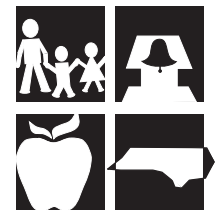


Assessment Brief



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 Tests of Computer Skills

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The North Carolina Tests of Computer Skills

The North Carolina Tests of Computer Skills were initially implemented during the 1996–97 school year for eighth-grade students who graduated in 2001. In May 1991, the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) adopted a policy that required all students, beginning with the class of 2000, to demonstrate computer proficiency in order to receive a high school diploma (Feature C of the Quality Assurance Program). In October of 1995, the SBE modified the requirement, which made it effective beginning with the graduating class of 2001 [HSP-N-004 (16 NCAC 6D .0503)]. Students who entered grade eight for the 1996–97 school year and beyond are required to satisfy the computer proficiency requirement in order to receive a North Carolina high school diploma. The North Carolina Tests of Computer Skills must be administered at least once during the eighth-grade year with subsequent opportunities during high school, as needed, to allow students the opportunity to satisfy the requirement before completing their senior year of high school.

The computer skills tests were designed to measure the computer skills component of the North Carolina *Standard Course of Study* grades K–8 of the K–12 curriculum. The goals of the computer proficiency 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.

Initially the computer skills tests were administered as a single test with a multiple-choice and a performance component. The initial design required students to achieve a scale score on the performance component of the test equal to or greater than 49 and a combined scale score equal to or greater than 46. Under the old standard, the pass/fail status was assigned for student performance on the combined components of the test. At the recommendation of the Computer Skills Advisory Committee, after input from educators and other stakeholders, the SBE modified the standard for passing the computer skills requirement effective July 1, 1997. The modified standard required that the test be separated into two tests: a multiple-choice test and a performance test. Either test could be passed independently of the other. The standards for the 1992 curriculum (**Test Edition 1**) and the 1998 curriculum (**Test Edition 2**) computer skills tests require that a student achieve a performance test scale score of 49 or above and a multiple-choice test scale score of 47 or above. Eligible students with disabilities who entered grade eight for the first time in 1996–1997 through the 2004–2005 school year, if documented on the students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), may use the **Computer Skills Portfolio** to assess

proficiency in computer skills.

In recent years discussions and resources were dedicated to exploratory research and development examining the feasibility of redesigning the North Carolina Tests of Computer Skills for the purpose of combining the tests into a single test and for delivering the redesigned single test online as an Internet-based, linear assessment. The redesigned test would broaden the annual test administration windows, deliver the test in a more cost-efficient manner by eliminating the need for hand-scoring, and provide students, parents, and schools with results of student performance in a shorter time period. Unlike the initial multiple-choice and performance computer skills tests, the online test would not require students to save files, print documents, or match ID numbers from the test booklet to student printouts.

The **North Carolina Online Test of Computer Skills** was administered for the first time as an operational pilot assessment during the first semester (Fall 2005) and as an operational assessment during the spring semester (Spring 2006) of the 2005–2006 school year. The North Carolina Online Test of Computer Skills is administered to fulfill the computer skills proficiency graduation requirement for students who enter grade eight for the first time in the 2005–2006 school year and beyond.

The North Carolina Online Test of Computer Skills measures the strands set forth and specifically defined in the North Carolina Computer/Technology Skills *Standard Course of Study* adopted by the SBE in February 2004: Societal/Ethical Issues, Database, Spreadsheet, Keyboard Utilization/Word Processing/Desktop Publishing, Multimedia/Presentation, and Telecommunications/Internet. The standard for the 2004 curriculum (**Test Edition 3**) North Carolina Online Test of Computer Skills requires that a student achieve a scale score of 150 or above. The standard was adopted by the SBE in March 2006.

The North Carolina Online Test of Computer Skills uses NCDesk as the generic proprietary application for assessment delivery. NCDesk

comes installed with a Test Simulation. The Test Simulation is an abbreviated functional demonstration of how the test interface works. During the Test Simulation, students have the opportunity to become familiar with section navigation and item tracking/flagging response features. For more Test Simulation information visit <http://ncdesk.ncsu.edu/ncdesk/simulation.asp>. Users must install the NCDesk application in order to access the Test Simulation. Instructions for installing NCDesk can be found at <http://ncdesk.ncsu.edu>. The NCDesk programs perform a limited set of functions and can be used externally from the test and Test Simulation.

The **North Carolina Computer Skills Alternate Assessment** may be used to meet the standard for (1) students who cannot access the North Carolina Online Test of Computer Skills as a result of technical/technology limitations at the building level and (2) students with disabilities who, due to the nature of their disabilities, are not able to access the North Carolina Online Test of Computer Skills even with the available approved accommodations.

School Years of Eligibility

Eligibility for the appropriate curriculum and the coinciding test edition/standard for which students are held accountable is determined by the year a student enters grade eight. The following table defines the year the curriculum was adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education, the appropriate assessment (test edition/standard) to measure a specific curriculum, and the years of eligibility that are used to determine the assessment that is appropriate for a specific student.

Curriculum Year	Test Edition	Eligibility School Years
1992	1	1996-1997 to 1999-2000
1998	2	2000-2001 to 2004-2005
2004	3	2005-2006 and Beyond

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