



Collaborative for the Alternate Assessment of
English Language Proficiency

A background image of a classroom with a teacher and students, overlaid with a purple-to-blue gradient. A dark blue rectangular box is centered over the image, containing the title text in white.

Alt ELPA Accessibility and Accommodations Manual

**Collaborative for the Alternate
Assessment of English Language Proficiency**

School Year 2021–2022

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Table of Contents

Structure of this Document	4
Section 1: Introduction.....	5
Intended Audience.....	5
Recommended Use.....	6
Purposes of the Alt ELPA	6
Alt ELPA Assessment Features Model	6
Accessibility Needs of English Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities	8
Instructional and Assessment Accessibility Decisions	8
Section 2: Alt ELPA Participation Criteria.....	10
Section 3: Alt ELPA Optimal Testing Conditions.....	14
What Are Optimal Testing Conditions?.....	14
Who Makes Decisions About Optimal Testing Conditions?	16
Section 4: Alt ELPA Universal Features	16
What Are Universal Features?	16
Who Makes Decisions About Universal Features?.....	16
Embedded Universal Features.....	16
Section 5: Alt ELPA Accommodations	18
What Are Accommodations?	18
Who Makes Decisions About Accommodations?.....	18
Embedded Accommodations.....	19
Non-embedded Accommodations	19
Resources	21
Appendix A: Student Examples of Applying the Accessibility Model	22
Appendix B: Tool 1: Template for Applying Accessibility Considerations.....	28

Structure of this Document

The *Alt ELPA Accessibility and Accommodations Manual* includes the following sections:

Section 1: Introduction

This section provides relevant background information for providing access to the Alt ELPA. It clarifies the intended audience as well as the framework for the Alt ELPA approach to accessibility.

Section 2: Alt ELPA Participation Criteria

This section provides the Alt ELPA participation criteria, along with additional information to support participation decisions.

Section 3: Optimal Testing Conditions

This section discusses conditions that support an optimal testing experience for the student participating in the Alt ELPA.

Section 4: Universal Features

This section describes features of the assessment that are available to all students participating in the Alt ELPA.

Section 5: Accommodations

This section identifies accommodations that are available for the Alt ELPA only to certain students based on their need documented in an IEP.

Resources

This section lists several resources that provide additional information relevant to accessibility and accommodations.

Appendices

This section includes two appendices that support the process of making decisions about accessibility needs of individual students participating in the Alt ELPA.

Section 1: Introduction

The Alt ELPA was developed by the Collaborative for the Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency (CAAELP). CAAELP is a federally funded project that was awarded to the Iowa Department of Education; it is working in collaboration with nine other states (Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Louisiana, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Oregon, and West Virginia) and the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) at UCLA.

CAAELP developed the Alt ELPA to provide an assessment of English language proficiency for English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities.¹ This assessment meets the unique needs of these students and enables the measurement of their progress toward attaining English language proficiency based on alternate performance standards.² The Alt ELPA was developed to align with English language proficiency standards that correspond to college- and career-ready content standards in mathematics, English language arts, and science. By doing so, it supports the English language and academic skills needed for English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities to progress through school ready for post-school success, including independent living, social engagement, employment, and postsecondary training.

CAAELP developed this *Alt ELPA Accessibility and Accommodations Manual* to guide the provision of optimal testing conditions and the selection and administration of appropriate universal features and accommodations for individual English learners with significant cognitive disabilities to produce valid assessment results and support appropriate interpretations and uses of assessment results. CAAELP recognizes that validity, reliability, and fairness of the Alt ELPA depend on each English learner with significant cognitive disabilities having appropriate access to the assessment to show their English language proficiency. CAAELP also recognizes the importance of the role of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team in making decisions for English learners with significant cognitive disabilities.

Intended Audience

The *Alt ELPA Accessibility and Accommodations Manual* is primarily for district- and school-level educational and assessment staff, as well as parents and students within IEP teams, as they make decisions about student participation in the Alt ELPA and the accessibility needs of those students. This manual provides information for classroom teachers, English language development educators, special education teachers, and related services personnel to use in selecting and administering

¹ “English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities” is a term used in federal law. In this document, both that term and the term “English learners with significant cognitive disabilities” are used to mean “English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities.”

² The term “alternate performance standards” corresponds to the term “alternate achievement standards” used in federal law. The term indicates that the performance to which students are held may be different from those for other students, even though the targeted English language proficiency standards for the student’s grade are the same.

universal features and accommodations for those students who need them. This manual also is intended for administrative staff who oversee the decisions made in instruction and assessment.

Recommended Use

The *Alt ELPA Accessibility and Accommodations Manual* applies to all students who take the online Alt ELPA and reflects the diverse needs of the student population taking this assessment. The manual highlights the Personal Needs Profile (PNP) as a means of identifying and administering specific supports for students. Decision makers enter information on accessibility features and accommodations required for the Alt ELPA from the IEP/504 plan into the PNP so these can be activated prior to testing. This can be accomplished by identifying one person (e.g., a team member or a test coordinator who will follow the state’s security guidelines) to enter information into the PNP prior to testing. The manual recognizes the critical connection between accessibility and accommodations in instruction and assessment and provides guidance on when supports may differ between instruction and assessment. It also encourages an iterative approach to supports. As students’ needs evolve, decisions should be reevaluated to ensure that appropriate supports are provided.

Purposes of the Alt ELPA

The Alt ELPA measures English language proficiency in the domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. It supports individual English learners with significant cognitive disabilities and their schools and districts by:

- monitoring the annual progress of English learners with significant cognitive disabilities in the attainment of English proficiency for academic purposes;
- measuring school district success in meeting accountability benchmarks established for Title I and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA); and
- informing decisions about exiting students with significant cognitive disabilities from English language development services.

CAAELP designed the Alt ELPA to reflect the diversity of English learners with significant cognitive disabilities. They also designed the test to hold high expectations for these students to make progress toward English language proficiency based on alternate performance standards and to acquire discipline-relevant language for grade-appropriate academic content tasks.

