

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

ACT® Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

2016–17

The following FAQ has been developed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) to assist school systems in the administration of the ACT. This information should be used in conjunction with other testing materials in the administration of the test, including all information from the test publisher.

- Parents may find more information about the ACT at <https://www.act.org/path/parent/>.
- Students may find more information, including how to access their ACT scores, at <http://www.actstudent.org/>. (Student ACT scores do not belong to the NCDPI. Students can only access their ACT scores through ACT.)

Eligibility

1. Which students are required to take the ACT?

All public and charter school students who are enrolled in grade 11 for the first time according to PowerSchool are required to take the ACT. The only exceptions are

- students who have a significant cognitive disability and receive instruction using the Extended Content Standards in all assessed content areas (i.e., English Language Arts/Reading, Mathematics, and Science). These students take the Grade 11 **NCEXTEND1** alternate assessment.;
- students who have a current Individualized Education Program (IEP) documenting participation in the Grade 11 College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment (CCRAA) as well as a written parental request for participation in the CCRAA;
- students deemed medically fragile because of a significant medical emergency and/or condition and are unable to participate in testing (All medical exceptions must be approved by the Division of Accountability Services/North Carolina Testing Program.);
- students who have been retained in the 11th grade and previously took the ACT;
- students who took the SAT® or the ACT before January 1, 2017, with scores that meet the ACT college readiness benchmark standards.

2. Are students who are homebound/hospitalized, and still enrolled in the school system, eligible to take the ACT?

Yes. Homebound/hospitalized students can be administered the ACT at home or in a hospital/treatment setting. If a homebound/hospitalized student requires accommodations, schools must follow the same accommodations request process for these students as they do for students attending school. These students are counted in the NCDPI accountability model. Schools must work with their LEA test coordinator and complete an off-site testing form before conducting the assessment.

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3. May nonpublic schools and home schools participate in the statewide administration of the ACT on February 28, 2016?

No. The February 28, 2016, statewide administration of the ACT is for North Carolina public school students only. As with any vendor assessment, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) does not function as a third-party for nonpublic or home school students.

4. If students have taken the ACT or SAT before January 1, 2017, and have scores that meet the benchmark standard(s) noted below, will they have to participate in the statewide ACT administration?

No. Students who have met the ACT or SAT benchmark prior to January 1, 2017 are not required to participate. However, it is the students' responsibility to notify the school that they do not wish to participate in the test administration. Before submitting a request for exemption, students must have either SAT or ACT test scores that meet the following college readiness benchmarks:

- SAT college readiness benchmark scores prior to March 2016 include all of the following subtests:

Test	SAT Score
Critical Reading	500
Mathematics	500
Writing	500

- SAT college readiness benchmark scores after March 2016 include the following subtests:

Test	SAT Score
Evidence-Based Reading and Writing Score	480
Mathematics	530

- The ACT college readiness benchmark scores include all of the following subtests:

Test	ACT Score
English	18
Mathematics	22
Reading	22
Science	23
Writing	7

5. If students have already taken the ACT through national testing and did not meet the college readiness benchmark scores, are they required to take the ACT again when it is offered at the school?

Yes. If students took the ACT through national testing and did not meet the benchmarks, ACT has waived its normal 60-day retest restriction for state testing and students must test on one of the state test dates (initial or makeup). The state pays for only one ACT weekday in-school test administration.

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6. Does the 95 percent participation rule apply to the ACT test?

Yes. The 95 percent participation rule for the state accountability program is in effect for the ACT assessment.

7. Are students eligible to test if they move to Junior status after February 28, 2017?

No. Students who are moved to Junior status after February 28, 2017 are not eligible for the 2016–2017 ACT test administration.

8. Are students who transfer into a school from another state between February 28 and March 14, 2017 eligible to take the ACT?

Yes. Students who transfer into a school as a junior from another state between February 28 and March 21, 2017, are eligible to take the ACT.

9. What happens if Juniors move to Senior status or Sophomores move to Junior status after the set deadline for ordering the ACT materials passes?

