

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers about the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills – Alternate (TAKS–Alt)

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About TAKS–Alt

1. Question: What is TAKS–Alt?

Answer: TAKS–Alternate (TAKS–Alt) is an assessment designed for students receiving special education services who have the most significant cognitive disabilities and are unable to participate in the other statewide assessments even with substantial accommodations and/or modifications. Unlike other statewide assessments in Texas, TAKS–Alt is not a traditional paper or multiple-choice test. Instead, the assessment involves teachers observing as students complete state-designed assessment tasks that link to the grade-level Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum. Teachers then answer a series of questions in the online instrument to evaluate student performance.

2. Question: Why must students with significant cognitive disabilities be assessed with a state-developed assessment?

Answer: Statewide assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities is a federal requirement. According to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) regulations, all students must be provided access to the general education curriculum. In addition, *all* students must be assessed on this curriculum with a state-developed assessment. According to federal law, *there are no exemptions* to these requirements regardless of the severity of the student’s disability. TAKS–Alt is the assessment that the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has developed to meet these requirements and the diverse needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities.

3. Question: What type of instruction do students assessed with TAKS–Alt receive?

Answer: Students designated by their admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committees to take TAKS–Alt will continue to learn the skills they need to be as independent as possible in adulthood, as outlined in their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). In addition, teachers should provide opportunities for students to participate in activities that are linked to the grade-level curriculum but that have been adapted in scope, complexity, material, methods of presentation, and response styles appropriate for their needs. Students being assessed with TAKS–Alt should be receiving instruction in the TEKS curriculum.

4. Question: How can my students be tested on grade level?

Answer: The state has developed two key resources for accessing the grade-level TEKS curriculum: TEKS Vertical Alignment documents and TEKS Curriculum Framework documents. These resources are useful in targeting skills for instruction in the TEKS. The Standardized Assessment Tasks for TAKS–Alt were developed by the state in accordance with these documents to insure alignment with the grade-level TEKS curriculum. Teachers of students designated to take TAKS–Alt who instruct their students on the prerequisite skills linked to each of the essence statements will be appropriately accessing the grade-level curriculum for instruction and assessment purposes. These resources are available on the TAKS–Alt Resource

Page of the TEA Student Assessment Division website at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/taksalt/> for you to view and/or print.

5. Question: What are the specific features of TAKS–Alt?

Answer: TAKS–Alt has been designed featuring the following aspects:

- Four state-required essence statements per subject are assessed for each student.
- Standardized assessment tasks are developed from state-selected prerequisite skills
- Three state-developed predetermined criteria for each assessment task are observed.
- Scores are determined by an online automated scoring process based on input from the teacher observation.
- Mandatory training for all new teachers to TAKS–Alt includes three training modules with qualification activities to verify content understanding.
- Documentation forms documenting student observations for TAKS–Alt are stored locally.

Choosing TAKS–Alt as the Student’s Assessment

6. Question: Which students can take TAKS–Alt?

Answer: TAKS–Alt is for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The cap reserved for 1% of the tested student population does not restrict the number of students who can take TAKS–Alt, but it does restrict the number of students who can count as proficient in Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculations.

7. Question: Do students, who are enrolled in grade 11 for multiple years, have to take TAKS–Alt each year?

Answer: Yes. Students who meet the eligibility requirements for TAKS–Alt are required to be assessed at their enrolled grade level regardless of what test they took the previous year. This requirement includes repeating 11th graders even if they passed the assessment during a previous test administration. This is a new policy starting with the 2009-2010 TAKS–Alt administration.

8. Question: How do I know if my student can participate in TAKS–Alt?

Answer: TAKS–Alt assesses students receiving special education services who have the most significant cognitive disabilities and are unable to participate in the other statewide assessments, even with *substantial* accommodations and/or modifications. Once the ARD committee has determined that a student is significantly cognitively disabled, it must ensure that the student meets all the requirements in the Participation Requirements document in order to take TAKS–Alt. This document is located on the TAKS–Alt Resource Page of the TEA Student Assessment Division website at http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/taksalt/training/participation_require

[ments_descriptors.pdf](#). ARD committees should also consult the *ARD Committee Decision-Making Process for the Texas Assessment Program* at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/ard/2008_2009_ARD_Manual.pdf.

Students qualifying for special education services with a specific learning disability are not eligible for TAKS–Alt because this disability category rules out a cognitive disability.

9. Question: What is the difference between TAKS–Alt and TAKS–M?

Answer: TAKS–Modified (TAKS–M) is an alternate assessment based on *modified* academic achievement standards. TAKS–M is designed for students receiving special education services who have a disability that significantly affects academic progress in the grade-level curriculum and precludes the achievement of grade-level proficiency within a school year. TAKS–M covers the same grade-level content as TAKS, but TAKS–M tests have been changed in format and test design. All students who meet the participation requirements for TAKS–M should take the assessment but only two percent of the tested population can count as proficient for AYP calculations.

