



ELL Participation in Secondary OSSLT, 2021

Released: March 10, 2021

The following information is provided to clarify the participation of English language learners (ELLs) in the secondary EQAO Grade 10 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). **Please note that the purpose of the administration of the 2020–2021 OSSLT is to field test the new online adaptive assessment. EQAO is planning to administer the OSSLT March 23–June 4. Grades 10 and 11 students who are studying in person are eligible to take the OSSLT. Students who are graduating in 2021 are exempt.**

The OSSLT field test is being made available to students who are learning in person. Should a student who is learning remotely wish to participate in the field test, the board may arrange for the student's participation in person. Schools should focus on ensuring that cohorts are maintained and that all necessary health and safety measures continue to be employed.

Which Students are Defined as ELLs and Entitled to Special Provision and/or Accommodations?

English language learners are students in provincially funded English language schools whose first language is a language other than English, or is a variety of English that is significantly different from the variety used for instruction in Ontario's schools, and who may require focused educational supports to assist them in attaining proficiency in English.

ELL Policies and Procedures – K to Grade 12, Ontario Ministry of Education, p. 7 (2007)

- All students who meet the Ministry of Education definition *above* are to be identified as ELLs in the EQAO Student Data Collection (SDC) system and are entitled to the special provisions for ELLs outlined by EQAO.
- All ELLs (as defined in Ministry Policy) who require special provisions are entitled to them, regardless of whether or not they are receiving direct language support through ESL or ELD courses.

Special Provisions for ELLs

English language learners can receive the following special provision:

- o Extended periodic supervised breaks

The OSSLT is a computer-based assessment that comprises two sessions (Session A and Session B) containing a total of 33 questions: 31 multiple-choice questions (including technologically enhanced multiple-select questions, e.g., drag and drop, dropdown menu, checklist) and two constructed open-response questions. Each session is designed to be completed in 60 minutes,

and students complete each session in one sitting. The sessions can be attempted one after the other, either back to back with a short break or on two different dates and times.

If students require additional time to complete a session, extra time with supervision is allowed.

During the assessment, students can have access to the following:

- o Headphones for listening to questions
- o White noise or calming music as required
- o A supply of pens or pencils and paper for rough work

Support materials are available for all students once they log in to the online OSSLT. A set of accessibility tools is located in the student toolbar. These tools are available to every student taking the OSSLT:

- o A help menu
- o A text-speech function that reads the text on the screen out loud
- o Zoom in and zoom out
- o A line reader that helps students focus on one line of text at a time
- o A high-contrast view
- o Annotation tools
- o A tool for rough notes

All students will also have access to virtual breathing exercises, reminders of test taking strategies and other minds-on activities to help them as they take the modernized OSSLT. All students will have access to a Practice Test to familiarize themselves with the overall appearance and features of the online OSSLT.

Deferrals for ELLs

Decisions regarding deferrals must be made prior to the assessment, for each student individually, and in consultation with the student and parents or the adult student and with the appropriate teaching staff.

OSSLT

ELLs are encouraged to participate in large-scale assessments when they have acquired the level of proficiency in English required for success. (ELL Ministry Policy 2.9.1; 2.9.3)

EQAO states that a student working toward an OSSD will not participate in the test (deferral), because:

- he or she is an English language learner and has not yet acquired a level of proficiency in English sufficient to participate
- the student is new to the school and appropriate accommodations cannot be provided

Note: A student deferral does not constitute an opportunity to write and therefore does not qualify the student to take the OSSLC.

Recommendations for ELL Participation in the OSSLT

To facilitate the process of determining participation and special provision for ELLs, ERGO offers the following recommendations to teachers and principals. School boards may develop different participation recommendations. Decisions must be made on an individual basis and according to EQAO guidelines.

Students in ESL Courses:	Participation in OSSLT
Level 1 (ESLAO)	Deferral recommended
Level 2 (ESLBO)	Deferral recommended
Level 3 (ESLCO)	Consider for deferral; Provide special provisions as outlined by EQAO for participating students.
Levels 4 & 5 (ESLDO/EO)	Provide special provisions as outlined by EQAO, if required
Students in ELD Courses:	Participation in OSSLT
Level 1, 2, 3 (ELDAO/BO/CO)	Deferral recommended
Level 4 (ELDDO)	Consider for deferral; Provide special provisions as outlined by EQAO for participating students.
Levels 5 (ELDEO)	Provide special provisions as outlined by EQAO, if required
Students in Mainstream Courses:	Participation in OSSLT
ELLs not enrolled in ESL or ELD Courses	Provide special provisions as outlined by EQAO, if required
<p>*Students under the age of 18 MUST write the OSSLT at least once before enrolling in the OSSLC. Teachers should plan effectively with each student to ensure the date of writing the OSSLT provides adequate access to all options within the student’s secondary timeframe.</p> <p>**note: At the time of the release of this document (March 10, 2021), the pilot OSSLT 2021 counting as a first attempt is not clear at this time. ERGO is in communication with both MOE and EQAO and will advise members of updates</p>	

ELLs with Special Education Needs

ELLs who have special education needs and an IEP are entitled to accommodations as outlined in the online *OSSLT User Guide for Administering the OSSLT*:

<https://eqao-kb-osslt.lswp.vretta.com/knowledge-base/what-are-the-key-guidelines-and-details-for-administering-the-osslt-this-year/>

ELL Participation in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC)

The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC) is a full-credit course that fulfils the Literacy requirement for graduation and can be counted as the compulsory English credit in either Grade 11 or Grade 12. This course may be offered in special sections for English language learners.

ELL Policies and Procedures – K to Grade 12, Ontario Ministry of Education, p. 25 (2007)