The school principal should be aware of and take into consideration these possibilities when providing the school's grade 11 enrollment figure to ACT. Test coordinators will be tasked with confirming material numbers in January 2017. ACT will provide a standard overage of both nonsecure and secure materials. Should a school require more than this standard overage, it may contact ACT for additional materials. ACT does not provide an overage of ACT-Approved accommodation materials.

Test Window

10. What are the administration dates for the ACT assessment?

For paper testing, the initial test date for schools is February 28, 2017. The make-up test day for these schools is March 21, 2017. For schools participating in the online ACT assessment, the testing window is February 28–March 14, 2017. The Accommodations Testing Window is February 28–March 14, 2017. There is no retest opportunity for the ACT assessment.

11. What happens if a student is absent on the initial test day?

If a student is absent on February 28, the student will be rescheduled to test on March 21. If the student misses testing on both February 28 and March 21, there is no additional makeup opportunity. Schools participating in the online ACT assessment may conduct makeup testing at any time during the testing window. Students approved to test with accommodations may test at any time during the testing window.

Test Planning

12. Are schools required to administer the ACT test online?

No. Schools may choose to administer the test either paper/pencil or online. This decision should not be made districtwide, instead it should be a school-based decision.

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13. When does a school test if it is not scheduled to be in session (i.e., tracked out, on spring break, etc.) on February 28 or March 21?

If a school is not scheduled to be in session on February 28, all students are expected to test on March 21. If a school is not in session on March 21, all students are expected to test on February 28.

14. If a school is not in session on February 28 or March 21, does it still test students with accommodations during the accommodations window of February 28–March 14?

Yes. These students should be tested during the accommodations window. Students may be approved for multiple-day testing by ACT.

15. What time must the ACT begin?

The ACT tests must be administered as the first activity of the morning. Testing must begin, at the latest, by 9:00 a.m. in all rooms on both the initial and makeup test dates. Testing begins when the room supervisor begins reading the Verbal Instructions. Timing for reading the Verbal Instructions will vary by room. Each room proceeds independently.

The 9:00 a.m. start time does not apply to students taking the ACT with accommodations.

16. How much time should be scheduled for ACT testing?

For the standard administration (without accommodations), schools must provide an uninterrupted period of 4 and one-half hours for either test format. Each student with ACT-approved accommodations has an assigned Timing Code that identifies the timing guidelines authorized for that student. NOTE: Additional time will be needed by testing staff to complete pre and post-testing responsibilities.

17. What if all students finish a subtest before the allowed time elapses?

Even if all students in the room finish a test before the standard allowed time elapses, the full time for each test must be given. Students do not move on to the next subtest until time is called for the current subtest.

Lunch and Breaks

18. Do students have a lunch break during the ACT standard time administration?

No. The standard time test day must not include extended breaks for meals (e.g., lunch) or other activities. Providing a lunch break may result in the invalidation of scores.

19. Are any breaks allowed between the ACT standard time subtest?

Yes. The ACT requires schools to allow a break of 15 minutes at the end of Test 2 and a break of 5 minutes at the end of Test 4 for both testing formats. The school should not attempt to preset a break schedule for all test rooms. Testing must resume no later than 15 minutes after STOP is called on Test 2. The school may wish to designate a rest area. Staff and students may bring snacks and beverages into the test room, but they must consume them only outside the test room during breaks.

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Sending Scores to Colleges

20. Are students required to send their scores to a college(s) when taking the ACT through the NCDPI?

No. Students are not required to send their scores to any colleges (or other reporting agencies) when taking the ACT through the NCDPI.

21. How many colleges may students send their ACT scores to, and is there a charge to have a student's score report sent to a college(s)?

There is no charge for students to list up to four colleges (or other reporting agencies).

If students wish to send additional reports to other agencies or colleges after receiving their score, an Additional Score Report Request may be submitted. The cost is \$12.00 per report (normally processed within one week after receipt) or \$16.50 (processed in two business days and typically delivered in the United States within three to four days). This fee applies regardless if the student, for example, initially requested only two reports at the time of testing. The student is responsible for paying for any subsequent reports beyond those requested initially.

Students do not need to designate the NCDPI as a score recipient. The NCDPI will receive scores regardless of the agencies or colleges students designate.

