### Field Testing

**NEW Benefits of Field Testing**

| How do Field Tests Help Teachers and Students? | Teachers receive each student’s marks promptly, gaining useful, immediate information about their students’ levels of expertise and knowledge. Students also benefit from writing a test that is similar to the experience of writing a diploma exam. Field tests provide students and teachers with good examples of the style and content of questions that may appear on diploma exams. Finally, because of field testing, students, teachers, and parents can be reassured that the questions on diploma exams have undergone a rigorous process of development, improvement, and validation. |
| Why are Field Tests Necessary? | Field testing is an absolutely essential stage in the development of fair, valid, and reliable provincial exams. Field testing is basically a process of “testing a test” and “testing questions” before they become part of a diploma exam. Potential diploma exam questions are administered to students in diploma exam courses throughout the province to determine their difficulty level and appropriateness. Ideally, each field test requires a large student sample to provide the exam developers with reliable information (statistical data and written validation comments from teachers and students). |
| How are Field Test Data Used? | The data received from field tests show the reliability of each question. Sometimes, after one field test round, it is clear that certain questions work very well in terms of fairness, validity, and appropriateness to course content. These questions then move into the diploma exam bank to be used at a future date. Other questions or sets of questions may not perform as well as we require. These questions are subject to revision and review, then retested in a second or third field test with the aim of generating questions that meet our standards. These changes are influenced by the written comments of students and teachers, who provide valuable advice about the appropriateness of the questions, adequacy of writing time limits, test length, text readability, artwork/graphics clarity and suitability, and question difficulty. |
Field Testing

Description of the Field Testing Program

Alberta Education prepares and administers field tests prior to the January and June diploma exam administration sessions. Field testing is essentially a process of “testing a test” – test questions are administered to determine their difficulty level and their appropriateness for use on a diploma exam. As well, teachers are able to provide comments about potential test questions, thereby contributing to the development of fair, valid, and reliable provincial exams. Teachers are asked to consider the following points when commenting on specific questions and the overall field test:

• appropriateness of the questions
• adequacy of writing time limits
• test length
• text readability
• artwork/graphics clarity and appropriateness
• question difficulty.

Field tests may be composed of multiple-choice and/or numerical-response questions, depending on the course and type of field test being administered. Generally, field tests, like diploma exams, are designed to assess outcomes from entire programs of study. However, some of the field tests that Alberta Education administers are “unit” tests that assess learning outcomes from only portions or sections of those programs of study.

Diploma exam program field tests are available in paper, digital, or hybrid formats. A hybrid field test consists of sources provided in a paper format while field test questions are accessed and responded to online. The Humanities Diploma Examination Program Field Tests are available in paper, digital, and hybrid formats. The Math/Science Diploma Examination Program Field Tests are available in digital and hybrid formats.

Paper format field tests are delivered to a school and administered to students by an assigned Alberta Education field test supervisor.

Digital format field tests are delivered and administered to students using computers under the supervision of the teachers who requested them. Field tests of this format must be administered to students using Alberta Education’s Quest A+ locked browser application, which is available for download at http://questaplus.alberta.ca/help/requirements.html.
Hybrid format field test source materials are mailed to schools and the questions are accessed in the same manner as digital format field tests. Prior to the hybrid format field test, the paper-format source materials must be kept secure by the school principal. After the administration of a hybrid format field test, **teachers must mail the paper-format source materials back to Alberta Education after the 24 hour perusal period.**

Field tests for both the Humanities and Math/Science are not available in special formats. Writing accommodations such as extra time, reader, or scribe may be permitted. If these accommodations are required for paper format field tests, please indicate this at the time of the field test request. In some circumstances, additional field test supervisor support may be required for these instances, and this requires advance notification and planning.

If writing accommodations such as extra time, reader, or scribe are required for **digital or hybrid format** field tests, the school is responsible for providing the necessary support. The extra time accommodation on Quest A+ can be unlocked by using the Supervisor PIN. Additional information regarding this process is included in the Digital Format Field Test Instructions.

All field tests are secure before, during, and after administration.

Paper format field tests are administered to students in Francophone schools by field test supervisors who speak French. Every effort is made to schedule French speaking field test supervisors to administer paper format field tests to students in French Immersion programs. However, it is not always possible to do so.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the field test administration scores and feedback, all field tests are administered to a prescribed number of students in classes that are selected to ensure a representative sample from across the province.

### Participation Requirements

For a class of students to be selected to have a field test administered at their school, the following conditions must be met:

1. The teacher must submit a request for a field test by the published deadline. **Field test requests can be submitted through an online request system:**
   
   [http://public.education.alberta.ca/FieldTestScheduler](http://public.education.alberta.ca/FieldTestScheduler) or by using the form located at the bottom of this website:
   
   [http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/forms/](http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/forms/).

2. A field test placement of the type specified by a teacher on a field test request application must be available for scheduling.
Field Test Security and Administration Rules

For field test results to be fair, valid and reliable, field tests must be administered under conditions that are similar to the administration of diploma exams. Consequently, all of the directives and rules that are specified in this bulletin for the administration of diploma exams apply to the administration of field tests. In addition to the directives and rules that are specified elsewhere in this bulletin, the following rules must be adhered to when field tests are administered in a school.

1. The security of all field test materials must be maintained before, during, and after their administration.

2. Paper format field tests must be administered by, and remain in the custody and control of, Alberta Education personnel at all times.

3. Digital and hybrid format field tests must be administered by, and at all times remain under the custody and control of, the teacher whose students are writing them.

4. Immediately following a field test administration session, teachers who administer digital and hybrid format field tests must submit a declaration to Alberta Education concerning the security of the testing material and its administration. The declaration is submitted online at this link: [https://questaplus.alberta.ca/teachertools.html](https://questaplus.alberta.ca/teachertools.html).

5. Teachers whose students are writing paper format field tests must remain present in the exam room for the duration of the field test and are expected to verify the answer key and to review and validate test questions.

6. Prior to reviewing and validating a paper format field test, a teacher must review and sign a declaration concerning the security of the field test materials.

7. Only teachers whose students are writing a particular field test may examine its contents.

8. Validation of a paper format field test must occur in the exam room where the field test is being administered.

9. Validation of a digital or hybrid format field test may occur within a 24-hour period following the field test administration. Digital and hybrid format field test contents are secure, and must not be copied or replicated in any manner.

*NEW* 10. After the 24-hour perusal period, source material for hybrid format field tests must be mailed back to Alberta Education.
11. No paper, digital, or hybrid format field test question or answer key may be copied, either by hand or mechanically, for any purpose.

12. Discussion of field test questions after their administration must be limited to a review of the concepts being assessed rather than to details of specific questions.

13. Students must be made aware of the purpose and importance of a field test prior to its administration.

14. Students who arrive late are not permitted to write a field test if there is insufficient time to complete it within the scheduled administration time.

**Field Test Marking**

Machine-scored digital and hybrid format field tests will be electronically marked by Alberta Education. Student scores will be emailed to the teacher who supervised its administration, once the teacher has submitted the required security declaration form to Alberta Education. In addition to a raw score, digital and hybrid format field test results will also contain additional information, including the proportion of students in the class who chose each alternative on the multiple-choice items and the proportion who left a numerical-response item blank. The items will be blueprinted to program of studies outcomes so that the teacher can use field test results to learn more about the strengths and weaknesses of their students. Teachers may use this report during the digital or hybrid field test perusal window.

The machine-scored questions on paper format field tests will be marked by the field test supervisor; student scores will be tabulated and provided to the participating teacher before the supervisor leaves the school. Alberta Education will provide no other field test marks.
In 2015–2016, Alberta Education will be administering paper, digital, and hybrid format field tests for diploma exam courses within the following timeframes.

