

End-of-Course Exams Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the purpose of end-of-course exams?

A: The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has identified the following purposes for end-of-course testing:

- Measuring student achievement and progress toward postsecondary readiness
- Identifying students' strengths and weaknesses
- Communicating expectations for all students
- Meeting state and national accountability requirements
- Evaluating programs

End-of-course exams will provide a valid and reliable method for assessing students' knowledge of Missouri's Course-Level Expectations (CLEs). They will also allow classroom teachers to incorporate statewide assessment results into students' course grades.

Q: Which courses will be included in end-of-course testing?

A: Beginning in 2008-09, end-of-course assessments will be available for three subjects: Algebra I, English II and Biology. End-of-course exams for Geometry, Algebra II, Integrated Mathematics II and III, English I, Government, and American History are being developed for use in 2009-10 and beyond. Additional science assessments also will be developed, but the specific courses to be covered have not been determined.

Q: What is the timeline for implementing end-of-course testing?

A: Algebra I, English II and Biology exams will be available for administration beginning in fall 2008. One complete form of each of these tests will be released to the public in August 2008. Geometry, Algebra II, Integrated Mathematics II and III, English I, Government, American History and additional science assessments (specific courses to be determined) will be available for administration in the 2009-10 school year. One complete form of each of these tests will be released to the public in August 2009. Results of 2008-09 end-of-course testing will be considered for accountability purposes in 2009-10.

Q: What is the format for end-of-course tests?

A: The Algebra I, English II and Biology assessments will include one section consisting of multiple-choice items and one section with a performance event (Algebra I and Biology) or a writing prompt (English II). Tests in these content areas will be designed to be administered in two 55-minute class periods; however, they will not be timed.

Additional end-of-course assessments (available in 2009-2010) will consist entirely of multiple-choice items and will be designed to be administered in one 55-minute class period. All assessments will be available in both paper/pencil and online formats.

Q: Who will take end-of-course exams?

A: A student who completes a course or sequence of courses incorporating the content of the Course-Level Expectations will be expected to take the corresponding end-of-course exam. Students will be expected to take the end-of-course exam upon completion of the content of the CLEs, regardless of grade level. If CLEs are included in courses that are organized in a two-year format (Algebra IA and Algebra IB, for example), students will take the exam at the end of the second year.

Q: If a student is failing a course, is he/she required to take the EOC exam?

A: No. If a student is failing a course and/or the district is not going to award credit, the district may opt to administer the end-of-course exam to the student at a later time when he/she has successfully completed the content of the CLEs being assessed.

Q: How many end-of-course exams will students take?

A: Districts must ensure that all students take eight end-of-course exams (Algebra I, English II, Biology, one additional test in each of these content areas, as well as two social studies end-of-course tests) prior to high school graduation.

Q: Will students be required to pass end-of-course exams prior to graduation?

A: No. While students will be required to take end-of-course exams upon completion of CLE content, DESE will not establish a “passing” score.

Q: How will end-of-course testing be phased in?

A: Beginning in 2008-2009, districts must administer Algebra I, English II and Biology end-of-course tests to freshmen and sophomores that are enrolled in corresponding courses. During the first two years of implementation (2008-09 and 2009-10), juniors and seniors that are enrolled in these classes will be expected to take corresponding end-of-course tests. Districts will not be responsible for ensuring that all students have completed eight end-of-course assessments until 2010-2011.

Q: When will districts administer end-of-course tests? Can different buildings within a district administer the tests at different times of the year?

A: Districts will administer end-of-course tests when students complete the applicable CLEs. Flexible administration schedules will allow districts to order and administer tests during summer school, at the end of the fall semester and at the end of the spring semester. Schools will be expected to identify a one-week window for test administration. Ordering windows will be flexible to allow for varying school calendars and schedules:

- Fall window: November 3, 2008 – January 31, 2009
- Spring window: April 15, 2009 – June 15, 2009
- Summer window: June 16, 2009 – August 31, 2009

If school buildings within a district have different schedules, the district will be able to place multiple orders to accommodate those needs. Results for students assessed during the summer window (June 16-August 31) will be included in the following year’s accountability calculations.

Q: If students are enrolled in a school for less than a year, do they still take end-of-course exams?

A: Yes. If a student completes a course for which there is an end-of-course exam, the student will take the exam regardless of when he/she enrolled in the school. However, the end-of-course exam results for students that have not been enrolled in the district for a full academic year will not be included in accountability calculations.

Q: How will end-of-course exams be scored? When will students receive their scores? Will the scores impact their grades?

A: Districts will send completed end-of-course exams to Riverside Publishing Company for scoring or submit exams electronically if they are completed online. Schools will receive raw score results from selected-response items within 24 hours for online exams or within five business days after Riverside Publishing receives paper answer sheets. For example, if an end-of-course exam included 45 selected-response items, and the student answered 40 items correctly, that student's raw score would be 40. Teachers will score students' responses to performance events and writing prompts locally. A student's raw score on selected-response items combined with his/her score on open-ended items (determined by the classroom teacher), will contribute to that student's course grade. DESE strongly recommends that a student's end-of-course exam score account for a minimum of 10 percent, but no more than 25 percent, of the course grade.

When all end-of-course assessments for the year have been completed statewide, Riverside Publishing Company, with the assistance of Missouri teachers, will also score students' responses to open-ended items (much the same way that MAP constructed-response items and performance events are scored). Students' scores on those items will be combined with their raw scores on selected response items to determine their achievement levels (similar to MAP achievement levels). By August 1 of the school year following administration, districts will receive a score report that will include building- and district-level data, as well as individual students' achievement levels.

Q: How will teachers obtain copies of performance events and writing prompts for local scoring?

A: Within five business days after end-of-course assessments are completed and returned to Riverside Publishing Company, the contractor will provide scanned electronic copies of performance events/writing prompts and student responses to districts for local scoring.

Q: How will teachers be trained to score performance events and writing prompts locally?

A: When Riverside Publishing Company receives a building's completed end-of-course assessments, teachers in the building will receive access to online training, including training and anchor papers and qualifying procedures, to score performance events/writing prompts locally. Online training will parallel that provided to the contractor's scorers and to Missouri teachers participating in in-state scoring events.

Q: Will 8th grade students who take a course that requires an end-of-course exam also take the 8th grade MAP test in the same content area?

A: Yes.

Q: How will end-of-course tests be field-tested and who will be involved?

A: The Algebra I, English II and Biology tests will be field-tested in spring 2008. With the exception of a sample of online tests administered in selected districts, these field tests will be paper-pencil and will be administered separately from all other statewide testing. All students enrolled in these courses will participate in some portion of the field test. Initial field tests for remaining end-of-course exams will be conducted in spring 2009. After the initial field tests, all field testing will be embedded, meaning that every student completing an end-of-course exam will also complete a small number of field-test items as part of the operational test.

Q: Will MAP-A students have to take end-of-course exams?

A: No. If a student meets the criteria for MAP-A eligibility, he/she will continue to participate in the MAP-A throughout high school.

Q: How will districts identify which students should take an end-of-course test, particularly if course names do not correspond to end-of-course tests?

A: End-of-course exams should be administered when the content outlined in the CLEs is completed, regardless of the name of the course. However, districts should be mindful that the CLEs have been developed by Missouri teachers to most accurately reflect the content that should be included in those courses.

Q: Will students in grades 3-8 ever be required to take end-of-course tests?

A: Students in grades 3-8 will continue to take the MAP test in its current format.