

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

**ACT and PLAN
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

The following FAQ has been developed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) to assist school systems in the administration of the ACT and PLAN. This information should be used in conjunction with other testing materials in the administration of the test, including all information from the test publisher. Additional information about ACT may be found at <http://www.act.org/aap/northcarolina/>.

The ACT

Eligibility:

1. Who is required to take the ACT?

All public and charter school students who are enrolled in grade 11 according to NC WISE are required to take the ACT. The only exceptions are as follows:

- Students who have a significant cognitive disability and receive instruction in the Extended Content Standards.
- Students deemed medically fragile because of a significant medical emergency and/or condition and unable to participate in testing. All medical exceptions must be approved by the Division of Accountability Services/North Carolina Testing Program.
- Students who took the SAT or ACT prior to March 6, 2011 with scores that meet the ACT benchmark.

Administration Dates and Times:

2. What are the administration dates for the ACT assessment?

The initial test date is March 6, 2012. The makeup test day is March 20, 2012. The Accommodations Testing Window is March 6–March 20, 2012.

3. Will adjustments be made to the ACT timeline?

No, ACT and the NCDPI have confirmed time lines for this year.

4. What happens if a student (testing standard time) is absent on test day?

If a student is absent on March 6th, reschedule the student to test on March 20th. If the student misses testing on both March 6th and March 20th, there is no additional makeup opportunity.

5. When does a school test if it is not in session on March 6th or March 20th?

If your school is not in session on March 6th, students are expected to test on March 20th. If your school will not be in session on March 20th, the only opportunity to test will be March 6th.

6. If a school is out on March 6th and March 20th, does it still test students with accommodations during the accommodations window of March 6–March 20?

Yes, these students should be tested during the accommodations window. Students may be approved for multiple-day testing.

7. What time must ACT testing begin?

ACT tests must be administered as the first activity of the morning. Testing must begin by 9:00 a.m. in all rooms on both the initial and makeup test dates. Testing begins when the room supervisor begins reading the Verbal Instructions. Timing for reading the Verbal Instructions will vary by room. Each room proceeds independently.

The 9:00 a.m. start time does not apply to students testing on the ACT with accommodations.

8. How much time should be scheduled for ACT testing?

For the standard administration (without accommodations), provide a room with an uninterrupted period of 4 hours. Each student with ACT-Approved accommodations has an assigned Timing Code that identifies the timing guidelines authorized for that student. **NOTE:** Additional time will be needed by testing staff to complete pre- and post-testing responsibilities.

9. What if all students finish a test before the allowed time elapses?

For standard-time testing, even if all students in the room finish a test before the allowed time elapses, the full time for each test must be given. Do not move onto the next test until time is called on the current test.

Lunch and Breaks:

10. Do students have a lunch break during the ACT standard time administration?

The standard time test day must not include extended breaks for meals (e.g., lunch) or other activities. Providing a lunch break may result in the invalidation of scores.

11. Are any breaks allowed between the ACT standard time tests?

ACT requires that schools allow a break of 15 minutes at the end of Test 2 to allow students to relax or go to the restroom. The school should not attempt to preset an exact schedule for all test rooms. The break may not include lunch. If it does, scores for these students may be canceled. Testing must resume no later than 15 minutes after STOP is called on Test 2. The school may wish to designate a rest area. Staff and students may bring snacks and beverages into the test room, but they may consume them only outside the test room during break.

Previous Test Takers and Newly Classified Juniors:**12. If students have taken the SAT prior to March 6, 2011 and have scores that meet the ACT benchmark standard(s), will they have to participate in the ACT administration?**

No, these students will not be required to participate. The NCDPI is preparing a process for these students to provide their scores as evidence of meeting the benchmark.

13. If students have already taken the ACT, do they take it again?

Yes, students must take the test again unless they met the benchmark for the ACT. If students took the ACT through national testing and did not meet the benchmark, ACT has waived its normal 60-day retest restriction for state testing. Students may test on one of the state test dates (initial or makeup) or on any ACT national test date. The state pays for one ACT weekday in-school test administration only.

14. Is there a minimum percent (i.e., 95%) of juniors required to be tested?

Yes, the 95% participation rule for the state accountability program will be in effect.

15. What happens when juniors move to senior status or sophomores move to junior status after the set deadline for ordering ACT materials passes?

The school principal should be aware of and take into consideration these possibilities when providing the school's grade 11 enrollment figure to ACT. ACT will confirm in early January 2012 the number of materials that are needed for ACT state testing. In both the non-secure and secure standard time shipments, ACT will provide a standard overage. Should a school require more than this standard overage, it may contact ACT for additional materials. ACT does not provide an overage of ACT-Approved accommodations materials as those are assigned to the individual student based upon the approved accommodations.

