



Adaptations

Strategies and Resources

- > **Curriculum outcomes** are statements of what students are expected to know and be able to do.
- > Adaptations do not change the public school curriculum outcomes; they enable students to achieve them. Any student might require an adaptation to support their learning; formal identification of a special need or disability is not required.
- > Adaptations that may provide enrichment can be found in the "Options in Programming" section of *Gifted Education and Talent Development* (Education and Early Childhood Development 2010) available at studentservices.ednet.ns.ca.

An adaptation is a documented strategy or resource that accommodates the learning needs of an individual student. An adaptation is planned, implemented, monitored, and evaluated to enable a student to achieve the public school curriculum outcomes.

One or more of the following strategies and resources may be explored to support student success:

Organizational adaptations, such as

- copied notes or notes in advance
- a student buddy system
- a daily agenda and graphic organizer(s)
- regular student-teacher check ins and developing learning contract(s)

Environmental adaptations, such as

- appropriate lighting
- an organized workspace
- appropriate seating (e.g., proximity, study carrel)
- alternate locations

Instructional and presentation adaptations, such as

- adjusting the length, complexity, or timelines of assignments
- organizing learning experiences around a variety of levels, themes, or topics
- highlighting key concepts and vocabulary and providing step-by-step directions
- supplying supplementary materials (e.g., calculator, prompts, models, audio, and video)

Motivational adaptations, such as

- using a checklist so the student can monitor their own progress
- using a visual timer to help the student manage time
- developing a reward system based on the student's interests
- matching teaching, assessment, and resources to strengths, challenges, and interests

Assessment adaptations, such as

- demonstrating learning in different ways (e.g., oral presentation, learning portfolio)
- offering tests and exams in alternate formats (e.g., Braille, orally with scribe/note taker)
- providing an alternate location
- providing extra time

Resources to help access or extend the curriculum, such as

- utilizing assistive technology (e.g., a pencil grip, headphones, text-to-speech software)
- offering various formats (e.g., print, electronic, audio) or additional materials
- reviewing vocabulary or formulas at the beginning of units
- providing images and objects to enhance understanding of texts and formulas

- > **The Program Planning Team** includes those who have responsibility for the student's learning—the teacher, principal/vice-principal, guidance counsellor, parents and guardians, the student (when appropriate), and professionals supporting the student.

- > **Assessment adaptation—“verbatim scribe”:** If a scribe (note taker) is required, the scribe writes exactly what the student dictates. Scribes do not edit student responses or imply that changes are required. Assessment content is not interpreted or summarized by the scribe. Questions are read verbatim and explanations are not permitted.

Who decides that a student requires an adaptation?

The teacher may decide that an adaptation is required to help a student achieve the curriculum outcomes. Sometimes a minor in-class adaptation is enough, especially with additional information from parents/guardians about what works well at home. If the teacher-level adaptation isn't enough, the teacher may submit a “Referral to Program Planning Team” form to the school principal. A Program Planning Team could then be formed and work together to determine other adaptations or supports.

What are the procedures for documenting and reviewing an adaptation?

Adaptations are documented in a form that the teacher fills out in TIENET, Nova Scotia's online student services information system. Adaptations are not documented on a report card or transcript.

Adaptations are monitored and reviewed throughout the school year to determine if they are helping the student achieve the curriculum outcomes. The decision to add or remove an adaptation is based on ongoing review and evaluation of their effectiveness. The teacher or Program Planning Team should consider reducing the dependency upon, or eliminating, adaptation(s) when possible.

Can an adaptation be provided for assessment purposes?

Yes. An adaptation used to support the student during instruction may be provided during assessment if the adaptation does not compromise or alter the assessment's validity. Adaptations must be documented in TIENET.

If the student required an instructional or assessment adaptation, will the adaptations continue in a post-secondary setting?

Adaptations are not documented on student report cards or transcripts, so a post-secondary institution would not be aware an adaptation was in place. Students who are transitioning to post-secondary options should be taught to self-advocate to get the support they will need to succeed in a post-secondary setting and future endeavours.

What if the student continues to struggle with the curriculum outcomes even though adaptations are in place?

The Program Planning Team may consider developing an Individualized Program Plan for the student. An IPP is developed and implemented when public school curriculum outcomes are not attainable or applicable. An IPP is written documentation of “individualized” annual and specific outcomes that are developed in one or more of the following areas: academic, enrichment, social development, and life skills. An IPP is monitored throughout the school year to ensure the plan is meeting the student's needs.

For more information about adaptations, please contact

School: School Principal

School Board: Student Services Coordinator

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development:
Student Services
(902) 424-7454

Evaluation Services
(902) 424-7746

The Student Services fact sheets series and related policies, guidelines, and procedures may be found at studentservices.ednet.ns.ca.