Training

22. What type of training is required for the ACT test coordinators, test administrators, and proctors?

All school ACT test coordinators will be required to attend face-to-face North Carolina policy and procedure training with their district test coordinator. School test coordinators will need to contact their district test coordinator for the date and time of this training.

All school ACT test coordinators, test administrators, and proctors are required to view recorded training sessions for the format that is offered at their site. (ACT offers a variety of training videos. School test coordinators will need to determine which training videos best fit the needs of their test format.) Recorded trainings and a schedule of the question-and-answer sessions are posted to the ACT Schedule of Events which can be found at www.act.org/stateanddistrict/northcarolina.

In January 2017, ACT and the NCDPI will co-host an ACT webinar that will include important information about the facilitation of the ACT assessment in school. LEA test coordinators, charter school test coordinators, and school test coordinators are encouraged to attend this webinar to gain insight into the testing process, as well as to ask questions about the implementation of the assessment. Please check the Schedule of Events for more information.

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Proctors

23. Are proctors required for the ACT administration?

Yes. A proctor is required (in addition to the room supervisor) for every 25 students beyond the first 25 in a testing room. Use the following scale (for standard testing) to determine the minimum number of proctors required in each paper test administration room:

Students per room:	1–25	26–50	51–75	76–100	101–125 (each additional 25)
Proctors per room:	0	1	2	3	4

For online testing, use the following scale to determine the minimum number of proctors required in each room:

Students per room:	1–25	26–50	51–100	101-150	151-200
Proctors per room:	1	2	3	4	5

NOTE: For accommodations, a proctor is required to assist the room supervisor if more than 10 students with the same timing code are testing in the room.

24. May proctors be used in a situation where the number of students in an administration site does not dictate that one be present?

Yes. School districts may elect to have a proctor in the room if fewer than 26 students are testing.

Accommodations

25. What types of accommodations can a student apply for on the ACT?

Two accommodation options are available to students with disabilities for the ACT: (1) ACT-Approved Accommodations and (2) Non-College Reportable Accommodations. Via the online testing format, students may choose to test with extended time, text-to-speech, or a number of accessibility features.

26. What is the difference between ACT-Approved Accommodations and Non-College Reportable Accommodations?

ACT-approved accommodations result in ACT scores that are fully reportable to colleges, scholarships, and other entities. Schools must apply for ACT-approved accommodations by January 20, 2017. Requests for ACT-approved accommodation are examined on an individual, case-by-case basis. Depending on the diagnosis and/or history of the condition, the student may or may not be eligible for ACT-approved accommodations. ACT recommends schools first apply for ACT-approved accommodations. If the student request is denied, then schools should consider Non-College Reportable Accommodations for the student.

Non-College Reportable Accommodations do not require ACT approval and can be administered to students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, English Language Plan/documentation or Transitory Impairment Documentation. The ACT scores obtained with the use of Non-College Reportable Accommodations are not college reportable but are counted in participation for state accountability purposes.

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School test coordinators do not have to place an order for non-college reportable accommodations materials. ACT will send an overage of accommodations materials that will be the same as those used by examinees testing with ACT-approved accommodations. Examinees who test with unauthorized accommodations can still receive a non-college reportable score for accountability purposes.

27. Do students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and Section 504 Plans need to include accommodations for the 2016–17 administration of the ACT?

IEPs: Accommodations for the ACT should be added to the students' IEPs as annual reviews occur.

Section 504 Plans: Section 504 committees may address accommodations for the ACT on the students' Section 504 Plan, or students may use existing classroom and testing accommodations documentation to support testing accommodation decisions for the tests.

NOTE: ACT has specific accommodations policies that may differ from those of the North Carolina state-developed assessments, and IEP/504 Teams must take these policies into consideration when making accommodations decisions. Additionally, accommodations for the ACT must be requested via submission of an ACT-Approved Accommodations Application by the deadline. Accommodation decisions for the test should be supported by classroom and testing accommodations documentation that already exists in the students' current IEP/504 Plan.

28. Do students who are English Learners (EL) qualify for ACT-Approved or Non-College Reportable Accommodations?

Students who are English Learners (ELs) without a disability do not qualify for ACT-approved accommodations. ELs do qualify for non-college reportable accommodations. EL teams may choose to include non-college reportable accommodations when writing/renewing EL documentation, but they are not required. EL students may test with non-college reportable accommodations on the ACT that are supported by classroom and testing accommodations that are already documented.

