



# Understanding the IEP Process

## Competency

Educator uses district policy, state regulations, and federal law to understand Individualized Educational Programs (IEP), goal writing, and implementing instructional supports for learners with IEPs.

## Key Method

The educator analyzes information from a current student's present level within an IEP and uses this information to write SMART, need-based goals and accommodations/modifications.

## Method Components

The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) plays a crucial role in the success of a learner with identified special needs. An IEP is the plan created by a team of stakeholders using the required components listed in the federal law, state regulations, and local policies. It maps out the current learning strengths and concerns, goals for the year, and related services required by that student for increased school achievement.

To learn about the required components of an IEP within your state regulations, you will need to visit your state department of education website. Most state departments of education list these in the special education regulations part of their website.

### General Components of an IEP

#### **Present Level**

Educators must know how the student is currently doing in school. This is known as the present level of educational performance. This may include:

- Most recent evaluation results
- How the disability affects his/her involvement and progress in the general curriculum



- Strengths of the student
- Results on state and/or district-wide assessments
- Parent concerns for enhancing the education of the student

### **SMART Goals**

Educators will write goals that the child can reasonably accomplish in a year. The goals are broken down into short-term objectives or benchmarks\*. Goals may be academic, address social or behavioral needs, relate to physical needs, or address other educational needs. The goals must be measurable, meaning that it must be possible to measure whether the student has achieved the goals.

- SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented, and Time-bound.
- A SMART IEP goal will be realistic for your learner to achieve and will lay out how your learner will accomplish it.

*For example: By the end of this IEP period, when given a list of 50 multisyllabic words containing closed, open, and consonant-vowel-e syllables, the student will be able to decode 40/50 words correctly as measured by teacher records.*

*\*The IDEA does not require the inclusion of short-term objectives or benchmarks in all IEPs (except for IEPs for students who are taking alternate assessments), BUT some states do require this.*

### **Accommodations**

According to Understood.org, accommodations are changes that remove barriers and provide your child with equal access to learning. They change *how* your child is learning. Some examples may be:

- Presentation: A change in the way information is presented. Example: Letting a child with dyslexia listen to audiobooks instead of reading printed text.
- Response: A change in the way a child completes assignments or tests. Example: Providing a keyboard to a child who struggles with handwriting when she's writing an essay.
- Setting: A change in the environment where a child learns. Example: Allowing a child with ADHD to take a test in a separate room with fewer distractions.
- Timing and scheduling: A change to the time a child has for a task. Example: Providing extra time for homework to a child who has slow processing speed.

### **Modifications**

Modifications are a change in what a student is taught or expected to learn. Assignment modifications allow a student to:

- Complete fewer or different homework problems than peers
- Write shorter papers



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- Answer fewer or different test questions
- Create alternate projects or assignments

Curriculum modifications allow a student to:

- Learn different material (such as continuing to work on multiplication while classmates move on to fractions)
- Get graded or assessed using a different standard than that for classmates
- Be excused from particular projects

## Supporting Rationale and Research

United States Department of Education. IDEA Individual with Disabilities Education Act. Retrieved from <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/statuteregulations/>

United States Department of Education. A Guide to the Individualized Education Program. Retrieved from <https://ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html>

Blackwell W.H. & Rosetti, Z.S. (2014). The Development of Individualized Education Programs: Where Have We Been and Where Should We Go Now? Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2158244014530411>

## Resources

Template

[Present Level Analysis Template](#)

IEP components

[IEP required components](#)

[Present level required components with examples from New York](#)

[IEPs for Students with Disabilities](#)

Goal writing

[How to Recognize SMART IEP Goals | Individualized Education Program](#)

[SMART IEP goal bank for behavioral goals](#)

[IEP Goals for Reading: What They Look Like](#)



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Accommodations/Modifications

[Accommodations: What They Are](#)

[Examples of Accommodations & Modifications | Smart Kids](#)

[Common Classroom Accommodations and Modifications](#)

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## Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

*To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3 and receive a proficient score for all components in Part 2.*

### Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

(250- to 500-word limit)

Please answer the following contextual questions to help our assessor understand your current situation. *Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.*

- Describe your current (or past) experiences in understanding the components of the IEP, especially focusing on the present level, goal writing, and accommodations/modifications.
- Describe your current role as part of the IEP team and list your responsibilities that take place before, during, or after the IEP is written. How many students with a disability do you currently serve?
- Describe the challenges that you face when working with students with a disability as related to the implementation of the goals and/or accommodations/modifications for the student.

**Passing:** Response completely addresses each of the questions using specific details and personal examples. Responses give the assessor a clear view of the current role and challenges being faced.

### Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credential, please submit the following **four artifacts** as evidence of your learning. *Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to your reviewers.*



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**Artifact 1: Copy of Present Level**

Submit a copy, with identifiable information crossed out, of an actual present level form from the IEP of a student at your school.

