Education Quality and Accountability Office

EQAO

Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, Primary Division (Grades 1–3) and Junior Division (Grades 4–6)

Guide for Accommodations, Special Provisions and Exemptions

Support for Students with Special Education Needs and English-Language Learners

2010

Contents

Support for Students with Special Education Needs and English Language Learners 1
Purpose of This Guide 1
Definitions 1
Role of the Principal 1

Section A: Accommodations 2
1. Students with Special Education Needs 2
The Student 2
Decision Making 2
Permitted Accommodations 2
Required Documentation 3
2. Scribes and Prompters 4
Definition 4
Guidelines 4
Scribes 4
Prompters 5
Required Documentation 5
3. Special Versions 6
Special Versions (for students receiving presentation-format accommodations) 6
4. Submitting Student Responses in Different Formats 7
5. Students with Special Circumstances 8
The Student 8
Decision Making 8
Required Documentation 8

Section B: Special Provisions for English Language Learners 9
The Student 9
Decision Making 9
Permitted Special Provisions 9
Required Documentation 9

Section C: Exemptions 10
The Student 10
Decision Making 10
Required Documentation 10

Support for Students with Special Education Needs and English Language Learners

Purpose of This Guide

This guide provides information and directions to assist principals and teachers in making decisions about accommodations for students with special education needs, special provisions for English language learners and exemptions. It also clarifies the expectations for documentation.

This guide is based on the following two Ministry of Education policy documents, available at www.edu.gov.on.ca:

- *Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning, and Implementation*
- *English Language Learners: ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12* (2007)

Definitions

"Modifications" are changes to the content of an assessment and to performance criteria. Modifications are not permitted, because they affect the validity and reliability of the assessment.

"Accommodations" are supports and services that enable students with special education needs to demonstrate their competencies in the skills being measured by an assessment. Accommodations change only the way in which the assessment is administered or the way in which a student responds to its components. Accommodations do not alter the content of the assessment or affect its validity or reliability.

A "special provision" is an adjustment to the setting for writing an assessment for English language learners. A special provision does not affect the validity or reliability of an assessment.

"Exemptions" are decisions made for students who are unable to participate in an assessment even with accommodations.

Role of the Principal

The principal is responsible for making decisions about student participation in the assessments and ensuring that all accommodations, special provisions and exemptions are provided and documented according to the instructions in this guide. Sample letters to parents are available on the secure section of the EQAO Web site, www.eqao.com.

Section A Accommodations

1. Students with Special Education Needs

The Student

The student has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that outlines accommodations that are necessary for and consistent with regular classroom assessment practices used for the student. **The student must normally receive these accommodations for all forms of assessment, including summative assessments, and not only for provincial tests.**

Decision Making

Permit only the accommodations listed below.

Decide on the accommodations

- based on the student's IEP;
- based on regular classroom practice, including accommodations provided for all forms of assessment, including summative assessments;
- prior to the assessment;
- for each student individually and
- in consultation with the student and parents, and with the appropriate teaching staff.

Permitted Accommodations

Setting *(adjustments to the **environment** in which the assessment is written)*

- an individual or quiet setting
- prompts for students with **severe attention problems** who are off-task for significant periods of time, solely to draw their attention back to the assessment (refer to page 5)

Presentation Format *(adjustments to the **format of the assessment**)*

- sign language or an oral interpreter*
- Braille version
- large-print version (with large-print Student Answer Sheet: Grade 6 only)
- coloured-paper version (with matching coloured-paper Student Answer Sheet: Grade 6 only)
- large-print coloured-paper version (with matching large-print coloured-paper Student Answer Sheet: Grade 6 only)
- audio version (CD) **for students with a visual impairment only**
- assistive technology: electronic formats (Kurzweil [3000 and 1000], Premier, Word, PDF, HTML, WYNN and WordPerfect) used with technology (e.g., text-to-speech software)

New – The ***Mathematics*** **booklet** will be available in **PDF and Word electronic formats only.**

New **Note:** For students with a visual impairment, both the Braille and the audio versions can be ordered.

* An oral interpreter mouths words for deaf or hard-of-hearing students so that they can lip-read. The interpreter does not vary from the approved administration instructions or from the assigned tasks.

