

## FAQ

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### Assistive Technology

- What kind of assistive technology is available at the AALRC for teachers to borrow to use with students?

The AALRC has the following assistive technology items available for check-out to adult education and literacy programs in Arkansas:

- Alpha Smart, <http://alphasmart.com/>
- Talking Scientific Calculator, Orion T1-34 (approved by GEDTS for use on the GED tests), [http://www.aph.org/tech/sc\\_info.htm](http://www.aph.org/tech/sc_info.htm)
- Reading Pen, [www.wizcomtech.com](http://www.wizcomtech.com)
- Ken-A-Vision magnifier, <http://www.ken-a-vision.com/7890b.asp>
- GED instructional materials on tape (and 4-track tape players), <http://www.rfbid.org>
- Laptop with JAWS software for students who are blind, [http://www.freedomscientific.com/fs\\_products/software\\_jaws.asp](http://www.freedomscientific.com/fs_products/software_jaws.asp)
- Step Pad, <http://www.attainmentcompany.com/>
- Time Pad, <http://www.attainmentcompany.com/>
- Hearing Helper FM system, <http://www.beyondhearingaids.com/>
- BrainTrain CLW1-S, Attention Skills, <http://www.freedomscientific.com>
- BrainTrain CLW2-S, Visual Motor Skills, <http://www.freedomscientific.com>
- My Reader magnifier, <http://www.pulsedata.com/myreader/usa/default.asp>
- CCTV magnifier, <http://www.tsbvi.edu/technology/cctv.htm>

### Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD)

- What documentation do students with AD/HD need to provide to request accommodations on the GED, and who can conduct the evaluation?

To request and receive accommodations on the GED for documented AD/HD, the documentation must be no more than 3 years old. Certified professionals for diagnosing AD/HD include medical doctors, psychiatrists, and psychologists.

When the student goes for the initial appointment, s/he should take a copy of the *Request for Testing Accommodations, AD/HD* so the doctor can complete Section 3 of the form following the evaluation. (You can download this form at [ACC-2 Request for Testing Accommodation - ADD-](#)

[ADHD.pdf](#)) The doctor should return the completed form to the student, along with a signed letter (on official letterhead) stating the diagnosis of AD/HD and providing supporting diagnostic evidence of this disability. Information presented must clearly document how the ADHD substantially limits the candidate's current ability to take the GED Tests under standard conditions, and identify the accommodations that are requested in light of those limitations. Further, the documentation must confirm that the ADHD symptoms are not due to other emotional/mental health factors. A DSM-IV diagnosis must be included with the certifying professional's or advocate's signature attesting to the diagnosis of ADHD.

- **For students with AD/HD, what accommodations should be applied and when should the accommodations be used?**

Students with AD/HD should accommodations for any TABE tests, classroom instruction, and the official GED Practice Test and GED Tests. Usually, a student with AD/HD will benefit from distraction-free testing and teaching (private room for testing), frequent breaks, and extra time to complete tasks. It may also be helpful to take only one test per day for GED testing, and some students with AD/HD need to take tests using audiocassette formats. Every adult education center should already have a copy of the TABE tests on tape and the GED Practice Test on tape. The need for accommodations (and what works best) should be determined on an individual basis.

## **Blind/Visual Impairments**

- **What testing and classroom accommodations are available for students who are blind or visually impaired?**
  - There is a Braille version of the GED practice test and the GED tests. Please contact the state GED office at 501.682.1980.
  - The AALRC has two closed-circuit televisions (CCTVs) available for checkout.
  - The AALRC has a contract with Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (<http://www.rfbd.org>) so programs can check out instructional materials on audiotape.

## **Deaf/Hearing Impairments**

- **Can a sign-language interpreter be used to administer the GED tests?**

A sign-language interpreter can be used only to interpret test instructions and the essay topic but not for the multiple-choice test questions. The interpreter

must be certified by a national or regional certifying agency. When an interpreter is hired, it should be made clear that the interpreter will be signing only instructions.

- **What instructional strategies/tools will help a student who is deaf?**
  - Use a multisensory approach to instruction, not just an interpreter.
  - Use assistive technology.
    - "Boardmaker" can print words with graphics; it's color-coded for kinesthetic grammar practice.
    - The Attainment Company makes "Show Me Spelling," which has picture clues instead of auditory.
    - TIMO makes software with lifelike, animated people (avatars) that sign. It's designed to be a vocabulary builder and a story builder.
    - "Writing with Symbols 2000" lets you write using pictures, and it's geared more for adults than Pixwriter.
    - "Co-Writer" is a good tool for students who are deaf.
    - Intellitools has an overlay-maker for writing sentences.
  - Contact your state's school for the deaf for more ideas.

## **Diagnosis/Documentation**

- **Where can Arkansas adult education and literacy programs refer students for diagnosis of learning disabilities?**

Referral directions are located at

<http://aalrc.org/resources/ld/referralProcess.aspx> Please note that the arrangements for contracted psychologists and the agreement with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services are ONLY for students who are working towards a GED diploma.

