

## Scribe Accommodation Guidelines

Scribe: A qualified person who writes down what a student dictates by speech, assistive communication device, pointing, or an interpreter/transliterater (examples include: American Sign Language, signed English, and Cued Speech). A student may also use Speech-to-Text/Voice-Recognition software.

### Student qualification for a Scribe

- The scribe accommodation is appropriate for a student with a physical disability that severely limits or prevents the student's motor process of writing, typing, or recording responses during instruction and assessment.
- Scribes may also be an appropriate accommodation for a student who has a **documented disability in the student's IEP** in the area of **written expression**, which results in **significant interference** in their ability to express their knowledge in writing/keyboarding, even after exhausting multiple repeated attempts to teach the student to do so.
- If a student requires a scribe due to a physical disability or a disability in the area of written expression, this should be **documented within the evaluation summary in the student's IEP or 504 plan**.
- The student's IEP or 504 plan must also have the scribe accommodation marked for Instruction, LEA/School Assessment, and State Wide Assessment.
- The student must have been using this accommodation during instruction and assessments throughout the year.
- A student may also require a scribe due to a recently-occurring debilitating injury, though temporary, or illness that prevents him/her from being able to write. Medical documentation of this injury needs to be kept in the student's school file.

### Qualifications of the person serving as the Scribe

- It is preferable for the scribe to be a person familiar to the student, such as the teacher or paraprofessional, who is typically responsible for scribing during regular instruction. If the scribe is new to the student, the two should have time to work together during instruction prior to the assessment administration.
- For students who are deaf, the scribe must be fluent in American Sign Language (ASL) and/or signed English, depending on the student's preferred communication method.

### Process for the person serving as the Scribe

- A scribe may only administer the scribe accommodation to one student at a time during a testing session. This accommodation must be administered so that other students are not able to hear the accommodated student's response.
- The scribe must be trained on, understand, and agree to his/her obligation as part of the test administration team. The scribe must sign the Standard Test Administration and Testing Ethics Policy, found on the USBE website: [Ethics Policy and Signature Form](#)
- Before the administration of the test, the assigned school testing coordinator should provide the scribe a copy of the test administration manual (TAM) to become familiar with the directions and format of the assessment.
- The scribe may handwrite or type the student's responses. For computer-based assessments, the scribe must enter student responses directly into the computer-based assessment.

- The student will dictate sentences or paragraphs on the assessment in the same manner used during instruction. The scribe should have the student proofread the dictation and/or the scribe may read it aloud at the student's request. The student may dictate changes to the scribe, and the scribe will make those changes exactly as dictated by the student. Students may proofread to add punctuation, and may change any capitalization or spelling they wish, even if it becomes incorrect.
- The student is responsible for punctuation and may indicate punctuation in several ways.
  1. The student may punctuate as he/she dictates. For example, when stating the sentence "The dog ran" the student would say, "The dog ran period"
  2. The student may dictate more than one sentence at a time and add punctuation after the fact when given the scribed sentences to proofread.
- The scribe can automatically capitalize in these cases:
  1. The scribe should capitalize the first letter in the beginning of a sentence if the student has indicated punctuation ending the previous sentence. For example, if the student said "The cat ran period The cat jumped period" The scribe would write: The cat ran. The cat jumped.
  2. The first word in any paragraph.
- The student must specify capitalization in these cases:
  1. The first letter in the beginning of a sentence, if the student has not indicated punctuation ending for the previous sentence. For example, if the student said, "The cat ran the cat jumped" The student would need to indicate that "The" for the second sentence needs to be capitalized, because the student did not say period after "The cat ran"
  2. Other capitalization (e.g., capitalization of proper nouns, acronyms, etc.)
- The scribe may ask the student to restate (or sign) words or parts, as needed.
- The scribe may ask "Are you finished?" or "Is there anything you want to insert or delete?"
- The scribe may respond to procedural questions asked by the student such as, "Do I have to use the entire space to answer the question?" The scribe can indicate "no."
- The scribe must produce legible text.
- The scribe session may be recorded for accuracy.

#### **The following are unacceptable scribe practices**

1. The scribe cannot give the student specific directions (e.g. "First, set the equations equal to one another" or "make sure that the equation is set equal to zero.")
2. The scribe cannot tell the student if his/her answer is correct or incorrect.
3. The scribe cannot answer content-related questions posed by the student (e.g. "Is this the right way to set up the problem?" or "Can you tell me what this word means?")
4. The scribe cannot alert the student to mistakes made during testing.
5. The scribe cannot prompt the student in any way that would result in a better response or essay.
6. The scribe cannot influence the student's response in any way.

#### **Special consideration when scribing for a student using ASL**

- When ASL is being used during scribing, the scribe may ask clarifying questions regarding the use of classifiers.
- The scribe will make conceptual translations from ASL to English.
- The scribe will write exactly what is heard. Asking questions or clarifying responses are not allowed. Using classifiers is permitted for students using ASL. Classifiers give descriptive information about a noun or verb such as: location, kind of action, size, shape and manner.

## Speech-to-Text/Voice-Recognition Software

- The use of Speech-to-Text/Voice-Recognition assistive technology devices and software is allowed and indicated as 3<sup>rd</sup> party assistive technology.
- Each assessment system varies in which software, devices, web-based applications, and/or built in features are allowable and how each system enables the assistive technology. Please see each systems user guides and test administration manuals for specifics.
- It is mandatory that any device or software used during testing must be able to have the predictive mode disabled or turned off.  
**NOTE:** The Utah Aspire Plus assessment for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade, must have any assistive technology, including dictation technologies, placed on a white list by USBE. Please notify USBE prior to using assistive technology on the assessment.
- The Speech-to-Text/Voice-Recognition software allows students to use their voices and input devices to dictate responses or give commands to the computer (e.g., opening application programs, pulling down menus, typing responses, and saving work).
- Students will use their own assistive technology devices, which generally include a microphone and headphones. For security purposes, all assessment content must be deleted from devices after testing.
- Students need to be familiar with the devices and software, and have had many opportunities to use it during instruction, and must have opportunities to practice using it prior to testing on the available practice tests, to ensure their technology works appropriately with the testing platform.
- Speech-to-text software requires that students know writing conventions and have acquired reviewing and editing skills, therefore devices and software must have predictive mode disabled prior to test administration. Which is why experience with this accommodation prior to testing is essential.
- Assistive Technology and/or text-to-speech must be enabled in the student's PNP in each assessment system. This mode can only be enabled by USBE personnel.

For clarification, please contact Tracy Gooley at the Utah State Board of Education.

If any form of scribe will be used on any statewide assessment, please submit the "Scribe Accommodation Request Form" to:

Tracy Gooley

Special Education Specialist

Utah State Board of Education

[Tracy.gooley@schools.utah.gov](mailto:Tracy.gooley@schools.utah.gov)