

Adjustments for students with disability

Adjustments are provided to students with disability to enable an equivalent learner experience during NAPLAN testing and to encourage maximum participation. Adjustments are detailed in the *NAPLAN national protocols for test administration* (the protocols). When considering the application of adjustments in the NAPLAN tests, it should be remembered that:

- adjustments should allow students with disability to access the tests. A student may have access to one or more adjustments in any one test, and these may differ across each of the tests.
- adjustments should be consistent with support and assistance typically accessed by the student for their in-school assessment activities. Adjustments should be closely aligned to the support that the student receives for their day-to-day classroom activities, as outlined in their personalised learning plan and/or NCCD evidence.
- when providing adjustments, the integrity of the NAPLAN tests should be maintained. For example, reading the stimulus material and/or questions to a student during the reading test is not appropriate or permitted, even if this is what happens during a student's regular lessons.

ACARA has developed videos and example Disability adjustment scenarios demonstrating the application of adjustments permitted in the NAPLAN tests. These resources were developed to support schools in their assessment of students requiring adjustments to participate in the NAPLAN tests. Some adjustments must be approved by the relevant Test administration authority.

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Assistive technology

Students with disability sitting NAPLAN online may use their assistive technology that is compatible with the test construct and the platform. Some assistive technologies may not be compatible with NAPLAN tests.

Assistive technology devices and software do not have automatic approval for use in NAPLAN. Schools must follow the protocols and test administration authority procedures for providing assistive technology adjustments to students with disability, including seeking approval for the use of text-to-speech assistive technology such as the C-Pen Exam Reader.

Adjustments are not appropriate if they compromise a student's ability to independently demonstrate the literacy or numeracy skills that are being assessed through the NAPLAN tests.

Students should be provided with opportunities to practise using their preferred device and browser via the Public demonstration site.

NAPLAN online test adjustments

All question types in NAPLAN can be accessed via keyboard. Students with disability who require access to the questions using a keyboard only are encouraged to view the keyboard shortcuts for NAPLAN. The public demonstration site showcases the types of audio and visual alternative format questions available in the online assessment. The tests on the public demonstration site can assist students, schools and families to determine what adjustments students with disability may need to access NAPLAN. Students can access the public demonstration site using only their keyboard to familiarise themselves with the keyboard shortcuts and functionalities available in the online assessment. Read the Guide for schools to assist students with disability to access NAPLAN (PDF 405 KB) for more information.

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Alternative questions

Alternative questions are available in NAPLAN online tests for students with disability who cannot access some types of technology-enhanced questions. This allows the same response to be captured from a student while still measuring the intended content.

There are 2 categories of alternative questions: audio and visual. Where a student has been identified as requiring alternative questions in these categories, the platform will automatically substitute an accessible question whenever required.

The audio alternative questions replace audio files for spelling with text passages for proofreading. This is relevant to the conventions of language test.

The visual alternative questions simplify or enlarge some images for easier viewing. This can include text within images, or the onscreen ruler and protractor. This is relevant to the reading and numeracy tests.

Students should access the public demonstration site to ensure the alternative questions meet their needs.

Colour themes

Colour themes that display black text against a selection of 5 different colour backgrounds (white, blue, lilac, green and yellow) are available to support access to NAPLAN for students with disability. These are available using the following disability adjustment codes:

- BNW (black text with white background)
- BNB (black text with blue background)
- BNL (black text with lilac background)
- BNG (black text with green background)
- BNY (black text with yellow background).

Students with disability who require an inverted theme (that is, white text with black background) should be set up with the disability adjustment code COL (colour contrast modification), which will enable the use of an unsecured browser to invert the display via device settings. This may also be used in combination with the disability adjustment code BNW (black text with white background) which will first render screen elements in black and white rather than using the standard test player colours.

Note: The use of the disability adjustment code COL gives students access to an unsecured browser, so schools' approval must be given by the test administration authority, and schools must ensure that appropriate supervision is provided.

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Alternative format (special print) tests

Paper

Alternative format (special print) paper tests including large-print, black-and-white print and braille are available for students with disability. Schools must arrange for these adjustments in advance with the state or territory test administration authority. This includes obtaining practice test materials from the test administration authority.

