

# DeSSA-Alt Frequently Asked Questions on the DLM Test Administration/Platform

**Q1: How do I know the first Testlet will be suited for my student who is working below grade-level standards?**

A1: When logging into Educator Portal, you will see rosters for every subject area test. If you click on the student, you are required to complete a First Contact Survey. The system accesses the information in the profile to generate the first Testlet. Once the student completes the first Testlet, he/she may be bumped up or down on the next Testlet based on performance.

It is recommended that you give an ELA and then a Math Testlet so that you will have time in between to print the Tip Sheet and prepare for the next session, in order to reduce preparation time. Access Profiles can be updated during the testing window.

Once the test window opens, the first Testlet a student is assigned will be based on the First Contact Survey and Personal Needs Profile. Level 2 supports may take 24 hours before the change is made.

**Q2: Is there a Materials List available in advance for each Testlet?**

A2: The materials list consists of common classroom items that you should have available. When you print the Tip Sheet, you can use items in the classroom and make a substitution, unless the Tip Sheet specifically states no substitutions allowed. The substitution can be anything that does not change the construct of the test. Remember that the test is adaptive, so it is difficult to state exactly what materials to purchase. It is best to use items you already use in your everyday classroom instruction.

- Educator Resource Page: <https://dynamiclearningmaps.org/delaware>
- [\*\*Mathematics Materials Collections for Instructionally Embedded States\*\*](#)
- [\*\*English Language Arts Materials Collections for Instructionally Embedded States\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Materials Collection for Science\*\*](#)

**Q3: Where can I find information on the Testlet?**

A3: [Testlet Information Pages](#) (TIP) provide test administrators information specific to each Testlet, such as the materials, the number of Testlets, and suggested substitute materials. They receive a TIP after a Testlet is assigned to a student. It should be reviewed prior to testing.

DLM also has Sample TIPs and Practice Testlets for each [Mathematics](#), [English Language Arts](#), and [Science](#).

**Q4: Is it possible to enlarge the questions / answer choices without enlarging the pictures or the entire screen?**

A4: This has been submitted to test developers for consideration. Some teachers display the test on a Whiteboard or SMART Board. If the font needs to be bigger, teachers can write it out or type it in a larger font for the student. (Please be cautious about security when displaying secure test items on a screen.)

**Q5: Can we have increased spacing between the answer choices?**

A5: According to DLM, the DeSSA-Alt Test passed Peer Review and looks good on screen. However, the question has been submitted to test developers for consideration. Teachers who need the increased spacing for answer choices may choose to write the choices on cards to show the student.

**Q6: Is it possible to have the answers highlighted when being read aloud or as the teacher is reading?**

A6: According to DLM, formal research does not support highlighting. However, we are currently looking into and discussing this feature.

Q7: Is it possible to have the answers presented horizontally instead of vertically?

A7: This has been submitted to test developers for consideration. Teachers can write out the answers on cards and present them in the manner needed by the student.

Q8: How is the Alt-Assessment relevant for IND/Functional students?

A8: The DeSSA-Alt is a federally-required assessment and was created to meet the individual assessment needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Q9: How long does it take for changes in accommodations/supports to occur?

A9: **Category 1 Supports • Change immediately •**

These supports include:

- Magnification
- Overlay color
- Invert color choice
- Contrast color
- Spoken audio

Student receives the same Testlet.

**Category 2 Supports • Do not change immediately** - need at least 24 hours.

These supports include:

- Braille — Alternate form-visual impairment —
- Single-switch system

Student receives the same or different Testlet, depending on the availability of the chosen support.

**Category 3 Supports • Changes have no impact on the Testlets being delivered**

These supports include:

- Human read-aloud
- Sign interpretation of text
- Language translation of text
- Test administrator entering of responses for the student
- Partner-assisted scanning (PAS)

If a Testlet is exited for a change in a Category 3 support, the same Testlet will be waiting for the student to begin again.

Q10. How long does it take for a test reset?

A10: Resets can take up to 3 business days.

Q11: Can the Testlets be taken more than once if the student does not master it the first time?

A11: A student may not retake a Testlet once it is submitted.

Q12: Since 9th and 12th grades are non-testing grade levels, would it be good practice if the 9th grade and 12th grade teachers still teach the DLM standards in the format that is being presented?"

A12: There are Essential Elements for grades 9-10, and 11-12. These are grade-banded at the high school level. That would be a state level decision.

Q13: Are the requirements the same for each blueprint for both subjects? Meaning, are the Essential Elements on the blueprint for that grade level the same for everyone and then teachers choose?