Proctors:**16. Are proctors required for the ACT administration?**

Yes, a proctor is required (in addition to the room supervisor) for every 25 students after the first 25 in the room. Use the following scale (for standard time testing) to determine the minimum number of proctors required in each room:

Students per room:	1–25	26–50	51–75	76–100	101–125	each additional 25
Proctors per room:	0	1	2	3	4	+1

NOTE: For Accommodations a proctor is required to assist the room supervisor if more than 10 students with the same timing code are testing in the room.

For all other state-required tests, a proctor shall be assigned regardless of the number of students being tested unless otherwise authorized by the NCDPI Testing and Accountability Program.

17. May proctors be used in a situation where the number of students in an administration site does not dictate that one be present?

Yes, school districts may elect to have a proctor in the room if fewer than 25 students are testing.

Accommodations:**18. Will state testing accommodations for students with disabilities and students identified as limited English proficient (LEP) be allowed on the ACT?**

Two accommodation options are available to students with disabilities for the ACT: (1) ACT-Approved accommodations and (2) State-Allowed accommodations. ACT-Approved accommodations result in ACT scores that are fully reportable to colleges, scholarships, and other entities. State-Allowed accommodations, which do not require ACT approval, may be requested and utilized during the assessment. The ACT scores from State-Allowed accommodations administrations are **not** college reportable.

ACT-Approved accommodations are granted based on the documented disability for disorder and the history of the diagnosis.

Accommodations applications are reviewed on a case by case basis. ACT encourages students, who seek an accommodation on the ACT, first apply for an ACT-Approved accommodation. Note that those students receiving school accommodations based solely on LEP (no other diagnosis) may only qualify for a State-Allowed accommodation.

19. Do students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and/or Section 504 Plans need to be modified to include accommodations for the 2011–12 administration of the ACT?

No, the ACT will be piloted statewide this year. As such, IEPs and Section 504 Plans should not be amended to include accommodations for this test.

20. Will there be changes to the IEP accommodations form in 2012–13 to reflect the ACT?

Yes, the testing accommodations form will be changed to reflect accommodations provided for the ACT.

21. What is the process for notifying ACT about students' accommodation needs?

For those students in grade 11 taking the ACT, there is an approved accommodation application process that must be completed by the school's Test Accommodations Coordinator (TAC). The TAC (appointed by the school principal) submits to ACT an application for ACT-Approved accommodations plus supporting documentation for each student requiring accommodations (receipt deadline is December 16) and coordinates all accommodated testing for the school. An accommodations training video is now available for all TACs. The streaming link is: <http://www.act.org/aap/northcarolina>. It is critical for TACs to begin viewing the video immediately to ensure that all procedures are followed and deadlines are met.

22. When students' accommodations are approved by ACT, to what portions of the test do they apply?

When a student is approved for an accommodation, it applies to the entire battery of tests. The only exception to this is when accommodations are given due to a writing disorder, in which case that accommodation is typically only applied to the writing portion of the test.

23. May students request the *Test Administrator Reads Test Aloud* accommodation for the English and Reading portions of the ACT? If approved for use by ACT, do students receive college reportable scores?

Yes, students may request the test be read aloud to them as an accommodation. ACT's equivalent to North Carolina's *Test Administrator Reads Test Aloud* accommodation is the Reader's Script. Audio versions are also available in the form of DVDs or Cassettes. Approved use of the ACT Reader Scripts, DVDs, or Cassettes accommodation does result in college reportable scores.

24. Can schools order an audio DVD for individual students with the read aloud accommodation?

Yes, students with this approved accommodation may be tested with headphones in a group setting using the DVD. The one room supervisor to one student ratio applies to “reader scripts” wherein ACT does not allow a reader to read to a group of students.

ACT does allow the DVDs to be played on a computer; however, the DVD must **not** be copied to the computer. Guidelines for using ACT DVDs are available at:
<http://www.act.org/aap/statetesting.html>.

25. Must students with a read aloud accommodation be tested individually?

If a student is approved to use a reader (human), he/she must test individually in a separate room. Since accommodations are applied to all tests in the battery, this separate room policy applies to all tests in which a Reader Script is used. However, a student may choose not to use his or her approved accommodation, such as a reader, in which case this policy would not apply.

26. Whom may we contact with accommodation questions concerning the ACT?

Contact ACT by calling 800-553-6244 x1788 between 7:00 am and 5:00 pm CST, Monday–Friday or email ACTStateAccoms@act.org.

Additional information on accommodations, including a North Carolina ACT Accommodations Summary Table, may be found at <http://www.act.org/aap/northcarolina/>.

27. Does a request for a medical exception need to be submitted to the NCDPI for students required to take the ACT?

Yes, a medical exception must be submitted to and approved by the Division of Accountability Services/North Carolina Testing Program in order for students to receive a medical exception for the ACT.

