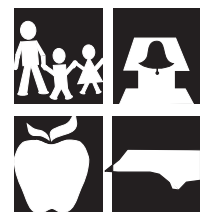


# Assessment Brief



Public Schools of North Carolina • State Board of Education • Howard Lee, Chairman • North Carolina Department of Public Instruction • June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed. D., Superintendent

## North Carolina Online Test of Computer Skills

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### Computer Proficiency Graduation Requirements

State Board of Education policy HSP-N-004 (16 NCAC 6D .0503) states that all students must demonstrate computer proficiency requirements in order to receive a North Carolina high school diploma. Students tested during grade eight who do not meet the proficiency standard are to be retested during subsequent years on the test. Until the graduation requirement has been met, beginning at grade eight, a student must be provided focused remedial instruction. Students who satisfy all state and local graduation requirements but do not meet the computer proficiency standards (a) shall receive a certificate of achievement and transcript and (b) shall be allowed by the LEA to participate in graduation exercises. Any student who has failed to meet the computer proficiency standards and who exits high school without a diploma may receive additional remedial instruction and continue to take the tests during regularly scheduled testing until the student reaches maximum school age (age 21). The school system may, at its discretion, provide remedial instruction and retesting opportunities for students beyond age 21.

The goals of the computer proficiency graduation requirement are to ensure that: (1) most students enter high school with sufficient computer skills and (2) no students exit North Carolina high

schools without sufficient computer skills.

Students may not be administered the computer skills test earlier than the fall of the eighth grade. Students following the Career Preparation, College Technical Preparation, or the College/University Preparation Course of Study must meet the computer skills proficiency requirements by participating in (1) the standard test administration, (2) the standard test administration with accommodations as stated in the student's current Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or limited English proficiency plan, or (3) the North Carolina Computer Skills Alternate Assessment. Per State Board of Education policy HSP-N-004 (16 NCAC 6D .0503), students following the Occupational Course of Study (OCS) must meet the standard as stated in the student's current IEP.

### Computer Skills Tests

The year a student enters grade eight determines which forms of the computer skills test students must take in order to meet the requirement for graduation. Students who entered grade eight from the 1996–1997 school year through the 1999–2000 school year must meet the computer skills graduation requirement based on the 1992 computer skills curriculum. Students who entered grade eight in the 2000–2001 school year through

2004–2005 must meet the computer skills graduation requirement based on the 1998 computer skills curriculum. Students who enter grade eight for the first time in the 2005–2006 school year and beyond are required to meet the computer skills graduation requirement based on the 2004 computer/technology skills curriculum.

### **Online Test of Computer Skills**

Students who enter grade eight for the first time in 2005–2006 will be administered the North Carolina Online Test of Computer Skills to fulfill the computer skills proficiency graduation requirement. This test replaces the computer skills tests for the 1992 and 1998 standards. The online computer skills test is designed to measure the components of the grades K–8 computer/technology North Carolina *Standard Course of Study* curriculum adopted by the SBE in 2004. This curriculum may be found at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/computerskills/scos/>.

The online test items assess the following strands of the curriculum: (1) keyboard utilization/word processing/desktop publishing, (2) database use, (3) spreadsheet use, (4) telecommunications, (5) societal issues, and (6) multimedia presentation. The computer skills system uses NCDesk as the generic proprietary application to deliver the online test.

Testing time for the North Carolina Online Test of Computer Skills is about 120 minutes. One stretch break is allowed after 60 minutes of testing. Fifty percent of the test is response monitored (constructive), and 50% of the test is selected response (multiple-choice). There are 72 items on the test. The test has four sections of 18 items in each section. Some items on the test are theme based. Theme based items, in groups of six, span a range of strands/objectives and address a common topic. Two sample items are located at the start of the test just prior to question number one. One sample question is a constructive response item and one is a selected response item.

### **About NCDESK**

NCDesk is a collection of small Java programs that replicate common applications, plus a test interface and a Test Simulation used to understand how the online computer skills test works. The NCDesk programs perform a limited set of functions and can be used externally from the online test and Test Simulation.

### **Test Simulation**

To prepare students for the North Carolina Online Test of Computer Skills, students are strongly recommended to complete the Test Simulation. The Test Simulation is not a test; it is to be used only for practicing the mechanics of navigating through the actual online test. Students may practice entering selected responses by either: (1) using the mouse to click on the letter of the response or (2) using the keyboard to key the letter of the response. During the Test Simulation, students have the opportunity to become familiar with section navigation and item tracking/flagging/response features.

The Test Simulation does not require that the computer use any network resources to function. However, users must install the NCDesk application in order to access the Test Simulation. The current version of NCDESK may be downloaded from the following site: <http://cuacs8.mck.ncsu.edu/ncdesk/current.asp>.

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