Online Test Scheduling Guidelines

Note: These guidelines apply to the online administration of the Smarter Balanced Assessment. Those schools administering a paper version of the assessment are restricted to a three week test window beginning in April. More information on paper-and pencil testing will be provided in a separate document.

Testing Time and Recommended Order of Administration

All students participating in the assessments will receive a Computer Adaptive Test (CAT), a Classroom Activity, and a Performance Task (PT) in both English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics.

Testing Time and Scheduling

Testing Windows

Each district will establish a schedule for the administration of the Smarter Balanced summative assessments using a testing window as defined below:

**Grades 3–8**

- Testing shall not begin until at least sixty-six percent (66%) of a school’s annual instructional days have been completed, but no sooner than March 16, 2015.
- Testing may continue up to and including the last day of school.

**Grade 11**

- Testing shall not begin until at least eighty percent (80%) of a school’s annual instructional days have been completed, but not sooner than March 16, 2015. A typical North Dakota high school might begin testing between April 1 and April 20, 2015, depending on the school calendar.
- Testing may continue up to and including the last day of school.

*Note: Sixty-six percent of a school year occurs after the 120th instructional day in a 180-day year, leaving a twelve-week window for grades 3–8 testing; eighty percent of a school year occurs after the 144th instructional day in a 180-day year, leaving a seven-week window for grade eleven testing.*

Scheduling Time for Testing:

Table 1 contains rough estimates of the time it will take most students to complete the Smarter Balanced assessments based on the time it took students to complete the Smarter Balanced Pilot and Field Tests. This information is for scheduling purposes only, as the assessments are not timed.
### Estimated Testing Times for Smarter Balanced Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) items</th>
<th>Performance Task (PT)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Classroom Activity (administered prior to the PT)*</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>hrs : mins</td>
<td>hrs : mins</td>
<td>hrs : mins</td>
<td>hrs : mins</td>
<td>hrs : mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Arts/Literacy</td>
<td>3–5</td>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>3:30 :30</td>
<td>4:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6–8</td>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>4:00 :30</td>
<td>4:30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>4:00 :30</td>
<td>4:30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>3–5</td>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>1:00</td>
<td>2:30 :30</td>
<td>3:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6–8</td>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>1:00</td>
<td>3:00 :30</td>
<td>3:30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>3:30 :30</td>
<td>4:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>3–5</td>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>6:00 1:00</td>
<td>7:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6–8</td>
<td>3:30</td>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>6:30 1:00</td>
<td>7:30</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>3:30</td>
<td>7:30 1:00</td>
<td>8:30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Classroom Activities are designed to fit into a thirty-minute window; however, the time within the window will vary due to the complexity of the topic and individual student needs.

When developing a testing schedule, use the estimated testing times to calculate the number of days and the amount of time it will take to complete an assessment in each content area and grade level.

These estimates do not account for any time needed to start computers, load secure browsers, and log in students, nor do they account for breaks. TAs should work with SCs to determine precise testing schedules.

Schools are encouraged to design a testing schedule friendly to instructional needs, hardware availability, and local scheduling needs.

**Recommended order of online administration**

The assessments are comprised of two components (tests) for ELA and mathematics: a CAT and a PT. All PTs must be preceded by the administration of a Classroom Activity.

Smarter Balanced recommends that students take the CAT and PT items on separate days. For each content area, Smarter Balanced also recommends that students begin with the CAT items, followed by the Classroom Activity, and then the PT. Districts/Schools may opt to administer in a different order if needed; however, the Classroom Activity, which is designed to introduce the PT, **must** occur prior to the PT.
Recommended Order of Test Administration

**Classroom Activity**

The purpose of the Classroom Activities is to introduce students to the context of a performance task so they are not disadvantaged in demonstrating the skills the task intends to assess. Classroom Activities do not address content information; instead, they focus on vocabulary and key contextual topics. The Classroom Activity is designed to be an introduction and not an assessment.

Guidelines for administering the Classroom Activity for ELA or mathematics are as follows:

Classroom Activities should be administered by a teacher. It is preferable—but not essential—that the teacher or TA administering the Classroom Activity has content knowledge in the area of assessment.

The teacher/TA should be able to record information—including any tables, graphics, formulas, or other information contained in the Classroom Activity materials—for students to see, such as on a chalkboard or dry-erase board. Computers, projectors, and other technology are allowed but not required for the Classroom Activity. Recorded information should not be available when students participate in the PT. When the PT is being administered, content from the Classroom Activity should not be available (i.e., do not put any content from the Classroom Activity on the board, in handouts, etc.).

