



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

English Language Proficiency (ELP) Assessments | Participation

Which students take state English language proficiency (ELP) assessments?

Schools must include all K-12 public-school students who have been identified as needing language assistance services. English learners (ELs) are often identified through a two-step process involving a home-language questionnaire filled out by a child's parents or guardians, followed by a screening or placement assessment.

ELs with disabilities are included in the group that takes state ELP assessments. They can participate in the ELP assessment in one of three ways:

- In the regular ELP assessment with accommodations
- In the regular ELP assessment without accommodations
- In an alternate assessment aligned to ELP standards

Who should decide about the participation of ELs with disabilities?

For students with disabilities, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team makes decisions about their participation in large-scale assessments, including ELP assessments. Because the ELP assessment tests English proficiency, English language development teachers should be part of the IEP team.

If an EL has a disability that precludes them from taking one portion of the ELP assessment, how should they participate?

States will need to carefully consider the constructs that the domains of their ELP assessments are designed to measure, and also consider how their ELs with disabilities demonstrate skills in that area during classroom instruction. Decision makers must be willing to recognize that a skill may have to be accommodated for some students. For example, taking information in from sign language may need to be considered *listening* for those who cannot hear. One difficulty in making these decisions is to determine how far along a continuum a skill can be considered the same when a disability is considered. For example, can responding by means of sign language be considered "spoken language" for those students who have been deaf since birth? Policy decisions similar to this example require much discussion among personnel responsible for assessment, curriculum, special education, and English as a Second Language or bilingual education. For more on this issue, see ["Questions to Ask to Determine How to Move Closer to Universally Designed Assessments From the Very Beginning, by Addressing the Standards First and Moving on From There."](#)



Can an IEP team decide that an EL with a disability will NOT participate in the state ELP assessment?

No. All ELs must take either the regular state ELP assessment, with or without accommodations, or an alternate assessment of English proficiency.

Can educators exit an EL with a disability from EL services so that the student does not have to take the ELP assessment?

According to [federal guidance](#), ELs with disabilities must continue to be identified as ELs until they achieve proficiency in English. Individual states vary in how they determine English proficiency for ELs.

IDEA legislation does not permit removal of a students' EL status before he or she has attained English proficiency.