Field Testing

Description of the Field Testing Program

Alberta Education administers field tests prior to the administration of May/June Provincial Achievement Tests. Field testing is a critical large scale assessment design process which ensures that all information provided by Alberta Education provincial assessments is reliable and valid. 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 future Provincial Achievement Tests. Moreover, field testing allows students to become familiar with the Provincial Achievement Test testing environment and similar-type test items. This exposure has the potential to reduce test anxiety. Furthermore, teachers are able to provide comments about potential test questions, thereby contributing to the development of fair, valid and reliable provincial assessments.

Teachers are asked to consider the following points when commenting on specific questions and the overall 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 Provincial Achievement Tests, are designed to assess a variety of outcomes from the corresponding programs of study. However, some field tests that Alberta Education administers are *unit* tests that assess learning outcomes from only portions or sections of those programs of study.

Provincial Achievement program field tests are available in either digital or paper formats, or, for some courses, both. They are not available in special formats. Students may write Provincial Achievement Test field tests using reader, or scribe accommodations.

The school is responsible to provide the necessary support for these accommodations. Field tests are to be completed within the scheduled timeframe; it is important for teachers and Alberta Education to get an idea of appropriate test lengths which are captured by the field test completion rate. The information captured in relation to students who complete the field test in the allotted time is invaluable and informative for the creation of valid and reliable assessments.

It is best if all students complete the field test. If class time permits and students need more time, the writing time may be extended for 15-mins. However, students who are unable to complete the entire field tests are not to be penalized and raw scores may be prorated. Teachers may create a mark for the student out of the number of questions completed and not the entire field test. Students should not be instructed to guess the remaining answers on the field test as this will skew the statistics of the field test.

All field tests are secure before, during and after the administration. Digital format field tests are administered to students using computers under the supervision of the teachers who requested them. Digital field tests must be administered to students using Alberta Education's *Quest A+* locked browser application, which is available for download at https://questaplus.alberta.ca/help/requirements.html.

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

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. A teacher must submit a request for a field test by the deadline. Field test requests are submitted through an online request system: http://public.education.alberta.ca/FieldTestScheduler or by using a paper-based form: https://education.alberta.ca/media/3272826/pat-paper-format-field-test-request.pdf

The following presentation will walk staff though the field test request process: https://prezi.com/6klnbxqfgloy/field-test-request-help/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy

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 valid and reliable, field tests must be administered under conditions that are similar to those that apply to the administration of Provincial Achievement Tests. Consequently, all of the directives and rules that are specified in this bulletin for the administration of Provincial Achievement Tests 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 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. Teachers whose students are writing paper format field tests must be present in the examination room at all times.

5. Teachers whose students are writing paper format field tests may verify the answer key and 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 examination room where the field test is being administered.

9. Validation of a digital format field test may occur within a 24-hour period following the field test administration.

10. No paper or digital format field test question or answer key may be copied, either by hand or digitally for any purpose.

11. 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.

12. Students must be made aware of the purpose and importance of a field test prior to its administration. Field tests are not intended to be used as a student assessment, they *test* the test items.

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

Field Test Scoring

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.

The machine scored sections of a digital format field test will be electronically marked by Alberta Education.

Field Test Administration Dates

In 2017-2018, Alberta Education will administer paper and digital format field tests for Provincial Achievement Test courses as follows:

Paper Format Field Test Administration Dates	
Unit Tests:	
Year End Field Tests:	April 16 – May 4 • Français 6 et 9 Partie A: Écriture • French Language Arts 6 et 9 Partie A: Écriture • Grade 6 ELA Part A: Writing • Grade 9 ELA Part A: Writing • K&E 9 ELA Part A: Writing May 14 – June 15 • Français 6 et 9 Partie B : Lecture • French Language Arts 6 et 9 Partie B : Lecture • Grade 6 ELA Part B: Reading • Grade 9 ELA Part B: Reading • K&E ELA 9 Part B: Reading • Grade 6 Mathematics and Mathématiques Part A • Grade 9 Mathematics and Mathématiques Part A • K&E Mathematics • Grade 6 Social Studies and Études sociales • Grade 9 Social Studies and Études sociales • K&E 9 Social Studies • K&E 9 Science

Digital Format Field Test Administration Dates	
Unit Tests:	
Year End Field Tests:	April 16 – May 5 • Grade 6 ELA Part A: Writing • K&E 9 ELA Part A: Writing May 14 – June 15 • Grade 6 ELA Part B: Reading • Grade 9 ELA Part B: Reading • K&E ELA Part B: Reading • Grade 6 Mathematics and Mathématiques Part A and Part B • Grade 9 Mathematics and Mathématiques Part A and Part B • K&E 9 Mathematics • Grade 6 Social Studies and Études sociales Part(ie) B • Grade 9 Social Studies • K&E 9 Social Studies • Grade 6 Science and Sciences • Grade 9 Science and Sciences • K&E 9 Science

Deadline for Field Test Requests:

- Paper format year end field tests must be submitted by **March 20.** Digital format year end field tests must be submitted five business days prior to the preferred field test administration date.

Participation Approval and Request Process

A formal and deadline-sensitive process is used by Alberta Education to schedule and administer field tests 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 within his or her school authority, the consent will automatically be carried forward to subsequent years. If a superintendent does not permit 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 intent.

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 intent.
   2.1. Using 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 using the Extranet.

3. Teachers submit field test requests:
   3.1. Teachers who intend on requesting field tests must obtain a Public Authentication System (PAS) account. Instructions regarding this process can be found at this link: http://goo.gl/aTGB8F.
   3.2. To request field tests, the teacher whose students will be writing the field tests can submit a request using the Field Test Request System - http://public.education.alberta.ca/FieldTestScheduler. Alternately, teachers can submit field test requests by paper form and email the request to field.test@gov.ab.ca - http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/forms/.

4. Alberta Education schedules field test placements:
   4.1. The individual field test request is reviewed to determine if it matches an available field test administration; where a match is

found, a field test placement is scheduled.

  4.2. Paper format field test requests are also reviewed for supervisor availability. If a supervisor is not available in a particular region the following options may be exercised:

    4.2.1. The school administration may recommend and provide an alternate supervisor, such as an assistant principal or teacher.

    4.2.2. The teacher may elect to administer the field test in digital format.

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 confirmation to the teacher who requested the field test.

  5.2. When a digital format field test placement is complete, 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 format field test.

  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.

Special Format Practice Tests

Field tests are not available in special format versions. Alberta Education produces special format practice tests to provide students, who are eligible for these accommodations and audio provisions an opportunity to practice provincial achievement test-style questions. Special format practice tests are available in Braille, audio, large print or coloured print versions. French Braille tests are available by request. Special format practice tests are produced for all Provincial Achievement Test courses and are distributed free of charge. Special format practice tests are produced in limited quantities, therefore, the number of special format practice tests distributed to each school is restricted and should only be administered to students eligible for Provincial Achievement Test accommodations and audio provisions. For more information, contact (780) 492-1644.

Significant Dates

September 1, 2017   First day teachers may submit field test requests. Field test requests are submitted via the *Field Test Request Application*.

March 20, 2018   Last day for participating schools to submit *Paper Format Field Test Request*s for year-end field tests.

June 10, 2018   Last day for participating schools to submit Digital Format Field Test Requests for year-end field tests.