28. What if the student's diagnosis has changed before testing, but the paperwork was already sent in?

ACT sends each school a preliminary roster which identifies all students approved for ACT-Approved accommodations and the specific accommodations and timing for each student. TACs must review the preliminary roster carefully to determine if any errors or omissions occurred, or if there are any questions. If a student’s diagnosis changed since the original paperwork was submitted, send this additional documentation to ACT by the specified deadline. If ACT does not receive additional documentation, no changes to the approved accommodation will be made. Contact ACT for further guidance.

29. Sometimes students transfer into our school before testing. What is the process for transferring the student's test materials from the original school to our school?

ACT will transfer a student's accommodations from one school to the next using the Transfer Form that will be made available on the state or district website. Both the new school and the former school will complete and sign the form, which will release the accommodations and remove the student from the former school's roster and transfer the accommodations and add the student to the new school's roster. Transfers must be requested by the deadline on your Checklist of Dates. Do not transport the testing materials from one school to another. Any test materials that were shipped to the former school for the transferred student should not be used by any other student, and should be returned to ACT along with the other accommodations materials after the testing window. If you need a form or have questions, please call our State Testing Accommodations area at 800/553-6244 extension 1788.

30. What if we have a student who breaks his arm or has another type of medical emergency after the deadline for submitting requests for accommodations has passed? Does he/she have to test with standard time?

If you have a student who has a medical emergency after the deadline to submit an Application for ACT-Approved Test Accommodations has passed, please call us at 800/553-6244 extension 1788. We will discuss the procedures for requesting accommodations for this student under these special circumstances.

31. What are locally approved accommodations?

A locally approved accommodation does not require ACT approval. The student must be able to test standard time, with normal breaks, and need no special test format. Examples of locally approved accommodations are such things as a wheelchair accessible room, color overlays, etc. Refer to the manual for further details.

32. If a student with an IEP who has been approved for accommodations suddenly decides he/she wants to test with no accommodations the morning of the test, what do we do?

The student may choose to test standard time. If so, the student MUST use the standard time test materials and test in a standard time room rather than use the accommodated materials that were assigned to him/her. Return the standard time answer document with the standard time materials. Return the assigned accommodation test materials (unused in the zip lock packet) with the rest of the accommodation materials, and note on the accommodations roster "student tested with standard time." Please refer to the "Students Who Elect to Test Without Accommodations" topic in the ACT Supervisor's Manual State Special Testing for more details.

33. Can a student be approved to test over multiple days?

Yes. If a student is approved for multiple days, he/she must take the ACT tests within the two-week testing window. The ACT for state testing may be administered during regular school hours, or before or after the student's school day. It's important to remember, each test must be completed in one testing session. One cannot stop a test prior to completion and finish it the next day.

Limited English Proficient Students:**34. Will limited English proficient students (LEP) in their first-year in US schools be required to take the ACT?**

LEP students in their first-year in U.S. schools will be required to take the ACT. These students will be counted for meeting the 95 percent participation requirement but will not be included in the state accountability model.

Alternate Assessments:**35. Will alternate assessments be administered for the ACT?**

All students in grade 11 are required to take the ACT except for those students who have a significant cognitive disability and are receiving instruction in the Extended Content Standards. These students will take a newly developed Grade 11 **NCEXTEND1** alternate assessment. The grade 11 **NCEXTEND1** administration will occur during the February 27–March 30, 2012 testing window.

NOTE: ACT is not responsible for the administration of **NCEXTEND1**. Questions regarding **NCEXTEND1** should be directed to the Division of Accountability Services/North Carolina Testing Program.

Occupational Course of Study Students:**36. Are students enrolled in the Occupational Course of Study (OCS) required to take the ACT?**

Yes, OCS students are required to participate in the statewide ACT assessment per IDEA.

37. Since many OCS students are not eligible for college, does the school system have to apply for ACT accommodations for those eligible, or may state accommodations be requested instead?

Each student's situation must be evaluated independently. Two accommodation options are available to students with disabilities for the ACT: (1) ACT-Approved accommodations and (2) State-Allowed accommodations. ACT-Approved

accommodations result in ACT scores that are fully reportable to colleges, scholarships, and other entities. ACT scores from State-Allowed accommodations administration are **not** college reportable.

Career Technical Education Personnel and ACT Responsibilities:

38. Can Career and Technical Education (CTE) personnel perform the role of either ACT Testing Supervisor, ACT Back-up Testing Supervisor, or an ACT Test Accommodations Coordinator?

