



National Evaluation Series™

NES

PROFILE

Special Education (601)

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NES Profile: Special Education K–12 (601)

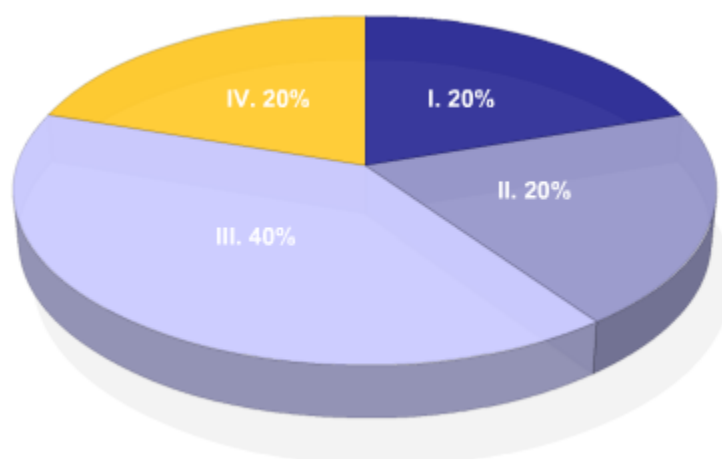
Overview





This *NES Profile* provides information about the test, including the approximate percentage of the total test score derived from each content domain. The complete set of the content domains, the test framework, is provided here and contains all of the competencies and descriptive statements that define the content of the test.

This *NES Profile* includes the following materials:

- » the test competencies associated with each content domain
- » a set of descriptive statements that further explain each competency
- » sample test questions aligned to the competencies
- » any applicable reference materials, as noted below

Test Field	Special Education K–12 (601)
Test Format	Multiple-choice questions
Number of Questions	Approximately 150
Test Duration	Up to 3 hours
Reference Materials	None required



Key	Approximate Percentage of Test	Content Domain	Range of Competencies
	20%	I. Students with Disabilities	0001–0002
	20%	II. Assessment and Program Planning	0003–0004
	40%	III. Learning Environments and Instructional Practices	0005–0008
	20%	IV. Foundations and Professional Practice	0009–0010

Content Domain I: Students with Disabilities

Competencies:

0001 Understand characteristics of students with disabilities.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Demonstrate knowledge of characteristics of typical and atypical human growth and development in various domains (e.g., cognitive, speech/language, social/emotional, physical).
- » Demonstrate knowledge of the types and characteristics of various disabilities and the similarities and differences among students with and without disabilities.

Sample Item:

Students with nonverbal learning disabilities and students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) typically share which of the following characteristics?

- A. preference for visual-spatial tasks
- B. limited range of interests
- C. good organizational skills
- D. difficulty interpreting social cues

Correct Response and Explanation

D. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of the similarities among students with disabilities. Individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and individuals with nonverbal learning disabilities often experience difficulties with communication and social interaction skills. Thus, interpreting social cues (e.g., facial expressions, body language) would be difficult for individuals with either ASD or nonverbal learning disabilities.

0002 Understand factors that affect development, learning, and daily living in students with disabilities.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Apply knowledge of the roles families and communities play in students' development and learning.
- » Apply knowledge of the implications of various disabilities for education and learning, development, and other aspects of an individual's life (e.g., social relationships, recreation and leisure, independent living, employment).
- » Recognize the unique medical needs that accompany various disabilities and the possible effects of medications.

Sample Item:

A student with cystic fibrosis is most susceptible to which of the following?

- A. respiratory infection
- B. brittle bones

- C. migraine headaches
- D. kidney failure

Correct Response and Explanation

A. This question requires the examinee to recognize the unique medical needs that accompany various disabilities. Cystic fibrosis is an inherited medical condition that causes an individual's lungs to become increasingly susceptible to infections due to excessive production of mucus.

