



## Frequently Asked Questions and Answers About the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form

This FAQ document is intended to provide local education agencies (LEAs), parents, advocacy organizations and other interested parties with information regarding eligibility criteria for participation in the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System.

**1. Where can I access the new Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form?**

**Answer:** The [Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form](#) is available for download on the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Web site and on the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal.

**2. Who is responsible for completing the form?**

**Answer:** The Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form should be completed in draft by the student’s primary special education teacher (case manager). The draft is then discussed at the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting to determine eligibility.

The student’s primary special education teacher must complete the required annual CSDE’s Alternate Assessment System training before the form can be submitted online. Additionally, to verify participation, the Special Education Director and District Administrator (DA in TIDE) must sign the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form.

**3. The PPT has determined that the student qualifies for the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System. What are the next steps?**

**Answer:** The completed and approved Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form (including the signed Verification Section) must be submitted electronically through the Data Entry Interface (DEI). The hard-copy eligibility form should be maintained with the student’s file.

**4. What are the submission deadlines for entering the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form through the DEI to register the student to participate in the Alternate Assessment System?**

**Answer:** The DEI will open on November 15, 2019, and close prior to the end of the assessment window in June 2020. It is recommended that the eligibility form be submitted through the DEI as soon as the PPT determines that a student meets eligibility criteria. To ensure that qualified students have access to the alternate assessments at the time of testing, the following deadline submissions were established.

<b>Data Entry Interface (DEI): Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form Submission Deadlines</b>	<b>Student Subgroup</b>
January 15, 2020	Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form Grade 11; Dually identified (special education and English learner) Grades 3-8 and 11
February 14, 2020	Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form Grades 3-8; Extended deadline for new Grade 11 students
June 5, 2020	DEI closes for the spring 2020 assessment window.

Educators must make every effort to meet these specified deadlines. The submission of the eligibility form through the DEI registers a student for the alternate assessment system. Without submission of the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form, the student will not have access to the alternate assessments. Reminder: Only CSDE trained teachers have the necessary permissions to enter the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form into the DEI.

**5. What happens once the new Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form is submitted through the DEI?**

**Answer:** Once the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form is submitted through the DEI by the specified deadlines (see the response to Question 4), the Alternate Assessment Indicator in the student's TIDE Test Setting account will be set to YES. Activation of the Alternate Assessment Indicator will provide the student with online access to the Connecticut Alternate Assessment for mathematics and ELA at the time of testing. Without this activation, the student will only have access to the online standard state-wide assessments (Smarter Balanced mathematics and ELA, and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessment (if the student is enrolled in Grades 5, 8, or 11)).

If the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form is submitted after the established due dates, the District Administrator (DA in TIDE) must contact the CSDE (860-713-6860) or the Connecticut Helpdesk (1-844-202-7583) to request the activation of the Alternate Assessment Indicator in TIDE.

**6. My student has a Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI) completed for the 2019-20 school year based on the PPT recommendations and the PPT determined that the student is eligible for the Alternate Assessment System. Can my student participate in the alternate assessment?**

**Answer:** The LCI is no longer valid for the submission of evidence to participate in the Alternate Assessment System. Therefore, the student's case manager must review and complete the new Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form to determine if there is sufficient evidence to support the student's participation in the Alternate Assessment System. For more information, see the [Connecticut Alternate Assessment System: Transition from the Learner Characteristics Inventory to the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form](#).

**7. Cognitive assessments were not administered to my student. Can he/she still participate in the alternate assessments?**

**Answer:** Yes. However, in the absence of standardized, cognitive assessments, there must be evidence to substantiate the presence of an intellectual impairment. Evidence might include, but is not limited to, curriculum based assessment scores, detailed present levels of performance information, goals and objectives, and progress report data.

Upon review of the evidence submitted, the CSDE may contact districts for additional information.

**8. When completing the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form, we could not provide the requested standardized assessment or evidence in one or more of the required areas. Can my student still participate in the Alternate Assessment System?**

**Answer:** No. If a district does not have evidence requested in the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form for questions 1, 2 or 3, the student does not qualify for participation in the Alternate Assessment System. Such students will be required to participate in the standard state-wide assessments (Smarter Balanced mathematics and ELA, and NGSS (if enrolled in Grades 5, 8, or 11) or the Connecticut SAT School Day (Grade 11)). The PPT should identify the appropriate use of designated supports, accommodations, and assistive technology (if applicable) on the assessments that are consistent with supports provided instructionally to provide optimal access to content.

Students should have an opportunity to use the Smarter Balanced and NGSS Practice Tests (available on the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal) well in advance of testing so that they are familiar with the test format and tools. Furthermore, consideration should be made during the test window to customize test sessions that best meet the needs of the student.

**9. What if my student’s PPT recommended the Alternate Assessment and completed the LCI in the 2018-19 school year, but when completing the new Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form evidence could not be provided in one or more of the required areas?**

**Answer:** The PPT must convene to review the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form and reconsider the recommendation for the alternate assessment unless the parent and district agree to revise the IEP without the need to convene a PPT meeting (which would require completion of an amendment process). For more information, see [the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System: Transition from the Learner Characteristics Inventory to the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form](#).

**10. I have a student with a Primary Disability Category of Learning Disability, SLD/Dyslexia or Emotional Disturbance who took the alternate assessment last year. Given the new Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form, does this student qualify for the alternate assessments in 2019-20?**

**Answer:** Only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are eligible for the Connecticut Alternate Assessment. For students to qualify for the alternate assessment, PPTs must provide evidence to support that the student:

- has an intellectual impairment;
- has adaptive behavior well below age level; and
- requires intensive instruction and significant supports.

Sections 34 CFR 300.309 (3)(a)(1) and (2) and 300.8(c)(4)(i) of the IDEA requires that intellectual factors/impairments be ruled out in order to qualify for special education services under the categories of a specific learning disability or emotional disturbance. Therefore, students with these primary disability types typically would not participate in the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System unless there is evidence to substantiate the presence of a significant cognitive disability (see the indicators outlined by the [Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form](#)).

**11. As a District Administrator, what do I need to do to ensure that my teachers have the appropriate access and training needed to administer the alternate assessments?**

**Answer:** District Administrators must determine annually which of their staff will be administering alternate assessments. District administrators must create or update TEA (Teachers Administering the Alternate) accounts in TIDE and notify TEAs of annually required online training. To access the DEI or administer the alternate assessments, TEAs must be assigned a TEA user role in TIDE – other roles will not provide this access. Furthermore, only DAs have the authority to designate a TEA role. The TEA training for 2019-20 will be available on the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal beginning in September 2019. For more information, refer to the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Training-Overview for District Administrators brochure (available on the portal).

**12. What training is required for teachers to administer the alternate assessments?**

**Answer:** Teachers Administering the Alternate (TEAs) must participate in annual required online training available on the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal. The training includes the completion of an online quiz with a required passing score of at least 80 percent or higher. Upon passing the quiz, TEA user accounts in TIDE will be marked as “trained” and user access to online alternate assessment related systems will be provided. Without a TEA user role or “trained” status in TIDE, TEAs will not be able to access the DEI or other critical systems and required materials. For more information, refer to the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Training-Overview for Teachers Administering the Alternate brochure (available on the portal).

**13. What other resources are available to support my understanding of the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System?**

**Answer:** A variety of brochures and documents are available on the CSDE Web site, as well as the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal.