

# Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Students with Disabilities and the OAAP Portfolio Assessment

## Q Are students with disabilities required to participate in statewide assessment?

A Yes. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) prohibits schools from excluding students with disabilities from the educational accountability system. The Act requires states to implement statewide accountability systems covering all public schools and students. Excluding students with disabilities from testing is also a violation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA addresses the participation of children with disabilities in assessments with appropriate accommodations in administration, as necessary, as well as their participation in alternate assessments for those children who cannot participate in state and district-wide assessment programs. States are required to provide accommodations and alternate assessments as needed, to ensure that students with disabilities participate fully in NCLB testing. Students with disabilities should participate in the same tests taken by their peers. However, some students need accommodations to show their knowledge on a regular assessment, or they need to participate in an alternate assessment which is linked to the same standards found in the regular assessment. These assessment requirements were put into place as a way to determine if the school is adequately educating every student in critical core academic areas.

## Q What is the Oklahoma School Testing Program?

A The Oklahoma School Testing Program (OSTP) is a statewide assessment program that was established to improve academic achievement for all Oklahoma students, and includes grades 3–8 and high school end-of-instruction assessments, for which students who complete an area of instruction must also take the corresponding statewide standardized assessment. Every student enrolled in a tested grade-level or course in an Oklahoma public school must participate in the statewide assessment program.

## Q What is an alternate assessment?

A Alternate Assessments based on Alternate Achievement Standards (AA-AAS) are for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. These assessments are based on the grade-level content covered by the general assessment, but at reduced depth, breadth, and complexity. These assessments describe achievement based on what a state determines is a high expectation for these students. A State may develop, through a documented and validated standards-setting process, alternate academic achievement standards that—

- Are aligned with the State’s academic content standards;
- Promote access to the general curriculum; and
- Reflect professional judgment of the highest achievement standards possible.

## Q What is the OAAP Portfolio?

A The OAAP Portfolio is a portfolio-based assessment that assesses students in their mastery of Oklahoma’s content standards. The OAAP Portfolio is an assessment developed for a small population of students with significant cognitive disabilities for whom the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team has determined are unable to participate in the general assessment, even with accommodations. The OAAP Portfolio format was selected for assessing the knowledge and skills of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in 2001. The OAAP Portfolio requires teachers to demonstrate students’ levels of academic knowledge and skills through collections of academic evidence. The pieces of evidence are submitted online via Pearson’s system, PearsonAccess. Pearson then scores the portfolio evidence using a team of professional scorers.

## Q What are appropriate accommodations?

A Students with severe cognitive disabilities have a broad range of disabilities and communication needs. Some students may require assistive technology devices to access content and demonstrate achievement. It is understood that all presentation and response methods used to show the knowledge of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are acceptable as long as they do not violate the intended construct of the assessment. Presentation and response methods must not interfere with the student's perception of the knowledge or skill expected.

## Q What subjects does the OAAP Portfolio assess?

### A Grades and Subjects assessed with the OAAP Portfolio

Grade 3-Math and Reading

Grade 4-Math and Reading

Grade 5-Math, Reading, Science, Social Studies and Writing

Grade 6-Math and Reading

Grade 7-Math, Reading and Geography

Grade 8-Math, Reading, Science, Social Studies and Writing

*Note: Grades 5 and 8 Writing Assessments are completed as a part of the OAAP Portfolio and should not be taken by students during the February Writing Assessment period.*

### End-of-Instruction (EOI)

Required by all students for graduation regardless of graduation tract:

Algebra, English II/Writing, Biology and U.S. History

Required only if student enrolled and completed these courses:

Algebra II, Geometry and English III/Writing

## Q Why is video evidence required in the OAAP Portfolio?

A Based on peer review (consisting of experts in the fields of standards and assessment), the Oklahoma State Department of Education decided to increase the amount of videos included as part of the evidence to be collected by teachers for the OAAP Portfolio test. Video provides evidence that the task being performed aligns to the content/process standards being assessed. This provides an added measure to ensure content validity in the assessment. It minimizes bias and allows scorers to accurately assess the knowledge and skills of the student. For these reasons, the inclusion of videos signified a major improvement in the assessment. Besides using them as evidence of student performance, the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) also uses the videos for monitoring of appropriate accommodations. In addition, the videos are submitted to a secure site which requires a username and password to access. The local district sets up the user accounts and decides which staff members will have access to individual students.



For more information contact:

### Special Education Services

Oklahoma State Department of Education

<http://www.ok.gov/sde/special-education>

Phone: (405)521-3351