Accommodations Considerations in Pre-College and Postsecondary Assessments for Deaf Individuals

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Session Objectives

Postsecondary Outcome Data
Test Barriers as Systemic
Test Access Through Accommodations
Test Planning and Self Advocacy
National Deaf Center Mission

NDC provides evidence-based strategies to deaf individuals, family members, and professionals at the local, state, and national levels with the goal of closing education and employment gaps for deaf individuals.
Purpose: To convene thought leaders to discuss the accessibility of assessments for deaf individuals in postsecondary environments and develop products and resources to move the field forward.
Look at Outcome Data
Smallest Gaps: UT, NE, NV, AZ, OK, CO, WA, CA
Largest Gaps: PR, KY, WV, MS, TN, LA

High School Completion

- Deaf: 82.1%
- Hearing: 88.6%

6.5% gap
Smallest Gaps: ID, NV, NM, OK, MS, FL, AR, AL, AZ, LA, SC, TX, CA

Largest Gaps: MA, MN, PA

Bachelor’s Completion

- Smallest Gaps: 14.7% gap
- Largest Gaps: 32.3%
Bachelor's Degree Gap

- Deaf: 14.7% gap
- Hearing: 17.6%

Employment Gap

- Deaf: 23% gap
- Hearing: 50.9%
Assessment is a critical access issue in postsecondary settings.
Test Access Barriers

It is important to identify the barriers in the provision of accommodations for deaf individuals, during learning, but also during testing.
Test Access As Systemic

School: admission and placement policies

Work: licensure, certification, evaluation

Federal laws: reasonable accommodations
Individual Experiences Vary

- Exposure to robust language models
- English as a second language
- Communication access
Possible Test Barriers

- English as a second language
- Emerging readers
- Reading fluency
- Specific vocabulary and concepts
- Processing language and task demands
Improving Test Access

• Item content and familiarity with concepts
• Vocabulary and language structures
• Flexible test formats
• Practice with accommodations
• Test construct & accommodations policies
• Self-advocacy opportunities
Why Deaf Individuals May Need Accommodations When Taking Tests
Assessment Accommodation Planning Guide

Purpose: Assist counselors, parents, transition specialists, and deaf individuals in applying for and obtaining assessment accommodations across different critical postsecondary assessments.
Three Key Sections

Prepare for the Test

During the Test

After the Test
Prepare for the Test (5 steps)

• Gather information: Test content, format, accommodation policies, preparation resources.
• Take practice tests and accommodations.
• Apply for accommodations.
• Prepare your equipment.
• Appeal a denial (if needed).
During the Test (4 steps)

- Bring a copy of your accommodations approval notification.
- Use good test-taking strategies.
- Advocate for yourself (if needed).
- Register a complaint (if needed).
After the Test (2 steps)

- Consideration of scores
  - College criteria
  - Retake
- Consideration of other evidence
  - Volunteer activities
  - Work experiences
  - Personal statement
Questions?
Suggestions?
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