

ACT and English Learners FAQ 2017 Spring Administration

What accommodations are allowed for English Learners for the 2016 Spring Administrations?

English Learners receiving services solely for limited English proficiency do not qualify for ACT-approved accommodations. An English Learner with an IEP or 504 may qualify for an ACT-approved accommodation. School personnel should follow the procedures for applying for accommodations as laid out by ACT for these students.

Why are the accommodations on ACT different than those on the NeSA content assessments?

The ACT is a large-scale national college entrance exam being used as the state assessment for the 3rd year cohort. Unlike NeSA, Nebraska does not have the ability to inform accommodations and must follow the allowable accommodations set by ACT.

Is ACT considering accommodations for English Learners in the future?

Yes. ACT has released information that for the 2017-2018 school year will provide supports for English learners. The supports include: additional time, use of approved word-to word bilingual glossary, native language test instructions, and testing in a non-distracting environment. Schools/districts will go through the process of applying for supports for English learners in the Test Accessibility and Accommodations System (TAA).

What are non-college reportable scores and how are they related to English Learners?

Non-college reportable scores are scores that may be used only for state or district assessment purposes only and will not be reported to colleges. Students receive a non-college reportable score when they use accommodations that are not approved by ACT as an allowable accommodation. English learners without an IEP or 504 plan who receive accommodations on the ACT will receive a non-college reportable score.

What considerations should a district make when deciding about non-college reportable scores for English Learners?

The decision around using non-college reportable scores for English Learners should be made on a case-by-case basis; not as a blanket decision for a particular group of students. Considerations may include time in program, time in the United States, language proficiency level, and native language proficiency level. All these considerations are important as well as the communication with students and families around the implications for both college reportable and non-college reportable scores.

If a district decides to use non-college reportable scores for an English Learner, what procedures should they follow?

It is extremely important that a student and their family be aware of the implications of using a non-college reportable score. This decision should be knowing and voluntary and made together with the student and family. Districts should provide guidance to students and families in a language they can understand and document all communications and any final decisions made.

Is there a required form for parents to sign when using non-college reportable scores?

The Nebraska Department of Education does not provide a form for ACT Accommodations Documentation for English Learners. If applying non-college reportable accommodations, a district should consider developing documentation with the assistance of the district's legal counsel, if appropriate, to ensure that students and their families are aware that the student will be taking the ACT but will receive a score that will not be able to be used for college entrance.