



Adaptations

Strategies and Resources

Adaptations are strategies and/or resources to accommodate the learning needs of an individual student. They are planned, implemented, monitored, and evaluated to enable a student to achieve the public school curriculum outcomes. Adaptations, strategies and/or resources are documented in the student's cumulative record folder but are not indicated on a student's high school transcript.

Adaptations may include one or more of the following strategies or resources:

- > Curriculum outcomes are statements of what students are expected to know and be able to do.
- > Adaptations do not change the public school curriculum outcomes; they enable students to achieve them.

Organizational Strategies

Consideration of classroom support structures, such as

- buddy systems/paired reading/peer tutors
- learning contracts/independent study
- management techniques (e.g., behavioural support plan)
- notes in advance

Environmental Strategies

Consideration of changes to the environment, such as

- specific seating arrangements (e.g., class seating, study carrels)
- varying lighting conditions
- organizing space
- using a variety of locations in the school

Presentation/Instructional Strategies

Using a variety of presentation strategies, such as

- providing multiple texts on related topics
- highlighting key concepts/vocabulary
- providing supplementary materials (e.g., tapes, CDs)
- organizing learning experiences around a theme or topic

- > This is one of a series of six Supporting Student Success fact sheets. Other topics in the series include *Assistive Technology, Enrichment, Inclusion, Program Planning, and Transition.*

Motivational Strategies

Creating and maintaining a positive learning environment through strategies, such as

- involving students in decision-making around topics, assessment strategies, and projects
- using a weekly home-school journal with positive reinforcement attached
- developing a reward system with students
- matching teaching strategies and resources to learning styles and interests

Assessment Strategies

Providing options for students to demonstrate what they know, such as

- administering assessments in alternate formats (e.g., oral, audio)
- varying time/location during testing
- scribing of student responses
- offering students choices in assessment formats (e.g., portfolios, individual contracts)

Resources

Providing a variety of learning supports to access or extend the curriculum, such as

- assistive technology
- various print formats (e.g., large print, high contrast, braille)
- teacher- and student-made manipulatives and models
- mentors

Supporting
Student
Success

- > Refer to Policy 2.2 of the *Special Education Policy* (2008) and "Options in Programming" from *Gifted Education and Talent Development* (2010), Department of Education.

- > For assessments administered by the Department of Education (provincial, national, and international assessments), a request for adaptations must be supported by documentation and submitted to the Department of Education.

Information about adaptations may be found in *Supporting Student Success: Resource Programming and Services*, Nova Scotia Department of Education.

For more information about adaptations, please contact

School: School Principal

School Board: Student Services Coordinator

Department of Education:

Student Services
(902) 424-7454 or
Evaluation Services
(902) 424-7746

How do we know when a student requires adaptations?

A student requires documented adaptations when he or she demonstrates a need for specific strategies and/or resources in order to meet the outcomes of the curriculum, or to meet the enhanced capacities of the learner.

Does a student have to be formally identified with a special need before being considered for support through adaptations?

No, formal identification of a disability is not required.

Who decides that a student requires documented instructional and/or assessment adaptations?

Teachers, guidance counsellors, parents/guardians, students, and other professionals supporting the student, can all be initiators and/or participants in discussions relating to the exploration of potential documented adaptations. If it is deemed that further supports are necessary, a referral should be made to the program planning team. The team includes those who have responsibility for the student's learning.

What are the procedures for documenting and reviewing adaptations?

Adaptations required by a student must be documented and placed in the student cumulative record (Policy 2.2 of the *Special Education Policy*, Department of Education).

Adaptations require monitoring and evaluation throughout the school year to determine if they are assisting the student in achieving the curriculum outcomes. When monitoring and evaluating adaptations, the teacher or team should consider the possibility of reducing the dependency upon and/or eliminating the adaptation(s).

Will adaptations to instructional or evaluation strategies be indicated on the report card/transcript?

No, adaptations to instructional or assessment strategies are not indicated on the report card/transcript because the outcomes of the course have not been changed. Students who are transitioning to post-secondary options should be taught to self-advocate to obtain the support they will need to successfully pursue their endeavours.

What is the connection between instructional adaptations and assessment adaptations?

Adaptations used to support the student during instruction may be provided during assessment, if such adaptations do not compromise or alter the assessment's validity.

If a scribe (note taker) is required, the scribe writes exactly what the student dictates. Scribes do not edit or proofread student responses, nor do they advise, suggest, or imply that changes are required. Assessment content is not to be interpreted, summarized, or paraphrased by the scribe. Questions are read verbatim. No explanations are permitted.

