Participation of Students with Disabilities in Utah’s Statewide Assessment Programs 2004-2005

Considerations for IEP Teams

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In a new era of accountability of education systems for the performance results of all students, states all over the country are developing assessment systems to measure student achievement. Utah’s Statewide Assessment Programs are outlined in Utah Performance Assessment System for Students (U-PASS).

U-PASS, Utah’s school and district accountability system, was established by state legislation. This system outlines requirements for collection of achievement data and testing for all schools and students in the state. These state requirements, combined with federal requirements for assessment of students with disabilities and other learners with special needs, will produce information about school and student performance from year to year.

Assessments are given for a variety of purposes and consequently they yield different kinds of information about student performance in school. Federal and State laws specify that all students are required to be included in state and district-wide testing programs. Decisions about how students with disabilities participate are made individually, based on how the disability affects the student’s ability to access the general core curriculum, and the assessment of those core standards.

This document provides information for decision-making by school personnel, parents, and other IEP team members about the participation of students with disabilities in the various assessments. It explains in detail the use of adaptations, including accommodations and modifications, where necessary for students to participate. Information is also presented about the alternate assessment for students who cannot participate in other parts of U-PASS.
In order to reach the same high standards set for all students in Utah, students with disabilities must be able to access and make progress in the general core curriculum. The IEP becomes the instrument that describes how the individual student will be assisted to reach the standards in the core curriculum and to participate in the assessments of those standards. Based on how the disability affects the student’s access to and progress in the core curriculum, the IEP documents any necessary accommodations or modifications to grade level and course standards. Each student’s access will fall along a continuum.

Continuum of Access in the Utah Core Curriculum

- **No Adaptations**
  - No change to:
    - Content (grade level/course)
    - Performance expectations
    - Sequence/timelines
    - Instruction

- **Adaptation: Accommodations**
  - No change to:
    - Content (grade level/course)
    - Performance expectations
  - Changes to:
    - Sequence/timelines
    - Instruction

- **Adaptation: Modifications**
  - Changes some or all of:
    - Content (grade level/course)
    - Performance expectations
    - Sequence/timelines
    - Instruction

- **Alternate**
  - Access skills
  - Functional, foundational Life Skills curriculum
  - Emerging literacy skills
  - Individualized
Participation of Students with Disabilities in Statewide Assessment

The Utah Special Education Rules require all students with disabilities to participate in district- and statewide assessments. IEP teams are required to make determinations of how each student will participate in the various assessments. Students may participate in one of three ways: (1) standard administration, (2) administration of the test with adaptations, or (3) alternate assessment. Any adaptations to the assessments should be aligned with instructional adaptations that the students uses throughout the year, as specified in the IEP.

Utah’s Statewide Assessment Program

Utah’s Statewide Assessment Program consists of eight major assessment programs:

- Kindergarten Tests (Optional—Readiness and End of Level)
- Core Assessment Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRT)
- Direct Writing Assessment (DWA)
- Utah Basic Skills Competency Test (UBSCT), an exit exam
- Utah Alternate Assessment (UAA)
- A Norm-Referenced Achievement Test (IOWA Tests)
- Reading Tests (Required only for K-3 students not reading on grade level)
- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

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<th>Utah Performance Assessment System for Students (U-PASS)</th>
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<td><strong>Utah Performance Assessment System for Students (U-PASS)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Criterion-Reference Tests</strong></td>
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Selected Students Only

(Students not reading at grade level)

(Course specific)

(If Needed)
CORE ASSESSMENT

CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS (CRT)

PURPOSE
Compare student, school, and district performance with state performance standards for each content area

ESSENTIAL SKILLS
Math: grade level/course objectives in mathematics core curriculum
Reading/Language Arts: grade level/course objectives in reading, writing
Science: grade level/course objectives in science core curriculum
Direct Writing Assessment: six core traits of writing

