MSAA

Arizona's Alternate Assessments

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, who account for approximately 1% of the student population, must meet eligibility criteria for participation in Arizona's alternate assessments. These online assessments are designed to measure student knowledge and skills based on Arizona's academic standards. Alternate assessments are administered in a 1:1 setting.

Accommodations and supports are embedded within the items on the MSAA. The following information addresses accessibility features and additional testing accommodations that may be documented by the IEP team if needed to access the assessments. Questions about qualification for the alternate assessments or administration procedures may be directed to the Alternate Assessment Inbox.

This document will address accessibility and accommodations for the content assessment, MSAA. For more information on accessibility and accommodations for the Alternate English Language Proficiency Assessment, please review the Alt ELPA Accessibility and Accommodations Manual.

The Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA)
Optimal Testing Conditions, Assessment Features, and Accommodations

The Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) is a comprehensive assessment system designed to promote increasingly higher academic outcomes for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in preparation for a broader array of post-secondary outcomes. The MSAA is designed to assess students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and measures academic content that is aligned to and derived from Arizona's academic content standards. This test contains many built-in supports that allow students to take the test using materials they are most familiar with and to communicate what they know and can do as independently as possible. The MSAA is administered in the areas of ELA and Mathematics in grades 3-8 and 11 and Science in grades 5, 8, and 11.

This assessment was developed through the research and development done by the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) and is being carried forward by the MSAA State Partners.

The MSAA is an online assessment, administered individually by a trained test administrator. The *Test Administration Manual* (TAM) contains detailed directions which include embedded accommodations tied to each item throughout the assessment. In addition to embedded accommodations, examples of the types of instructional accommodations which may be documented in the IEP for presentation, response, conditions, and timing are listed below. For important details on test preparation and administration, please consult the MSAA *Test Administration Manual* (TAM), which is available from the MSAA system after accounts are created at the end of February. If you have questions about using a routine instructional accommodation during testing, please contact The Alternate Assessment Unit.

MSAA Creating a Comfortable and Secure Testing Environment

Test Administrators (TAs) must provide each student with a comfortable and secure testing environment during every testing session. TAs can ensure an appropriate testing environment by providing: Optimal testing conditions, appropriate assessment features, the accommodations in a student's IEP that are consistent with MSAA accommodations policies as described in the MSAA Test Administration Manual and state-specific policy.

These procedures support student access to the test so that students can demonstrate their skills and knowledge. Each of these is discussed in detail in the individual *Test Administration Manuals* (TAMs). Implementation of these practices **must be planned for prior to testing the student.**

A secure testing environment includes but is not limited to the following:
- Restricting student access to resources that are explicitly identified in the Directions for Test Administration (DTA)
- Viewing of test items only by the student taking the test and the certified, licensed, and a trained TA administering the test
- Removing any devices or materials that could jeopardize test content in the test-taking environment or that may distract the student

- Ensuring a quiet test-taking environment, void of distractions, and one that does not permit other students to hear the responses to the items of the student being tested. This does not need to be a separate room or location in the school building if the student is unfamiliar with that space. Students are often comfortable in a routine, and disrupting this routine could have consequences impacting their ability to focus on the test. A secure and comfortable space could be a corner of the classroom where the TA and the student can work uninterrupted and in privacy. Other students may remain in the classroom but cannot interfere when testing is taking place. Support from additional staff may be required in order for the TA to focus on the student being tested.
- Reviewing the assessment features and accommodations the student may need
- Making sure the same computer (if using a computer administration), laptop, tablet, or other device is available for testing. This ensures that security of materials is maintained.
- Providing scratch paper for students to make notes or solve math items. Following testing, all scratch paper must be submitted to the TC for secure shredding.
- Providing appropriate student positioning, appropriate assessment features, and the accommodations in the student's IEP that are consistent with MSAA accommodations policies
- Providing encouragement to support student engagement and focus. TAs may use phrases that do not indicate either the correct or incorrect response. Examples of acceptable encouraging phrases include:
    - "Just five minutes until a break!"
    - "I like the way you are listening and following directions."
    - "Only one more to go!"
    - "Keep working!"
- Permanently deleting all downloaded secure test materials after administration.

MSAA Accessibility Features and Accommodations

What are Accessibility Features and Accommodations?