29. What is the process for notifying ACT about students' accommodation needs?

All requests for ACT-approved accommodations must be submitted via the Test Accessibility and Accommodations System (TAA) by January 20, 2017. The school test coordinator must request access to TAA. Once access is approved by ACT, the test coordinator may approve access to TAA for test accommodations coordinators. Either the test coordinator or the test accommodations coordinator can submit requests for accommodations, along with supporting documentation for each student via TAA. The TC and TAC should work to schedule all accommodated testing for the school.

30. What is the process for notifying students about their ACT-Approved Accommodations or Non-College Reportable Accommodations?

It is important that students who are granted ACT-approved accommodations or non-college reportable accommodations are notified about the accommodations they will be provided before their test date so that they know what to expect on the day of the test. Notifying the students ahead of time gives school personnel the opportunity to address any student concerns

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before the actual test administration date. When a student is notified about the accommodation before the test date, the student may state he or she does not want to use the accommodation, which allows the student, parent/guardian, and the IEP Team or Section 504 Committee time to resolve the issue beforehand.

31. When students' accommodations are approved by ACT, to what portions of the test do they apply?

When a student is approved for an accommodation by ACT, it applies to the entire battery of tests. The only exception occurs when accommodations are given because of a writing disorder, in which case that accommodation is typically only applied to the writing section of the test.

32. May students receive the test Administrator Reads Test Aloud accommodation for the English and Reading portions of the ACT? If approved for use by ACT, do students receive college reportable scores?

Yes. Students may have the English and Reading portions of the ACT read aloud to them as an accommodation. ACT's equivalent to North Carolina's Test Administrator Reads Test Aloud accommodation is the Reader's Script. An audio DVD and text-to-speech are also available. Students' scores are college reportable.

33. Does ACT allow a group setting for the read-aloud accommodation if the students use the DVD and one set of headsets per student?

Yes. Students who are approved to test with an oral presentation format may choose to test using DVDs as a group if they have their own headphones, can control the progress of their own players, and are all working on the same test at the same time (e.g., when administering Test One, English, all students in the room must be working on Test One, English). Students using a human reader for an oral presentation format must test individually.

34. What if the student's diagnosis has changed before testing, but the paperwork has already been sent?

If a student's diagnosis changed since the original request was submitted, this additional documentation must be sent to ACT by the specified deadline. If ACT does not receive additional documentation by January 27, 2017, no changes to the approved accommodation can be made.

35. Sometimes students transfer into a new school before testing. What is the process for transferring the students' accommodations from the original school to the new school?

ACT will transfer a student's accommodations from one school to the next. The new school must contact ACT, and ACT will release and transfer the accommodations. Transfers must be requested by the deadline on the Schedule of Events. Test materials must not be transported from one school to another by school personnel. Any test materials that were shipped to the former school for the transferred student should not be used by any other student and should be returned to ACT along with the other accommodation materials after the testing window.

36. What if a student breaks his/her arm or has another type of medical emergency after the deadline for submitting requests for accommodations has passed? Does he/she have to test with standard time?

If a student has a medical emergency after the deadline to submit a request for ACT-approved accommodations has passed but it is still within the late consideration window, a request must

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be submitted via TAA. The late consideration form must be uploaded as supporting documentation with the student's request.

37. What are local arrangements?

A local arrangement does not require ACT approval. Examples of local arrangements are such things as a wheelchair-accessible room, color overlays, etc. Schools that administer the ACT using local arrangements must fill out an ACT State and District Testing Irregularity Report found in the back of the Administration Manual.

38. If a student is denied ACT-Approved Accommodations, may he/she take the ACT in a room under standard-time conditions for college-reportable scores?

Yes. A student may choose to test in a standard-time room using standard materials, which will result in college-reportable scores.

39. Can a student test over multiple days?

Yes, but only if the student is approved for multiple days by ACT. When a student is permitted to test over multiple days, the ACT may be administered during regular school hours or before or after the student's school day. It's important to remember, each test must be completed in one testing session. A student cannot stop a test before completion and finish it the next day.

