

AzMERIT Testing Conditions, Tools, and Accommodations

Guidance for Spring 2015

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to inform all AzMERIT test administrators of the universal test administration conditions, the testing tools, and the accommodations available on AzMERIT. This document also provides guidance in the use of these conditions, tools, and accommodations. AzMERIT is a standardized test. The correct administration of AzMERIT requires the use of this document as well as the corresponding *Test Administration Directions* manuals. All AzMERIT test administrators are expected to read and follow the guidance in this document. All AzMERIT test administrators are also expected to read and follow the guidance and scripted directions in the appropriate *Test Administration Directions*.

As AzMERIT and its computer-based platform evolve, additional tools and accommodations may become available. This document will be updated annually to reflect those revisions.

Students with significant cognitive disabilities may be eligible to participate in the alternate NCSC assessment. This document does not provide guidance for NCSC. For guidance or information please contact the Alternate Assessment Unit at 602.542.8239 or AssessingSWDs@azed.gov.

Overview of AzMERIT Tests

AzMERIT is the statewide achievement assessment for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. AzMERIT includes grade level tests for students enrolled in Grades 3-8 and End-of Course tests for students enrolled in courses aligned to the first three English credits required for high school graduation and the first three mathematics credits required for high school graduation. AzMERIT tests are available in two modes: computer-based testing (CBT) and paper-based testing (PBT). The two modes, CBT and PBT, will produce comparable student results.

Arizona Revised Statutes, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act mandate that all students who are educated with Arizona's public funds must participate in state assessments including all students with disabilities and all students identified as English Language Learners. To prepare for the assessments, every student should be engaged in an instructional program based on Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards. This program should use varied approaches to instruction, offer a range of opportunities that enable students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, and provide necessary and appropriate program supports and instructional accommodations to ensure student access to the academic content.

Universal Test Administration Conditions

All *Test Administration Directions* manuals address the need to provide students with an appropriate testing location that is comfortable and free from distractions. Universal Test Administration Conditions are specific testing situations and conditions that may be offered to any student in order to provide a comfortable and distraction free testing environment. Universal test administration conditions are available for both testing modes, CBT and PBT.

Universal test administration conditions include:

- Testing in a small group, testing one-on-one, testing in a separate location or in a study carrel,
- Being seated in a specific location within the testing room or being seated at special furniture,
- Having the test administered by a familiar test administrator,
- Using a special pencil or pencil grip,
- Using a place holder,
- Using devices that allow the student to see the test: glasses, contacts, magnification, and special lighting,
- Using different color choices or reverse contrast (for CBT) or color overlays (for PBT),
- Using devices that allow the student to hear the test directions: hearing aids and amplification,
- Wearing noise buffers after the scripted directions have been read,
- Signing the scripted directions,
- Having the scripted directions repeated (at student request),
- Having questions about the scripted directions or the directions that students read on their own answered,
- Reading the test quietly to himself/herself as long as other students are not disrupted, and
- Extended time. (Testing session must be completed in the same school day it was started. No student is expected to need more than twice the estimated testing time.)

While some of the items listed as universal test administration conditions might be included in an IEP as an accommodation, for AzMERIT testing purposes these are not considered testing accommodations and are available to any student who needs them not just to students with IEPs.

Universal Testing Tools for CBT

The AzMERIT computer-based testing platform offers numerous testing tools. All tools will be available in the AzMERIT Sample Tests. Students who will participate in the computer-based AzMERIT should take the AzMERIT Sample Tests and try out all of the available tools.

The following list of Universal Test Tools are available to all students in all AzMERIT tests and cannot be disabled.

| Universal Testing Tools for CBT Available to All Students | |
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| Area Boundaries | Allows student to click anywhere on the selected response text or button for multiple choice options. |
| Expand/Collapse Passage | Expand a passage for easier readability. Expanded passages can also be collapsed. |
| Help | View the on-screen <i>Test Instructions and Help</i> . |
| Highlighter | Highlight text in a passage or item. |
| Line Reader | Allows student to track the line he or she is reading. |
| Mark (Flag) for Review | Mark an item for review so that it can be easily found later. |
| Notes/Comments | Allows student to open an on-screen notepad and take notes or make comments. In ELA, notes are available globally and available throughout the session. In math, comments are attached to a specific test item and available throughout the session. |
| Pause and Restart | Allows the session to be paused at any time and restarted and taken over a one day period. For test security purposes, visibility on past items is not allowed when paused longer than 20 minutes. |
| Review Test | Allows student to review the test before ending it. |
| Strikethrough | Cross out answer options for multiple-choice and multi-select items. |
| System Settings | Adjust audio (volume) during the test. |
| Text-to-Speech for Instructions | Listen to test instructions. |
| Tutorial | View a short video about each item type and how to respond. |
| Writing Tools | Editing tools (cut, copy, and paste) and basic text formatting tools (bold, underline, and italic) for extended response items. |
| Zoom In/Zoom Out | Enlarge the font and images in the test. Undo zoom in and return the font and images in the test to original size. |