For more information on the Alt ELPA, visit altelpa.org.

Alt ELPA Assessment Features Model

Accommodations remove barriers to test taking without reducing expectations by providing for changes in scheduling or timing, setting, presentation methods, and response formats. CAAELP has

broadened the approach to removing barriers by greatly increasing the accessibility of the Alt ELPA.

CAAELP determined which testing conditions, universal features, and accommodations provide equitable access and support valid assessment results, interpretations, and uses. This accessibility model reflects a tiered approach that includes: (a) optimal testing conditions, (b) universal features available to all English learners with significant cognitive disabilities for the Alt ELPA, and (c) accommodations available only to certain students with significant cognitive disabilities based on their documented needs. Table 1 provides definitions of the tiers and examples of features in each tier. Features in all tiers should be documented on the student’s IEP. Accommodations must be assigned to individual students in advance.

Table 1

Features in CAAELP Accessibility Model

Feature	Definition	Examples
Optimal Test Conditions (Non-embedded)	These are external to the assessment delivery system and address the testing environment and other adjustments to meet individual student preferences or needs as indicated in their IEPs.	Assistive Technology (AT) device (e.g., AAC, adapted keyboard, device, switches, tablet), Breaks and flexible scheduling, Directions adjusted (e.g., clarified, highlighted, reread, simplified, underlined, translated, or interpreted as often as needed), Focusing prompts and materials (e.g., fidgets, redirect to test by prompting or physical objects)
Universal Features (Embedded)	These are provided digitally through the assessment delivery system (embedded) and are available to any student based on their preference.	Amplification (e.g., audio aids, volume control), Color Adjustments, Disable Universal Features, Keyboard Navigation, Online Tools (e.g., highlighter, mark items, masking, strikethrough, zoom), Replay Audio, Re-record, Text-to-speech (for domains other than reading), Writing Tools
Accommodations (Embedded)	These are provided through the assessment delivery system but are available only to certain students based on their individual needs in their IEP.	Print on Demand, Text-to-speech for reading
Accommodations (Non-embedded)	These are provided outside the assessment delivery system and are available only to certain students based on their individual needs in their IEP.	American Sign Language (ASL), Presentation of items, Read aloud, Sign Language presentation of items (e.g., signed exact English, personalized sign system), Verbal description of graphics

Table 1 shows that optimal testing conditions are not embedded in the CAAELP test platform, while universal features are embedded in the CAAELP test platform. Accommodations include

some features that are embedded in the test platform; these features are provided digitally as components of the test administration system and must be selected in advance of the test so that they are available to the students. Other accommodations are non-embedded features that are provided locally with human assistance. Identified optimal testing conditions, universal features, and accommodations all yield valid scores and support valid interpretations of the results from the Alt ELPA when used in a manner consistent with this manual.

Depending on the test domain (i.e., reading, writing, listening, or speaking), a feature may be considered a universal feature, an accommodation, or may not be allowed in certain domains. These differences reflect the focus of the domain being assessed. Some accessibility features that are provided during alternate content assessments of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and other content areas may not be provided for the Alt ELPA because they would change the construct measured, making interpretations from test results invalid.

In addition to the Alt ELPA accessibility framework, the design of the Alt ELPA further supports customization to meet student needs. This is evidenced through the test administration instructions provided in the platform.

Accessibility Needs of English Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities are generally a small population with highly complex needs. Thus, it is critical that the IEP team have current information about student strengths and areas of concern to make informed decisions about instruction and assessment. These decisions include accessibility and accommodations for instruction and assessment. The accessibility features and accommodations determined to meet individual student needs and preferences for participation in the Alt ELPA will maintain the validity of the assessment results and interpretations. This manual provides information about optimal testing conditions, specific embedded universal features, and embedded and non-embedded accommodations available for the Alt ELPA. It also gives domain-specific indications of availability for each feature.

Educators should ensure that students have ample opportunity to practice using the accessibility features and accommodations available to them before they are used during assessments. The consistency between instructional supports and accessibility features for Alt ELPA should always be considered, even though some features may be used in instruction but are not allowed for the assessment.

Instructional and Assessment Accessibility Decisions

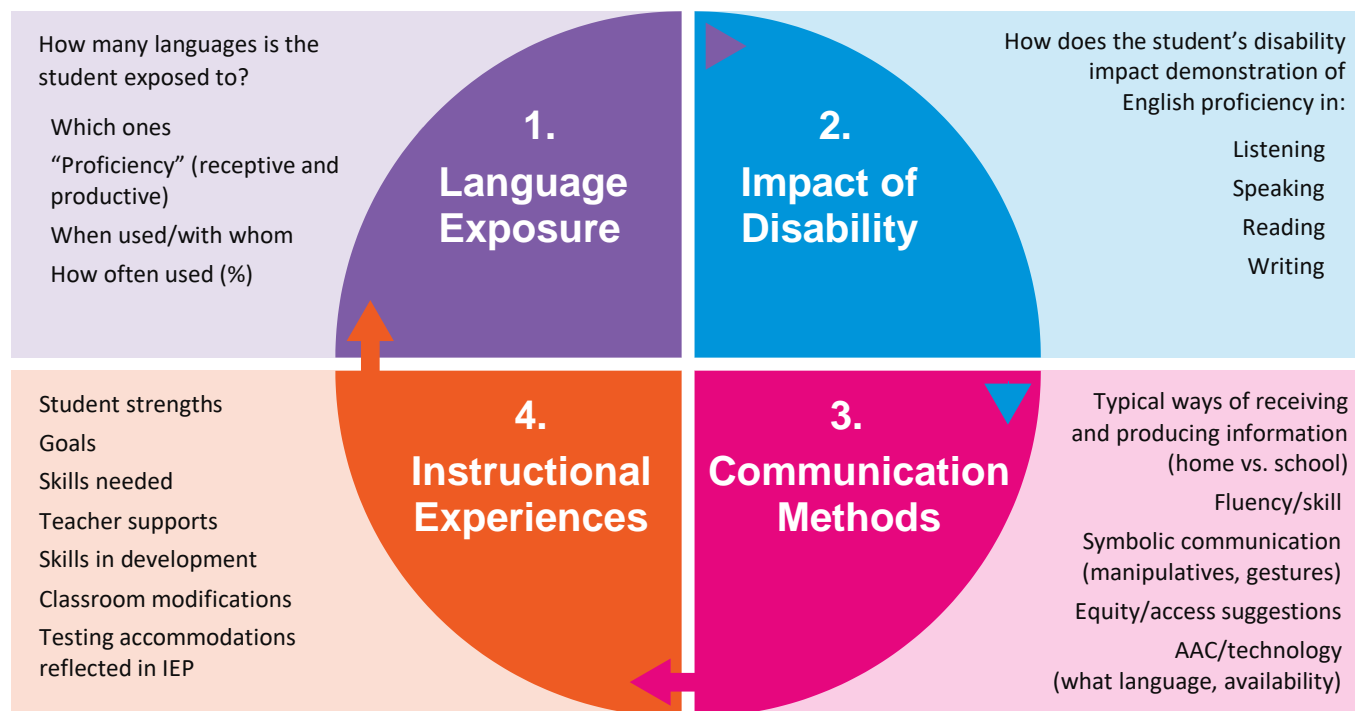
Supports that a student receives in instruction may not be identical to the accessibility features available for the Alt ELPA. Instruction focuses on content knowledge (e.g., reading, English language arts, math, science, social studies) and developing English skills in English learners. Alt ELPA assesses English language proficiency in the domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Thus, the accessibility features must allow for appropriate interpretations related to what

