

# Consideration for Participation in the Alternate Assessment

## Criterion 1: Significant Cognitive Disability

The alternate assessment is an option for student with the *most significant* cognitive disabilities. In making decisions regarding assessment eligibility, teams must determine if a student demonstrates a significant cognitive disability. Below are some considerations teams may address to make sure decisions are based on a holistic view of the student and do not focus purely an IQ score as there are many factors that can impact assessment performance.

Broad Questions to consider to Help Determine Criterion 1	Additional Considerations for Teams
<p>1. <b>Did the team complete all the evaluation procedures to help determine the presence of a cognitive disability?</b></p>	<p>A. Intellectual disability evaluation procedures (<a href="#">here</a>) note that it is <b>not</b> required that a student have the primary disability of intellectual disability to be eligible for the alternate assessment. However, teams should evaluate all relevant areas associated with a cognitive disability, as exclusionary factors may impact test results.</p> <p>B. Was the Exclusionary Factors Worksheet completed as part of the evaluation, or did evaluator adequately address each exclusionary factor? See Appendix J of the Intellectual <a href="#">Disability Evaluation Guidance Document</a>.</p>
<p>2. <b>Is there reason to believe that the IQ score is lower than the student’s true ability? For example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b><i>Communication or behaviors impact testing performance.</i></b></li> <li>– <b><i>Other areas of functioning indicate higher ability (e.g., improved language or academic achievement, a history of higher ability).</i></b></li> </ul>	<p>A. Review all past evaluations completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Are there differences between assessment results?</i></li> <li>– <i>Are there indicators of higher performance within the student’s overall functioning (e.g., language, academics, and daily living skills) possibly indicating higher levels of ability compared to cognitive assessment results?</i></li> </ul> <p>B. Did the team complete the Tennessee</p>

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	<p>assessment instrument selection form or provide other documentation of how assessments were chosen based on the unique needs of the student in order to obtain the most valid estimate of ability?</p> <p>C. Based on the evaluation results, were factors that may have negatively impacted test performance considered (e.g., influence of language, behavior, or motor delays)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>If language may have impacted testing, was a nonverbal cognitive assessment (e.g., UNIT-2, WNV, CTONI, TONI, Leiter) administered to rule out the impact of language deficits?</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Does the best estimate of the student’s cognitive ability represent a significant* cognitive disability?</b></p>	<p>A. Does the best estimate of the student’s cognitive ability take into consideration other factors that may have impacted performance on the cognitive assessment? How severe is the student’s cognitive disability (e.g. more than two standard deviations below the mean, three standard deviations below the mean, etc.)?</p> <p>* “Significant” indicates that there is a high level of severity associated with the cognitive disability.</p>
<p><b>4. Were the adaptive behavior scores consistently significantly low compared to same-aged peers for both parent and teacher raters?</b></p>	<p>A. Did the adaptive measure address all three domains of adaptive behavior (i.e., conceptual, practical, social domains)?</p> <p>B. If the adaptive behavior scores were inconsistent, did the assessment specialist’s documented systemic observation indicate which scores were most consistent with the student’s adaptive behavior?</p>