Yes, it is a local decision as to who can fill these roles. The issue for the ACT and PLAN relates to maintenance of time and effort (OMB Circular A-87) that requires personnel who are paid exclusively from Perkins funds to perform only CTE functions. In the instances of a Test Supervisor and Testing Accommodations Supervisor, the time needed to complete the necessary tasks would create an issue. It is appropriate for the CDC/SPC to serve as a room monitor or test reader on the day of testing as it will be an activity that the entire school will be involved in and will involve only a few hours. (The CDC/SPC should not be the only position taken from their normal duty to provide the service.) Individuals appointed to serve as testing staff must meet the qualifications and responsibilities provided by ACT.

Fee Waivers:

39. How will fee waivers (waivers allowing students to have a college application processed free of charge for taking the ACT) be handled for fall 2012?

ACT provides the form, *Request for Waiver or Deferral of College Admission Application Fee* on page 43 of the *ACT's User Handbook*, which may be provided to the institution(s). The LEA must work with the student's college(s) of choice to determine if the process remains intact for the student participating in state testing as ACT or the North Carolina Testing Program is not involved in a college's decision to consider a waiver.

Ordering and Managing Materials:

40. Is it possible to allow school districts to order, receive, and manage all ACT testing materials?

No, ACT ships directly to high school principals, test supervisors, and test accommodations coordinators for the purposes of ACT state testing.

Access to Communications:

41. How will school district test coordinators gain access to communications sent to principals regarding the ACT?

The NCDPI is working to provide ACT with the e-mail addresses of each school district test coordinator in the state. Therefore, when ACT messages are sent to school principals, they will also be received by district test coordinators. The NCDPI Accountability Services Division will also post announcements on the Testing News Network (TNN) to update school test coordinators on the latest information regarding the ACT.

PLAN

Eligibility:

1. Who is required to take PLAN?

All public and charter school students in grade 10 according to NC WISE will participate in PLAN. The only exceptions are as follows:

- Students who have a significant cognitive disability, receive instruction in the Extended Content Standards, and whose current IEPs document participation in the **NCEXTEND1** grade 10 alternate assessment.
- Students deemed medically fragile because of a significant medical emergency and/or condition and unable to participate in testing. All medical exceptions must be approved by the Division of Accountability Services/North Carolina Testing Program.

Administration Dates and Times:

2. What are the administration dates and administration times for PLAN?

The testing window for PLAN is December 5–December 16, 2011. Schools may schedule testing anytime within the window. The PLAN program has been designed to be administered within a half day during school-supervised sessions. It takes about 3 hours and 15 minutes to complete the entire program: approximately 60–70 minutes for the non-test sections and 2 hours and 10 minutes for the four tests of educational development.

3. Will PLAN replace the PSAT?

No, the PSAT will still be available to school systems. The PSAT's funding is not impacted by PLAN.

4. What time of day does PLAN begin?

The 9:00 a.m. start time does not apply to PLAN test administrations. The start time for the administration is a local decision.

Accommodations:**5. How are accommodated testing materials acquired for PLAN students?**

There is not an ACT-Approved process for PLAN accommodations. However, PLAN accommodations' requests should be supported by the students' IEPs or Section 504 Plans. Schools or districts use the online ordering website <http://www.act.org/app/orders/northcarolina/plan> to enter the total number of accommodated testing materials needed at each school. Accommodated materials include audio CDs, reader's scripts, large print test books, and Braille test books.

NOTE: The order window runs from October 17 – November 7th.

6. Do students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and/or Section 504 Plans need to be amended to include accommodations for the 2011–12 administration of PLAN?

No, IEPs and Section 504 Plans should not be amended for PLAN. Accommodations requests should be supported by the students' IEPs or Section 504 Plans that are filed at the school.

7. Will there be changes to the IEP accommodations form in 2012–13 to reflect PLAN?

Yes, the testing accommodations form will be changed to reflect accommodations provided for PLAN.

8. Whom may we contact with accommodation questions concerning PLAN?

Call ACT Customer Service at 877-789-2925

9. Does a request for a medical exception need to be submitted to the NCDPI for students required to take PLAN?

Yes, a request for a medical exception must be submitted to and approved by the Division of Accountability Services/North Carolina Testing Program in order for students to receive a medical exception for PLAN.

Limited English Proficient Students:**10. Will limited English proficient students (LEP) in their first-year in US school be required to take PLAN?**

LEP students will be required to take PLAN. However, this assessment will not be included in the state accountability model.

Alternate Assessments:

11. Will a newly developed alternate assessment be administered for PLAN?

No, a new alternate will not be developed. The current grade 10 **NCEXTEND1** alternate assessments of Reading, Mathematics, and Science will serve as the alternate assessment for PLAN. Students who qualify for this alternate assessment must have a significant cognitive disability, receive instruction in the Extended Content Standards, and have current IEPs documenting participation in the **NCEXTEND1** grade 10 alternate assessments. The grade 10 **NCEXTEND1** administrations occur during the April 16–June 15, 2012 testing window.

WorkKeys

A separate WorkKeys FAQ will be coming soon.