TASK DEMANDS
Math: answer multiple choice items by filling in bubbles on answer sheet; scratch paper allowed; in some sections a calculator is allowed
Reading: read paragraphs and answer multiple choice items by filling in bubbles
Language Arts: reply to multiple choice questions by filling in bubbles on answer sheet
Science: read science material and answer multiple choice questions about textual information and graphic displays; fill in answer bubbles
Direct Writing: write a legible single draft in response in English to a prompt

GRADE LEVELS
Math: 1-7; Pre-Algebra, Elementary Algebra, Geometry.
Reading/Language Arts: 1-11
Science: 4-8; Earth Systems, Biology, Chemistry, Physics
Direct Writing Assessment: 6, 9

SCHEDULE
Annually in the spring

PARTICIPATION
All students must participate in the assessment. If the IEP team determines that the student cannot participate in standard administration, or with allowable adaptations, then alternate assessment is used.

ADAPTATIONS
Generally, most accommodations are allowed because they do not change what is being measured. Modifications are allowed only if they do not invalidate the student’s score or reporting. See tables on pages 13-16. Reading the reading test to a student is not allowable.

RESPONSE TYPE(S)
Math: multiple choice
Reading/Language Arts: multiple choice
Science: multiple choice
Direct Writing Assessment: constructed response

OTHER ISSUES
Student may need adaptations in one subject area, but not others, depending on the nature and extent of disability. All accommodations and modifications must be described and justified in the IEP.
UTAH BASIC SKILLS COMPETENCY TEST (UBSCT)
CRITERION-REFERENCED

PURPOSE
Compare student with state standards to determine eligibility for basic high school diploma. Class of 2006 is first to be accountable.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS
Reading, language arts, math

TASK DEMANDS
Read and respond to multiple choice items by filling in bubbles on the answer sheet; write a single draft response to a prompt with legible handwriting

GRADE LEVEL(S)
Beginning at grade 10; repeated opportunities on sections not passed

SCHEDULE
Spring of 10th grade; then fall and spring repeated administration offered yearly

PARTICIPATION
All students must pass the three subtests and meet other graduation requirements to receive a regular high school diploma. If the IEP team determines that the student cannot participate in standard administration, or with allowable adaptations, alternate lines of evidence may be considered. If a student cannot take the UBSCT or the grade level/course CRTs, an alternate assessment must be given through the school year in which the student turns 18 years of age.

ADAPTATIONS
Many accommodations are allowed because they do not change what is being measured. See tables on pages 13-16. Reading the reading test aloud to a student is not allowable.

RESPONSE TYPE(S)
Multiple choice and constructed response

OTHER ISSUES
Student may need adaptations in one subject area, but not others, depending on how the disability affects his ability to access the general curriculum and the assessment. All accommodations must be described and justified in the IEP.
UTAH’S ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT (UAA)
CRITERION-REFERENCED

PURPOSE
Evaluate performance of students unable to participate in other components of U-PASS

ESSENTIAL SKILLS
Individualized IEP goals that are benchmarked to core standards in Language Arts and Math

TASK DEMANDS
Individually determined for and related to IEP goals

GRADE LEVELS
1-12

SCHEDULE
IEP team selects tasks in the fall. Student is given three opportunities to demonstrate proficiency on selected tasks during spring testing period.

PARTICIPATION
If a student cannot take the UBSCT or the grade level/course CRTs, an alternate assessment must be given through the school year in which the student turns 18 years of age. If the student is receiving instruction in functional life or access skills, the IEP team may determine that the UAA is the most appropriate method to assess the student’s progress. CAUTION: Parents and students must be fully informed of the possible consequences of selection of alternate assessment. A student who meets the criteria for UAA is generally not receiving instruction in the curriculum necessary to pass the UBSCT and receive a basic high school diploma.

ADAPTATIONS
See tables on pages 13-16.

