



Division of Accountability and Assessment
Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services

The Use of Multiple Days as an Accommodation

The Maryland Accommodations Manual clearly states, “Accommodations are intended to reduce or even eliminate the effects of a student’s disability; accommodations do not reduce learning expectations. The accommodations provided to a student must be the same for classroom instruction, classroom assessments, and district and state assessments. It is critical to note, however, that although some accommodations may be appropriate for instructional use, they may not be appropriate for use on a standardized assessment. There may be consequences (e.g., lowering or not counting a student’s test score) for the use of some accommodations during state assessments. It is very important for educators to become familiar with Maryland policies regarding accommodations during assessments.”

1. What are the principles of accommodations?

Accommodations must adhere to the following principles:

- a. Accommodations enable students to participate more fully in instruction and assessments and to better demonstrate their knowledge and skills.
- b. Accommodations must be based upon individual student needs and not upon a category of disability, level of performance in general classroom, or program setting.
- c. Accommodations for students with disabilities must be justified and documented in the student’s appropriate education plan: the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or the Section 504 Plan.
- d. Accommodations for students who are English language learners (ELL), must be justified and documented in the ELL Plan (formerly known as Limited English Proficient or “LEP” Plan). Students who are both English language learners and students with disabilities have the IEP as the controlling document for accommodations.

- e. Accommodations must be implemented as soon as possible after completion of the appropriate education plan (IEP or Section 504 Plan for students with disabilities, or ELL Plan for English language learners) and must be aligned with and be a part of daily instruction. Accommodations must not be introduced for the first time during the testing of a student.
- f. Accommodations must be approved as specified in this manual (see Sections 3, 5, and 9).
- g. Accommodations not explicitly mentioned in this document and/or multiple accommodations do not constitute reasons to exempt students from assessments. The School Test Coordinator (STC) must coordinate with the Local Accountability Coordinator (LAC) prior to testing to address issues caused by the need to provide multiple accommodations. The LAC will consult with MSDE as necessary to resolve accommodations issues.

[2006-2007 Maryland Accommodations Manual. Pg. 2-1]

2. How is the determination for accommodations made?

Each child's IEP now must contain a statement of the child's present level of "academic achievement and functional performance." In doing so, the IEP must contain a statement of individual appropriate accommodations necessary "to measure the academic achievement and functional performance" of the child on state and district assessments.

Each IEP team needs to ensure that needed accommodations are based on the individual needs of each child and based on the state's guidelines for appropriate accommodations.

Section 612(a)(16)(B)

3. What does the Timing and Scheduling accommodation "Extend Over Multiple Days" mean?

Students are allowed to complete activities and take tests over multiple days – completing a portion each day. This is usually done to reduce fatigue. When implementing this accommodation for testing, test examiners, STCs, and LACs must take appropriate precautions to ensure that security of test items is not compromised, and that students are not permitted to return to previously completed sections of a test.

This accommodation is not permitted for the High School Assessments (HSAs) unless the request is made in writing by the school principal and specifically approved by the LAC and MSDE. The security concerns relative to the HSAs are especially critical, considering the high-stakes consequences of the tests for students as a high school graduation requirement.

[2006-2007 Maryland Accommodations Manual. Pg. 5-17]

4. In what circumstances is the use of multiple days to complete an assessment an allowable timing and scheduling accommodation?

Determining whether a student requires the administration of an assessment over multiple days is an individualized decision that must be supported with sufficient documentation to demonstrate its appropriateness. These decisions are made on an individualized case-by-case basis, not by a category of students as a group. In limited situations MSDE may grant permission for a student to have an assessment administered over more than one day. MSDE will consider allowing that accommodation to take precedence over test security considerations.

[2006-2007 Maryland Accommodations Manual. Pg. 5-17; and 6-9]

5. What should be considered in determining whether or not a student requires a timing and scheduling accommodation of multiple days?

The determination of needed accommodations begins with an analysis and review of the student's instructional needs and how these needs impact student participation and performance in the general curriculum. Within the *Maryland Accommodations Manual, Section 6*, there are a series of tools available for school personnel to use in order to assess a student's need for multiple days to complete instructional assignments and Statewide assessments.