What if a student is unable to meet the public school curriculum outcomes even though documented adaptations have been put in place?

An individual program plan (IPP), based on the student's specific strengths and challenges, is developed and implemented for the student for whom the public school curriculum outcomes are not attainable and/or applicable. For some students with exceptional abilities, additional learning outcomes may need to be developed in the form of an IPP.



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Adaptations: Nova Scotia Assessments and Examinations

Adaptations are strategies and/or resources to accommodate the learning needs of an individual student. Adaptations are planned, implemented, and evaluated to enable a student to achieve the prescribed curriculum outcomes. Adaptations, strategies, and/or resources are documented in the student's cumulative record folder. Further information about adaptations may be found in *Supporting Student Success: Resource Programming and Services*, Nova Scotia Department of Education.

Adaptations used to support the student during classroom instruction should be made available during the assessment or examination. However, there are adaptations that may compromise or alter the validity of the assessment or examination. If such adaptations are used, the student report will indicate "insufficient evidence." It is important that the results of the assessments accurately reflect what students know and can do independently in relation to learning outcomes. For example, if terms used on an assessment are explained to a student, this alters the validity of the assessment since there is no way to tell that the student has learned independently the concepts that are being assessed.

Adaptations made available to the student during any of the Nova Scotia assessments or examinations must be in place before the administration of the assessment or examination. Adaptations must be documented in the student's cumulative record file (Policy 2.2 of the *Special Education Policy Manual*, Department of Education). A copy of the list of adaptations used during assessments or examinations must be attached to the front cover of the student's assessment or examination booklet when the booklet is returned to the Department of Education.

The following is a description of adaptations that may be used during provincial assessments and examinations. Refer to the table at the end of this document for details regarding the adaptations permitted for each assessment and for each examination. Further details can also be found in the *Information Guide* for each assessment and examination.

A. Additional time

Additional time can be given to a student during an assessment or examination if this is a documented adaptation in the student's cumulative record file. This additional time does not refer to the additional time that may be given to an individual or the entire class as outlined in the *Information Guide* for each assessment and examination. A student eligible to receive an additional time adaptation can be given up to twice the allotted time for the assessment or examination with periodic, supervised breaks.

B. Alternate setting

A student may complete any part of the assessment or examination in a setting different from that of the other students in the class if this is a documented adaptation in the student's cumulative record file. The proctor must follow the guidelines for administration of the assessment or examination.

C. Alternate format

Alternate formats provided include large-print, Braille, and black-and-white versions of assessments and examinations as well as other formats. This must be a documented adaptation in the student's cumulative record file. The type of alternate format must be specified in the line provided on the assessment or examination booklet.

D. Verbatim scribing

A scribe may be made available to a student during an assessment or examination if the student has a visual impairment or physical injury, or learning disability and if this is a documented adaptation in the student's cumulative record file. A student must use this adaptation on a regular basis in the classroom in order to be eligible for its use in an assessment or examination. A scribe must write exactly what the student dictates. See page 5 for more detailed instructions.

E. Verbatim reading

If reading to a student is a documented adaptation in the student's cumulative record file and if this adaptation is used by the student on a regular basis in the classroom, the assessment or examination can be read to the student. It is important to note that this adaptation is not allowed on the reading portions of language arts assessments. This would compromise the validity of these reading assessments since the results of these assessments must reflect the independent abilities of students. The verbatim reading adaptation is allowed in mathematics assessments, in the writing portions of language arts assessments, and in Nova Scotia Examinations as long as the relevant documentation is provided. During verbatim reading, the questions must be read verbatim and are not to be interpreted, summarized, or paraphrased. No explanations are permitted. See page 6 for more detailed instructions.

F. Audio CD

If a student regularly uses an audio CD in their classroom work and if this is a documented adaptation in the student's file, an audio CD of the assessment or examination can be requested. It is important to note that Audio CDs of language arts assessments are not available. This would compromise the validity of the reading portions of these assessments since the results of these assessments must reflect what students know and can do independently in relation to learning outcomes. The request for an audio CD can be accommodated for Nova Scotia Examinations as long as the relevant documentation is provided.

G. 1) Assistive Technology: Text-to-Speech

If text-to-speech assistive technology is a documented adaptation and if it is used regularly in the classroom, this adaptation can be provided to a student. It is important to note that this adaptation is not allowed on the reading portions of language arts assessments. This would compromise the validity of these reading assessments since the results of these assessments must reflect what students know and can do independently in relation to learning outcomes. The text-to-speech assistive technology adaptation is allowed in mathematics assessments and in Nova Scotia Examinations as long as the relevant documentation is provided.

