

Provincial Assessment Program

Protocols for Accommodations
and Exemptions

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Assessment, Analysis and Design Services Branch

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New Brunswick Provincial Assessments

Protocols for Accommodations and Exemptions

Preface

This document replaces the April 2010 version of *Protocols for Accommodations and Exemptions* published by the Assessment, Innovation and Technologies Branch.

The *Protocols for Accommodations and Exemptions* was developed in collaboration with New Brunswick teachers, Educational Support Teachers and the Educational Support Services (ESS) Branch of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) and is based on best practices for inclusion.

Provincial assessments are compulsory for all students enrolled in New Brunswick schools. Students who have a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) are given the opportunity to participate and demonstrate the full extent of their knowledge and skill. As these assessments are meant to be inclusive, a host of accommodations are provided for students. Accommodations fall into two broad categories: universal and justified. Accommodations should be fully explored before an exemption is considered.

In certain circumstances, it is necessary and appropriate for students to be exempted from participating in provincial assessments if the testing format does not support the demonstration of learning, even with accommodations. Typically, academic exemptions are sought for students following individualized goals and outcomes in their PLP. Exemptions may also be considered for English Language Learners (ELL).

Accommodations

Definition

Accommodations are supports, methods and practices that enable a student to participate as independently as possible. Within the context of provincial assessments, *universal* or *justified* accommodations can be used to support students.

Universal accommodations are those strategies, technologies or adjustments (good teaching strategies) that enable a student to reach the prescribed outcomes and can be used as needed. These accommodations are not documented within the PLP.

Justified accommodations are documented strategies, technologies or adjustments without which the student would not be able to demonstrate knowledge. These accommodations are documented within the PLP and require prior approval to be accessed during provincial assessments.

For the purpose of large scale assessments, accommodations are alterations that do not jeopardize the integrity or content of the assessment, yet give students an equal opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do as part of the assessment process.



Types of Accommodations

Accommodations in presentation affect the way directions and content are delivered to students. Students with visual, hearing or learning difficulties are much more able to engage in the content when it is presented in a form they can understand.

Accommodations in response offer different ways for students to respond to assessment questions. They help students with visual and hearing impairments, physical disabilities and organizational problems to structure, monitor or put words directly on paper.

Accommodations in setting affect either where a test is taken or the way in which the testing environment is set up. Changing the environment can be especially helpful to students who are easily distracted.

Accommodations in timing or scheduling allow flexibility in the timing of the assessment. Generally, these are chosen for students who may need more time to process information or who need breaks throughout the testing process to regroup and focus.



Provincial Assessment Universal Accommodations

Accommodation	Description	Type	Applicable Assessment
Read instructions aloud	The assessment instructions are read to the student. Reading comprehension passages and accompanying questions may not be read aloud to students.	Presentation	All
Extra time	Student may take longer than the time allowed. Up to double the allocated assessment time is considered a <i>universal</i> accommodation. If more than double time is required, it is considered extended time and a <i>justified</i> accommodation is required through the Provincial Assessment Protocol Accommodation and Exemptions (PAPAE) site.	Timing	All
Sign-interpret directions	Directions are presented via sign language.	Presentation	All
Repeat /re-read	Directions may be repeated for the student.	Presentation	All
Familiar examiner	Assessment is administered by someone the student is familiar/comfortable within the educational setting.	Presentation	All
Encouragement	Assessment administrator may motivate or encourage the student to continue or remain on task.	Presentation	All
Page turner	The student with mobility limitations receives assistance turning the pages of the assessment booklet.	Presentation	All
Computer or word processor	The student uses a computer or word processor (e.g., DANA, NEO), but the spellcheck and autocorrect options must be disabled.	Response	All
Communication device	Various devices (e.g., Symbol boards) may be provided for the student to use in giving responses; translation devices are not permitted on any assessment.	Response	All except writing
Individual setting	The student is assessed separately from other students.	Setting	All
Small group setting	The student is assessed in a small group separate from other students.	Setting	All
Carrel setting	The student is assessed while seated in a study carrel.	Setting	All
Separate room	The student is assessed in a separate room.	Setting	All
Seating	The student is assessed in a specifically designated location, usually in close proximity to the assessment administrator.	Setting	All
Minimize distractions	The student is assessed in a quiet environment.	Setting	All
Increase/decrease movement	The student is assessed in an environment that allows for increased or decreased movement (e.g., The student may be allowed to walk around).	Setting	All
Breaks	An appropriate break from the assessment is allowed as it is typically administered without breaks.	Timing	

