

## NC Final Exams Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

**2016–17**

*For specific questions about the EVAAS growth model or Effectiveness Status, please contact the Educator Effectiveness Team at [educatoreffectiveness@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:educatoreffectiveness@dpi.nc.gov).*

- 1. Q: Are NC Final Exams part of the state’s READY Accountability Model?**  
**A:** No. end-of-grade (EOGs) and end-of-course (EOC) assessments are part of the state’s READY Accountability Model. The NC Final Exams are not part of the Accountability Model and are used in grades or subject areas that do not have an EOG or EOC to measure student growth for teachers and school growth for participants in the North Carolina Educator Effectiveness System (NCEES).
- 2. Q: Does the 95 percent rule for participation in assessments in the North Carolina Testing Program apply to the NC Final Exams? If not, can local education agencies (LEAs) “excuse” students who are already failing the course from taking the NC Final Exam?**  
**A:** The 95 percent rule does not apply to the NC Final Exams. However, all students enrolled in courses in which NC Final Exams are administered must take the appropriate assessment at the completion of the course. This includes students who are identified as failing a course, grade, or subject for which an NC Final Exam is required.
- 3. Q: If an NC Final Exam is administered in a class, are all students enrolled in the class required to take the assessment?**  
**A:** Yes. State Board policy GCS-A-016 requires all eligible students who are enrolled in a grade/course in which an NC Final Exam is being administered to participate in the administration, with or without accommodations.
- 4. Q: Are middle school students who are taking a course with an NC Final Exam required to take the NC Final Exam if they are taking the EOG in the same subject area?**  
**A:** Yes. If a middle school student is enrolled in a course in which an NC Final Exam is administered, he or she is expected to take **both** the NC Final Exam and the EOG exam. For example, an 8<sup>th</sup>-grade student enrolled in Earth/Environmental Science would take both the Earth/Environmental Science NC Final Exam and the grade 8 Science EOG.
- 5. Q: Can high school seniors be exempted from the NC Final Exams by the building principal, a school-based exemption policy, or a local board of education policy?**  
**A:** No. Per State Board policy GCS-A-016, all eligible public school students shall participate in the administration of the NC Final Exams, with or without accommodations, including seniors who are exempt from final exams by local board of education policy.
- 6. Q: Are students enrolled in the North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS) required to take an NC Final Exam?**  
**A:** Yes. All students (including charter school students) enrolled in courses taught by the NCVPS

must take the corresponding NC Final Exams. This includes NCVPS Occupational Course of Study (OCS) courses that are taught jointly between the LEA and NCVPS.

**7. Q: Are students enrolled in a course for credit recovery required to take an NC Final Exam in that course?**

**A:** No. Students taking a course for credit recovery are not required to take the NC Final Exams. If an LEA/charter school chooses to administer the NCFE as part of a credit recovery requirement, the scores are not included in the growth model.

**8. Q: Are students enrolled in an AP or IB course required to take an NC Final Exam?**

**A:** No. AP and IB courses have a different process for determining teacher effectiveness.

**9. Q: Are students with disabilities and students identified as English Learners (ELs) required to participate in the NC Final Exams?**

**A:** Students with disabilities who are currently instructed on the Extended Content Standards and, according to their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), participate in the **NCEXTEND1** alternate assessments are the only students with disabilities who are exempt from the NC Final Exams. Students identified as EL who score below Level 4.0 Expanding on the reading subtest of the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT™) and are in their first year in U.S. schools are exempt from the NC Final Exams for English I, English III, and English IV. However, these students are required to participate in the administration of the NC Final Exams for science, mathematics, and social studies.

**10. Q: What is required of charter schools in regards to NC Final Exams?**

**A:** Effective with the 2016–17 school year, the administration of NCFEs is optional for charter schools. An exception to this policy is for charter school students enrolled in courses through the North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS). These students must participate in the corresponding NCFEs.

**11. Q: How do the NC Final Exams affect a student's overall grade average?**

**A:** Results from a valid test administration should be used as a minimum of 20 percent of the student's final grade for each respective course. This requirement does not apply to end-of-year assessments in grades 3–8, but public schools may adopt policies to use results from end-of-year assessments in grades 3–8 elementary and middle schools as part of the student's final grade.

