TABE WAIVERs

Eligibility and Requirements

**TABE Waiver Eligibility and Requirements**

**for Students with Cognitive Disabilities**

A TABE Waiver does not relieve the center of providing accommodations or appropriate instruction in reading and math.  It simply allows the center to stop TABE testing so that a student does not get overly frustrated from not progressing on the assessment over an extended period of time.

**Who Qualifies?**

Eligible students are those who have documentation of cognitive disabilities and who have not shown progress (at least one EFL level gain) in their last three TABE exams combined.

**Waiver Requirements – PRH: Appendices 301 and 303**

Exemption of Students with Documented Cognitive Disabilities from Follow-Up TABE Testing: Centers must follow the guidelines in Appendix 301 and complete the checklist in Appendix 303 for waiving follow-up TABE testing for students with cognitive disabilities:

* The student must have documentation of a specific cognitive disability that could impact his or her learning/testing abilities, with or without accommodation.
* Each student’s case must be reviewed by the center’s RAC.
	+ RAC participants are identified on the Job Corps Disability website located on Job Corps’ Community website. For the purposes of developing a request for the TABE test waiver, the team should include, at a minimum, the Center Disability Coordinator, Center Director, Special Education Supervisor or instructor (if available), representatives of departments directly impacted by the request, and center Health and Wellness staff.

**Criteria in Appendix 301**

* Criteria to be considered include:
	+ High school diploma earned prior to or during attendance on center.

If the student has earned a high school diploma prior to entry, is it a special type of diploma? Is the student progressing in his or her career technical area? Does the student demonstrate competency in basic functional life skills? If the student is making progress in these other areas, then perhaps a TABE waiver would be an appropriate consideration.

* + Student’s Educational Functioning Level (EFL)
	+ Specific cognitive disability and previous IEPs and/or 504 plans
	+ Student’s learning style
	+ Student’s attendance and participation in academic classes

How has the student’s attendance been in his or her core reading and math classes? If the student is not attending classes regularly, then the attendance issues need to be addressed first.

* + Instructional strategies and methods utilized by instructors

Have instructional strategies and accommodations been implemented that support the student’s preferred learning styles, areas of strengths, and interests? If these things are not known or not documented, then the center RAC and instructional staff should re-assess and consider implementing and evaluating the impact of using these strategies and supports.

* + Whether or not any test preparation approach and/or practice has been used?

Has the student been taught any testing strategies? If testing anxiety is an issue, has there been any effort to teach the student any relaxation techniques or refer the student to the CMHC for support? If these things are not known or not documented, then the center RAC and instructional staff should re-assess and consider implementing and evaluating the impact of using these strategies and supports.

* + Does the student have testing and learning accommodations?

Is he or she using the testing accommodations during the TABE test? Are those accommodations being used in the instructional environment as well and with practice testing for the TABE so that the student is accustomed to how they work and can assist?

Has there been a review of the effectiveness of accommodations each 60 days and whether a RAC was convened and changes made to the accommodation plan if it was apparent that the student was struggling with TABE progress?

* + Number of TABE tests taken and scores

**Checklist in Appendix 303**

Appendix 303 provides a checklist for student exemptions from follow-up TABE testing for students with documented cognitive disabilities and a ***“Sample Form for Disability Waiver from TABE Testing.”*** Centers must use the checklist prior to recommending that a student with a cognitive disability be exempt from follow-up Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) testing.

* Student has documentation of a cognitive disability (identified, for example, in a student’s most recent IEP, 504 Plan, or medical/ psycho-educational documentation) that could impact his or her learning/testing with or without accommodations.
* Student’s case has been reviewed by center’s reasonable accommodation committee (RAC).

Criteria considered:

* + High school diploma earned prior to, or during, stay on the Job Corps center □ TABE history including patterns of score improvement, if applicable
	+ Previous Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), 504 Plans, or medical/psycho-educational documentation reviewed and included accommodations/strategies used, as appropriate
	+ General and testing accommodations that have been provided to the student while in Job Corps (i.e., review of effectiveness of accommodations, changes to accommodation plan, etc.)
	+ Instruction and support provided in consideration of student’s learning style (as one component of instructional delivery)
	+ Teaching techniques and strategies utilized by instructors
	+ Student’s attendance and participation in academic classes
	+ Test preparation class completed

The center will prepare a ***summary statement*** showing how the criteria above were considered in making the request to waive further TABE testing. This ***summary*** will be included with the ***Disability Waiver Form*** to be sent to the Regional Office (RO) for final approval or disapproval.

**Preparing Waiver Request for Regional Review**

After all data has been gathered and reviewed and a decision has been made to request a waiver for further TABE testing, a request and the supporting documentation (as per Appendix 303) must be sent to the Regional Office (RO) for final approval or disapproval.