is being learned or measured. It is important to keep the language emphasis in mind for the Alt ELPA.

Figure 1 provides a model to guide accessibility decisions. It addresses language and disability in detail. At the same time, it guides teams to identify supports used for instruction and how these may bridge to supports used for the Alt ELPA. Teams may want to start with Section 1, and then work around the cycle. For each student, identify (a) how many languages the student is exposed to and his or her receptive and productive language skills in each, (b) the impact of disability on English language skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing), (c) what communication methods the student uses, and (d) the student’s instructional experiences. See Appendix A for student examples using the model and Appendix B for **Tool 1: Template for Applying Accessibility Considerations** to guide decision-making using the model.

Figure 1

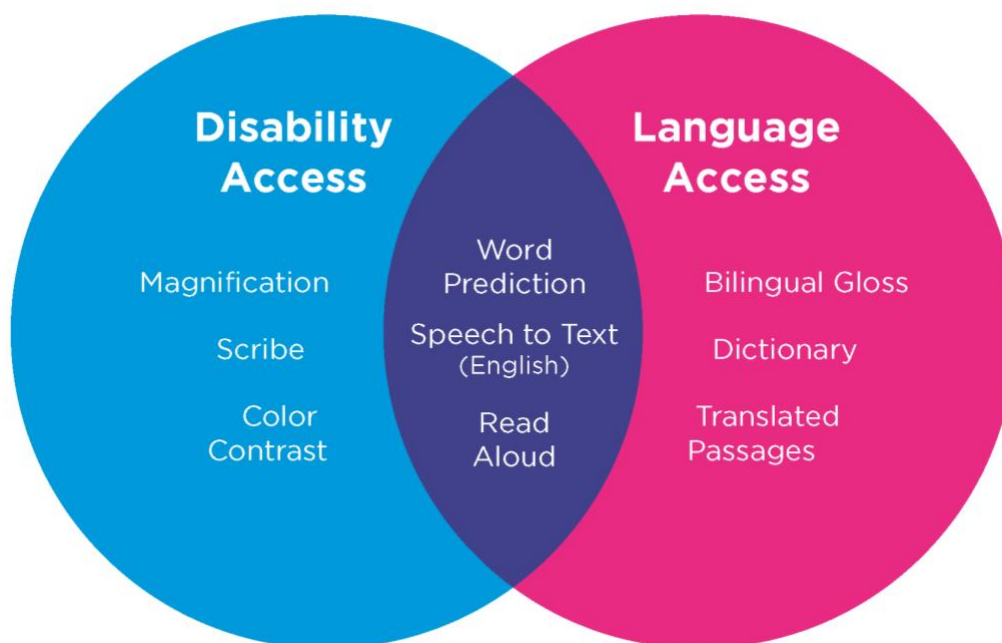
Accessibility Considerations



Typically, accessibility features that support a student’s developing English proficiency are not allowed on standard English language proficiency assessments. Supports that address a student’s disability generally are allowed. Still, some features may appear to address both disability and language. This is especially the case for students identified as English learners with significant cognitive disabilities eligible for the Alt ELPA. Figure 2 shows how different supports may address a student’s disability, language ability, or both.

Figure 2

Examples of Accessibility Features That Address Disability, Language, or Both



Note. Blue = Allowed on Alt ELPA; Pink = Conditionally Allowed by Domain on Alt ELPA; Purple = Not Allowed on Alt ELPA. Translated directions is a language support allowed on Alt ELPA.

IEP teams should be aware of whether supports in the overlapping category of disability and language are provided to an individual student because of disability needs, language needs, or both. For example, a student may use word prediction to address a disability, even though it also supports the student’s language use. A dictionary typically only supports language. If a student uses an augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device, that device would need to use only English settings for assessment items but might use another language during non-assessment portions (e.g., general directions) of the Alt ELPA.

Sections 3-5 of this manual provide detailed information about optimal testing conditions, universal features, and accommodations. Section 2 provides the Alt ELPA participation criteria that are to be used to ensure that the Alt ELPA is the most appropriate ELP assessment for an individual English learner.

Section 2: Alt ELPA Participation Criteria

The following definition serves as the basis for the Alt ELPA participation guidelines. English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities are students:

- who are not proficient in the English language and have been identified as needing English language development services;
- who meet the federal definition of an English learner (ESEA §8101(20));
- who meet the state definition for having a most significant cognitive disability; and
- whose IEP teams have determined an alternate assessment is appropriate for the student.