Where students with disability:

- find that online adjustments are not suitable, including the zoom tool available via the tests or their usual magnification software, they can continue to access large-print paper tests. Students may find it necessary to use a paper large-print test but should first access the public demonstration site to determine whether they can access NAPLAN online
- require colour themes or colour contrast modifications, they should access the public demonstration site tests to identify the colour theme they are familiar with and use every day in the classroom, or whether tests printed on coloured paper are still required.

Students who require braille are able to access hard copy braille tests.

Electronic (PDF)

The electronic test format is a PDF document accessed via a device; however, it is not an online NAPLAN test. The electronic tests enable students to answer questions on screen by clicking a radio button or typing their answer in a text box. To be eligible to use the electronic tests, students must currently use assistive technology (that is, a computer) as part of their usual adjustments when participating in classroom assessments and must not be able to access the tests through any other adjustments available.

PDF versions are only available to eligible students who have a physical or vision impairment. Test administration authorities cannot approve PDFs for other students with disability.

The electronic tests contain the same content as the alternative format (special print) tests.

Schools may obtain sample NAPLAN electronic tests from the relevant test administration authority to help students familiarise themselves with the medium in preparation for the tests.

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Scribes and NAPLAN support persons

A scribe and a NAPLAN support person provide different types of support to help students with disability access NAPLAN tests. A scribe may only be used for the writing test. A NAPLAN support person may be used for the reading, conventions of language and numeracy tests. While the same person may fulfil both roles, they are distinct roles with separate responsibilities and accountabilities.

Scribe

A scribe may be used for the NAPLAN writing test to assist a student with disability, provided that the student meets the criteria set out in the protocols. Schools must obtain permission from the test administration authority to use a scribe. Scribes must meet requirements set out in the protocols, including that they have experience working as a scribe, be officially and regularly engaged by a school, and be aware of, and abide by, the NAPLAN scribe rules.

NAPLAN support person

A NAPLAN support person can be used for the NAPLAN reading, conventions of language and numeracy tests. A NAPLAN support person is not allowed for the writing test because a scribe is the appropriate equivalent adjustment for the writing test.

A NAPLAN support person is officially engaged by a school and can undertake certain tasks indicated by a student, replicating the support a student receives as part of their personalised learning plan/NCCD adjustments. A NAPLAN support person **can** be a teacher, or another appropriate person engaged by a school. Ideally, they should be someone who supports the student in their regular classroom activities. A NAPLAN support person **cannot** be a person with responsibility for administering the NAPLAN test, a parent of a student, or another student.

Some support that is used in classroom learning and assessment is not appropriate in the NAPLAN assessment setting. If some methods students use in their classroom-based assessment are not permitted in the NAPLAN assessment setting, adequate time and support should be provided to these students to enable them to adjust to the NAPLAN assessment conditions accordingly.

The protocols specify which parts of a test a NAPLAN support person can read aloud to students.

Depending on circumstances and to minimise disruption to other students, some students may require separate supervision during the tests, or have consideration given to their seating position.

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Reading to students

Reading to students is a provision available to all students in line with the protocols. It is not available where reading aloud would compromise a student’s ability to demonstrate their skills during the NAPLAN tests.

During NAPLAN online tests, students use headphones and can access the audio player when this is consistent with what is permitted for test administrators to read aloud for test content.

Extra time and rest breaks

Please note that additional time and rest breaks should only be granted if they are part of a student’s regular teaching and learning experience.

Extra time

Teachers and schools are best placed to determine how many minutes of extra time a student should have to take the test. Generally, it is recommended that no more than 5 minutes of extra time per half-hour of test time be granted; however, in some cases it is recommended up to an additional 50% of the published test time be provided. In any case, a school is best placed to make a final decision based on the specific circumstances of the student in question, in line with test administration authority requirements.

Extra time for braille users

The logistics of using braille or a braille may warrant the provision of some extra time for all students accessing the test in this manner, regardless of their proficiency in this medium. For example, students who use braille are also required to use 2 large braille books in the reading test (that is, the reading magazine and question book), working between the 2 at the same time (for example, taking their fingers off one book to refer to the other and finding their place in each). Students using braille are required to respond on their braille and then tactually find their place for the next question.

Rest breaks

Where relevant, rest breaks can be used as an alternative to extra time to avoid student fatigue, although there will be instances where both extra time and rest breaks are necessary. Students should not be interacting with the test or test materials during a rest break.

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