Response Format *(adjustments to the **format of the student responses**)*

- use of a computer or word processor
- assistive devices and technology used for **recording responses only** (e.g., a speech synthesizer, a Brailler, speech-to-text software or augmentative or alternative communication systems)
- verbatim scribing of responses (refer to page 4)

Note: Remember to complete the Student Answer Sheet for multiple-choice responses (Grade 6 only).

Required Documentation

- the student information recorded in the online EQAO Student Data Collection (SDC) system
- an information letter from the principal to the parents outlining the accommodations approved (sample letters are available on the secure section of the EQAO Web site, www.eqao.com)

Keep all documentation on file.

Notes

- Verbatim reading of instructions and/or questions, **for writing and mathematics only,** is not considered an accommodation, since writing instructions and mathematics questions can be read to any student who requests it.
- Students using assistive technology to complete the assessment **must** use the appropriate hard-copy booklets. **"For use with assistive technology"** must appear on the cover of the booklets.

2. Scribes and Prompters

Definition

- A scribe or a prompter is someone who supports the accommodations the student receives on a regular basis and for all forms of assessment.
- Scribes and prompters must not be relatives of the students they are assisting.

Guidelines

A scribe or prompter must

- follow the guidelines outlined below;
- work under the supervision of a teacher, unless he or she is a teacher, and
- adhere to the "Professional Responsibilities for the Administration of the Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, Primary Division and Junior Division" and the "EQAO Policies and Procedures" (Appendix B) outlined in *Administering the Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, Primary Division (Grades 1–3) and Junior Division (Grades 4–6),* including the requirement to report child abuse.

Scribes

This accommodation allows for writing assistance in the mathematics, reading and writing components of the assessment for a student

- who normally requires a scribe in the classroom, in accordance with his or her IEP;
- who normally has all forms of assessment, including summative assessments, scribed or
- who has a temporary condition and is unable to write.

A student requiring a scribe must be assessed in a **separate quiet area** so that other students who are writing the assessment are not disturbed. The principal must ensure that scribes are aware of the acceptable practices for EQAO assessments, listed below.

For reading and mathematics only,

the scribe must

- print by hand or type exactly what the student dictates. Handwritten transcriptions must be made directly in the booklet. Typed transcriptions must be stapled to the inside front cover of the appropriate booklet.

the scribe may

- fill in the circles on the Student Answer Sheet as directed by the student (Grade 6 only) and
- read the dictation back to the student if requested.

For writing only,

the scribe must

- print by hand or type exactly what the student dictates as one long statement with no punctuation or capitalization (the scribe is permitted to spell words correctly). Handwritten transcriptions must be made directly in the booklet. Typed transcriptions must be stapled to the inside front cover of the appropriate booklet;
- show the student the transcription, **after the student has finished dictating his or her work,** and ask the student to indicate where capital letters and punctuation should be placed and

- make any other modifications the student requests. (The scribe may erase, cross out or insert the student's corrections.)

the scribe may

- fill in the circles on the Student Answer Sheet as directed by the student (Grade 6 only) and
- read the dictation back to the student if requested.

For reading, mathematics and writing,

the scribe must not

- edit or alter the student's dictation in any way;
- alert the student to mistakes;
- prompt the student in any way;
- initiate the use of test-taking strategies;
- show any reaction to the student's responses;
- correct the student's responses or computations or
- engage in incidental conversation with the student or others during the administration of the assessment.

Prompters

A prompter is allowed for students with **severe attention difficulties.**

Prompters are allowed to

- draw the student's attention back to the assessment through a tap on the arm, shoulder or desk or
- use a verbal signal, for example, a word or phrase, to redirect the student's attention.

Prompters are NOT allowed to

- clarify, explain or comment on the reading selections, questions or writing tasks or
- draw the student's attention to a specific part of the assessment booklet.

Required Documentation

- the student information recorded in the SDC system
- an information letter from the principal to the parents outlining the accommodations approved (sample letters are available on the secure section of the EQAO Web site, www.eqao.com)

Keep all documentation on file.