This definition is consistent with federal regulations that outline the scope of state definitions of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

The IEP team makes assessment eligibility decisions for students who receive special education services. This includes the Alt ELPA participation decision for those students with a most significant cognitive disability who are also identified as English learners. No single individual should make the decision to have a student participate in the Alt ELPA.

It is assumed here that the student has been identified as an English learner using the state’s identification process and meets the federal definition of an English learner (ESEA 8101(20)). It also is assumed that results of the screening process are included as just one piece of evidence in the Alt ELPA participation criteria. Further, it is essential that parents or guardians, as members of the IEP team, are provided information in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner that they can understand so they can participate in decision-making for their child.

It is expected that the vast majority of English learners with disabilities in Grades K-12 will participate in the state’s general ELP assessment rather than the Alt ELPA. Also, it is assumed that educators and parents will hold high expectations for the English language development of English learners, regardless of the assessment in which they participate. Table 2 provides a summary of the assumptions that underlie the CAAELP participation criteria.

Table 2

Assumptions Underlying CAAELP Participation Criteria

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student has been identified as an English learner. • The results of the language screening process are included as just one piece of evidence. • The IEP team makes the decision about participation in the general ELP assessment or the Alt ELPA. • The vast majority of English learners will participate in the general ELP assessment. • No single individual makes the decision. • The IEP team includes parents or guardians of the student as well as an English language development specialist. • Parents are provided information in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. |
|---|

Making a decision about participation in the Alt ELPA will differ for grades with an alternate content assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) and grades

without an AA-AAAS. Nevertheless, the **intent** is that the students in the Alt ELPA will be consistent across all grade levels. The IEP team must meet at least one time during the school year to determine whether the student will participate in the state’s alternate assessments, including the Alt ELPA.

Student in a Grade with an AA-AAAS: *For English learners in Grades [state enters grades with an AA-AAAS here, e.g., Grades 3-8], the IEP team should use the following criteria for participation in the Alt ELPA:*

1. Student participates in (or is eligible to participate in) at least one of the state’s AA-AAAS according to the state’s AA-AAAS participation guidelines.
2. Student could not participate in the general ELPA even with accommodations.
3. Potential unintended consequences of the Alt ELPA participation have been considered.

Student Not in a Grade with an AA-AAAS: *For English learners in Grades [state enters the grades without an AA-AAAS here, e.g., Grades K-2, high school)] and recent arrivals, the IEP team should use the following criteria for participation in the Alt ELPA:*

1. Student meets the state’s definition as having a most significant cognitive disability and has significant delays in adaptive behavior.
2. Student requires intensive and extensive individualized instruction and substantial supports to access the curriculum.
3. Student could not participate in the general ELPA even with accommodations.
4. Potential unintended consequences of Alt ELPA participation have been considered.

Each criterion is described further in the Additional Descriptions of Criteria section.

Factors that Should NOT Determine Participation in the Alt ELPA

The need to participate in the Alt ELPA instead of the state’s general ELP assessment (with or without accommodations) is **not primarily** the result of the following:

- Time of arrival in U.S. schools
- Language and cultural differences
- History of limited or interrupted formal schooling
- Low English language proficiency or literacy level without the presence of significant cognitive disability
- Student's ability to exit from English learner services
- Excessive absenteeism
- Poor performance or impact on accountability system
- Disability category label
- Special education placement or services
- A single person (e.g., principal, teacher) making the decision

Additional Description of Criteria

1. Student has a most significant cognitive disability and significant delays in adaptive behavior.

The determination that a student has a most significant cognitive disability and significant delays in adaptive behavior should be based on an IEP team review of student records. This review should include any medical records that the school has available. These records should indicate that a disability or multiple disabilities significantly affect both the student's cognitive functioning and the student's adaptive behavior compared to that of the student's grade-level peers. The student's delayed cognitive functioning and limited adaptive behavior are evident in home and community environments, not just in school.

A student's **cognitive functioning** reflects the student's reasoning, language, memory, and attention skills that may delay the student's ability to meaningfully attain information and knowledge. Records of cognitive functioning may include the results of a cognitive ability test or other formal or informal assessments.

A student's **adaptive behavior** reflects the student's conceptual skills, literacy, numeracy, and self-direction skills that are required for people to function in their daily lives. Adaptive behavior is essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life. Records of adaptive behavior may include the results of standardized measures, interviews (e.g., with parents, students), or observations.

2. Student requires extensive individualized instruction and substantial supports to access the general education curriculum.

Student needs intensive, extensive, and repeated individualized instruction and supports to successfully and meaningfully access the curriculum. These services and supports are needed on a continuous basis throughout the student's school years. Supports might also include assistive technology, personal care attendants, or medical services. Nevertheless, the mere presence of these types of supports does not automatically mean that the students will participate in the Alt ELPA.

Adaptations and modifications in the general education curriculum and instruction are needed to provide alternate ways for the student to acquire, maintain, demonstrate, and generalize English language skills across multiple settings and topics. Evidence of adaptations and modifications may include teacher-collected data (e.g., samples of student work or observations of the student). For English learners with significant cognitive disabilities, English language development is guided by English language proficiency standards that are aligned to, but may be somewhat different in depth, breadth, and complexity from those held for English learners without significant cognitive disabilities.

3. Student could not participate in the state’s general ELP assessment even with accessibility supports and accommodations.

Appropriate accessibility supports and accommodations should be provided to English learners with significant cognitive disabilities during instruction and assessments. It is essential to determine which accessibility supports and accommodations provide these students with access to instruction. The goal of using accessibility supports and accommodations is to ensure that students are able to demonstrate their English language skills without barriers that are irrelevant to those skills. There must be clear evidence that if needed accessibility supports and accommodations were provided, the English learner still would not be able to participate in the state’s general ELP assessment.