**Artifact 2: Analysis of Present Level**

Refer to the present level of the IEP you submitted. Use the present level analysis template (see Resources section) to create a list of that student's strengths and concerns.

- Include all areas of strengths and concerns (weaknesses) such as academic, social, adaptive, related service, and behavioral that are included in the present level.
- Identify any challenges that educators may face as he/she is addressing and implementing goals and accommodations for the specific student.

**Artifact 3: SMART Goals**

Use the information you collected in the analysis of present level and convert the concerns into three SMART goals.

**Artifact 4: Accommodation/Modification Writing**

Use the information you collected in your analysis of present level and think about the SMART goals that you wrote to write three accommodations/modifications that will enhance the student's classroom experience.

**Artifact 5: IEP Meeting Analysis and Evaluation**

(500-700 words)

After receiving permission from the team, including the parent, attend an IEP meeting.

*Take notes for your own use while attending the IEP meeting (no need to submit these).*

Answer the following questions:

- How did each of the following stakeholders give input for the present level, goals, and accommodation/modifications?
  - Parent(s)
  - General education teacher
  - Specialized Instructional Support Personnel
  - Paraeducators
  - Administrators
  - Other
- Would you change what happened at the meeting to ensure all voices were heard? Why or why not?



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- Were the best goals and accommodations/modifications created to meet the student’s needs to make progress on his/her goals? Explain your answer.
- Were there any issues around bias that needed to be addressed or reconsidered?

## Part 2. Rubric

	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Developing</b>
<b>Artifact 1: Copy of Present Level</b>	The template is used.	The template is used.	Template not used or it is not present.
<b>Artifact 2: Analysis of Present Level</b>	<p>All strengths and concerns from the present level are listed.</p> <p>The list includes all areas, such as behavior, related service areas, etc.</p> <p>There is a list of at least three challenges that might have to be overcome to help make the student successful in meeting goals.</p> <p>(After removing identifiable information, include a copy of the present level used to complete this artifact.)</p>	<p>Strengths and concerns are listed.</p> <p>Not all areas, such as behavior, related service areas, etc., are included.</p> <p>A challenge to overcome is listed.</p> <p>(After removing identifiable information, include a copy of the present level used to complete this artifact.)</p>	<p>A minimal list of strengths and concerns is included.</p> <p>A challenge is not listed.</p>



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<p><b>Artifact 3: SMART Goal</b></p>	<p>Three SMART goals are written.</p> <p>Each goal is directly related to a student concern.</p> <p>Each goal contains the SMART components (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound.)</p>	<p>Two goals are written.</p> <p>Each goal is related to a student concern.</p>	<p>A SMART goal is written. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound.)</p>
<p><b>Artifact 4: Accommodation/Modification Writing</b></p>	<p>Three accommodations/modifications are listed.</p> <p>They are directly related to the student's goals, concerns, and needs in the regular classroom.</p>	<p>Two accommodations/modifications are listed.</p> <p>They are related to student concerns.</p>	<p>An accommodation/modification was written.</p>
<p><b>Artifact 5: IEP Meeting Analysis</b></p>	<p>An IEP meeting was attended.</p> <p>The analysis includes how each member of the IEP team gave input on the present level, goals, and accommodations/modifications.</p> <p>The analysis includes challenges and positive events that occurred at the meeting.</p>	<p>An IEP meeting was attended.</p> <p>The analysis includes how some members of the IEP team gave input on the present level, goals, and accommodations/modifications.</p> <p>The analysis includes some challenges and positive events that occurred at the meeting.</p>	<p>An IEP meeting was attended.</p> <p>The analysis includes how some members of the IEP team gave input on the present level, goals, and accommodations/modifications.</p> <p>The writer explains if he/she felt the best goals and accommodations were created to ensure progress on the goals.</p>



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	<p>The writer includes if he/she would change anything to ensure all voices were heard at the meeting and why or why not.</p> <p>The writer explains if he/she felt the best goals and accommodations were created to ensure progress on the goals.</p>	<p>The writer includes if he/she would change anything to ensure all voices were heard at the meeting and why or why not.</p>	
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### Part 3 Reflection

(350-500 word limit)

Use the word count as a guide to write a personal reflection about your work on this micro-credential. For tips on writing a good reflection review the following resource:

[How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?](#)

*Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.*

1. How did completing this microcredential increase your understanding of the IEP components from present level to developing SMART goals and accommodations/modifications to the implementation of that IEP?
2. What challenges were presented during this micro-credential? How did you overcome them?
3. Describe how this micro-credential impacted your role in the IEP process and implementation. What will you do differently now?

**Passing:** All three questions are answered. Reflection provides evidence that this activity has had an impact on educator practice and future student successes.



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