Content Domain II: Assessment and Program Planning

Competencies:

0003 Understand procedures for selecting, adapting, modifying, designing, and using various types of formal and informal assessments.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Demonstrate knowledge of basic assessment terminology and the characteristics, uses, and limitations of various types of formal, informal, and alternative assessments.
- » Apply knowledge of strategies for selecting, adapting, and modifying assessments in given situations, including the assessment of nonverbal students and English language learners.
- » Apply knowledge of strategies and procedures for administering assessments, including strategies for using technology and procedures to avoid bias during the assessment process.

Sample Item:

A special education teacher is participating in a three-year reevaluation of a high school student with an intellectual disability. As part of an assessment, the teacher accompanies the student to a store and asks the student to locate and purchase an item. This is an example of which of the following types of assessments?

- A. ecological
- B. portfolio
- C. authentic
- D. interview

Correct Response and Explanation

C. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of the characteristics of various types of assessments. An authentic assessment is a method of evaluating a student's problem-solving abilities in real-life situations. In this scenario, the high school student is being assessed on the ability to perform life skills in a community-based setting.

0004 Understand strategies and procedures for developing, implementing, and monitoring individualized programs.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Apply knowledge of screening, prereferral, referral, and eligibility procedures.
- » Interpret and use information from formal and informal assessments to collaborate with the team in making eligibility, program, and placement decisions; determining student goals; and planning and evaluating instruction.

- » Identify components of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and the roles special education teachers, general education teachers, students with disabilities, parents/guardians, related services providers, and others play in planning and implementing IEPs, transition plans, behavioral intervention plans, and other individualized plans.
- » Apply knowledge of the continuum of placement and services available for students with disabilities, including knowledge of supports students need for integration into various program placements.
- » Apply knowledge of strategies for integrating affective, social, and life skills with academic curricula; for incorporating and implementing instructional and assistive technology into students' educational programs; and for prioritizing areas of the general curriculum for students with disabilities.

Sample Item:

A fifth-grade student with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) attends a general education class full time with support from a special education teacher. Which of the following would be the most effective way for the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team to integrate social skills training into the general academic curriculum for this student?

- A. Incorporate individual counseling services into the student's IEP.
- B. Establish clear expectations for appropriate classroom behavior.
- C. Assign the student a one-on-one aide to model appropriate behavior.
- D. Include peer-to-peer supports in the general education class as part of the student's IEP.

Correct Response and Explanation

D. This question requires the examinee to apply knowledge of strategies for integrating social skills with academic curricula. Research has shown that using peer-to-peer supports is an effective strategy for supporting students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in the general education setting. The peers serve as role models to students with ASD in supporting their development of academic and social skills.

Content Domain III: Learning Environments and Instructional Practices

Competencies:

0005 Understand strategies and procedures for planning, managing, and modifying the learning environment for students with disabilities.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Apply knowledge of ways in which teacher attitudes and behaviors affect students with and without disabilities and effective strategies for establishing and maintaining rapport with all students.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for planning and managing the learning environment for students with disabilities, including strategies for establishing reasonable behavioral expectations, designing consistent daily routines, fostering students' independence, and maintaining students' attention.
- » Apply knowledge of strategies for creating a safe, supportive, and positive classroom and schoolwide climate that fosters respect for diversity and positive interactions among all students.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of barriers to accessibility and acceptance of students with disabilities and adaptations that can be made to the physical environment to provide optimal learning opportunities for students with disabilities.
- » Apply knowledge of effective methods for fostering students' active participation and individual academic success in one-to-one, small-group, and large-group settings and for facilitating students' integration into various settings.
- » Apply knowledge of strategies for modifying the learning environment to manage behaviors and strategies for crisis prevention and intervention.

Sample Item:

A middle school social studies teacher consults with a special educator about a new student who has cerebral palsy and an associated speech impairment. The social studies teacher wants to know the best way to include the student in class discussions. Which of the following would be the special educator's most appropriate response?

- A. "Give the student five minutes to prepare a response to a question during discussions."
- B. "Ask the student questions at the very beginning of discussions to minimize her anxiety."
- C. "Discuss with the student her preferred method of communication."
- D. "Position the student in the center of the classroom so that everyone can hear the student's contributions."