4. The IEP team should consider potential consequences of participating in the Alt ELPA.

There are potential consequences associated with participation in any assessment. Some that might be important to consider for participation in the Alt ELPA include:

- Assignment to the Alt ELPA in early grades (e.g., K-2) may determine participation in a future AA-AAAS
- A change in the student’s placement, which may not be reflective of their least restrictive environment
- Differential access to instructional content, perhaps at a reduced level of depth, breadth, and complexity compared to their English learner peers without significant cognitive disabilities
- Possible limitations in the provision of English language development services
- Differential exit criteria from English language development services compared to English learner peers without significant cognitive disabilities

Consideration of an English learner’s accessibility needs is intertwined with the ELP assessment participation decision. Although full access should be considered when deciding whether the student can participate in the general ELP assessment, the characteristics of the student (as described in the Participation Criteria) may mean that the allowed supports are not sufficient for the English learner with significant intellectual and adaptive behavior challenges. Alt ELPA provides for optimal testing conditions, universal features, and accommodations to ensure that all English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities have access to the test. These accessibility features are described in detail in Sections 3-5 of this manual.

Section 3: Alt ELPA Optimal Testing Conditions

What Are Optimal Testing Conditions?

Optimal testing conditions are those that are considered to be standardized testing conditions for English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The conditions are all external to the testing platform. Similar to universal features and accommodations, optimal testing conditions support a meaningful and accessible assessment experience for each student. They include the setup

of the testing environment, medical considerations, and other adjustments to meet individual student needs to participate in the assessment while ensuring assessment validity and valid score interpretations. They generally mirror what has been successful in providing the student with access during instruction and should be documented in the student’s IEP. Examples of these conditions may include:

- Assistive Technology (AT) device (e.g., AAC, adapted keyboard, device, switches, tablet)
- Breaks and flexible scheduling
- Directions adjusted (e.g., clarified, highlighted, reread, simplified, underlined, translated, or interpreted as often as needed)
- Focusing prompts and materials (e.g., fidgets, redirect to test by prompting or physical objects)
- Hearing Assistive Technology, sound system, FM systems, hearing aids
- Magnification beyond magnification/zoom in test platform (e.g., projector, interactive whiteboard, magnifying glass)
- Medical device (e.g., glucose monitor; the test administrator must ensure that security is maintained if a device connects to the internet)
- Navigation assistance by test administrator (e.g., mouse point-and-click, onscreen tool/button navigation)
- Noise buffer (e.g., headphones, including music)
- Object representations or objects (to represent a person, place, object, or activity)
- Student responds in preferred communication mode (e.g., pointing, eye gaze, tactile, cued speech, signed exact English, signing, use of AT, etc.)
- Scratch paper, individual erasable whiteboard, or AT device for notes (all notes must be shredded or deleted from devices)
- Scribe for responses (e.g., dictation of responses to the test administrator who enters them verbatim into the test platform)
- Setting (e.g., separate location, school-approved secure location)
- Special lighting (as indicated in IEP)
- Student and item positioning (as indicated in IEP)
- Student reads aloud to self
- Tactile graphics or symbols
- Text navigation assistance (e.g., mouse movement, tool/button navigation)
- Verbal encouragement that does not assist student to produce or correct responses (e.g., “keep working,” “make sure to answer every question”) or physical prompting (e.g., tapping the student’s arm or hand)

Who Makes Decisions About Optimal Testing Conditions?

Decisions about incorporating optimal testing conditions are made by trained test administrators or school test coordinators based on the supports and student needs defined in the IEP.

Section 4: Alt ELPA Universal Features

What Are Universal Features?

Universal features are available to all students participating in the Alt ELPA. They are indicated by the IEP team and should reflect the student's personal preferences. These features are selected by the student with test administrator support and are provided digitally through the assessment delivery system (embedded).

Note: To ensure valid scores and secure administration of the Alt ELPA, only those universal features explicitly identified in this manual should be used during test administration. Using other features may create a risk that the assessment will no longer measure the intended constructs, and assessment results will be invalid. If you have questions about other features, contact your Alt ELPA state representative listed at altelpa.org.

Who Makes Decisions About Universal Features?

The IEP team, which should include an English language development specialist as well as the student's parents or guardians and the student (when appropriate), makes decisions about embedded universal features. Decisions should be based on considerations of the student's individual needs and the routine use of the features during instruction. It is recommended that these be documented in the student's IEP. Check your state's policy for documenting universal features.

Embedded Universal Features

The Alt ELPA is a digitally delivered assessment that includes a wide range of embedded universal features. These features are available to all students as part of the assessment platform.

Table 3 lists the embedded universal features available to all students for the Alt ELPA. It also includes a description of each feature, recommendations for the domains in which the feature might be needed, and how and when it might be used. Students whose IEPs identify embedded universal features for the Alt ELPA will need to have these entered into the student's Personal Needs Profile (PNP) or similar document used to ensure that what the student needs is communicated to the testing platform. Although embedded universal features generally are available to all students, educators may determine that one or more might be distracting for a particular student, and thus might indicate that the feature should be turned off for the administration of the assessment for that student.

Table 3*Embedded Universal Features for Reading (R), Writing (W), Listening (L), and Speaking (S)*

Universal Feature	R	W	L	S	Description
Amplification (e.g., audio aids, volume control)	X	X	X	X	Volume may be raised or lowered, as needed. Student may use headphones for amplification.
Color Adjustments (e.g., contrast, overlay, choice)	X	X	X	X	The text color and screen background color may be adjusted to meet the student's needs.
Disable Universal Features	X	X	X	X	This feature allows disabling of any universal feature that might interfere with student performance or be distracting to the student.
Keyboard Navigation	X	X	X	X	Navigating through test content may be made by using a keyboard (e.g., arrow keys).
Online Tools (e.g., highlighter, mark items, masking, strikethrough, zoom)	X	X	X	X	<p>These include a variety of tools within the platform, including:</p> <p>Highlighter: This digital feature may be used for marking desired text, items, or response options, with a choice of four colors. Highlighted text remains available throughout the test.</p> <p>Mark Items: Items may be flagged for future review during the assessment. Markings are not saved when moving to another test domain or after pausing the test for more than 20 minutes.</p> <p>Masking: This feature allows blocking off answer choices.</p> <p>Strikethrough: This feature may be used to eliminate those answer choices that do not appear correct to the student. The student must clearly indicate the choice is not correct.</p>
Replay Audio	X	X	X	X	All tasks can be replayed as needed. Student may use headphones for this feature.

