

STAAR – End of Course (EOC) Frequently Asked Questions

GENERAL

1. What is STAAR?

The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, or STAAR, will replace the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) program beginning in spring 2012.

2. Why is there a new assessment program for Texas students?

This new system will focus on increasing postsecondary readiness of graduating high school students and helping to ensure that Texas students are competitive with other students both nationally and internationally.

3. In what grades, subjects, and course will students be assessed under the new STAAR program?

STAAR EOC assessments will be available for Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II, biology, chemistry, physics, English I, English II, English III, world geography, world history, and U.S. history.

4. In general, how will the STAAR assessment program be different from the TAKS assessment program?

- Increasing the rigor of both the assessments and the performance standards for all grades, subjects, and courses.
- Changing high school assessments from grade-based to course-based assessments.
- Establishing postsecondary-readiness performance standards for Algebra II and English III.

5. What are the most significant differences between the STAAR assessments and the TAKS assessments?

- The rigor of items has been increased by assessing skills at a greater depth and level of cognitive complexity.
- The total number of test items for the STAAR assessments has been increased for most grades, subjects, and courses.
- A four-hour time limit has been established for STAAR assessments, as opposed to TAKS which was untimed.
- STAAR EOC assessments will differ from the current TAKS high school assessments in that each STAAR EOC assessment will cover only the content from a particular course (e.g., Algebra I will assess only Algebra I content) rather than content from multiple courses (e.g., Algebra I and grade 8 mathematics were assessed on the TAKS grade 9 mathematics tests).

- STAAR EOC assessments for English I, II, and III will be administered over two days, with the writing component on day one and the reading component on day two.
- STAAR English I, II, and III will require students to write two essays addressing different purposes for writing rather than one longer personal essay, which TAKS required.
- The test designs for English I, II and III will allow for the reading and writing components to be equated and scaled separately so that reading and writing scores can be reported separately. This means that a student will need to retake only the portion of the STAAR English I, II, or III assessment (reading or writing) that he or she did not pass.
- Most STAAR mathematics and science assessments will have an increased number of open-ended (griddable) items to allow students the opportunity to derive and answer independently without being influenced by the answer choices provided with the questions.

6. How will student performance be described on STAAR?

There will be two cut scores, which will identify three performance categories. For the general STAAR assessments, STAAR Modified, and STAAR L, the labels for the performance categories are;

- Level II: Advanced Academic Performance
- Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance
- Level I: Unsatisfactory Academic Performance



Unsatisfactory – students do not meet the satisfactory standard

Satisfactory – Standard, similar to the Met-Standard scale score on TAKS

Advanced – similar to Commended on TAKS, but more aligned to college readiness

7. Which students will be required to take the STAAR EOC assessments?

Students first enrolled in grade 9 or below in the 2011-2012 school year will be required to take the STAAR EOC assessments for courses in which they're enrolled as part of their graduation requirements and will no longer take TAKS. Students enrolled in grade 10 or above in the 2011-2012 school year or who are repeating grade 9 in the 2011-2012 school year will graduate under TAKS requirements and do not have the option of taking STAAR assessments.

	2011–2012	2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015
Grade 9	EOC	EOC	EOC	EOC
Grade 10	TAKS	EOC	EOC	EOC
Grade 11	Exit-TAKS	Exit-TAKS	EOC	EOC
Grade 12	Exit-TAKS	Exit-TAKS	Exit-TAKS	EOC or Exit-TAKS*

8. What are the testing requirements for students who repeat grade 9 in the 2011-2012 school year?

Repeating grade 9 students in the 2011-2012 school year have TAKS as their graduation requirement. These students will not take the TAKS grade 9 assessments, as these tests are no longer available. However, districts may choose to administer a released TAKS test or a locally developed test to students. Students are eligible to take the TAKS grade 10 assessments as soon as they are reclassified as 10th grades.

9. What are the testing requirements for a student who moves into a Texas public high school (i.e., a student who moves from out of state, from a private school, or has migrant status)?

A student who receives high school credit out of the state or country or from a private school for a course assessed by STAAR is not required to take that assessment if the Texas school district accepts the course credit from the school in which the course was taken. As a result, the student's cumulative score will be based on fewer assessments. However, the student could choose to take the assessment and has the option of using the score in his or her cumulative score.

SCORE REQUIREMENTS

10. What score do students have to make on each test in order to graduate?

Students must achieve a cumulative score “at least equal to the product of the number of EOC assessments taken in that content area and a scale score that indicates satisfactory performance”. (number of EOCs x satisfactory scale score).

- Satisfactory standard score will be determined by TEA
- Student must achieve at least the minimum score on an EOC exam in order for the score to count toward the cumulative score
- Cumulative score requirement may vary by subject area
- If a student retests, the highest score is used to determine the cumulative score

11. How is performance on the EOC tied to a student’s graduation requirements?

In addition to meeting the course requirements established by state and local policy, a student will also need to meet the required performance standards for all applicable end of course assessments.

GRADING

12. What ways will the EOC have an effect on grading?

A student’s score on the initial end-of-course assessment shall count for 15% of the student’s final grade for the course as reported on the student’s transcript. (policy EIA Local). Awarding of credit will continue to be based on semester averages.

13. How will the 15% from the EOC affect a student’s grade point average and class rank?

The EOC will have no effect on a student’s grade point average or class rank. Grade points and class rank continue to be determined by semester average only.

14. If a student passes a course but fails to make a minimum score on the EOC, must the course be repeated?

No, the student would be required only the retake the EOC.

RETESTING

15. When must a student retake an EOC?

If a student does not meet at least the minimum score requirement, the student **must** retake the assessment until a satisfactory score is attained.

16. Under what conditions does a student have an option to retake an EOC?

A student may choose to retest on an EOC assessment for any reason, including attempting to raise an already satisfactory score.

17. When will retakes be offered?

Beginning July 2012, EOC testing windows will occur four times every year: spring, summer, fall, and winter.