Students may take notes during the Classroom Activity, but the notes may not be used during the PT. Notes must be collected before proceeding to the PT and stored in a secure location until securely shredded.

There should be no more than a **three-day lapse** between the Classroom Activity and the PT administration. Inadvertently administering the PT before or without the Classroom Activity constitutes a testing irregularity.

Classroom Activities should only be administered to students once and are designed to be completed in approximately thirty minutes.

The Classroom Activity is non-secure; however, it should not be supplemented with any other content that the administrator may think is helpful. Supplementing the Classroom Activity may detract from the intended purpose of the Classroom Activity and is not advised.

Consider the appropriate accommodations that should be provided to students in the class that would normally be provided during instruction. *Appendix G: Accessibility Guidelines for Classroom Activities* contains information on these student resources that can be provided during the Classroom Activity.

In the event a student is absent during the Classroom Activity, a make-up session must be scheduled. The Classroom Activity may be recorded; however, the make-up session should provide students with an experience similar to that of his or her peers. To the greatest extent possible, the make-up session should provide students an opportunity to interact with the teacher or TA and his or her peers.

See section 3.1 Security of the Test Environment for more security guidance.
**Duration and timing information for ELA and mathematics**

The scheduling/rules for each of these components is included in Table 2 and Table 3 on the next page. Note that the duration, timing, break/pause rules, and session recommendations vary for each content area and component.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELA</th>
<th>CAT Items</th>
<th>Classroom Activity</th>
<th>Performance Task (PT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Number and Duration of Sessions** | Recommendations:  
No fewer than two sessions (recommended) and no more than six sessions (rare/extreme).  
Session durations range from 40–60 minutes. | Recommendations:  
Administer in one session  
Approximate session duration: 30 minutes  
Should occur one to three days prior to PT  
Should NOT occur on the same day as the ELA PT | The PT is presented in two parts.  
Recommendations:  
Administer in two sessions corresponding to Parts 1 and 2 of the PT.  
Session durations range from 60–120 minutes. |
| **Breaks within Sessions** | Breaks can be provided during the test sessions using the software’s pause feature.  
If the test is paused for more than 20 minutes, the student will not be able to go back to items on the previous screens. | NA | The PT is presented in two parts.  
Students can take breaks within Parts 1 and 2; however, once a student moves to Part 2, he or she will not be able to review or revise items in Part 1.  
Recommendation:  
Students complete Part 1 in one test session and Part 2 the next school day. |
| **Total Duration** | Once a student has started the CAT items, they will be available for 45 days.  
Recommendation: Student completes this portion within five days of starting. | NA | Once a student has started the PT, it will be available for 10 days.  
Recommendation: Student completes each part of the PT within one day. |
Table 3: Assessment Sequence—Mathematics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>CAT Items</th>
<th>Classroom Activity</th>
<th>Performance Task (PT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Number and Duration of Sessions** | Recommendations: Administered in two sessions.  
Session durations range from 40–60 minutes.  
Most students will complete the CAT items in two sessions of 60 minutes or less or one long session of more than 60 minutes. | Recommendations: Administered in one session  
Approximate session duration: 30 minutes  
Should occur as close to the PT as is feasible, and no more than three days prior to the PT  
MAY occur on the same day as the PT | Recommendations: Administered in one session.  
Session duration ranges from 40–120 minutes. |
| **Breaks within Sessions**    | Breaks can be provided during the test sessions using the software’s pause feature.  
If the test is paused for more than 20 minutes, the student will not be able to go back to items on the previous screens. | NA                                                              | Students can take breaks during PT test sessions.  
Mathematics PT items are presented on a single screen. Following a break, the student will have access to the same items. |
| **Total Duration**            | Once a student has started the CAT items, they will be available for 45 days.  
Recommendation: Student completes this portion within five days of starting it. | NA                                                              | Once a student has started the PT, it will be available for 10 days.  
Recommendation: Student completes the PT in one day. |

Additional administration recommendations

For the performance tasks, students may be best served by sequential, uninterrupted time that may exceed the time in a student’s schedule.

Minimize the amount of time between beginning and completing each test within a content area.

Important reminders:

1. The number of items will vary on the CAT portion of each student’s test.
2. The tests are not timed, so all time estimates are approximate.
3. Students should be allowed extra time if they need it, but test administrators need to use their best professional judgment when allowing students extra time. Students should be actively engaged in responding productively to test questions.
4. The test can be spread out over multiple days as needed.
5. The Classroom Activity must be completed prior to administration of the PT. Inadvertently administering the PT before the Classroom Activity is considered a testing irregularity.