Correct Response and Explanation

C. This question requires the examinee to apply knowledge of effective methods for fostering students' active participation in large-group settings. Depending on the student's degree and type of impairment, the student may have little or no control over the muscles involved in producing speech. For example, the student may have a mild to moderate speech disorder and use speech to communicate. On the other hand, the student may have a severe speech disorder and use an augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) system. To foster this student's participation in social studies discussions, the general education teacher should encourage the student to use the student's preferred method of communication.

0006 Understand effective instructional practices for promoting students' success in the general curriculum.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Apply knowledge of research-supported methods for providing reading and written language instruction to all students with disabilities.
- » Apply knowledge of research-supported methods for providing mathematics instruction to all students with disabilities.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of methods for teaching students learning strategies to compensate for deficits in perception, attention, language processing, memory, and retrieval; and methods for teaching students to use self-assessment, problem-solving, and other cognitive strategies to meet their needs.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of effective strategies for teaching essential concepts, vocabulary, and content across the general curriculum; for facilitating maintenance and generalization of academic skills; and for helping students recognize relationships across disciplines.

Sample Item:

A special education teacher is planning to use drill-and-practice software to reinforce the mathematical computation skills of a student with a learning disability. This type of software would be especially useful for the teacher's intended purpose because of its ability to provide:

- A. virtually unlimited examples of any given type of problem.
- B. highly entertaining visual displays.
- C. direct comparisons with different students' performances.
- D. immediate feedback on answers.

Correct Response and Explanation

D. This question requires the examinee to apply knowledge of research-supported methods for providing mathematics instruction to all students with disabilities. Research has shown that using drill-and-practice software is an effective instructional strategy to use with students who have a specific learning disability in mathematics because such software provides students with repeated opportunities to practice facts, immediate feedback, and the opportunity to experience success. Immediate feedback helps ensure that students are not learning facts incorrectly.

0007 Understand strategies for developing students' communication and social skills and for providing effective behavioral interventions for students with disabilities.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Demonstrate knowledge of instructional strategies for fostering the communication skills of students with disabilities, including students from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds and students who use alternative and augmentative communication systems.
- » Apply knowledge of strategies for fostering students' social skills; for increasing self-awareness, self-management, and self-esteem; and for developing self-advocacy skills, resulting in self-determination.
- » Apply knowledge of strategies for developing, implementing, modifying, and monitoring behavioral interventions for students with disabilities, including strategies for providing positive behavioral supports.
- » Apply knowledge of appropriate expectations for personal and social behavior in educational and community settings and strategies for teaching problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills.

Sample Item:

A middle school student with specific learning disabilities has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) goal to develop self-determination skills. Which of the following would be most effective for the special educator to use in helping the student achieve this goal?

- A. including the student as a collaborator at his own IEP annual review meeting
- B. providing the student with opportunities to evaluate his own work
- C. assigning the student a research project to present to classmates orally
- D. providing the student with reading material to learn more about the IEP process

Correct Response and Explanation

A. This question requires the examinee to apply knowledge of strategies for developing students' self-advocacy skills, resulting in self-determination. Developing self-determination skills means that students learn to make choices and take an active role in their education and in transition planning. One way to help students develop these skills is to have them participate in setting goals for themselves during their annual Individualized Education Program (IEP) team meeting. By participating in their IEP meeting, students learn to take ownership of their education and ultimately their future.

0008 Understand strategies for teaching functional living skills and promoting successful transitions for students with disabilities.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Apply knowledge of strategies for teaching daily living skills (e.g., food preparation, money management, medical self-management, use of assistive technology, accessing community resources).
- » Apply knowledge of strategies for teaching skills to promote students' vocational/career competence and participation in civic, leisure, and recreational activities.