Re-record				X	Answers in the speaking domain may be recorded an unlimited number of times. Student may use headphones for this feature.
Text-to-speech		X	X	X	Text (direction, prompts, responses) is read aloud to the student via embedded text-to-speech technology. The speed can be controlled and the volume can be raised or lowered. Text-to-speech for reading is considered an accommodation.
Writing Tools		X		X	Use of writing tools to format and edit written responses, including cut and paste, copy, underline, italicize, bold, and undo/redo. Spell check is allowed unless the Test Administration Manual indicates it is not allowed for a specific item.
Zoom	X	X	X	X	Embedded zoom magnification allows for up to a 400% increase. Magnifying features will work in conjunction with other allowed accessibility features and accommodations. Zoom may be set for either item level (available on demand) or test level (test platform is pre-set to be enlarged before test begins).

Section 5: Alt ELPA Accommodations

What Are Accommodations?

Accommodations are changes in procedures or materials that increase equitable access but do not change what the Alt ELPA is measuring. They are available only to certain students based on their individual needs. Accommodations should always be documented on the student’s IEP. They should be identified prior to the opening of the testing window because they need to be activated in the testing platform.

Note: To ensure valid scores and secure administration of the Alt ELPA, only those accommodations explicitly identified in this manual should be used during test administration. The use of other accommodations may create a risk that the assessment would no longer measure the intended constructs, and assessment results will be invalid. If you have questions about other accommodations, please contact your Alt ELPA state representative listed at altelpa.org.

Who Makes Decisions About Accommodations?

The IEP team, which should include an English language development educator as well as the student’s parents or guardians and the student (when appropriate), makes decisions about

accommodations. The team should provide evidence of the need for specific accommodations and ensure that they are included on the IEP and used routinely during instruction.

Embedded Accommodations

Table 4 lists the embedded accommodations available for the Alt ELPA. The table includes a description of each accommodation, recommendations for the domains in which the accommodation might be needed, and how and when it might be used.

Table 4

Embedded Accommodations for Reading (R), Writing (W), Listening (L), and Speaking (S)

Accommodations	R	W	L	S	Description
Print on Demand	X	X	X	X	Individual test items may be printed on a printer located near the testing platform. Printed items must be shredded at the end of each test domain.
Text-to-speech	X				This feature may be allowed for the reading domain for specific students (e.g., those who are blind and do not read braille, who have a print disability, those with multiple complex conditions such as intubation or a ventilator). For other domains, text-to-speech is considered to be an embedded universal feature.
Word Prediction		X		X	Word prediction prompts the user with a list of likely word choices from which to select. The choices are based on words previously typed. Word prediction is allowed unless the Test Administrator Manual indicates it is not allowed for a specific item.

Non-embedded Accommodations

Table 5 shows the non-embedded accommodations for the Alt ELPA. The table includes a description of each accommodation, along with recommendations for the domains in which each accommodation might be used. If other accommodations are needed for an individual student, contact your state representative.

Table 5*Non-embedded Accommodations for Reading (R), Writing (W), Listening (L), and Speaking (S)*

Accommodations	R	W	L	S	Description
Read Aloud	X				Test items in the reading domain may be read aloud to the student who has difficulty understanding embedded text-to-speech.
Sign Language Presentation of Items (e.g., American Sign Language – ASL, signed exact English, personalized sign system)	X	X	X	X	Signed presentation may be provided for directions, prompts, items, and answer choices. For signed presentation, the test administrator may sign allowable portions of the tests to the student in the manner that is regularly used in the classroom but must be careful not to use signs that might lead the student to a correct response. In such cases, fingerspelling may be used as an alternative. Signing may be repeated as many times as a student requests.
Verbal Description of Graphics	X	X	X	X	Test administrator may describe graphics for specific students (e.g., those who are blind and do not read tactile graphics). Care must be taken to not describe in a way that provides the correct answer or cues to the correct answer.

Resources

- Collaborative for the Alternative Assessment of English Language Proficiency [CAAELP]. (2021). *Alt ELPA Participation Guidelines*.
<https://ucla.app.box.com/s/7l90r1okroswpwco8c4d931aom8wvk6>
- Collaborative for the Alternative Assessment of English Language Proficiency [CAAELP]. (2018). *Alt ELPA Theory of Action*.
<https://ucla.app.box.com/s/sih72kbc6twxmw6gc9be8h8z3wlk2ny>
- Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO]. (2019). *English language proficiency (ELP) standards for English learners with significant cognitive disabilities*.
<https://ccsso.org/resource-library/english-language-proficiency-standards-english-learners-significant-cognitive>
- Liu, K. K., Wolforth, S., Thurlow, M. L., Jacques, C., Lazarus, S. S., & August, D. (2021). *A framework for making decisions about participation in a state's alternate ELP assessment* (NCEO Report 426). National Center on Educational Outcomes. www.nceo.info
- National Center on Educational Outcomes [NCEO]. (n.d.) *Accessibility and accommodations for English learners with disabilities* [links to state policies].
https://nceo.info/state_policies/policy/accommodationsells
- Still, C. & Christensen, L. L., (2018, September). *Talking points for state leaders: Alternate English language proficiency standards and assessments* (ALTELLA Brief No. 8). Retrieved from University of Wisconsin–Madison, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, Alternate English Language Learning Assessment project:
https://altella.wceruw.org/pubs/ALTELLA_Brief-08_Talking-Points-State-Leaders.pdf

Appendix A

Student Examples of Applying the Accessibility Model

The two student examples presented here show how to apply the accessibility considerations presented in Figure 1 of the *Alt ELPA Accessibility and Accommodations Manual* (see p. 9). The underlying template of these student examples is also provided as **Tool 1: Template for Applying Accessibility Considerations** in Appendix B.