### Paper Format Field Test Administration Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year End Field Tests:</th>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Session 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 7–18</td>
<td></td>
<td>May 16–June 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 4–12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Digital Format Field Test Administration Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Tests:</th>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Session 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 21–December 18</td>
<td></td>
<td>February 1–June 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 4–27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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### Hybrid Format Field Test Administration Sessions

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**Notes:**
- Hybrid format Math/Science field tests are only available for year-end field test types.
- Social Studies field tests (paper, hybrid, digital) should only be administered from January 4–12 and June 1–10.
- Requests for paper and hybrid format field tests must be submitted to Alberta Education by **October 16** for Session 1 administrations and by **March 18** for Session 2 administrations.
- Requests for digital format field tests must be submitted to Alberta Education at least **5 working days** prior to the preferred field test administration date.
- All field test requests that are submitted using the paper-based form must be submitted by **October 16** for Session 1 administrations and by **March 18** for Session 2 administrations. The paper-based field test request form is located at the bottom of this webpage: [http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/forms/](http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/forms/).
Participation Approval and Request Process

A deadline-sensitive process is used by Alberta Education to schedule and administer field test sessions in Alberta schools. That process, and school and school authority responsibilities related to it, are as follows.

1. If a superintendent has previously provided authorization for Alberta Education to conduct field tests in within his or her school authority, the consent will automatically be carried forward to subsequent years. If a superintendent does not permit its schools to participate in field testing or would like to verify or change the status of authorization, please notify field.test@gov.ab.ca expressing this intention.

2. If a school principal has previously provided consent for teachers within his or her school to participate in the Field Testing Program, the consent will be carried over to subsequent years. If a school principal would like to remove this consent or would like to verify or change the status of consent, please notify field.test@gov.ab.ca expressing this intention.
   2.1. Via the Extranet, Principals authorize individual teachers to access the Field Test Request System. When teachers sign up for the Field Test Request System service, an email will be sent to the Principal indicating authorization is required.
   2.2. If a Principal has previously provided authorization for a teacher to access the Field Test Request System, the authorization will be carried forward indefinitely. Via the Field Test Request System, a Principal can remove authorization for a teacher to access this application.
   2.3. At any time, Principals can monitor field test requests for the school via the Extranet.

3. Teachers submit field test requests:
   3.1. Self-service: Field test requests are submitted using the Field Test Request System. http://public.education.alberta.ca/FieldTestScheduler
   3.2. Paper-based process: Teachers may also request field tests by submitting a field test request form. The field test request form is located at the bottom of this webpage: http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/forms/.
   3.3. Two field test sessions are run within each school year, September-January (Session 1) and February-June (Session 2). Schools must submit separate field test requests for each of these field test sessions.
   3.4. Teachers who intend on requesting field tests either through the self-service or field test request form processes must obtain an Alberta Education account. Instructions regarding this process can be found at this link: http://goo.gl/aTGB8F.
4. Alberta Education schedules field test placements:
   4.1. Submitted field test requests are reviewed.
   4.2. The individual field test requests are reviewed to determine if (a) they match the participation requirements and (b) there are any available field tests for administration; where a match is found, a field test placement is scheduled.

5. Alberta Education communicates and confirms field test placements:
   5.1. Once the scheduling of paper format field test placements is complete, Alberta Education sends a follow-up email to selected teachers communicating pertinent details of the paper-format field test.
   5.2. When digital and hybrid format field tests are placed, Alberta Education sends a follow-up email to the teacher who placed the request and who will be supervising its administration. This email communicates the information the teacher requires to access and administer the digital or hybrid format field test. For hybrid field tests, Alberta Education will send information regarding the shipment of paper-format source materials.
   5.3. Prior to each scheduled paper format field test administration, a field test supervisor from Alberta Education will contact the teacher whose students will be writing to confirm administrative details (e.g., date, time, and location of the test administration; number of students being tested).
Significant Dates

August 31, 2015  First day teachers may submit Session 1 and Session 2 paper, digital, and hybrid format field test requests. Field test requests are submitted via the Field Test Request Application or by using the Field Test Request Form.

October 16, 2015  Last day for teachers to submit Session 1 paper or hybrid format field test requests.

March 18, 2016  Last day for teachers to submit Session 2 paper or hybrid format field test requests.

Note: Requests for digital-format unit and year-end field tests must be submitted at least five business days prior to the preferred field test administration date.

Please also refer to the Field Test Request and Administration Dates on page 6 of this section for dates when field tests will be administered.