- » Demonstrate knowledge of sources of specialized materials, curricula, and resources for students with disabilities; effective career, vocational, and transition programs for students with disabilities; and strategies for developing and selecting instructional content that is responsive to students' cultural, linguistic, and gender differences.
- » Apply knowledge of strategies that promote successful transitions between various environments (e.g., classroom to classroom; school to school; school to adult life roles, employment, or postsecondary education or training).

Sample Item:

It would be especially important to take gender differences into account when a special education teacher is planning instruction for which of the following components of a functional curriculum?

- A. leisure activities
- B. personal hygiene
- C. money management
- D. vocational skills

Correct Response and Explanation

B. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of strategies for developing and selecting instructional content that is responsive to students' gender differences. In addition to learning academic curricula, some students with disabilities receive instruction in functional living skills, including self-care skills. Learning skills related to personal hygiene enhances students' level of autonomy and independence. Of the categories of functional living skills listed, personal hygiene skills are most likely to be different depending on gender, particularly for older students (e.g., shaving, applying makeup).

Content Domain IV: Foundations and Professional Practice

Competencies:

0009 Understand the historical, legal, and ethical foundations of the field of special education.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Apply knowledge of the historical and philosophical foundations of special education and contemporary issues (e.g., the identification of students with disabilities, factors influencing the overrepresentation of students from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds in programs for students with disabilities) and trends (e.g., advances in technology, inclusion, early intervention) in the field of special education.
- » Apply knowledge of federal laws and policies (e.g., IDEA, ADA, Section 504) and ethical guidelines related to the education of students with disabilities (e.g., related to behavior management, confidentiality, rights and responsibilities of all stakeholders).

Sample Item:

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which of the following steps must take place before a student can be evaluated for special education services?

- A. The student's general education teacher must submit a list of assessments to include in the evaluation.
- B. A school administrator must allocate funding for the evaluation to take place.
- C. The student's parents/guardians must give written permission for the evaluation.
- D. An independent psychologist must review the referral information and determine that an evaluation is necessary.

Correct Response and Explanation

C. This question requires the examinee to apply knowledge of federal laws related to the education of students with disabilities. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) provides students with disabilities and their parents/guardians with a number of procedural safeguards to protect their rights. For example, if a student is referred for a comprehensive individual evaluation to determine eligibility for special education services, the student's parents/guardians must give written permission before this evaluation can take place.

0010 Understand the professional roles and responsibilities of the special education teacher.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Apply knowledge of effective strategies for communicating and collaborating with students with disabilities and their parents/guardians to help students achieve desired learning outcomes, including students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- » Apply knowledge of effective strategies for communicating, collaborating, and consulting with general education teachers, related services providers, other school staff members, and representatives of community agencies in providing learning opportunities for students with disabilities and knowledge of

effective strategies for supervising and working with teachers' aides, teaching assistants, paraprofessionals, and volunteers.

- » Demonstrate knowledge of the importance of upholding high standards for professional practice through participation in professional activities and organizations and knowledge of resources for enhancing one's professional skills and for engaging in lifelong professional growth and development.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of effective strategies for engaging in reflection and self-assessment activities to identify one's own strengths and weaknesses, to become aware of cultural biases and differences, to improve instruction, and to determine goals for professional growth.

Sample Item:

A special educator is scheduling a three-year reevaluation meeting for a student who is an English language learner. The student's parents prefer to communicate in their first language rather than in English. Which of the following steps should the special educator take to promote effective communication during this meeting?

- A. Ask the parents to bring a family member who speaks both languages.
- B. Request that the school administrator hire a translator.
- C. Learn to say some basic greetings in the parents' first language.
- D. Provide a dictionary for the parents to use.

Correct Response and Explanation

B. This question requires the examinee to apply knowledge of effective strategies for communicating and collaborating with students with disabilities and their parents/guardians. The parents/guardians of a student with a disability are considered to be key members of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. In order to collaborate effectively with parents/guardians whose preferred language is not English, a special educator must be able to communicate with them. In the scenario provided, the special education teacher has a professional obligation to ensure that a professional translator or interpreter is available to attend the meeting to ensure clear, accessible communication.

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