**12. Q: What is the testing time allotted for each NC Final Exam?**

**A:** The administration time for all NC Final Exams (elementary, middle, and high school) is 120 minutes. No administration of the NC Final Exams may exceed 120 minutes, and each exam must be administered in one school day (except for students with documented special needs requiring accommodations, such as *Scheduled Extended Time* and/or *Multiple Testing Sessions*). The 120-minute administration time does not include time for general instructions and breaks.

**13. Q: Are there alternate assessments for the NC Final Exams for students receiving Exceptional Education Services?**

**A:** No. There are no alternate assessments for the NC Final Exams for Exceptional Children. Students with disabilities, including students only receiving services under Section 504, may receive testing accommodations for the NC Final Exams. The need for accommodations must be

documented, and copies of the documentation must be kept at the school and be made available to test coordinators. The accommodations must be used routinely during the student's instructional program and similar classroom assessments. For all NC Final Exams, (1) *Braille*, (2) *Large Print*, (3) *One Test Item Per Page*, and (4) *Large Print-One Test Item Per Page* editions are available for order. Additionally, special print requests can be made.

**14. Q: What type of questions are on the NC Final Exams?**

**A:** Some NC Final Exams have only multiple-choice questions for which the students have to choose the best answer. Other NC Final Exams also include one or more questions that require students to write a short answer.

**15. Q: Who may administer and proctor the NC Final Exams?**

**A:** The principal is responsible for the assignment of trained test administrators and proctors for the NC Final Exams.

**16. Q: Beginning with the 2016–17 school year, student growth will no longer be a stand-alone standard in the North Carolina Educator Effectiveness System (NCEES). How will the NC Final Exams affect a teacher's evaluation rating?**

**A:** NCDPI will continue to report student growth for teachers based on the NC Final Exams. The growth data from these exams, however, will not be used as a formal component of the NCEES process. Student growth data may be used by an evaluator to inform ratings on the five standards of the teacher (or seven standards of the principal) evaluation process. How growth data are used in employee evaluation is at the discretion of the employing LEA. All processes related to measuring student and/or school growth will continue (unchanged) for the 2016-17 school year.

**17. Q: If a teacher teaches more than one class with an EOC, EOG, and/or NC Final Exam, which scores are used for a teacher's growth rating?**

**A:** When a teacher teaches multiple classes with EOCs, EOGs, and/or NC Final Exams, the scores from all of the assessments administered that school year are combined in what is called an "evaluation composite," and the evaluation composite is used to determine the teacher's student growth. Teachers are able to see value-added reports for each of the courses, grades or subjects they teach in order to examine the evaluation composite in more detail.

**18. Q: How is the three-year average used to determine the rate of growth calculated? Is there weighting based on student enrollment?**

**A:** The average is a simple arithmetic mean; there is no weighting based on student. The growth rating used as a factor in the overall Educator Effectiveness Status is based on the average of the EVAAS growth values for each year. This value is a rolling average. After three years, the oldest year drops off, and the newest year becomes part of the average calculation.

**For example:**

Year 1 rating = 1.9 (met expected growth)

Year 2 rating = -2.5 (did not meet expected growth)

Year 3 Rating = 1.2 (met expected growth)

Add:  $1.9 + -2.5 + 1.2 = .6$  and divide by three to get the average:  $6/3 = .2$  (met expected growth)

- 19. Q: Will the Educator Effectiveness Reports for a teacher become public record?**  
**A:** No. Educator Effectiveness Reports are only available by district and school, not by individual teacher. Thus, only aggregate data is provided to the public. The public report suppresses the count when a cell contains 5 or fewer teachers.
- 20. Q: How will Exceptional Children (EC) teachers populate their data? In many cases they are co-teaching rather than content-area teachers.**  
**A:** EC teachers will participate in a roster verification process in which they will claim responsibility for students they have directly instructed (as in a co-teaching situation) or supported on content standards (as in a push-in/pull-out model). For EC teachers who support students with general academic skills (e.g., organizational or study skills), EVAAS is not an appropriate measure of effectiveness. LEAs have the final authority over whether EC teachers participate in roster verification or not.
- 21. Q: What assessments will be used in K–2 programs to determine student growth?**  
**A:** The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction has partnered with the mClass:Reading 3D program to determine student growth in grades K–2.
- 22. Q: Will elementary school teachers who teach subjects such as art or music (where they teach all K–5 students) have to assess every single student in every grade that they teach?**  
**A:** Teachers in the Arts, World Languages, and Healthful Living as well as teachers of Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses will use an Analysis of Student Work (ASW) process for which they will select a sample of students from whom they will collect work.