
UNIVERSAL DESIGN & SENSITIVITY CONSIDERATIONS

FOR ITEM DEVELOPMENT AND STIMULUS SELECTION

High quality items are the foundation for high quality, valid and reliable assessments that measure students' understanding in a fair and unbiased manner. Meticulous attention during the item development process should produce items that are accessible to the widest range of students—sometimes referred to as “universal design.” When developing items, item writers should avoid constructing items that might cause unnecessary challenges to students with disabilities or other special needs. Test items and stimulus materials should not demonstrate or inadvertently foster negative stereotypes or images. Some areas of concern are listed below as reminders, but item writers should use their best professional judgment regarding possible additional areas of concern. States that use items from the SCASS Arts Item Pool are responsible for sensitivity reviews and field testing items to detect possible bias.

Age

Age Appropriateness

Controversial Points of View or Subject Matter

Cultural or Language Differences

Disability

Economic Advantage/Disadvantage

Ethnicity

Gender

Gender Orientation

Geographic/Regional

Magic/occult

Religion

Rural/Urban

Violence or Other Inappropriate Behaviors (stealing, cheating, etc.)

Other