Provincial Assessment Justified Accommodations

Accommodation	Description	Type	Applicable Assessment
Large print	All parts of the assessment are provided in enlarged print.	Presentation	All
Specialized font	All parts of the assessment are printed in Dyslexie font or other specialized font.	Presentation	All
Coloured paper	All parts of the assessment are printed on coloured paper.	Presentation	All
Braille	All parts of the assessment are converted to braille.	Presentation	All
Extended time	If more than double time is required (<i>universal</i>), it is considered extended time and a <i>justified</i> accommodation is required through the PAPAE site.	Timing	All
Braille	The student is provided with a device or computer that generates responses in braille. The auto-correct function will be disabled.	Response	All
Speech / text	The student's verbal responses are transferred to text via a speech/text device (e.g., Dynavox). Word prediction software (student select) is permitted.	Response	All
Scribe (see "A Guide for Scribes", page 11)	The student responds verbally and a scribe transcribes this to the booklet verbatim.	Response	All
Answers written in assessment booklet	Responses may be written in the assessment booklet rather than on the bubble answer sheet.	Response	All
Questions read aloud	The assessment questions are read to the individual student*.	Presentation	Only Science and Math in K-8; All high school assessments
Text / speech	The assessment questions are read to the student (e.g., Dragon, etc.) *	Presentation	Only Science and Math in K-8; All high school assessments
Centres of Excellence or medical setting (hospital, rehabilitation centre)	The student is assessed when out of school for illness, medical conditions or extenuating circumstances. <i>Special circumstances require professional/additional documentation.</i>	Setting	All
Word-prediction software	This software is available to students using assistive technologies (e.g., Word Q).	Response	All

*Text-to-speech or reading aloud may be used under the following circumstances when assessing reading comprehension at the high school level: (1) a related learning disability is diagnosed and documented, (2) the dyslexia font is not suitable for the student, (3) and the accommodation is normally available to the student in daily work at school. This accommodation is not available to students in earlier grades where decoding is one of the skills being assessed.

Scribes are not appropriate accommodations for writing. Please see assistive technologies for appropriate accommodations for students.

Accommodation Procedure

Provincial Assessment Universal Accommodations

Universal accommodations are available to any student at the school’s discretion. It is not necessary to apply or provide any documentation for these accommodations for any provincial assessment. Refer to list of *Universal Accommodations* on page 5.

Provincial Assessment Justified Accommodations

1. Requests for justified accommodations must be submitted through the PPAE site (see ONE site <https://collabe.nbed.nb.ca>). Refer to list of Justified Accommodations on page 6.
2. Under *Request for Justified Accommodation* on the PPAE site, fill in all applicable areas, including grade level and date with the year.
3. Once an online request is completed at the school level, including verification from the administrator, it is received by the appointed district ESS Coordinator. On approval, the request will be forwarded to the Assessment, Innovation and Technologies Branch for approval.
4. Confirmation of requests will be sent electronically from the Assessment, Innovation and Technologies Branch to the ESS Coordinator at the district. Please check the PPAE site for the status of requests.

Note: Check the due dates identified in the assessment timetable sent to your school’s administrators.

It is important that requests for large-print, braille or other formats be submitted in a timely fashion to allow for the necessary arrangements.

The screenshot shows the 'Submitted Requests' section of the 'Accommodation or Exemption Request' web application. The interface includes a navigation bar with icons for Student Search, My Profile, Live Assessments, Submitted Requests, User Guide, and Contact Systems. The main content area shows a dropdown menu for 'School' set to 'Deer Island Community School (DT10)'. Below this are tabs for 'Awaiting My Approval', 'Pending', 'Rejected', and 'Approved'. A table displays the submitted request details:

Action	Name	NBEN	Submitted Date	Step
Grade 10 French Immersion Literacy Assessment in READING				
Deer Island Community School				
	Demo This Student	000113333	2011-02-11 2:19:59 PM	Awaiting Learning Specialist Approval

Exemptions

Definition

In certain circumstances, it is appropriate for a student to be exempted from participating in a provincial assessment. Any decision to exempt a student must be made in collaboration with the student's parent(s) or guardian(s).