RESPONSE TYPE(S)
Specified for each UAA task

OTHER ISSUES
All decisions about the student’s participation in statewide assessment, including the decision to use an alternate assessment, must be described and justified in the IEP.
IOWA TESTS:
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and Iowa Test of Educational Development (ITED)
NORM REFERENCED

PURPOSE
Compare student, schools, and district performance with national norms for grade level achievement

ESSENTIAL SKILLS
Reading, language arts, math, science, social studies

TASK DEMANDS
Read and respond to multiple choice items by filling in bubbles on answer sheet; third grade students record their answers in the test booklet.

GRADE LEVEL(S)
3, 5, 8, 11

SCHEDULE
Last two weeks of September, first week of October

PARTICIPATION
The IEP team may determine if the student can participate in standard administration, or with allowable adaptations. Students may participate partially by taking those subtests not affected by their disability.

ADAPTATIONS
A number of accommodations are allowed that do not differ from the normal conditions of test administration. See tables on pages 13-16. Reading the reading test to a student is not allowable. (See test producer’s administration manual.) Students who are visually impaired may take the IOWA in Braille. However, the Braille version is normed and scored separately, and results cannot be compared to the standard version of the test.

RESPONSE TYPE(S)
Multiple choice

OTHER ISSUES
A student with disabilities should not take the Iowa Tests if the test must be significantly modified in a way that would violate the standardization requirements. Students with disabilities who have significant cognitive disabilities, and/or whose instructional level is three years of more below their enrolled grade level may be exempted from participation. All adaptations must be described and justified in the IEP.
**SUPPLEMENTAL READING ASSESSMENTS**

**NORM-REFERENCED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PURPOSE</strong></th>
<th>Determine grade-level competency in reading; provide an additional assessment to better define a student’s reading level</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ESSENTIAL SKILLS</strong></td>
<td>Decoding, fluency, comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TASK DEMANDS</strong></td>
<td>Varies by instrument; instruments to be determined</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **GRADE LEVEL(S)** | Grades 1-2, individually administered informal reading inventory  
Grade 3, group administered reading diagnostic assessment, norm-referenced test |
| **SCHEDULE** | Annually in the spring |
| **PARTICIPATION** | Administered to students who are achieving below grade level. |
| **ADAPTATIONS** | Most accommodations are allowed if they do not change what is being measured. Modifications are allowed only as they do not invalidate the student’s score or reporting. See individual administration manual for allowable adaptations. See tables on pages 13-16. **Note:** Reading the reading test to a student invalidates the test scores. |
| **RESPONSE TYPE(S)** | Varies by instrument |
| **OTHER ISSUES** | All accommodations must be described and justified in the IEP. |
PURPOSE
Compare Utah’s performance with that of other states

ESSENTIAL SKILLS
Reading, writing, math, science

TASK DEMANDS
Read and respond to multiple choice items by filling in bubbles on an answer sheet; write a single draft response to a prompt, legible handwriting

GRADE LEVELS
4, 8, in randomly selected schools

SCHEDULE
End of January to March

PARTICIPATION
All students who can meaningfully take this assessment should participate.

ADAPTATIONS
Decisions about adaptations and exemptions are made by test designers and federal contractor. Specific guidelines provided to test administrators at the time of training.

RESPONSE TYPE(S)
Multiple choice and constructed response

OTHER ISSUES
Student may need adaptations in one subject area, but not others, depending on how the disability affects his ability to access the general curriculum and the assessment. All accommodations must be described and justified in the IEP.
Adaptations for Students With Disabilities in Utah’s Statewide Assessments

Adaptation is the general term for changes in the general curriculum, instruction, and/or assessment made for a student by an IEP. These changes are divided into two broad categories: accommodations and modifications. Changes fall into one category or the other depending on the nature of the task, the facts of the situation, and the effects of those changes.

**Accommodations** are changes in curriculum, instruction, or assessment that are necessary to provide access for a student with a disability to participate (“level the playing field”), and which **DO NOT** fundamentally alter or lower the standard or expectations of the curriculum, course, or assessment.