Mya Win (*7th grade student with emergent symbolic communication*)

Mya Win is a 7th grade English learner with Down syndrome. Her family came to the U.S. from Myanmar two years ago. She is the middle child of three children. The parents use the Karen language at home, and the children use both English and Karen with one another. Mya uses primarily single words in both languages. She responds to yes or no questions, usually nodding or shaking her head. She requests objects by pointing or reaching for an object. She can make choices between two objects and occasionally with three objects. Mya Win attends a school that does not have widespread access to technology, so her teachers typically make hard copy materials or use physical objects in the classroom. Materials that are malleable or soft and colorful appeal to her, such as play-dough, marshmallows, and foam to form objects, letters, and numbers. Given choices between two or three objects or large high-contrast flash cards, she can identify different shapes, sizes, most of the English alphabet, and sequence some numbers. She wears glasses and has difficulty attending to pictures, whether on paper or a computer, especially if there are many details. Occasionally, she will look at images or video clips if they are simple, large, and with contrasting colors on a topic of interest.

Has student taken the Alt ELPA before? (circle one) Yes No

If yes, review prior form and update any section information below as appropriate on new form.

Section 1

Table A1

Student Exposure to Languages

Languages	General Proficiency	When Used and with Whom	How often? (% overall)
Karen	Basic, uses single words	Uses with parents most of the time at home	70%
English	Basic, uses single words, most of English alphabet, and can sequence some numbers	Uses with siblings at home and at school	30%

Sections 2 & 3

Table A2

Impacts and Communication Methods in Instruction

Domains	Disability Impact on English Proficiency	Communication Methods and Fluency/Skill
Listening	Hearing tests show normal hearing ability, but cognitive ability limits overall language use.	Listens at basic level.
Speaking	Speaks using some single words but currently uses nodding and gestures in response, or initiates with pointing to or moving objects.	Mya primarily uses physical communication (nods, shakes head, points, reaches).
Reading	She can identify most letters in the English alphabet, but no words yet.	She uses objects and high-contrast flash cards in class.
Writing	She can physically manipulate writing tools and press keys on keyboard, but her English language skill level does not allow for composition using these tools.	She points to, reaches for, or moves objects to communicate.

Are there any suggestions for equity/access in Table 2 (e.g., access to technology)?

The school currently has limited access to technology and is pursuing grant funding in this area. In the meantime, teachers make hard copies of materials. If the school were to obtain more technology, Mya would need to access it using simple high-contrast content.

Section 4

Table A3

Instructional Experiences

Student Strengths	Motivated on topics of interest, likes to socially engage with peers in her classes. Although she prefers the soft colorful letterforms, she is getting good at identifying the letters in other contexts. Her literacy awareness is broadening beyond the forms.
Goals	Learning alphabet and ordering numerals. A big goal is shifting to symbolic communication.
Teacher Supports	Helps to adjust color/contrast and magnification for materials on computer or hard copy/printed. Teacher modifies materials for contrast, simple lines, and includes colors and textures that interest Mya.
Classroom Modifications	Need access to printer, objects, and flashcards.

Skills Needed	Learn all alphabet letters in order to move towards sound and letter correspondence to create words. Needs to broaden topics of interest.
Skills in Development	Mya is working on alphabet letter identification and ordering numbers. She is expanding her attention on areas outside favorite topics. Mya is also working on choosing between three options when working on shapes, sizes and letters.
Testing Accommodations Reflected in IEP (If Available)	Color contrast, magnification, print on demand, teacher helps navigate screens and assists with answer response location, redirect to test, extra time, use of objects/manipulatives, read aloud, strikethrough, text-to-speech.

Section 5 Accessibility on the Alt ELPA

Review the student’s instructional impacts, methods, and experience in the above sections with the menu of optimal testing conditions, universal features, and accommodations found in Table 1 of the *Alt ELPA Accessibility and Accommodations Manual*. Then fill in the following table with the appropriate supports in each category from the manual. The first row applies to all domains of the assessment (listening, speaking, reading and writing), and the following row applies to specific domains per the individual needs of the student.

Table A4

Individualized Accessibility on the Alt ELPA

Alt ELPA Domains	Optimal Testing Conditions	Universal Features	Accommodations
All Domains	Extra time Redirect to test	Color contrast Magnification/zoom Strikethrough (online or paper equivalent if printed material)	Teacher assists with test navigation screens and response location Print on demand
Specific Domain Speaking	Although Mya can physically speak, this likely will not occur for the testing window this year. Instead, use pointing and moving objects, cards.		

Review whether supports for the Alt ELPA have implications for instruction and note them here:

Mya uses physical and referential communication the most, but she may benefit from introducing a focus on speaking when she is ready. This would also benefit her growth in reading letters in order to move on to phonemes, as she transfers to more symbolic language use.

Student example: Arif

Arif was born in Indonesia, where he spent his first four years in an orphanage. He is profoundly deaf with unintelligible speech and has a severe intellectual disability. He also has limited mobility. While in the orphanage, he learned some of the local sign language in Jakarta, but his progress was slow. He was adopted by an Indonesian-speaking family from Australia who were not familiar with any sign languages but were willing to learn what was needed to support Arif. In Australia the family continued to use the signs Arif had learned in Jakarta while introducing some **Australian sign language (Auslan)* at home to prepare for what public schools would use. Arif also has some motor challenges that affect his ability to sign, so his parents acquired a device so he could press or point to sign icons or pictures to facilitate communication. The family immigrated to the U.S. due to a job transfer. Now Arif is enrolled as a kindergartner in a U.S. school. He has been identified as an English learner because although his father is a fluent bilingual speaker in English, the family predominantly speaks Indonesian in the home. Arif and his family now have to shift to learning American Sign Language (ASL). He is unable to read or write in any language and does not produce speech.

The school’s special education staff are working with Arif using information from his parents about what specific signs he had been working on in the southern dialect of Auslan in Melbourne as well as his prior Jakarta signs. They are trying to smooth the transition to ASL but find they need to rely a lot on the picture and symbols device that he had started using in Australia with his family. The family has concerns about the recent shifts between sign languages and is coordinating with the school staff on his continued use of social interaction signs and gestures and pictures and signs to practice with him at home, aligned with the kindergarten standards.