**After the Waiver…**

**Complete the *Form for Request for a Disability Waiver from TABE Testing* (Appendix 303).**

**The request will be accompanied by**

1. Copy of the cognitive disability documentation.
2. Copy of the accommodation plan.
3. Minutes of the RAC meeting along with Documented Cognitive Abilities Checklist (e.g., TABE Exemption Checklist).
4. TABE test history printout.
5. Statement indicating how criteria on the TABE Exemption Checklist were used in making the recommendation that the student be exempt from further TABE testing.

**If waiver is approved:**

* Students with documented disabilities who qualify for exemption from further TABE testing will remain in the pool for tracking literacy and numeracy gains for Outcome Measurement System (OMS) purposes.
* The students will also continue to receive instruction in reading and math unless they have earned a high school diploma or High School Equivalency (HSE) prior to or during enrollment in Job Corps. This instruction can occur in specific reading and math classes, in high school diploma or HSE programs, in evening/weekend studies programs, or through applied academic skills training in career technical programs.
	+ Instruction in reading and math will involve a minimum of 25% of the time in a student’s training week. Instruction must be documented by academic and career technical instructors and monitored by the center’s RAC, and copies of documented instruction must be kept in the student’s file.
	+ Students will continue in reading and math instruction until they complete the competency requirements for reading or math (as determined by the center and documented in the center’s CDSS Plan, in accordance with Chapter 5, Section 5.1, R8, Chapter 3, Section 3.2,R1-R2, and Chapter 6, Section 6.4, R9)
	+ Completion of competency requirements must be documented by the instructors and approved by the RAC.

**If waiver is denied:**

* Student will continue to work toward completion of the TABE requirements with the benefit of accommodations
	+ Additional or other accommodations perhaps should be considered, implemented center-wide, and then the student re-evaluated for progress.  Please contact your Regional Disability Coordinator (RDIC) for assistance.
* Other supports may be considered:
	+ Tutoring
	+ Mentoring
	+ CMHC Referrals
	+ Peer buddies
	+ Additional services provided by community partners

**General Information and Considerations**

* An IEP serves as a source of documentation of a disability and certainly provides a “jumping off” point in terms of historical documentation of accommodations provided, etc.  **Although there definitely is a higher threshold of burden to meet for standardized testing accommodations, other information within the IEP could provide sufficient documentation to afford the student a broader list of accommodations including even possibly oral testing.** Contact your RDIC for additional guidance.
* Generally, revisit the IEP and any other documentation to determine if there were recommendations not yet tried.  Then consider appropriate reasonable accommodations that are needed for accessing the Job Corps program.  For example, perhaps the student is very strong in processing visual information and may need picture and graphic supports to learn or understand information. See also guidance for *How Does the RAC Know What Accommodations are Appropriate?*
* Does the student’s documentation of disability indicate any historical use of assistive technology (AT) or functional limitations which may warrant the need for and use of assistive technology? The use of AT may not only help with program access but enable the student to perform more independently (including the use of audio and video taped instructions, guidance, information).
* The center should document all efforts in the **Notes Tab** of the Accommodation Plan in CIS.

**How Does the RAC Know What Accommodations are Appropriate?**

The RAC should consider whether or not appropriate accommodations have been provided to the student and their efforts to accommodate the student should be documented, but how does the RAC know what is appropriate?

The DCs have to ensure that the accommodations are related to that student’s specific functional limitations. What are the specific tasks, activities, or actions that the student is struggling to manage, overcome, or perform? Are they having difficulty completing the tests in the amount of time that they are given? Are they getting anxious and drawing a blank when they sit down to take a test? Are they having a hard time paying attention or are they having a hard time remembering what it was that they just read, etc.? If the student has difficulties in the area of math, do they have difficulty aligning numbers when computing non-calculator supported problems or do they forget the sequence of events in solving an equation? These are all important details and facts to know about each individual student in order to determine whether their accommodation plans have the “appropriate” supports or not. As a general rule, if a student is not progressing, the RAC should convene and discuss with the student why they think that is and if necessary and appropriate, adjust the accommodation plan.

*For example, Student “A” has the following accommodations: 5-minute break during testing, extended time, different or secluded test environment. The RAC convened and confirmed that the student had received these accommodations, however, he was still not progressing. Since the RAC includes the student, the student would be asked for his or her input and an attempt to identify other accommodations would be made.*

*The student stated he was having difficulty adding up the numbers and when the RAC had him demonstrate, he was not aligning his numbers properly. It also was identified that the student was having some medication side-effects so he actually performed better on tests later in the day but seemed to always take the TABE test first thing in the morning so his testing schedule was modified to* afternoons *only and he was given graph paper as his “scratch” paper for working out math problems. These supports were added to the student’s accommodation plan; the RAC meeting was documented in the CIS Notes tab; minutes of the meeting were taken and maintained by the DC.*

Ultimately the RAC has to determine whether or not the student has been appropriately supported in achieving TABE gains and secondly, how has the failure to attain those gains impacted the student’s overall ability to benefit from the program.