[2006-2007 Maryland Accommodations Manual. Pg. 6-9]

6. In addition to the “*Application of Approval to Administer the High School Assessments over Multiple Days*,” what documentation should be submitted to the LAC and MSDE to support the justification?

This type of accommodation is not typically allowed because of the test security considerations. A separate form for each content area assessment is required. The student's IEP must sufficiently document:

- The student's present level of academic achievement and functional performance that identifies the student's instructional needs and how the student's disability impacts his or her participation and performance in general curricular instructional activities, classroom/curricular assessments, and HSAs;
- Annual Goals in the content area(s) to be assessed that include the specialized instruction required to enable the student to demonstrate the content;
- Special Considerations, as appropriate;
- Consideration of Assistive Technology and Assistive Technology Services;
- Use of supplementary aids, services, supports, and program modifications; and
- Instructional and assessment accommodations

Additional documentation may include, but is not limited to:

- Assessment reports;
- Student progress reports;

- Provider service logs; and
- Accommodation journal

Within the Maryland Accommodations Manual, there is an accommodation tool available to school personnel. It is entitled “Accommodation Tool 6: Accommodation Journal” on page 6-7. As stated in Tool 6, “The journal lets the student “be in charge” and could be kept up-to-date through regular consultation with a special education teacher or other staff member.” This journal could be useful to a student’s IEP team in determining needed instructional and assessment accommodations.

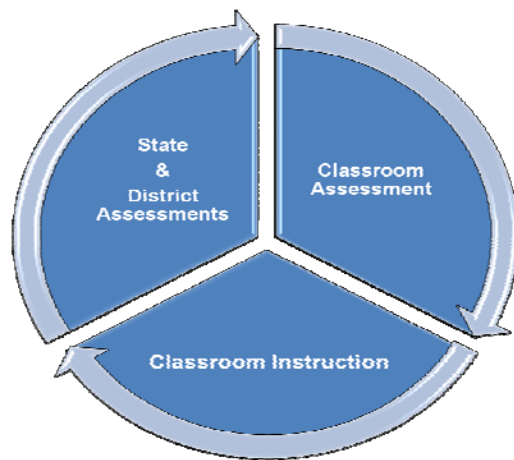
7. When should the LAC submit the “Application of Approval to Administer the High School Assessments over Multiple Days,” to ensure it will be reviewed in a timely manner prior to an HSA test window?

In certain limited situations, MSDE may grant permission for a student to have one or more of the HSAs administered over one or more days. This accommodation is not typically allowed because of test security issues. However, if this accommodation is identified on an IEP, MSDE will consider allowing that accommodation to take precedence over test security.

As soon as an IEP identifies multiple days (3-C) as an appropriate accommodation for a student enrolled in an HSA-related course, the IEP team must immediately provide the documentation to the STC, school principal, and LAC. The Application and supporting documentation should be submitted to MSDE with the signature of the local LAC and the Director of Special Education, no later than 4 weeks prior to the opening of the test window for the content area assessment.

8. Which student situations merit taking the HSA over multiple days?

There must be sufficient individualized documentation that supports the accommodation, and this documentation is reviewed by MSDE on a case-by-case basis, as all situations are unique. This accommodation must also be required for instruction, classroom –based assessments, as well as Statewide assessment.



Within the Accommodations Manual, Section 6, the list of questions to identify various types of accommodations is a tool that will be helpful for the IEP team to use in determining which accommodations are needed for classroom instruction, state and district assessment, and classroom assessments.

The accommodation journal, tool 6, is another way to keep track of the accommodations that work for the student. The journal allows the student to identify which accommodations were useful in the classrooms and on tests and allows the teachers and others to help determine how accommodations appear to be working.

Again, the approval of multiple-day accommodations for HSAs is an individualized decision that must be sufficiently documented on a case-by-case basis for each student and each content assessment.

For more information, call 410-767-0238

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