

ENGLISH LEARNERS (EL)

This section will guide Delaware educators through the decision-making process for participation in DeSSA for students who are English learners (EL). The decision tree on page 20 summarizes decision-making steps for determining the testing condition under which a student will be assessed.

Eligibility

Students who have been formally identified as ELs are eligible to test with accommodations or supports on all or part of the DeSSA (ELA/Math/Science/Social Studies) and DeSSA-Alt (ELA/Math/Science), or be exempted from the DeSSA ELA/Literacy, SAT Reading or DeSSA-Alt ELA tests. See the formal criteria for identifying the EL student below and on the following page.

An EL is a student who:

- Was either born in the United States or outside the United States and whose native language is a language other than English and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; or
- Is a Native American, or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas and comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English proficiency; or
- Is migratory and whose native language is other than English and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and
- Has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language, which may interfere with the student's ability to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English, or to participate fully in society.

Criteria for Identifying the EL Student

The formal process for identification of English learners requires several steps:

Step 1: Delaware Home-Language Survey

- Upon enrollment of any student, the school administers the statewide home-language survey.
- If a language other than English or non-US English is indicated in questions 1-3 on the statewide home-language survey, the school initiates the standardized identification screening process.

Step 2: Standardized Identification Screening Process

- A staff member completes the records review process for any student whose native language is not English to distinguish students who are proficient in English and therefore, need no further testing.
- The school implements the EL identification process if the screening process suggests the student may not be proficient in English.

Step 3: Administer WIDA Screener, Kindergarten MODEL assessment, DE Alternative EL Identification Protocol, or valid Out-of-State ACCESS Scores

- Within 25 days of enrollment, the school uses the statewide identification criteria as determined by Delaware-approved WIDA language proficiency assessments to confirm a student's classification as an EL.

- An oral proficiency level below 5.5 on the WIDA MODEL in first semester of Kindergarten or;
- A composite proficiency level below 5.0 on the WIDA Screener or WIDA MODEL

After these steps are completed, the student is formally identified as EL and will maintain this status until he/she exits/transitions out of the EL program.

EL students are not eligible for exit/transition out of the EL program until student reaches a level of 4.7 on the annual WIDA ACCESS for ELs 2.0 test.

Former EL students who have been exited or transitioned are federally required to have a two-year monitoring period during which time they may be reclassified as active EL and returned to the EL program.

Home Language Survey

The school district must administer the home language survey upon enrollment to all new students entering Delaware schools, regardless of the date or academic term of their arrival. A student who speaks a language other than English as their native language, but who also speaks English, may still have insufficient academic language to be successful without the additional instruction offered through an EL program. A district's enrollment packet must include a home language survey form asking if a language other than English is spoken in the home or by the student.

Parent Withdrawals from English Learner Services

Some students are evaluated and have received English learner services but are withdrawn from these services by their parent or guardian. This means that, although these students qualify as an English learner, the parent or guardian chooses not to have the students continue to receive English learner services.

If a student has been identified, but the parent or guardian withdraws the student from services, the student may still receive testing accommodations or supports, including but not limited to the EL exemption (exemption from the DeSSA ELA test and SAT Reading). Students must meet the criteria on pages 17 and 18 in order to receive an exemption from ELA as a recently arrived EL.

The decisions regarding which accommodations and supports should be given to a student should be made on an individual basis using the information in these Accessibility Guidelines.

Justifiable Rationale for Selection and Deletion of EL Accommodations

Best practice dictates that an accommodation may not be introduced for the first time in a testing situation—it must be introduced during instruction and then only used during assessment after the student is comfortable using the accommodation.

For example, the accommodation of using a bilingual dictionary would not be appropriate during testing if the student has not been taught how to use one and has not been practicing using a bilingual dictionary. On the cover page of the Accommodations and Supports Form, there is space to identify any

new accommodations being used by the student and what sort of practice the student may need before the accommodation or support may be used on a test.

Accommodations and support decisions for EL students must be made on an individual basis and must be based only on the following:

- information regarding the student's English Language Proficiency
- information regarding any student disabilities
- scores from student evaluations and assessments
- student's formative classroom evaluation information
- documented student observation
- documented student preference

Accommodations and support decisions for EL students must NOT be made based on any of the following:

- a student's membership in a particular demographic group,
- a particular label that applies to a student, or
- concerns external to the student such as
 - school or district staffing issues,
 - cost to the district of providing the accommodation or support; or
 - other logistics or political concerns.

Criteria for Receiving an Exemption from the DeSSA ELA/Literacy, SAT Reading or DeSSA-Alt ELA

If an EL student receives an exemption, he or she is not required to take the DeSSA ELA/Literacy Assessment, SAT reading, or the DeSSA-Alt ELA assessment. Students receiving an exemption should have the EL exemption for ELA entered into DeSSA TIDE student settings. SAT Exemptions are entered through the District Test Coordinators.

The following are the criteria for receiving an exemption from these language arts tests:

1. The student has not been transitioned or exited;
2. It is the student's first year of enrollment in U.S. schools.

An EL student is considered to be in the first year of enrollment in U.S. schools or "recently arrived" if (a) the student's "Immigrant date" (a field in the EL database) is less than 1 year from the last day of the DeSSA ELA test window, SAT test day, or DeSSA-Alt ELA test window (whichever test the student is to take) or (b) the student has been enrolled in a US state school from a US territory such as Puerto Rico less than 1 year from the last day of the DeSSA ELA test window, SAT test day, or DeSSA-Alt ELA test window (whichever test the student is to take)

The DDOE defines recently arrived ELs as an EL whose enrollment in any public school in the United States has been less than 12 cumulative months (not consecutive).

The decision to grant an exemption is made on an **individual** basis.

The Following is an excerpt of the [Delaware Test Administration Policy for ELs](#).

Identified ELs born in United States and EL territories
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can receive an exemption from ELA the 1st year.• Participates in DeSSA assessments following all the standard procedures the 2nd year onward.
Valid Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1st Year EL (for DeSSA ELA)• Distance to an off-site location is an extreme burden on the sending LEA.• Limited capacity with sending LEA or receiving LEA.• Secure computer not available at receiving institution.• Student has a documented health concern.• Student is newly enrolled and start date is within the last two weeks of the testing window.

DOE Assessment Screen

1. Any student who is identified as an EL exempt 1st year will be identified in the DOE Assessment Screen.
2. Review Student Information to make sure all students are correctly identified.
3. If a student who is from Puerto Rico or another US territory does not have a date entered, the flag in the DOE Assessment Screen must be manually updated.
4. All flags for ELs will only be granted exemptions based on the flag set on this screen.

The Department of Education expects that a student's accommodations and supports on the Accessibility Form and entered in the TIDE/DLM/PAN database will be available, offered, and provided on the days of testing.

Domain-Specific Testing Exemptions

State and federal laws require all ELLs to participate in annual ELP assessment. No disability exempts a student from this requirement. However, when all appropriate accommodations have been offered and the student's disability remains a barrier to assessing a particular language domain, the student may be exempted from that individual domain test. See Appendix C-11 for the Domain Exemption Decision Tree. Domain Exemptions are a DOE-Approved Request. Complete Appendix C-3 and submit to the DOE Help Desk.

Figure 3. Decision Tree for Assessing English Learners