3. Special Versions

Under no circumstances may special versions be photocopied or otherwise reproduced for use by other students.

If a shortage is discovered the day of the administration, please refer to page 3 of *Administering the Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, Primary Division (Grades 1–3) and Junior Division (Grades 4–6).*

Special Versions (for students receiving presentation-format accommodations)

Uncontracted Braille plus a set of regular-print booklets for the scribe's use

Contracted Braille plus a set of regular-print booklets for the scribe's use

Large-print booklets—white paper (with large-print Student Answer Sheet: Grade 6 only)

Regular-print coloured-paper booklets—blue, green or yellow paper (with matching coloured-paper Student Answer Sheet: Grade 6 only)

Large-print coloured-paper booklets—blue, green or yellow paper (with matching coloured-paper large-print Student Answer Sheet: Grade 6 only)

Audio CD plus a set of regular-print booklets, **for students with a visual impairment only**

Audio CD plus a set of large-print booklets (with large-print Student Answer Sheet: Grade 6 only), **for students with a visual impairment only**

Assistive technology—electronic formats used with technology (e.g., text-to-speech software). A set of regular-print booklets will also be sent to the school for those students who receive this accommodation. The electronic formats—Kurzweil (3000 and 1000), Premier, PDF, Word, HTML, WYNN and WordPerfect—will be available for download on the secure section of EQAO's Web site two school days prior to the start of the assessment. **Students using assistive technology must use the appropriate hard-copy booklets to complete the assessment.**

Notes

- The download of the assistive technology versions from the secure section of EQAO's Web site must be completed **at the school level only.**
- The electronic files will be compressed in ZIP format.
- Order special versions using the SDC system. The option to order both the audio and the Braille versions for students with a visual impairment is now available.
- Ensure that computers have sufficient memory to accommodate the electronic formats, that student work is saved frequently and that it can be printed. EQAO recommends printing student work after each session. Students cannot redo work that has been lost. If after a thorough search, work cannot be located, place the remainder of the student work and the booklets in the **Issues Envelope** with an explanation.

4. Submitting Student Responses in Different Formats

After the assessment has been completed, handle the different student response formats according to the chart below. This is important to ensure accurate links between student work and the package IDs assigned to students.

Response format	Special instructions	What to return to EQAO and how
Computer responses (using regular-print booklet presentation format) or assistive technology (e.g., text-to-speech software presentation format)	• Type the final 12 digits of the package ID number in the header of **each page** of the document. • Complete the Student Questionnaire and, for Grade 6 students only, the Student Answer Sheet.	• Print the student's answers and staple the pages to the inside front cover of the corresponding assessment booklet. • Place the booklets, the questionnaire and, for Grade 6 students only, the **completed** Student Answer Sheet in the **Special Versions Envelope.** • Delete ALL electronic versions of the assessments and responses by the end of August 2010.
Scribed responses	• Responses scribed by hand should be written directly in the corresponding booklets, Student Questionnaire or, for Grade 6 multiple-choice questions, on the Student Answer Sheet. • For word-processed or typewritten scribing, follow the procedures outlined in "Computer responses" above.	• For handwritten responses only, return the booklets, the questionnaire and, for Grade 6 students only, the **completed** Student Answer Sheet with the rest of the assessment materials.
Audio-recorded responses	• Clearly state the final 12 digits of the package ID number at the beginning of each recording session. • Clearly print the final 12-digits of the package ID number on each audio recording. • Complete the Student Questionnaire and, for Grade 6 students only, the Student Answer Sheet.	• Place the student's audio recordings with the student's regular-print or large-print booklets, questionnaire and, for Grade 6 students only, Student Answer Sheet in the **Special Versions Envelope.**
Braille responses	• Clearly print the final 12 digits of the package ID number at the top of each response page. • Complete the Student Questionnaire and, for Grade 6 students only, the Student Answer Sheet (if possible).	• Place the student's regular-print booklets inside the front cover of the corresponding Braille booklets. • Return the booklets, the questionnaire and, for Grade 6 students only, the **completed** Student Answer Sheet with the rest of the assessment materials.
Braille transcriptions	• Handwritten transcriptions should be made directly in the corresponding booklets, Student Questionnaire or, for Grade 6 students only, the Student Answer Sheet. • For word-processed transcriptions, follow the procedures outlined in "Computer responses" above.	• Place the student's regular-print booklets inside the front cover of the corresponding Braille booklets. • Return the booklets, the questionnaire and, for Grade 6 students only, the **completed** Student Answer Sheet with the rest of the assessment materials.