There are many ways to provide support and increase accessibility for students. MSAA has two designations of test support. First, are accessibility features that are available to any student who benefits from the support. The second, are accommodations that must be included in the student's IEP prior to test administration. Accommodations are changes in the materials or procedures of the assessment that **do not alter the construct being measured**. For the assessments, a student may use the accommodations that are in their IEP that are consistent with the MSAA accommodations policies. When selecting which accessibility features and accommodations are most effective, keep the following in mind:

- Accessibility features and accommodations may not restrict a student's independence or communication.
- Accessibility features and accommodations must be based on what the student uses during daily instruction.
- Students and TAs should become familiar with the assessment features selected and should practice using them with the sample items prior to administration of the test.
- If using any assistive technology (AT) or augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device, practice with the sample items prior to the administration of the test to ensure that the technology is functioning appropriately. For more information on technology, refer to the MSAA Online Assessment System User Guide for Test Administrators found on the MSAA Assessment Website.

MSAA Accessibility Features – Paper Administration

Accessibility Feature	Description
Allowed Reading	The TA may read the directions, answer options, or passage as often as is reasonable to obtain a student's response to an item. All text must be read to students exactly as written, with no paraphrasing or word substitution.
Alternate Color Themes	Acetate overlays in the color preferred by the student should be used. Another option is to print the test on paper that is the color preferred by the student.
Alternative Text	Alternative text includes descriptive statements for graphics (e.g., tables, charts, graphs, timelines, etc.) that may need to be described verbally in order for the student to understand. **NOTE:** *Alternative text is included in the Directions for Test Administration (DTA) and should be read aloud by the TA as needed.*
Answer Masking	For students who require answer masking on the paper version of the test, TAs should use paper or cards to cover and reveal individual answer options as needed.
Increase/Decrease Size of Text and Graphics	Paper versions of the test can be projected by document projection devices or interactive whiteboards as needed by the student.
Increase Volume	TAs can adjust the volume of their voice as necessary.
Line Reader	The TA or student can use two pieces of paper to limit attention to one or a few illuminated lines at a time, while blocking out the rest of the test item.
Magnification	Any hand-held magnification device normally used by the student is acceptable.

Manipulatives for Mathematics	Directions for the use of manipulatives are described in the DTA; to the extent possible, these should be the tools the student uses during instruction. Manipulatives are not provided by MSAA because not all students use the same tools. Possible manipulatives and tools required for testing include, but are not limited to, the following: • Ruler, thermometer, clock, abacus, talking calculator, raised line graph/grid paper, tiles, and blocks. • Calculator. Each item includes information for the TA on whether a calculator is allowable. Most items do allow the use of a calculator, but it is important to note which ones do not.
Object Replacement	An object or part of an object may be used to represent a person, a place, object, or activity. For example, a silk flower petal, leaf, and stem may represent parts of a flower, or interlocking centimeter blocks may represent graphed numbers. Object replacement may be used during the test if it is already used by the student on a regular basis. Please review the MSAA vocabulary lists prior to testing to ensure that students have time to learn and become familiar with any new objects. TAs are responsible for creating any objects the student may require. Refer to the TAM for guidance on Tactile Graphics and Object Replacement.
Tactile Graphics	Tactile graphics are raised versions of print graphics that are adapted for the sense of touch (*Guidelines and Standards for Tactile Graphics, 2010, Braille Authority of North America*). An example is the raised lines on a simplified image of the parts of a flower or on a mathematical graph. Tactile graphics may be used during the test if they are already used by the student on a regular basis. Review the MSAA vocabulary lists prior to testing to ensure that students have time to learn and become familiar with any new tactile graphics. TAs are responsible for creating any tactile graphics the student may require. Refer to the TAM for guidance.

Tactile Symbols	Tactile symbols are concrete representations of objects or concepts developed for individuals with a visual impairment or who have a practical need for a graphic language system. For example, a seed within a textured triangle can represent a plant, or a textured slanted line with a series of dots can represent a graph. Tactile symbols may be used during the test if they are already used by the student during routine instruction. Review the MSAA vocabulary lists prior to testing to ensure that students have time to learn and become familiar with any new symbols. TAs are responsible for creating any tactile symbols the student may require. Refer to the TAM for guidance.
Transcribe	Transcribing is the process of transferring a student's response into the MSAA system. The transcription entered into the system must be an exact replica of what is produced by the student. For more information on transcription versus the Scribe Accommodation, please contact your State MSAA Coordinator.

