

## Distinction Between Providing Disability Accommodations and Modifying the Content of Assessments

A disability accommodation is a change to the test administration procedures that makes the assessment activity "do-able" and fair for the student with a disability.

The easiest way to characterize a disability accommodation is to consider the commonalities between an assessment item and a program objective:

- A *behavior* to be performed or a knowledge to be demonstrated
- *Conditions* under which the behavior must be performed or knowledge demonstrated
- *Criteria* that describe successful execution of a skill or demonstration of knowledge
- A *standard of performance* that specifies achievement of the objective or successful completion of the test item
- A *stability ratio* that specifies desired consistency of performance

When making disability accommodations, the behavior, standard of performance, and stability ratio usually remain the same as for students who do not have disabilities. In other words, the content of the assessment is not changed. However, the *conditions* and *criteria* may require changes to accommodate the student's participation. Using American Sign Language and demonstrations to communicate test instructions to a student who is deaf is an example of changing the *conditions*. Requiring a student who uses a wheelchair to focus on bouncing the ball ahead of the wheelchair, maintaining fingertip control of the basketball when placed in the player's lap, and executing no more than two pushes on the wheel between bounces<sup>1</sup> is an example of modifying the *criteria* for skill performance.

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<sup>1</sup> The skill criteria for dribbling in wheelchair basketball are from Davis, R. W. (2002). *Inclusion through sports*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.