

Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines

The criteria for participating in alternate assessments are students who reflect the pervasive nature of a significant cognitive disability and who cannot participate in regular assessments, even with accommodations, as determined by the IEP team. Utah's alternate assessments are for students with significant cognitive disabilities that measure the students' academic achievement based on alternate achievement standards, the Essential Elements. All content areas must be considered when determining eligibility for these assessments. Thus, a student who participates in alternate assessments, participates in these assessments for all content areas (ELA, Math, and Science).

See [Utah Participation & Accommodations Policy](#)

Participation Criteria

The answer to all the following criteria must be a "yes" and the student's eligibility and IEP must include documentation to support each criterion for the student.

- Student has special education eligibility documentation indicating the disability significantly impacts **intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior**; and
- Student requires intensive, repeated, **significantly modified**, and direct individualized instruction that requires substantial supports to learn, maintain, and generalize skills in the student's grade and age-appropriate curriculum; and
- Student is learning content linked to the Utah Core Standards through the support of Utah's Alternate Achievement Standards, the Essential Elements; and
- Is determined by the IEP team.

The student is eligible to participate in alternate assessments if *all criteria above* are met.

Not DLM Participation Criteria

- A disability category or label.
- Poor attendance or extended absences.
- Native language/social/cultural or economic difference.
- Expected poor performance on the SAGE assessments.
- Educational environment or instructional setting.
- Percent of time receiving special education.
- Low reading level/achievement level.
- Anticipated student's disruptive behavior.
- Impact of student scores on accountability system.
- Administrator decision.
- Anticipated emotional duress.
- Need for accommodations (e.g., assistive technology/augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)) to participate in assessment process.
- English Learner (EL) status.

USBE Definition of Significant Cognitive Disability R277-705-2

- (8) "Student with a significant cognitive disability" or "SWSCD" is determined by a comprehensive understanding of a whole student, including review of educational considerations and data obtained through the IEP process, including whether a student:*
- (a) requires intensive, repeated, modified, and direct individualized instruction and requires substantial supports to learn, maintain, and generalize skills in the student's grade and age-appropriate curriculum;*
 - (b) has special education eligibility documentation indicating the disability significantly impacts intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior;*
 - (c) demonstrates cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior in home, school, and community environments, which are significantly below age expectations, even with program modifications, adaptations, and accommodations;*
 - (d) has a severe and complex cognitive disability, which limits the student from meaningful participation in the standard academic core curriculum or achievement of the academic content standards established at grade level, without substantial support, modifications, adaptations, and accommodations;*
 - (e) may be eligible to participate in alternate assessments; and*
 - (f) has a disability, which increases the need for dependence on others for many, if not all, daily living needs, and is expected to require extensive ongoing support through adulthood.*

[Utah Administrative Code R277-705-2](#)