Tactile Graphics and Object Replacements

The TA must review the DTA and the test items to determine which items may benefit from the use of tactile graphics, tactile symbols, or object replacements. Tactile graphics and symbols may be used when the student is not able to see graphics that are essential to understanding the item. Object replacements may be used when the visual and/or tactile graphics do not provide optimal accessibility to the student. Follow these guidelines when creating tactile representations and using object replacements:

- When tactilely enhancing graphics or using replacement objects, ensure that the critical features needed to understand the item or passage are included. Also, remember that the purpose of the image is not necessarily the same as the appearance of the image. For example, if an item showing a diagram of the water cycle includes a lake with a boat, mountain with a hiker, rain, clouds, and evaporation, it is important to tactilely enhance or provide replacement objects for the lake, mountain, rain, clouds, and evaporation. The boat and hiker are not essential to the item and do not need to be tactilely enhanced or represented with objects.

- Do not enhance a graphic to cue an answer. For example, if the graphic illustrates parts of a butterfly and the item asks: "What part of the butterfly helps the butterfly locate flowers?" the TA should tactilely enhance, or represent with objects, all main parts of the butterfly, not just the antennae.
- When utilizing object replacement, use the actual object(s) specified in the item when feasible. It is usually preferable to use whole objects or parts of familiar objects rather than miniatures (e.g., a piece of bark rather than a plastic toy tree).
- While the student should be familiar with the tactile enhancement presented, options for adding tactile qualities to graphics include the following:
  - Tooling: Use a tool such as a tracing wheel to make raised areas on paper or diagramming foil.
  - Collage: Use textured materials (e.g., corrugated paper, crocheted cotton, string, punched-out dots) glued onto paper to form a raised image.
  - Other techniques: Use pliable waxed yarn sticks, hot glue, acrylic or puff paint, raised line graph paper, or compressed sponge that can be drawn on and expands when wet, then used when dried, etc.

MSAA Accessibility Features

Assessment features support student access to the test. Assessment features are either built into the MSAA System or are typically available on a computer. Assessment features may be enabled by the student or TA at the time of testing. The test is designed to have all passages, items and response options read to the student, either by the Audio Player or the TA. Refer to the MSAA System User Guide for Test Administrators for descriptions of the assessment features and the directions to enable the assessment features. <u>Students and TAs should become familiar with the assessment features and may practice using them with the sample items prior to administration of the test.</u>

MSAA Accessibility Features – Computer, Laptop, or Tablet Administration

Accessibility Feature	Description
Allowed Reading	The TA may read the directions, answer options, or passage as often as is reasonable to obtain a student's response to an item. All text must be read to students exactly as written, with no paraphrasing or word substitution.
Alternate Color Theme Tool	The student or the TA can change the onscreen background color and/or text color based on need or preference. Choice for assessment should be based on combinations successfully used in instruction. The options are: • White background with black text • Light blue background with black text • Black background with white text • Cream background with black text • Light magenta background with black text • Dark blue background with light blue text
Alternative Text	Alternative text includes descriptive statements for graphics (e.g., tables, charts, graphs, and timelines) that may need to be described verbally for the student to understand an item. Alternative text can be read by the embedded Audio Player or the TA. If the TA will read the alternative text, it is included in the DTA (Directions for Test Administration) and should be read as indicated.

Answer Masking Tool	The embedded Answer Masking tool allows students and TAs to electronically cover and reveal individual answer options as needed.
Audio Player Tool	The embedded Audio Player reads each line automatically and can be paused, resumed, and made to repeat segments as needed. The pace of reading can be controlled by the student or TA so that reading of the text may be slowed or sped up depending on student needs. **NOTE:** If a student responds better to a human voice, verbally administer the items following the language in the DTA rather than using the audio player feature.
Increase Volume	To increase the volume on the computer, laptop, or tablet, use the built-in volume control options. Students may need headphones depending on testing location.
Increase/Decrease Size	The embedded Zoom tool increases and decreases the size of the whole item. Once selected, use the + button to increase the size of text and graphics. Use the – button to reduce the size of text and graphics in order to view more item information on one page.
Line Reader Tool	The embedded Line Reader tool allows the entire item to be shaded, and an adjustable box allows attention to be focused on one line or a few lines at a time. The box can be adjusted by the student or the TA.
Manipulatives for Mathematics	Directions for the use of manipulatives are described in the DTA; to the extent possible, these should be the tools the student uses during instruction. Manipulatives are not provided by MSAA because not all students use the same tools. Possible manipulatives and tools required for testing include: • Ruler, thermometer, clock, abacus, talking calculator, raised line graph/grid paper, tiles, blocks, etc. • Calculator. Each item includes information for the TA on whether a calculator is allowable. Most items do allow the use of a calculator, but it is important to note which ones do not.