Exemptions are permitted under the following circumstances:

- Students with individualized goals and outcomes outlined in either the learner's PLP-I or Individualized Behaviour Support Plan (PLP-IBSP). For students who are not following a PLP-I and require an academic exemption, documentation must accompany the application detailing the necessity for exemption. Typically, these students are following a modified PLP (PLP-M).
- Students experiencing unforeseen circumstances* (e.g., serious illness, sudden bereavement, or other unusual circumstances requiring an exemption that could not be predicted prior to the administration of the assessment).
- English Language Learners should participate in provincial assessments when possible. In extreme circumstances—ELLs who would not be able to attempt any portion of the assessment, even with accommodations—an exemption will be considered. ELLs do not require a PLP to qualify for an exemption; however, documentation must accompany the application detailing the necessity for exemption, along with parental/guardian permission.

Exemption Procedure

1. Requests for exemption must be submitted using the PAPAE site (see ONE site <https://collabe.nbed.nb.ca>).
2. On the *Request for Exemption*, fill in all applicable areas, including grade level and date, with the year.
3. Confirmation of exemption requests will be sent from the Assessment, Innovation and Technologies Branch via the PAPAE site to the district ESS Coordinator.

*Unforeseen Circumstance Exemption must follow this protocol:

- Parent/guardian must be informed immediately for approval. If parent/guardian permission is not received, the request for exemption due to unforeseen circumstance will not be granted. The student's results will be reported as a Did Not Write (DNW).
- Principal, District ESS Coordinator and the appropriate EEC Learning Specialist must be informed via email.
- The unforeseen exemption must be entered on the PAPAE site, following all protocols, including signed parent/guardian permission.



Exemptions from the English Language Proficiency Assessment/Reassessment (ELPA/R)

The following two types of exemptions have been developed specifically for the ELPA/R as it is a graduation requirement in New Brunswick. These exemptions must be submitted, following the proper procedures, on the PAPAE site.

Temporary exemptions: This type of exemption can be selected on a year-by-year basis. Students who will not be participating in the ELPA/R this year, but wish to write in the future, may be granted a temporary exemption. Reasons for temporary exemptions can range from academic readiness to absence during the time of writing. All of the proper signatures must be present before the temporary exemption can be considered for approval. If a student is approved for a temporary exemption, they will be registered for the next administration of the ELPA/R. Potential graduates are not eligible for a temporary exemption.

Permanent exemptions: Students who will not write the ELPA/R, at any point, may be granted a permanent exemption. These exemptions must be substantiated through a PLP. Once a permanent exemption is approved, there is no need to resubmit in any subsequent year. The student will be listed as a permanent exemption in the EECD database.

Process to reverse a permanent exemption:

- Request parent/guardian permission in writing
- Inform principal of request
- Request permission from district ESSCoordinator
- Originator of Permanent Exemption request (the staff member who entered the request to the PAPAE site) must be the one to cancel it; if the originator of the request is no longer at the school, please contact Kathy McCormack (Kathy.mccormack.gnb.ca) at the Assessment, Innovation and Technologies branch of EECD.
- Please notify the ELPA/R Learning Specialist and Kathy McCormack at EECD once the permanent exemption has been cancelled.

Please note: the original permanent exemption no longer applies to the student once reversed.

A Guide for Scribes



Do

be patient and make sure the student feels no undue pressure.

write down exactly and only what the student asks to have written.

ask the student to include directions for equation writing and punctuation, including periods, symbols, etc.

read back to the student what you have written.

make changes, only if the student requests them.



Do Not

explain or elaborate upon the question.

interpret or paraphrase.

make suggestions or offer advice.

imply that the student could/should write more or change an answer.

“help” the student with the problem or question, even if they request it.

Please remember that the student’s work should be as much their own as if they were writing it. Your part in the process should simply be a facilitator for the mechanical task of writing.

Note: All sessions that occur between a scribe and a student, in connection with administration of this assessment, must be recorded and the audio recording then sent to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Education along with the student’s other assessment materials.