies

when they take a test, such as a plain straight-edge ruler, magnifying strips or glass, colored overlays, ear plugs, and other devices as deemed appropriate<sup>1</sup>.

Sample accommodations in test administration procedures or environment are shown in Table 1. Examples of these accommodations are extended time, supervised breaks, or sign language interpreter for *test administration directions only*. The accommodations listed are suggestions only. Accommodations are based on needs of individual learners and not on a disability category. Any testing accommodation must be consistent with documentation in the annual plan, such as an IEP. These strategies do not alter the validity of the test results. The local test administrator does not need to contact CASAS when providing these accommodations.

It is *not* an appropriate accommodation in test administration procedures to *read a CASAS reading test* to a learner simply because of low literacy skills. The purpose of a reading test is to assess reading skill level, to determine the learner's appropriate instructional level, and to document progress. Agencies may call CASAS to provide information on additional accommodations in test administration procedures and formats not listed in Table 1 or about documentation of accommodations on individual records.

### ► Use of Appropriate CASAS Test Forms

It is important to use an appropriate test form that best meets the learner's goals and manner of receiving and reporting information. Most learners with a disability can take some form of a CASAS test. CASAS provides large-print versions of all tests. Large-print tests and

CASAS eTests® are examples of test forms often used for learners with documented disabilities based on need as well as for *all* learners. The POWER performance-based assessment series, Forms 301-307, and the Tests for Adult Life Skills, Forms 312 through 352, are available specifically for learners who have intellectual disabilities.

CASAS is currently expanding development of other test forms to measure basic literacy skills of learners with specific documented disabilities. Please contact CASAS if you are interested in participating in a national validation of other appropriate assessment for specific needs. The CASAS test development process always includes field-based specialists who help design, develop, and field test assessment instruments to ensure appropriateness for assessment of the specific population.

### ► When Appropriate CASAS Tests Are Not Available

Please contact CASAS to obtain permission before changing the test format locally, if the test form is not currently available from CASAS. CASAS requires approval because changes in test format affect the standardization and statistical measures for the test. CASAS will provide advice regarding appropriate accommodations and use of test formats or test administration directions that are not currently available to test administrators.

**Contact Ginny Posey at 1-800-255-1036, ext. 192 for further information on appropriate accommodations for using CASAS tests.**

**TABLE 1. Providing Accommodations Using CASAS Assessment**

Disability	Test Administration Procedures	CASAS Test Forms Available	Forms for Development
Specific Learning Disability and/or ADHD such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, receptive aphasia, hyperactivity, written language disorder, attention deficit disorder	Extended time (1.5) Alternate schedule Frequent breaks Scribe/writer/alternate room Computer — spelling and grammar check disabled Simple calculator for Level A/B only	Large-print forms and Answer Sheet for all CASAS tests Oral assessment for Citizenship Interview Test Large-Print Answer Sheets for Reading for Citizenship CASAS eTests®	Low-level Literacy Forms in CASAS eTests® (with touch screen)
Deaf or Hearing Impairment	Sign language interpreter for test directions only Head phones for those taking a listening test		
Blind or Visually Impaired	Magnifier/Template Text-to-speech software Video magnifiers Scribe/reader	Level A/B Reading test in contracted Braille format Large-print CASAS tests CASAS Listening test series (Levels A, B and C)	Level B/C Reading test in contracted Braille format Audio Version
Mobility impairment	Extended time Alternate site/equipment Scribe/writer/communication board		
Emotional/Mental Disability such as bipolar disorder and major depression	Extended time Supervised breaks Private room Limit testing per day		
Intellectual Disabilities such as traumatic brain injury, autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, mental retardation	One-on-one administration Extended time	Adult Life Skills Color-Photo Forms 312 -352 POWER Forms 301- 307 Beginning Literacy Forms 27/28	Low-level Literacy Forms in CASAS eTests® (with touch screen)

*Note.* The accommodations listed above are suggestions only and in addition to use of regular CASAS tests. Accommodations are based on needs of individual learners and not on a disability category. Any testing accommodation should be consistent with documentation in the annual plan, such as an IPP. Alternate test forms developed by CASAS do not modify test standards.

<sup>1</sup> www.acenet.edu/calec/aed/