2) Assistive Technology: Word Processors and writing software

If assistive technology software or word processing software is a documented adaptation and if it is used regularly in the classroom, it can be provided to a student as long as all grammar/spell check features and all word/sentence prompters or cueing systems are disabled in the writing portions of language arts assessments and examinations. In mathematics assessments and examinations it is not necessary to disable these features.

Adaptations: Nova Scotia Assessments and Examinations

H. Calculators

Students are required to have a graphing calculator when writing the Nova Scotia Examinations in mathematics.

For mathematics assessments, calculator use adaptations are available for Part 2 in cases that warrant a documented adaptation. Note, however, that calculator adaptations are not available for Part 1 of the assessments since computation, estimation, and mental math strategies are the focus. Refer to the *Information Guide* for additional information on adaptations.

I. English as a Second Language Students

Students whose first language is not English are expected to participate in Nova Scotia Examinations and provincial assessments. If a student whose first language is not English has an Individual Program Plan, then this student is not eligible to participate in the examination or assessment. Principals, in consultation with parents, may exempt a student from provincial assessments if the student has been learning English for one year or less. However, principals may not exempt students whose first language is not English from Nova Scotia Examinations. Adaptations may be provided to students whose first language is not English as long as these are documented adaptations. Students whose first language is not English may use bilingual dictionaries or electronic translators that translate only individual words while writing provincial assessments and Nova Scotia Examinations.

J. Other

Adaptations documented in the student's cumulative record file other than those listed above may be provided to students as long as the adaptations do not compromise the validity of the assessment or examination and as long as these adaptations are used by the student on a regular basis in the classroom. The adaptation should be specified on the lines provided in the assessment or examination booklet, and a copy of the documentation should be provided in the same manner as with the other listed adaptations.

If you have further questions regarding the use of adaptations in assessments and examinations, please contact your board's Board Assessment Coordinator.

The Department of Education may contact the school for further clarification regarding the use of certain adaptations.

Overview of Adaptations on Provincial Assessments and Examinations*

	ELLA (grade 3)	EEMLA ÉAM1 ^{er} CÉ (grade 3)	ELA ARL (grade 6)	EMLA ÉAM2 ^e CÉ (grade 6)	JHLA ARLS (grade 9)	NSE ENGLISH (Senior High)	NSE/ÉNÉ MATH (Senior High)
Additional Time	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alternate Setting	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alternate Format	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Verbatim Scribing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Verbatim Reading	No	Yes	Yes: writing tasks No: reading tasks	Yes	Yes: writing tasks No: reading tasks	Yes*	Yes
Audio CD	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes*	Yes
Assistive Technology: Text-to-Speech	No	Yes	Yes: writing tasks No: reading tasks	Yes	Yes: writing tasks No: reading tasks	Yes*	Yes
Assistive Technology: Word Processors and other types	Yes**	Yes	Yes**	Yes	Yes**	Yes**	Yes
Calculators	n/a	Yes***	n/a	Yes***	n/a	n/a	Yes

NOTE: All adaptations must be documented in the student's cumulative record file and must be used on a regular basis in the classroom.

* Provincial Assessments and Examinations:

ELLA: Early Language Literacy Assessment (administered in grade 3)

EEMLA: Early Elementary Mathematical Literacy Assessment (administered in grade 3)

ÉAM1^{er}CÉ: Évaluation des apprentissages en mathématiques: 1^{er} cycle à l'élémentaire (administrée en 3^e année)

ELA: Elementary Literacy Assessment (administered in grade 6)

ARL: Appréciation du rendement en littératie à l'élémentaire (administrée en 6^e année)

EMLA: Elementary Mathematical Literacy Assessment (administered in grade 6)

ÉAM2^eCÉ: Évaluation des apprentissages en mathématiques: 2^e cycle à l'élémentaire (administrée en 6^e année)

JHLA: Junior High Literacy Assessment (administered in grade 9)

ARLS: Appréciation de rendement en littératie au premier cycle du secondaire (administrée en 9^e année)

NSE English: English 12 and English/Communications 12 (administered in Senior High)

NSE Mathematics: Mathematics 12 and Advanced Mathematics 12 (administered in Senior High)

ÉNÉ Mathématiques: Mathématiques 12 et Mathématiques avancées 12 (administré en 2^e cycle : secondaire)

* The use of the Read-Aloud adaptation (audio CD, text-to-speech assistive technology or reader) in NSE English must be approved. See the *NSE English Information Guide* for details regarding the approval process.

** All grammar/spell check features and all word/sentence prompts or cueing systems must be disabled.

*** A calculator adaptation is available for Part 2 of the mathematics assessments but not available for Part 1.