**A language with different vocabulary and grammatical structure from ASL*

Has student taken the Alt ELPA before? (circle one) Yes No

If yes, review prior form and update any section information below as appropriate on new form.

Section 1

Table A5

Student Exposures to Languages

Languages	General Proficiency	When Used and with Whom	How Often? (%)
Jakarta Sign	Low	Family	80%
Auslan-Australian sign language different from ASL	Very low	Family	10%

ASL	Very low, just started	Family, friends, teachers, & deaf community (e.g., online content)	10%
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Sections 2 & 3

Table A6

Impacts and Communication Methods in Instruction

Domain	Disability Impact on English Proficiency	Communication Methods and Fluency/Skill
Listening	Deaf, can't hear English sound correspondence to phonemes.	Receives input through familiar signs, symbols/pictures, gestures/expressions and objects/touch. Student uses AAC device for Jakarta signs and new English vocabulary at basic levels. Content is repeated as many times as needed.
Speaking	Unintelligible speech.	Uses familiar signs, symbols, pictures, gestures and expressions. Student uses AAC device for Jakarta signs and new English vocabulary at basic levels.
Reading	No phonemic awareness. Cognitive ability requires a lot of repetition and highly contextualized visual or tactile chunks of information.	Same method as for listening, with content repeated as many times as needed.
Writing	Motor challenges holding writing tools or typing keys. Not able to use speech-to-text.	Same method as for speaking.

Are there any suggestions for equity/access in Table 2 (e.g., access to technology)?

No suggestions at this time.

Section 4

Table A7

Instructional Experiences

Student Strengths	Social, positive energy, not easily frustrated with repetition or mistakes. Student can use AAC device with switch somewhat independently.
Goals	Transitioning to ASL. No discussion on when may start cued speech.
Teacher Supports	Teacher assists Arif in accessing classroom computers and navigating onscreen content.

Classroom Modifications	Arif needs a lot of one-on-one time during instruction, and a clear path visually and any other relevant contextual cues in the classroom.
Skills Needed	Arif needs to be consistent and reliable with pictures and signs already learned while assigning meaning to new pictures and signs to build and expand his vocabulary.
Skills in Development	Arif is working on basic social language to describe needs and wants in English, as well as grade-appropriate vocabulary.
Testing Accommodations Reflected in IEP (If Available)	Arif has not yet participated in any state content assessments, and no IEP planning for accessibility needs on the state content alternate has occurred.

Section 5 Accessibility on the Alt ELPA

Review the student’s instructional impacts, methods, and experience in the above sections with the menu of optimal testing conditions, universal features, and accommodations found in Table 1 of the *Alt ELPA Accessibility and Accommodations Manual*. Then fill in the following table with the appropriate supports in each category from the manual. The first row applies to all domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) of the assessment, and the following row applies to specific domains per the individual needs of the student.

Table A8

Individualized Accessibility on the Alt ELPA

Alt ELPA Domains	Testing Considerations	Universal Features	Accommodations
All Domains	Input repeated as many times as allowed. Use AAC device with switch. Use symbols, pictures, manipulatives, as allowed for each item.		Use AAC device with switch. Help with navigating test platform and entering answers.
Specific Domain Listening			Student may need exemption for listening portion due to disability and the allowed supports.

Review whether supports for the Alt ELPA have implications for instruction and note them here:

Need to discuss timing for introducing cued speech and how much emphasis while transitioning to ASL.

Appendix B

Tool 1: Template for Applying Accessibility Considerations

Has student taken the Alt ELPA before? (circle one) Yes No

If yes, review prior form and update any section information below as appropriate on new form.

Section 1

Table B1

Student Exposures to Languages

Languages	General Proficiency	When Used and with Whom	How Often? (%)

Sections 2 & 3

Table B2

Impacts and Communication Methods in Instruction

Domains	Disability Impact on English Proficiency	Communication Methods & Fluency/Skill
Listening		
Speaking		
Reading		
Writing		

Are there any suggestions for equity/access in Table 2 (e.g., access to technology)?

Section 4

Table B3

Instructional Experiences

Student Strengths	
Goals	
Teacher Supports	
Classroom Modifications	
Skills Needed	
Skills in Development	
Testing Accommodations Reflected in IEP (If Available)	

Section 5 Accessibility on the Alt ELPA

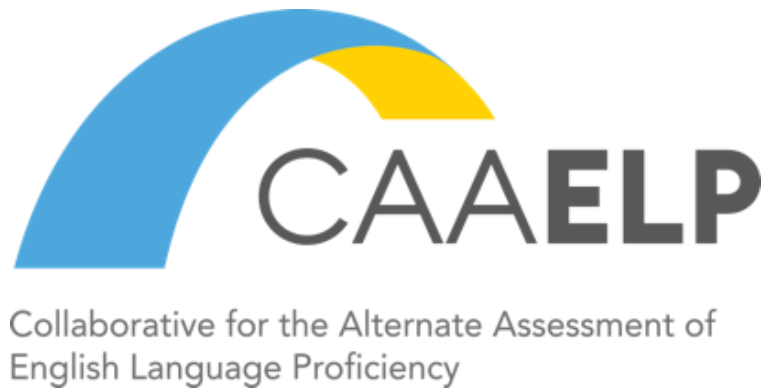
Review the student’s instructional impacts, methods, and experience in the above sections with the menu of optimal testing conditions, universal features, and accommodations found in Table 1 of the *Alt ELPA Accessibility and Accommodations Manual*. Then fill in the following table with the appropriate supports in each category from the manual. The first row applies to all domains of the assessment (listening, speaking, reading and writing), and the following row applies to specific domains per the individual needs of the student.

Table B4

Individualized Accessibility on the Alt ELPA

Alt ELPA Domains	Testing Considerations	Universal Features	Accommodations
All Domains			
Specific Domain			

Review whether supports for the Alt ELPA have implications for instruction and note them here:



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