Subject Area Tools for CBT and PBT

AzMERIT testing requires specific subject area tools or resources for certain portions of AzMERIT.

| Subject Area Tools/Resources Available to All Students | | |
|--|-------------------------|--|
| Dictionary/Thesaurus | Writing | <p>CBT – Students have access to the dictionary/thesaurus tool. Students may opt to use a published, paper dictionary or thesaurus instead of using this tool.</p> <p>PBT – Schools must make published, paper dictionaries and thesauruses available to students.</p> <p>Students with a visual impairment may use an electronic dictionary and thesaurus with other features turned-off.</p> |
| Writing Guide | Writing | <p>CBT – Students have access to the writing guide tool.</p> <p>PBT – The writing guide is included within the test booklet.</p> |
| Scratch Paper | Writing and Mathematics | <p>CBT – Schools must provide scratch paper (plain, lined, or graph) to students</p> <p>PBT – Schools must provide scratch paper (plain, lined, or graph) to students</p> |
| <p>Calculator</p> <p>Grades 7-8 (Part 1 only): scientific calculators are acceptable</p> <p>EOC (entire test): graphing calculators are acceptable</p> | Mathematics | <p>CBT – Students have access to the calculator tool when calculator use is permitted. Students may opt to use an acceptable handheld calculator instead of this tool when calculator use is permitted.</p> <p>PBT – Students may use an acceptable handheld calculator when calculator use is permitted. Schools should provide students with an appropriate handheld calculator.</p> |

Accommodations

Accommodations are provisions made in how a student accesses and demonstrates learning that do not substantially change the instructional level, the content, or the performance criteria. Accommodations can be changes in the presentation, response, setting, and timing/scheduling of educational activities. Testing accommodations provide more equitable access during assessment but do not alter the validity of the assessment, score interpretation, reliability, or security of the assessment. For a student with disabilities, accommodations are intended to reduce or even eliminate the effects of the student's disability. For an English Language Learner or a Fluent English Proficient Year 1 or Year 2 student, accommodations are intended to allow the student the opportunity to demonstrate content knowledge even though the student may not be functioning at grade level in English.

Determining if a Student Needs a Testing Accommodation

When students need accommodations in how they learn or demonstrate learning, they are likely to need accommodations in how they are assessed. Conversely, if students do not need accommodations

in how they learn or demonstrate learning, they will not need accommodations in how they are assessed. Therefore, **no accommodation may be put in place for an AzMERIT test that is not already used regularly in the classroom.**

Selecting Appropriate Testing Accommodations for Students Who Need Them

Research indicates that more accommodations are not necessarily better. Providing students with accommodations that are not truly needed may have a negative effect on performance. There should be a direct connection between a student's disability, special education need, or language need and the accommodation(s) provided to the student during educational activities, including assessment. Make accommodation decisions based on individual needs. Select accommodations that reduce the effect of the disability or limited English proficiency. Selected accommodations should be provided routinely for classroom instruction and classroom assessment during the school year in order to be used for standardized assessments.

Testing accommodations may not violate the construct of a test item. Testing accommodations may not provide verbal or other clues or suggestions that hint at or give away the correct response to the student. Therefore, it is not permissible to simplify, paraphrase, explain, or eliminate any test item, writing prompt, or answer option. Not all accommodations appropriate for instruction are appropriate for use during AzMERIT testing. The accommodations available to students while testing on AzMERIT are generally limited to those listed in later sections of this document. The testing accommodations listed do not alter the validity, score interpretation, reliability, or security of AzMERIT. If a student's IEP calls for a testing accommodation that is not listed, contact ADE at AzMERIT@azed.gov for guidance.