40. Are students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP) or Section 504 Plans eligible to receive extended time on the ACT?

Yes, but only if the student is approved for extended time by ACT. Students with ACT-Approved extended time will be assigned a specific Timing Code, and the school must adhere strictly to the assigned timing code in order for the student to receive college-reportable scores. Students using non-college reportable accommodations should use the same amount of extended time that is already documented in their IEP, Section 504 Plan, or EL documentation.

41. Where can additional information on accommodations be found?

Additional information on accommodations, including a North Carolina ACT Accommodations Summary Table, may be found at www.act.org/stateanddistrict/northcarolina.

Medical Exceptions

42. Must a request for a medical exception be submitted to the NCDPI for students required to take the ACT?

Yes. A medical exception must be submitted to and approved by the Division of Accountability Services in order for a student to receive a medical exception for the ACT.

Suspended Students

43. Can suspended students receiving instruction from the school system take the ACT?

Yes, although it is up to the school to determine if a suspended student is to participate in the ACT. Please note: suspended students are counted in the 95 percent participation requirement for the state accountability model.

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Limited English Proficient Students

44. Are English Learners (ELs) in their first-year in U.S. schools required to take the ACT?

EL students in their first-year in U.S. schools are required to take the ACT. These students are included in the 95 percent participation requirement for the state accountability model.

Foreign Exchange Students

45. Are foreign exchange students required to take the ACT?

Yes. Foreign exchange students included in membership are required to be assessed on the ACT. Their scores are included in the accountability model.

Alternate Assessments

46. Are alternate assessments administered for the ACT?

Students who have a significant cognitive disability and are receiving instruction using the North Carolina Extended Content Standards in all assessed content areas are not required to take the ACT. These students take the Grade 11 NCEXTEND1 alternate assessment at the end of the academic school year.

Students who are following a course of study that, upon completing high school, may not lead to admission into a college-level course of study resulting in a college degree and who have a written parental request for an alternate assessment are not required to take the ACT. These students take the College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment (CCRAA). The testing window for the CCRAA is February 28 through March 14, 2017.

NOTE: ACT is not responsible for the administrations of the Grade 11 NCEXTEND1 and the CCRAA. Questions regarding the NCEXTEND1 and the CCRAA should be directed to the Division of Accountability Services.

Occupational Course of Study Students

47. Are students enrolled in Occupational Course of Study (OCS) required to take the ACT?

Students who meet the CCRAA eligibility requirements and are enrolled in the Occupational Course of Study (OCS) should take the CCRAA in place of the ACT. To be eligible for the alternate, students must have a current IEP; must exhibit severe and pervasive delays in all areas of conceptual, linguistic, and academic development as well as in adaptive behaviors, including communication, daily living skills, and self-care; must be following a course of study that, upon completing high school, may not lead to admission into a college-level course of study resulting in a college degree; and must have a written parental request for an alternate assessment. Additional information on the eligibility requirements for the College and Career Readiness Alternate is available at

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/policyoperations/tswd/ccraabrief.pdf>

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Fee Waivers

48. How will fee waivers (waivers allowing students to have a college-admission application processed free of charge) be handled in the fall?

ACT provides the form Request for Waiver or Deferral of College Admission Application Fee in the ACT User Handbook for Educators, which may be provided to the institution(s). The LEA must work with the student's college(s) of choice to determine if the process remains intact for the student participating in state testing because neither ACT nor the North Carolina Testing Program is involved in a college's decision to consider a waiver.

Ordering and Managing Materials

49. Is it possible to allow school districts to order, receive, and manage all ACT testing materials?

No. ACT ships directly to high school principals, test coordinators, and test accommodations coordinators for the purposes of ACT state testing.

50. How will materials arrive from ACT?

ACT combines the nonsecure and secure materials into one shipment. School test coordinators are expected to count secure and nonsecure materials immediately upon arrival at the school and to order additional materials if necessary. Schools will continue to retain nonsecure test materials through any additional test dates. Secure test materials needed for a makeup test date must be ordered and shipped separately.

51. Will schools be able to track their ACT test materials while in transit to the school?

Yes. PearsonAccess next (PANext) enables visibility to the shipping tracking numbers which will provide status of inbound material.