5. Students with Special Circumstances

The Student

The student is unable to participate in regular classroom assessments without accommodations, due to special circumstances.

Students with a Temporary Condition

The student would not normally require accommodations but has a temporary condition (e.g., a hand injury) that prevents him or her from writing or using a keyboard.

Students New to the School

The student has transferred into the school from another school, school board, province or country shortly before the assessment, and there is no time to develop an IEP. There is documentation to show that accommodations are necessary.

Decision Making

Decide on the accommodations

- prior to the assessment;
- for each student individually;
- in consultation with the student and parents and with the appropriate teaching staff and
- having referred to "Students with Special Education Needs" on page 2 of this guide for a list of permitted accommodations.

Required Documentation

- the student information recorded in the SDC system
  - Under "Special Circumstances," indicate that the student has the principal's permission for accommodations due to a temporary injury or condition or because the student is a recent arrival from another school, school board, province or country.
  - Indicate the accommodations provided.
- an information letter from the principal to the parents outlining the approved accommodations (sample letters are available on the secure section of the EQAO Web Site, www.eqao.com)

Keep all documentation on file.

Section B Special Provisions for English Language Learners

The Student

The student is an English language learner as defined by *English Language Learners: ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12* (2007). Refer also to *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development: A Resource Guide.* English Language Learners are eligible for special provisions.

Decision Making

Decide on the special provision

- prior to the assessment;
- for each student individually and
- in consultation with the student and parents and with the appropriate teaching staff.

Permitted Special Provisions

Setting *(adjustments to the **environment** in which the assessment is written)*

- an individual or quiet setting

Required Documentation

- the student information recorded in the SDC system
- an information letter from the principal to the parents outlining the approved special provision (sample letters are available on the secure section of the EQAO Web Site, www.eqao.com)

Keep all documentation on file.

Notes

- English language learners in the early stages of English-language acquisition (refer to *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development: A Resource Guide)* are eligible for special provisions as well as accommodations. It is assumed that these students require accommodations for classroom assessments throughout the school year.
- New An English language learner in the early stages of English-language acquisition is not required to have an IEP. If the student does not have one, he or she is still eligible for accommodations. Please record the accommodations in the SDC system.
- English language learners who have special education needs and an IEP are also entitled to accommodations in accordance with "Students with Special Education Needs" on page 2 of this guide.
- Verbatim reading of instructions and/or questions, **for writing and mathematics only,** is not considered a special provision, since writing instructions and mathematics questions can be read to any student who requests it.

Section C Exemptions

The Student

The student is unable to participate in any or all of the assessment even with accommodations or special provisions.

A student **must** be **exempted** from

- **reading,** if the student has to be read to by a teacher or other adult, and
- **mathematics,** if mathematics terms have to be defined.

Decision Making

Decide on the exemption

- prior to the assessment;
- for each student individually;
- in consultation with the student, parents and appropriate teaching staff and
- with the consent of the parents.

If the parents want their son or daughter to write the assessment, the student must be allowed to write.

Required Documentation

- the student information recorded in the SDC system
- a letter from the parents, requesting exemption (the final decision rests with the principal), and/or a copy of the principal's letter to the parents informing of the exemption

Keep all documentation on file.

Notes

- Student materials (booklets, etc.) will not be shipped for exempted students. Alternative learning activities must be provided by the school, possibly in a different environment.
- If a student is exempted from reading, the teacher must **highlight** for the student which **portions to omit** and which to complete in *Student Booklet: Language 1* and *Student Booklet: Language 2.*

Education Quality and Accountability Office

EQAO

2 Carlton Street, Suite 1200, Toronto ON M5B 2M9

Telephone: 1-888-327-7377 Web site: www.eqao.com

© 2010 Queen's Printer for Ontario