**Modifications** are changes in curriculum, instruction and/or assessment that are necessary to provide access for a student with a disability to participate, and which **DO** fundamentally alter or lower the standard or expectations of the curriculum, course, or assessment. Modifications substantially alter the constructs or essential elements of a test, or violate the standardized test administration conditions, and therefore invalidate the test results.

IEP teams must carefully consider the use of adaptations in curriculum, instruction, and assessment and the possible effects of those decisions on the student’s educational goals. Accommodations the IEP team selects to enable the student to access the general curriculum have little effect on goals of graduation and post-high school options. If modifications are appropriate for a specific student, as determined by the IEP team and developed on an IEP, the parents and the student must be informed of the potential consequences of those choices. The IEP team must consider what information is provided by the selected assessment options regarding the student’s progress toward meeting grade level standards and graduation criteria.

Adaptations can be organized into four broad categories:

1. **Presentation adaptations** alter the way in which the test or test directions are given or materials are used in the test.

2. **Response adaptations** alter the way in which a student responds to the test items.

3. **Scheduling/timing adaptations** are any timing or scheduling changes in the way the test is usually administered.

4. **Setting adaptations** are changes to the testing environment or location in which the test is administered.

The IEP team can use the tables on the following pages to determine whether an adaptation is an accommodation or a modification on a specific test. This will tell the team whether the test results are interpretable and if they will count toward a student’s goal. An example would be the UBSCT—if a student uses a modification on this test, the student’s score would not count toward basic diploma requirements.

**NOTE:** The adaptations shown on pages 13-16 may be appropriate for some students with disabilities based on their individual needs. If an IEP team selects a particular adaptation, then the tables may be used to decide if a particular adaptation would be an accommodation or a modification. This will help the team determine the implications or potential consequences of that choice. All adaptations must be documented in the student’s IEP.
### 1. Implications of Presentation Adaptations

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<th>K Pre/Post</th>
<th>Core Tests</th>
<th>Suppl Reading</th>
<th>DWA</th>
<th>IOWA</th>
<th>Basic Skills Competency Test</th>
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**KEY:**
- ❌ - Not applicable
- A - Accommodation
- M - Modification
- ◆ - Only within test specifications otherwise a Modification
- * - Check with test producer to understand consequences for test score interpretations
- ● - Separate test with different norms
## 2. Implications of Response Adaptations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K Pre/Post</th>
<th>Core Tests</th>
<th>Suppl Reading</th>
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**KEY:**
- ■ - Not applicable
- A - Accommodation
- M - Modification
- ★ - Check with test producer to understand consequences for test score interpretations
- ● - Separate test with different norms
- + - Some grade level administration requires all students to answer in test booklet
### 3. Implications of Scheduling/Timing Adaptations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>K</th>
<th>Core Tests</th>
<th>Suppl Reading</th>
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</table>

**KEY:**
- ■ - Not applicable
- A - Accommodation
- M - Modification
- † - Up to 60 minutes

### 4. Implications of Setting Adaptations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K</th>
<th>Core Tests</th>
<th>Suppl Reading</th>
<th>DWA</th>
<th>IOWA</th>
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**KEY:**

- Not applicable
- Accommodation
- Modification
- Only within test specifications otherwise a Modification
- Check with test producer to understand consequences for test score interpretations
- Separate test with different norms
GLOSSARY OF ASSESSMENT TERMS

**Accommodations** - Changes in curriculum, instruction or assessment that are necessary to provide access for a student with a disability to participate in, and which do not fundamentally alter or lower the standard or expectations of the curriculum, course or assessment. To be appropriate, assessment accommodations should usually be the same accommodations that are used in instruction.

**Adaptations** - General term for changes in general curriculum, instruction and/or assessment made for a student by an IEP team depending on the facts of the situation or the effects of the changes, they are divided into two categories: accommodations and modifications.