Administering AzMERIT with Testing Accommodations

Prior to the day of a test, test administrators must know what accommodations each student will be using and how to administer them properly. Testing accommodations provided for one student may not impede or impact other students in the testing room. It is the responsibility of the Test Administrator to see that each student who qualifies for testing accommodations receives appropriate accommodations while also ensuring that other students who do not receive accommodations are not affected. Accommodations must be properly recorded as directed in the *Test Administration Directions*.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH AN INJURY

Students with an injury, such as a broken hand or arm, that would make it difficult to participate in AzMERIT may use, as appropriate, any of the universal test administration conditions and any of the following accommodations. There are no specific CBT tools to support these accommodations.

| Accommodations for Students With an Injury | |
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| Adult Transcription | An adult marks selected response items on CBT test form or PBT test booklet based on student answers provided orally or using gestures. An adult transfers student responses produced using Assistive Technology on CBT test form or PBT test booklet. |
| Assistive Technology | Use of assistive technology for the writing response and/or other open response items. Internet access, spell check, grammar check, and predict ahead functions must be turned off. An adult must transfer the student's responses exactly as written to the CBT test form or PBT test booklet. Any print copy must be shredded. Any electronic copy must be deleted. This accommodation also requires Adult Transcription. |
| Rest/Breaks | Student may take breaks during testing sessions to rest. |

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (ELL) AND FEP STUDENTS

Students who are not proficient in English, as determined by the Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA), may use, as appropriate, any of the universal test administration conditions and any of the following accommodations. This includes English Language Learner (ELL) students and students withdrawn from English language services at parent request. Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (FEP) students are monitored for two school years. These FEP Year 1 and FEP Year 2 students also may use, as appropriate, any of the universal test administration conditions and any of the following accommodations.

The *upon student request* accommodations are to be administered in a setting that does not disturb other students such as in a one-on-one or very small group setting.

| Accommodations for ELL and FEP Students | |
|---|---|
| Read Aloud Test Content | <p>CBT – Accommodated Text-to-Speech for test content may be provided for the writing portion of the ELA test and the math test.</p> <p>PBT – Read aloud, in English, any of the test content in the writing portion of the ELA test and the math test <i>upon student request</i>.</p> <p>Reading aloud the content of the Reading portion of the ELA test is prohibited.</p> |
| Rest/Breaks | Student may take breaks during testing sessions to rest. |
| Simplified Directions | Provide verbal directions in simplified English for the scripted directions or the directions that students read on their own <i>upon student request</i> . |
| Translate Directions | <p>Exact oral translation, in the student’s native language, of the scripted directions or the directions that students read on their own <i>upon student request</i>.</p> <p>Translations that paraphrase, simplify, or clarify directions are not permitted.</p> <p>Written translations are not permitted.</p> <p>Translation of test content is not permitted.</p> |
| Translation Dictionary | <p>Provide a word-for-word published, paper translation dictionary.</p> <p>Students with a visual impairment may use an electronic word-for-word translation dictionary with other features turned-off.</p> |

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may use any of the universal test administration conditions and any of the following accommodations, as designated in their IEP or 504 plan.

| Accommodations for Students with Disabilities | |
|---|--|
| Abacus | Students with a visual impairment may use an abacus without restrictions for any AzMERIT math test. |
| Adult Transcription | An adult marks selected response items on CBT test form or PBT test booklet based on student answers provided orally or using gestures. An adult transfers student responses produced using Assistive Technology on CBT test form or PBT test booklet. |
| Assistive Technology | Use of assistive technology, including Braille writer, for the writing response and/or other open response items. Internet access, spell check, grammar check, and predict ahead functions must be turned off. An adult must transfer the student's responses exactly as written to the CBT test form or PBT test booklet. Any print copy must be shredded. Any electronic copy must be deleted. This accommodation also requires Adult Transcription. |
| Braille Test Booklet | Provide a paper Braille test booklet. This accommodation also requires Adult Transcription on a regular size paper test booklet. |
| Large Print Test Booklet | CBT – Either increase default zoom settings and student participates in CBT or provide a PBT Large Print test booklet. A PBT Large Print test booklet requires Adult Transcription on a regular size paper test booklet. PBT – Provide a Large Print test booklet. This accommodation also requires Adult Transcription on a regular size paper test booklet. |
| Paper Test Booklet | CBT – Provide a regular size paper test booklet for a student at a school administering the CBT. If a paper test booklet is ordered as an accommodation for a student at a CBT school, the student must use the paper test booklet and may not participate in computer-based testing. |
| Read Aloud Test Content | CBT – Accommodated Text-to-Speech for test content may be provided for the writing portion of the ELA test and the math test. PBT – Read aloud, in English, any of the test content in the writing portion of the ELA test and the math test. Reading aloud the content of the Reading portion of the ELA test is prohibited. |
| Rest/Breaks | Student may take breaks during testing sessions to rest. |
| Sign Test Content | Sign any of the content of the Writing portion of the ELA test. Sign any of the content of the Math test. Signing the content of the Reading portion of the ELA test is prohibited. |
| Simplified Directions | Provide verbal directions in simplified English for the scripted directions or the directions that students read on their own. |