



Adaptations

Strategies and Resources

Adaptations are strategies and/or resources to accommodate the learning needs of an individual student. They are planned, implemented, monitored, and evaluated to enable a student to achieve public school program learning outcomes. Adaptations, strategies and/or resources are documented in the student's cumulative record but are not indicated on a student's high school transcript.

Adaptations may include one or more of the following strategies or resources:

- > Learning outcomes are statements of what students are expected to know and be able to do.
- > Adaptations do not change learning outcomes; they enable students to achieve them.

Organizational Strategies

Consideration of classroom support structures, such as

- buddy systems/paired reading/peer tutors
- learning contracts/independent study
- management techniques (e.g., behavioural support plan)
- notes in advance

Environmental Strategies

Consideration of changes to the environment, such as

- specific seating arrangements (e.g., class seating, study carrels)
- varying lighting conditions
- organizing space
- using a variety of locations in the school

Presentation/Instructional Strategies

Using a variety of presentation strategies, such as

- providing multiple texts on related topics
- highlighting key concepts/vocabulary
- providing supplementary materials (e.g., tapes, CDs)
- organizing learning experiences around a theme or topic

Motivational Strategies

Creating and maintaining a positive learning environment through strategies, such as

- involving students in decision-making around topics, assessment strategies, and projects
- using a weekly home-school journal with positive reinforcement attached
- developing a reward system with students
- matching teaching strategies and resources to learning styles and interests

Assessment Strategies

Providing options for students to demonstrate what they know, such as

- administering assessments in alternate formats (e.g., oral, audio)
- varying time/location during testing
- scribing of student responses
- offering students choices in assessment formats (e.g., portfolios, individual contracts)

Resources

Providing a variety of learning supports to access or extend the curriculum, such as

- assistive technology
- various print formats (e.g., large print, high contrast, braille)
- teacher- and student-made manipulatives and models
- mentors

- > This is one of a series of seven Supporting Student Success fact sheets. Other topics in the series include *Assistive Technology, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Enrichment, Inclusion, Program Planning, and Transition.*

- > Refer to Policy 2.2 of the *Special Education Policy* (Nova Scotia Department of Education 2008) and “Options in Programming” from *Gifted Education and Talent Development* (Department of Education 2010).
- > For assessments administered by the Department of Education (provincial, national, and international assessments), a request for adaptations must be supported by documentation and submitted to the Department of Education.

Additional information about adaptations may be found in *Supporting Student Success: Resource Programming and Services* (Nova Scotia Department of Education 2006), available at <http://studentservices.ednet.ns.ca>.

For more information about adaptations, or print copies of Department of Education resources, please contact

School: School Principal

School Board: Student Services Coordinator

Department of Education:
Student Services
(902) 424-7454 or
Evaluation Services
(902) 424-7746

How do we know when a student requires adaptations?

A student requires documented adaptations when he or she demonstrates a need for specific strategies and/or resources in order to meet the learning outcomes, or to meet the enhanced capacities of the learner.

Does a student have to be formally identified with a special need before being considered for support through adaptations?

No, formal identification of a disability is not required.

Who decides that a student requires documented instructional and/or assessment adaptations?

Teachers, guidance counsellors, parents/guardians, students, and other professionals supporting the student, can all be initiators and/or participants in discussions relating to the exploration of potential documented adaptations. If it is deemed that further supports are necessary, a referral should be made to the program planning team. The team includes those who have responsibility for the student’s learning.

What are the procedures for documenting and reviewing adaptations?

Adaptations required by a student must be documented and placed in the student cumulative record (Policy 2.2 of the *Special Education Policy*, Department of Education).

Adaptations require monitoring and evaluation throughout the school year to determine if they are assisting the student in achieving the learning outcomes. When monitoring and evaluating adaptations, the teacher or team should consider the possibility of reducing the dependency upon and/or eliminating the adaptation(s).

Will adaptations to instructional or evaluation strategies be indicated on the report card/transcript?

No, adaptations to instructional or assessment strategies are not indicated on the report card/transcript because the outcomes of the course have not been changed. Students who are transitioning to post-secondary options should be taught to self-advocate to obtain the support they will need to successfully pursue their endeavours.

What is the connection between instructional adaptations and assessment adaptations?

Adaptations used to support the student during instruction may be provided during assessment, if such adaptations do not compromise or alter the assessment’s validity.

If a scribe (note taker) is required, the scribe writes exactly what the student dictates. Scribes do not edit or proofread student responses, nor do they advise, suggest, or imply that changes are required. Assessment content is not to be interpreted, summarized, or paraphrased by the scribe. Questions are read verbatim. No explanations are permitted.

What if a student is unable to meet the public school program learning outcomes even though documented adaptations have been put in place?

An individual program plan (IPP), based on the student’s specific strengths and challenges, is developed and implemented for the student for whom the public school program learning outcomes are not attainable and/or applicable. For some students with exceptional abilities, additional learning outcomes may need to be developed in the form of an IPP.