

Domain Exemptions

Domain exemptions are available for the Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment (OELPA) and the Ohio English Language Proficiency Screener (OELPS). Districts may exempt students from a domain if the student's disability prohibits the student from participating in the stated domain. Districts may exempt a student from no more than three of the four domains.

In determining which student situation might be applicable for a domain exemption, administrators and teachers must determine that:

- The student has a documented disability or impairment (IEP or 504) applicable to the domain;
- Even with available accommodations, the student cannot engage with (access) the domain; and
- The 504 plan or IEP team, in consultation with the educator(s) supporting student's English language development, have established a need for a domain exemption. It is essential for the determination process, that IEP team include participants who have the requisite knowledge of the child's English language development needs. The determination must be documented in the student's plan.

If all three criteria above are affirmed, the District Test Coordinator or District Administrator will register participating students in Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) in advance of the test window and will indicate exemptions under test settings and tools. Please see the [TIDE User Guide](#) for instructions on manually editing or uploading test settings.

A student who can access a domain, even if supporting educators question the soundness of the subsequent scores due to the nature of a student's response, are not candidates for domain exemption. For example, a student who is deaf could be exempt from taking the listening domain test or a student who is nonverbal could be exempt from taking the speaking domain test. However, a student with a speech impediment that hampers clear articulation, but who does engage in verbal exchange, should participate in assessing her or his English speaking skills.

Students will receive an overall designation of Proficient if they receive 4s or 5s on all non-exempt domains. Students cannot receive an overall designation of Proficient if the district fails to test the student in a domain without a valid exemption or the student's score is invalidated after testing.

Frequently Asked Questions about Domain Exemptions

Q: Can a 504 plan team exempt a student from a domain on the OELPA?

A: Yes, a student with a 504 plan may be excused from up to three domains if his or her disability prohibits the student from participating in the domain. However, it is unusual for a student with a 504 plan to have a disability severe enough to justify an exemption. If the student's disability is significant enough to prohibit participation in a domain, the student will most likely have an IEP.

Q: Can a student reading multiple grades below grade level be excused from the reading domain?

A: A student may be excused from a domain only if he or she is unable to participate in that domain due to their disability and not a lack of instruction or opportunity to learn. For example, it may be appropriate to exempt a student who is blind and cannot read Braille from the reading domain. However, an English learner (EL) reading below grade level is still a reader and would not qualify for an exemption. In some cases, recently arrived ELs have had no previous language instruction, even in their native language, and so may just be beginning to develop fundamental reading skills such as phonological awareness or decoding skills. These students would not qualify for a reading domain exemption unless teams have evidence that it is the student's

disability that is causing their inability to access the test and not the student's lack of previous instruction or opportunity.

Q: May a student who qualifies for the reading access accommodation of read-aloud on the state English language arts (ELA) test be excused from the reading domain on the OELPA?

A: The OELPA does not allow a test administrator to read to a student any part of the test that is not already read as part of the standard test administration. If a student is appropriately identified for the reading-access accommodation of read-aloud on the state ELA test, the student would qualify for a reading domain exemption. The accommodation of read-aloud on the state ELA test is only for a student who is unable to participate in the state ELA test because his or her disability severely limits or prevents the student from accessing printed text. Since these students, due to their disability, are virtual nonreaders and are receiving ongoing, intensive instruction and/or interventions in foundational reading skills, they would qualify for an exemption from reading on the OELPA.

Q: Would all students who take Ohio's Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (AASCD) likely be eligible for exemption from one or more domains?

A: No. A team cannot exempt a student from a domain based solely on cognitive abilities. Some students who take the alternate assessment are readers. Most students who take an alternate assessment have hearing and vision within normal limits, use symbolic language, and do not use an augmentative or alternative communication (AAC) system in addition to, or in place of, oral speech.

Q: For a student to receive an accommodation, must the IEP team or 504 plan coordinator document the exemption on the student's plan?

A: Yes. It is the responsibility of a student's IEP team or 504 plan coordinator to determine eligibility and to document the exemption in the IEP or 504 plan. The IEP team or 504 plan coordinator should review and document all exemptions in the student's IEP or 504 plan before the student begins the OELPA. All cases of domain exemptions are subject to monitoring by the Ohio Department of Education.

Additional resource:

The state of Washington also allows for domain exemptions on their state ELP assessment. They have created a helpful training video to help teams make decisions about domain exemptions. The video is [All About Domain Exemptions: Guidance for IEP Teams Making ELP Assessment Decisions](#). If you have further questions after watching the video, you should contact the Ohio Department of Education, Office of Assessment, at Statetests@education.ohio.gov. DO NOT contact the Washington Department of Education as suggested in the presentation.