

II. Guidelines for Participation in the Wy-ALT

The Wy-ALT is one of three forms of statewide assessment. This assessment is appropriate only for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who meet the participation guidelines reviewed and determined during the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting.

Students with disabilities who participate in the Wy-ALT share all of the following characteristics: they have a significant cognitive disability documented in their evaluation team report, require instruction focused on the application of state standards through essential life skills, require instruction at multiple levels below age or grade-level, and are unlikely to meaningfully participate in a standardized assessment even with allowable accommodations.

Participation in the Wy-ALT is not appropriate for students who are engaged in and making progress in the general curriculum. Although these students require individualized instruction, they have developed the skills that enable meaningful participation in statewide assessments. The Wy-ALT is appropriate for students who have the most significant cognitive limitations and, therefore, require the highest level of individualized instruction.

At least one time annually, the IEP team must convene and determine how a student with disabilities will participate in state- and district-wide assessments. If the IEP team determines that the Wy-ALT is appropriate for a student, that student will participate in the Wy-ALT in all subject areas. Participation in the Wy-ALT should not be based on disability condition, achievement level, school attendance, or socio-cultural factors.

The IEP team should document test-taking status in the appropriate sections of the student's IEP.

Wyoming's Alternate Assessment: Criteria for Participation

The decision-making framework used to determine student participation in an assessment relies on the following basic assumptions:

- The vast majority of students with disabilities should be able to participate in the general state assessment with appropriate accommodations, if needed.
- A small number of students should participate in the Wy-ALT (typically 1%).

Use the chart on the following page to help IEP teams make the determination about assessment participation.

Decision Making Framework

Participation in the Wy-ALT reflects the pervasive nature of a significant cognitive disability and requires a **"YES" TO EACH** of the following criteria. Wyoming requires that a student participates in the Wy-ALT for all subjects tested. The IEP team should document test-taking status in the appropriate sections of the student's IEP.

Participation Criteria (Provide documentation for each criteria)	Participation Criteria Descriptors	Yes or No
The student has a significant cognitive disability.	Review of student records indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. <i>*Adaptive behavior is defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life.</i>	Yes / No
The student is learning content linked to (derived from) the extensions to the WyCPS.	Goals and instruction listed in the IEP for this student are linked to the enrolled graded level WyCPS and address knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for this student.	Yes / No
The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum.	The student (a) requires extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and support that is not of a temporary or transient nature and (b) uses substantially adapted materials and individualized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate, and transfer skills across multiple settings.	Yes / No
Proficiency determined by the WyCPS extensions does not under challenge the student or limit the educational opportunity of the student.	The student's IEP goals and objectives are based on grade-level extended standards. These are reduced in breadth, depth, and complexity and define appropriate challenge given the students level of performance, historical data, and rate of progress.	Yes/ No
The student cannot participate in the general statewide assessment with or without accommodations, as appropriate, based on his/her IEP.	Documentation should support the decision.	Yes/ No

Evidence for the decision to participate in the Wy-ALT is NOT BASED on:

- A disability category or label
- Poor attendance or extended absences
- Native language/social, cultural, or economic difference
- Expected poor performance on the general education assessment (PAWS/SAWS or ACT Suite)
- Academic and other services student receives
- Educational environment or instructional setting
- Percent of time receiving special education services
- English Language Learner (ELL) status
- Low reading level/achievement level
- Anticipated disruptive behavior
- Impact of student scores on the accountability system
- Administration decision
- Anticipated emotional distress
- Need for accommodations (e.g., assistive technology/Augmentative and Alternative Communication [AAC] devices) to participate in the assessment

Frequently Asked Questions: Student Participation and Eligibility

1. Do all students need to participate in state assessments?

With the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 1997, there is no longer a question of whether students will participate in statewide testing; the question is how they will participate.

2. Do all IEP goals need to be standards-based and aligned to the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards (WyCPS) extensions?

Every student with significant cognitive disabilities in Wyoming who participates in an alternate assessment must receive instruction aligned to the WyCPS extensions.

3. Who determines which students will participate in the Wy-ALT?

Decisions concerning a student's participation in statewide and district-wide assessments are made annually by each student's IEP team. The state of Wyoming provides IEP teams with guidelines for participation in the Wy-ALT.

4. Who participates in the Wy-ALT?

The Wy-ALT was developed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Participation in the Wy-ALT is not based on disability condition, achievement level, school attendance, or social/cultural factors. See the previous Guidelines for Participation in Wy-ALT section for further information.

5. Should students who are not expected to do well on the general assessment participate in the Wy-ALT?

The decision about a student's participation in the Wy-ALT must NOT be made on the basis of the student's "perceived probability" of poor achievement on the general assessment. As many students as possible should participate in the general assessment, either with or without accommodations.

6. Can students participate in the general assessment in one content area (e.g., mathematics) and participate in the Wy-ALT in another content area (e.g., ELA)?

No. If a student can participate in any part of the general assessment, then he or she should take the entire general assessment with accommodations as needed. As many students as possible should participate in the general assessment.

7. If a new student arrives in my classroom during the test window, do I have to administer the Wy-ALT to him or her?

If a student enrolls in a school at any time prior to the last day of the administration and the student's IEP indicates that he or she is to be assessed using the Wy-ALT, then the school MUST administer the Wy-ALT. Depending on the timing of the transfer, the "sending" school may have already begun the administration. The receiving school should work with the sending school to determine the remaining assessments that need to be administered. If part of an assessment was already administered, the new school must finish administering that assessment.

8. Can districts exempt from testing students who do not respond?

No. All students are required by federal and state law to participate in statewide testing.