A13: Yes. The blueprint for grade 3 for the Instructionally-Embedded Model is the same for each third grade student; the same is true for every grade. They cover more than the blueprints for YE. The linkage level is where the instruction will be different.

Q14: In regards to Test Security with DLM IE Model – since testing will occur more often, do teachers have to remove all instructional materials off the walls/etc? – Or can they test in a separate area of their rooms with minimal distractions?

A14: Instructional materials on the walls is acceptable, but the teacher should select a separate area of the room to test with minimal distraction. The area selected should be free of distraction and no materials on the wall.

Q15: Are there IE Testlets for non-tested grades?

A15: High school is where you will find 9-10, 11-12. We do not have Testlets for K-2.

Q16: Is there a final date by which a student must be added in order to receive a valid score using the IE model?

A16: Any Testlet that a student takes will be scored. In Delaware, a student needs to complete at least one Testlet in each content area during the window in order for it to count towards participation. Every attempt should be made to test the student.

Q17: What if we have students performing below grade level who do not have the skills to meet the grade-level Essential Element?

A17: Start looking at the Essential Elements and their linkage level skills. Every student is assessed at their assigned grade level, but every grade-level Essential Element has linkage levels, which are shown in the mini-maps along with skills that build to those levels. So for those students who are not at grade level, those mini-maps will help you find skills that you can work on with them and help them get closer to the grade-level targets. This will also help you align the IEPs with those academic goals.

Q18: What happens if a student does not master the claim or Essential Element tested?

A18: You may choose to try a lower linkage level, try a different Essential Element, or continue working with the student on the same skill.

Q19: How do we access the instruction and assessment planner in Educator Portal?

A19: Log into Educator Portal ([educator.kiteaai.org](http://educator.kiteaai.org)) select the MANAGE TESTS tab, and then select Instruction and Assessment Planner. *Please note: this tool is only accessible during an active assessment window.*

Q20: What happens if a student is found eligible for the alternate assessment but have not received instruction on the Delaware Alternate Achievement Standards?

A20: Review the Eligibility Decisions and Testing section of the [Guidance and Procedures for Implementing the Decision-Making Tool](#) document found on the Alternate Assessment webpage.

Q21: What happens if a student completes a content area testlet and then is found ineligible for the alternate assessment?

A21: Review the Eligibility Decisions and Testing section of the [Guidance and Procedures for Implementing the Decision-Making Tool](#) document found on the Alternate Assessment webpage.

Q22: For classes comprised of students across multiple grades, how can a teacher provide cohesive instruction?

A22: The EEs across grade levels build on skills from the previous level. The EEs didn't change from last year so the instruction would not be different from last year. Using the mini maps teachers can easily see how to connect the EEs across grade levels. Gen Ed standards build on each other as well.

Q23: Is there an instructional sequence or progression for teaching the EEs?

A23: The EEs across grade levels build on skills from the previous level. Using the mini maps teachers can easily see how to connect the EEs across grade levels. Gen Ed standards build on each other as well. If a student has mastered at one level you can move up to higher linkage levels.

Q24: There are only 9 EEs to choose from for 11<sup>th</sup> grade math and you have to pick 6. This would mean teaching the same thing in the fall and the spring for many EEs. Why would you teach the same standards in the fall and then again in the spring? This would not allow instruction of all the grade level standards. How does this give them access to the curriculum?

A24: It is not necessary to teach the same EEs and/or linkage levels in the spring. Data and research on students with significant cognitive disabilities shows that many students may take months to obtain mastery. This allows teachers the freedom to decide to continue working on the same EEs or move on to something else. The only difference with the IE model is the assessment and instruction cycle and having the flexibility to choose your EEs, and the linkage level the students will test on. It would be quite a rare occurrence if all 11<sup>th</sup> graders with a significant cognitive disability mastered all the EEs at the target or successor linkage level. There are many skills tested within the EEs.

Q25: Is using the IE model blueprints, teaching to the test?

A25: The EEs tested are the EEs that can be tested for all students. The EEs have not changed, just how often you assess. There is no pretest, and the assessment is not meant to be baseline testing. EEs are selected in the planner, Instruction is given, and Testlets are taken to inform teachers of how well students are doing. This information guides instruction and gives students more of a chance to show what they know and can do. The same EEs exist in the YE model, and just like Gen Ed assessments, the IE model does not test every element that is taught.

Q26: How many testlets does a student need to complete for the IE model?

A26: The full blueprint needs to be covered in both windows unless a student is newly identified to take the Alt in the fall, therefore the student will only test in the spring. Eligibility Decisions and Testing section of the [Guidance and Procedures for Implementing the Decision-Making Tool](#) document found on the Alternate Assessment webpage.