**Achievement Test** - Measures the learner’s currently acquired knowledge and skills in one or more of the content areas common to most school curricula. In Utah legislation, “a standardized test that measures or attempts to measure the level of performance that a student has attained in one or more courses of study. Achievement test shall include norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests.”

**Aggregate** - Collect or gather parts into a mass or a total. For example, reports that combine results from all students regardless of gender, race/ethnicity, or any other subcategory are “aggregated data.”

**Basic Skills Course** - In Utah legislation, “a subject that requires mastery of specific functions, as defined by the State Board of Education, to include reading, language arts, mathematics through geometry, science in grades 4 through 12, and effectiveness of written expression.”

**Constructed-Response Item** - An assessment question or problem that elicits a written, pictorial, or graphic response. In Utah legislation, “an answer to a question on a criterion-referenced test that requires a student to provide other than a ‘true-false’ or ‘multiple-choice’ response.”

**Construct** - The underlying theoretical concept or characteristic that a test is designed to measure.

**Content Standards** - Statements of the subject-specific knowledge and skills that schools are expected to teach and students are expected to learn. They indicate what students should know and be able to do. The Utah Core Curriculum represents the content standards for Utah.

**Criterion-Referenced Test** - A standardized assessment that measures to what degree students have learned the Core Curriculum based on a pre-established, specific performance standard.

**Disaggregate** - An analysis of data differentiated by subgroup or subcategory. This kind of analysis is usually conducted to ensure that the results for all subgroups are equitable and
to plan remedial interventions if they are not. For example, assessment data reported by subgroup such as gender, race/ethnicity, language proficiency, or socioeconomic status.

**General Curriculum** - The same curriculum as for non-disabled children.

**High-Stakes Test** - A test whose results have important, direct consequences for examinees, programs, or institutions tested.

**Item** - A test question.

**Modifications** - Changes in curriculum, instruction and/or assessment that are necessary to provide access for a student with a disability to participate, and which do fundamentally alter or lower the standard or expectations of the curriculum, course or assessment.

**Multiple-Choice Item - Basic Components:**
- **Directions or Introduction** - Directs the student’s attention to a particular piece of information and sets the context for any graphics used or for the item itself.
- **Stem** - Directs the students to choose a response. It is usually in the form of a direct question, but could also be an incomplete statement.
- **Distractors** - The incorrect response choices for a multiple-choice item.

**Key** - The correct answer.

**Options** - All of the response choices presented.

**Norm-Referenced Test** - A standardized assessment that compares the performance of a student or group of students with the performance of a specified reference group, usually others of the same grade and age.

**Performance Standard** - A level of student performance relative to specified curriculum established by education experts as a goal of student attainment. A system that includes performance levels (in Utah, substantial, sufficient, partial, minimal), and descriptions of student performance for each level and cut scores.

**Test Producer** - The entity that creates the test. This can be a state, a school district, a private vendor, or other possibilities. The state of Utah is the producer of the criterion-referenced tests in U-PASS.

**Test Validity** - The extent to which a test measures what its authors or users claim it measures, and the appropriate interpretation and use of test scores.

**Standardized Assessment** - An assessment in which all students perform under the same conditions, that is, uniform and consistent procedures for administering and scoring a test.

**Writing Prompt** - Provides a topic for students to respond to in writing an essay for a direct writing assessment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRT</td>
<td>Criterion-Referenced Test</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEP</td>
<td>Individualized Education Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>IOWA</td>
<td>Iowa Test of Basic Skills and Iowa Test of Educational Development</td>
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<td>NAEP</td>
<td>National Assessment of Educational Progress</td>
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<td>NRT</td>
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<td>Utah’s Alternate Assessment</td>
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<td>UBSCT</td>
<td>Utah Basic Skills Competency Test</td>
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<td>U-PASS</td>
<td>Utah Performance Assessment System for Students</td>
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