

# Effects of Accommodations on Test Scores for Deaf Students

**RS**  
Research  
Summarized

*Summary of Cawthon et al., "Assessment Accommodations on Tests of Academic Achievement for Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: A Qualitative Meta-Analysis of the Research Literature"<sup>1</sup>*

## Why was this work done?

- Educational testing continues to shift toward two goals:
  - Standardized measurement of student academic progress
  - Inclusion of all students in testing
- Common accommodations allowed on state standardized assessments include extended time, separate room for administration of the test, read-aloud or signed test instructions, and read-aloud or signed test items (except for tests of reading ability).
- Deaf students have unique personal characteristics that influence their learning experiences.

## How was this work done?

- Researchers reviewed the literature and identified 16 studies that analyzed the impact of factors related to performance of deaf students on academic assessments. Studies included a range of educational settings, content areas, and types of accommodations.
- Researchers also looked at the effects of accommodations on test scores, factors related to the test itself, and factors related to the students and their educational environment.

## What did researchers find?

- There were not many significant differences between scores on tests taken with and without accommodations.
- Despite the importance of matching accommodations to individual student characteristics and needs, few studies disaggregated findings beyond broad categories such as deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing.
- There are complex intersections between student-level, test-level, and larger, policy-level factors that affect conclusions about accommodated test scores.

"The future of accommodations for students who are deaf will include changes to test formats such as computer-based and adaptive testing."

## What do these results mean?

- Researchers and scholars need to know more about effects of accommodations for students who have co-occurring disabilities, the range of quality in ASL accommodations, and what kinds

<sup>1</sup>Cawthon, S., & Leppo, R. (2013). Assessment Accommodations on Tests of Academic Achievement for Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: A Qualitative Meta-Analysis of the Research Literature. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 158(3), 363–372.



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of decisions are made about student proficiency and achievement using accommodated test scores.

- Professionals need to know more about how packages of accommodations support learning.



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