Object Replacement	An object or part of an object may be used to represent a person, place, object, or activity. For example, a silk flower petal, leaf, and stem may represent parts of a flower or interlocking centimeter blocks may represent graphed numbers.
	Object replacement may be used during the test if it is already used by the student on a regular basis. Please review the MSAA vocabulary lists prior to testing to ensure that students have time to learn and become familiar with any new objects. TAs are responsible for creating any objects the student may require. Refer to the TAM for guidance on Tactile Graphics and Object Replacement.
Tactile Graphics	Tactile graphics are raised versions of print graphics that are adapted for the sense of touch (Guidelines and Standards for Tactile Graphics, 2010, Braille Authority of North America). An example is the raised lines on a simplified image of the parts of a flower or on a mathematical graph.
	Tactile graphics may be used during the test if they are already used by the student on a regular basis. Review the MSAA vocabulary lists prior to testing to ensure that students have time to learn and become familiar with any new tactile graphics. TAs are responsible for creating any tactile graphics the student may require. Refer to the Test Administration Manual (TAM) for guidance.
Tactile Symbols	Tactile symbols are concrete representations of objects or concepts developed for individuals with a visual impairment or who have a practical need for a graphic language system. For example, a seed within a textured triangle can represent a plant, or a textured slanted line with a series of dots can represent a graph.
	Tactile symbols may be used during the test if they are already used by the student during routine instruction. Review the MSAA vocabulary lists prior to testing to ensure that students have time to learn and become familiar with any new symbols. TAs are responsible for creating any tactile symbols the student may require. Refer to the TAM for guidance.

Transcribe	Transcribing is the process of transferring a student's response into the MSAA system. The transcription entered into the system must be an exact replica of what is produced by the student. For more information on transcription versus the Scribe Accommodation, please contact your State MSAA Coordinator.
Zoom	The embedded Zoom tool increases and decreases the size of the whole item. Once selected, use the + button to increase the size of text and graphics. Use the – button to reduce the size of text and graphics in order to view more item information on one page.

MSAA Accommodations

Accommodations are changes in the materials or procedures of the assessment that **do not alter the construct being measured**. For the assessments, a student may use the accommodations that are in their IEP that are consistent with the MSAA accommodations policies.

Note: The use of any physical prompting, including hand over hand**, invalidates the results** of the test for the student. The use of physical prompting is considered to be a modification or change to the *Directions for Test Administration*. Physical prompting is not permitted, and it is considered to be an inappropriate test practice and a test irregularity.

MSAA Testing Accommodations

Accommodation	Description
Assistive Technology	Students may use assistive technology devices for viewing, responding to, or interacting with the test. The student and the TA should use the AT device with the sample items to ensure that it functions properly with the MSAA Online Assessment System. Refer to the MSAA Online Assessment System User Guide for Test Administrators for information about compatibility of the MSAA Online Assessment System with assessment features.

Paper Version	A paper version of the test may be downloaded and printed from the MSAA Online Assessment System in PDF format. After testing, all printed assessment materials must be given to the TC for secure shredding, and all downloaded files must be deleted from any computer or laptop used for testing. The paper accommodation is also required if students are using both paper and the computer to respond to items. **Note:** All student responses **must** be entered for Session 1 before an assignment in Session 2 may be determined.
Scribe	A TA may record student responses for all or part of the test, including the writing prompt. Anyone performing as a scribe for a student must read and follow the MSAA Scribe Accommodation Protocol in Appendix A of the TAM. Here are three ways a scribe can support a student's independence during testing: 1. **A student is able to use a mouse to select a response to the SR items but cannot use the keyboard to type a response to the writing prompt.** In this case, the scribe can type the student's writing response but may not need to help with any other part of the test. 2. **A student is able to use the mouse but becomes physically fatigued easily.** The scribe can select the response the student indicates as needed. The scribe can assist with recording and typing the student's writing response. 3. **A student is able to complete the paper version of the test using AT, AAC, eye gaze, etc.** The TA transfers the student's responses into the MSAA Online Assessment System when the student has completed each testing session, or after several items are completed. **NOTE:** The Scribe Accommodation is used to capture the student's response and the scribe is then required to transfer the response into the MSAA online system.

Sign Language	For students who use American Sign Language (ASL), Pidgin Sign English (PSE), or Sign Exact English (SEE), the TA may translate passages, items, answer options, and directions. Review the vocabulary lists for ELA and Mathematics to determine which words the student may need practice with prior to testing.
	Required Documents: It is important to adhere to the Sign Language Protocol in Appendix C of the TAM as it will help signers avoid cueing the student.