## **Emotional/Mental Health Disabilities**

- **What documentation do students with emotional/mental health disorders need to provide to request accommodations on the GED, and who can conduct the evaluations?**

The form for requesting accommodations on the GED for emotional/mental health disorders is available for printing at [ACC-3 Request for Testing Accommodation - EMH.pdf](#)). The certifying professional or advocate should complete Section 3 of the form, and there should be a letter from the person who diagnosed the student that clearly

states the diagnosis, the date of diagnosis, and any additional supporting documentation not covered on the form. The GED Examiner at the adult education center will have to complete the rest of the form and send it to the State GED Testing office - the sooner, the better, so the student knows what accommodations will be applied during instruction and testing.

## GED Accommodations

- **What types of disabilities qualify a person to receive accommodations on the GED test?**
  - Learning disabilities
  - Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder
  - Physical/chronic health disabilities
  - Emotional/mental disabilities
  
- **How does an individual apply for accommodations for the GED test?**

Individuals who request GED testing accommodations must provide appropriate documentation of their disability and the need for the requested testing accommodations. The Adult Education Center/GED Testing Center will provide a form that a professional diagnostician such as a physician, psychologist, or psychiatrist must sign and include specific documentation of the disability. The forms may also be downloaded at [http://aalrc.org/resources/ld/ged\\_forms.aspx](http://aalrc.org/resources/ld/ged_forms.aspx)

The Adult Education Center/GED Testing Center will submit the information to the Arkansas GED Testing office for review. In some cases, the documentation will have to be sent to the national GED Testing Service in Washington DC for review.

- **Is there a special education version of the GED tests?**

No, there is not a special education version of the GED tests. All test forms are essentially the same level of difficulty. There is an audio version for individuals with documented and approved reading learning disabilities or sight impaired, a Braille version for sight impaired individuals and Spanish or French versions. The special edition tests have the same questions as the regular versions, however.

- **Can a 16 or 17 year old get an accommodation based on a diagnosis from their local school district?**

Yes, if they meet the requirements of the GED Testing Service. However, there are specific tests that are required to document a learning disability such as the Wechsler Intelligence Scale test and the Woodcock Johnson Achievement Test.

- **Are there some accommodations that can be given without special approval?**

Yes. The following are examples of accommodations that do not require special approval: Earplugs, one test per day, priority seating, large-print test, straightedge, temporary adhesive with spatial directions, magnifying device, colored transparent overlays, clear transparent overlays, highlighter, and the use of graph paper for working math problems.

- **Do students with diagnosed disabilities have to pass all of the practice tests before taking the GED?**

No. If the student has the appropriate disability documentation (for any type of disability), s/he may pass one part of the practice test and then complete that same part of the GED. The process continues until all of the GED has been completed. None of the GED test components will be scored until the entire test has been completed.

Be sure to document the use of this accommodation on the student's Accommodation Tracking Form.

## **General Referral Information**

- **What can parents do if they think their K-12 child may have a learning disability?**

They can submit a written request to the child's school that they provide testing to determine the existence of a learning disability. The school has 90 days to respond to the request. They will need to have some convincing evidence in the letter to show a basis for the request, and it would be best if the child's teacher would also make the same request. I also suggest the parents contact the Arkansas Disability Coalition at 800.223.1330. They provide help for parents and kids with disabilities in the K-12 system, including parent training. They may also send an advocate to go with her when she meets with school officials.

If the school denies the request, they may want to schedule an evaluation with a private psychologist, or a local mental health center, or at the Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH) - if they're anywhere near Little Rock. Local mental health centers and ACH take AR Kids First, Medicare, Medicaid, etc. if they don't have insurance to cover the costs. The mental health centers sometimes do this evaluation on a sliding scale, too. Some private psychologists may also accept AR Kids First, Medicare, Medicaid, etc.

- **Where can I find more resources to help my students with disabilities?**

There is a referral directory at  
<http://aalrc.org/resources/ld/directory/index.aspx>

## **Intake/Classroom Accommodations**

- **How do I know what accommodations my student should have for their disability?**

If the student is not sure what accommodations would be the most effective for teaching and testing, the teacher and the student should partner to discuss and determine the most effective and appropriate accommodations for that individual's needs. The program GED examiner may also help in this process. Discuss the types of accommodations that are most commonly requested for the person's disability. (These are listed on the request forms for accommodations at [http://aalrc.org/resources/ld/ged\\_forms.aspx](http://aalrc.org/resources/ld/ged_forms.aspx))

It may be helpful to test accommodations by applying them to a short test, e.g., the survey TABE, just to get an idea about whether or not the accommodations are effective and appropriate for that individual. You should document the process of choosing accommodations with the student, for your own accountability and your student's self-advocacy. If you have test scores available with and without accommodations, you should include that documentation with your student's request for accommodations on the GED. There's a form for showing the test comparisons at [http://aalrc.org/resources/ld/policyManual/appendixH\\_AccomodationsAttachment.pdf](http://aalrc.org/resources/ld/policyManual/appendixH_AccomodationsAttachment.pdf)

- **When are accommodations provided for students with documented disabilities in adult education and literacy centers?**

In general, accommodations should be applied during all testing and instructional settings, including any intake tests.

## **Memory**

- **What can students with learning disabilities do to help them remember what they've learned from one class to the next?**

Remember that practice is not something that happens every now and then. The student needs practice several times each day. Find a way for the student to review information based on strengths, so if they're visual,

make some flash cards they can keep in their pocket and just flash through the deck about 3 times a day. If they're auditory, put stuff on tape and they can listen while driving. If they're tactile/kinesthetic, some specific tasks to do each day with manipulatives would help. It's the Weight Watcher's approach to the GED. NO binging. This stuff is every day, even on the weekend, at least 3 times a day...and that's in addition to time in class. Have students do that for 2 or 3 weeks and then give a teacher-made test - something short - to see if retention is improving. This requires a lot of commitment from the student, but will improve the learning process.

## Reading

- What can students with reading disabilities do to increase their reading speed?
  - Read the questions about the paragraph before you read the paragraph, then scan for key words.
  - Use a straightedge to help your eyes stay on the right line and avoid backing up & re-reading a lot. Or put a clear transparency over the page and highlight as you read.
  - Use the clear transparency to highlight key words as you read for quick review.
  - <http://www.ucc.vt.edu/stdysk/suggest.html> included this helpful information: In general, people should **read more slowly** when they find
    1. Unfamiliar terminologies not clear in context. Try to understand it in context at that point; otherwise, read on and return to it later;
    2. Difficult sentence and paragraph structure; slow down enough to enable you to untangle them and get accurate context for the passage;
    3. Unfamiliar or abstract concepts. Look for applications or examples of your own as well as studying those of the writer. Take enough time to get them clearly in mind;
    4. Detailed, technical material. This includes complicated directions, statements of difficult principles, materials on which you have scant background;
    5. Material on which you want detailed retention.
- In general, **increase speed** when you meet the following:
  - Simple material with few ideas which are new to you; move rapidly over the familiar ones; spend most of your time on the unfamiliar ideas;

- Unnecessary examples and illustrations. Since these are included to clarify ideas, move over them rapidly when they are not needed;
  - Detailed explanation and idea elaboration which you do not need;
  - Broad, generalized ideas and ideas which are restatements of previous ones. These can be readily grasped, even with scan techniques.
- **Practice, practice, practice.** Each and every day, at least 30 minutes a day, just read something.
  - Sometimes reading out loud can increase overall reading speed.
  - Is the student very distractible? This can interrupt the flow and mess up your comprehension as well as speed. Maybe have the student try reading with some kind of white noise - or a Gary Lamb tape or a fan or something - in the background to reduce distractions. If they are distracted visually, have them face the wall while reading.
  - Sometimes bright lights will make it hard for people to read well. If you have florescent lights in your testing room, a baseball cap might help. Even better, ditch the fluorescents and get full-spectrum bulbs.
  - Here's some pay-for sites that have free trial versions/demos:
    - <http://www.rocketreader.com/>
    - <http://www.infmind.com/>
  - Complete the developmental vision screening. The AALRC has the updated software, and it works best if you have a joystick on the pc. (Microsoft Sidewinder, about \$30)

## Workplace

- Should students with learning disabilities disclose their disability to their potential employer?

The answer usually depends on (1) the potential employee, and (2) the potential employer, so this decision should always be made on an individual basis. There are some places that I would advise the person to disclose upfront just because I know the employer is familiar with LD issues and the fact that there are strengths, not just weaknesses. Or, if the person has terrific self-advocacy skills, they can usually sell themselves on their strengths with a "sandwich approach" to advocacy: "I'm really great at following directions (**strength**), although it's sometimes more difficult if the directions are only given orally (**weakness**). But if I get those directions in writing (**accommodation**), I will follow your directions exactly every time (**strength**)."

So they kind of sandwich the weakness between strengths....works best if they can link the strength to an explanation of how this helps them meet the employer's goals. I've seen this work really well for people who are

afraid the employers will be mad if they disclose after they're hired, and that does sometimes happen. So they get the job, but if they don't prove how good they are really fast, it can be a bad situation.

Some websites that address this issue are:

- [http://ldlink.coe.utk.edu/jobseekers\\_employers.htm](http://ldlink.coe.utk.edu/jobseekers_employers.htm).
- [http://www.nclد.org/livingwithld/ldonjob\\_disclosure.cfm](http://www.nclد.org/livingwithld/ldonjob_disclosure.cfm)
- <http://www.jan.wvu.edu/media/LD.html>
- [http://ldlink.coe.utk.edu/ld\\_work\\_issues.htm](http://ldlink.coe.utk.edu/ld_work_issues.htm) (This one is an online tutorial.)