TAKS–Alt is an alternate assessment based on *alternate* academic achievement standards. TAKS–Alt is designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities. TAKS–Alt tests assess content that is linked to the grade-level curriculum through prerequisite skills. All students who meet the participation requirements for TAKS–Alt should take the assessment but only one percent of the tested population can count as proficient for AYP calculations.

10. Question: Can a student who is able to write qualify for TAKS–Alt?

Answer: Yes, if the ARD committee determines that the student has a significant cognitive disability and meets all of the other participation requirements. The student may be able to perform some writing tasks, such as tracing words, copying spelling words, completing worksheets, or even writing simple phrases or sentences. However, the student would typically be evaluated by methods other than what he or she produces on paper, such as manipulation of objects or activation of a switch to indicate responses.

11. Question: What is the role of the ARD committee in making decisions for TAKS–Alt?

Answer: Using the state participation requirements for TAKS–M and TAKS–Alt, the ARD committee will need to determine which state assessment is appropriate for an individual student. The ARD committee should consider the student’s current level of functioning and how the student receives instruction in the state curriculum. Keeping high standards in mind, the members of the committee must weigh the benefits of rigorous and challenging expectations with the possibilities of success, given each student’s individual strengths, needs, instruction, and accommodations.

If TAKS–Alt is selected, the committee may review the state-required essence statements for the student’s enrolled grade and give input into appropriate supports needed for instruction

and assessment. However, it is not the responsibility of the ARD committee to select the complexity level of the assessment task for each essence statement.

12. Question: Should AYP be a part of the assessment decision?

Answer: No. The ARD committee must choose the assessment that matches the educational needs of each student individually. The assessment decision should not be based on the 1% or 2% caps for AYP calculations. The ARD committee should consider the type of curriculum the student is receiving so that the student is prepared for the assessment.

Standardized Assessment Tasks and Complexity Levels

13. Question: What is a standardized assessment task?

Answer: The standardized assessment tasks for TAKS–Alt are test items for each grade-level and subject tested with TAKS. For each essence statement there are three assessment tasks that vary in complexity and assess both the essence statement and a state-selected prerequisite skill. Predetermined criteria, a set of three observable and measurable student expectations that measure the performance on the targeted skills, are included with each assessment task. The predetermined criteria help ensure an accurate and fair observation that focuses on the student’s performance.

14. Question: How do I select an appropriate assessment task for my student?

Answer: In order to determine the assessment task for each essence statement, you will need to consider

- The student’s current level of performance
- The targeted prerequisite skills
- The complexity levels of the assessment tasks
- The specific verbs in the assessment tasks

After considering the above, you need to select the task that will most likely reflect student success after instruction. If a student is already able to complete an assessment task, the student must then be assessed on the task at the next higher complexity level.

15. Question: What is a complexity level?

Answer: The United States Department of Education (USDE) requires all states to include a range of complexity levels for assessments as well as progression across grades for students with significant cognitive disabilities. To address this requirement for TAKS–Alt, three assessment tasks for each essence statement were written in descending order of complexity. Prerequisite skills were selected by the state to ensure adequate progress of skill development over time.

16. Question: What does complexity level for an assessment task mean?

Answer: Each essence statement has three corresponding assessment tasks which vary in complexity level. The tasks are presented in descending order of complexity. Level 3 is the most complex task and involves applying knowledge beyond basic recall. Level 2 is of moderate complexity and involves demonstrating knowledge at a basic recall level. Level 1 assessment tasks are the least complex and involve responding to knowledge at the beginning awareness level. The predetermined criteria that accompany each assessment task use verbs that help define each complexity level by keeping the student action representative of that complexity level.

17. Question: Can a student be assessed at different complexity levels across the assessment?

Answer: Yes. For each essence statement, teachers will select an assessment task at the appropriate complexity level for each student. The teacher may choose one complexity level in one essence statement and another complexity level in a different essence statement.

18. Question: How can assessment tasks be made accessible for students?

Answer: Considering accessibility for a specific student is critical since the assessment tasks are written broadly to include as many students as possible. Tasks can be made accessible through the careful use of presentation supports and materials and the identification of appropriate student response modes. The supports and response modes a teacher plans must be routinely used with the student during classroom instruction.

19. Question: What if my student cannot access any of the Level 1 assessment tasks?

Answer: For some students, the Level 1 assessment tasks may still be unattainable—even with instruction and supports.

When the student is unable to show any purposeful change in affect or movement for any of the Level 1 tasks, the teacher has the following options:

- Evaluate the instruction provided
- Evaluate student supports provided
- Confer with other school professionals
- Consider the No Response Observed (NRO) designation
- Call TEA for guidance

The NRO designation can be used if the student is unable to display any observable change in affect or movement due to an ongoing medical condition or the severity of the student's disability.

When the NRO designation is *not* appropriate because the student does not meet the official description provided by the state, the student must be assessed at complexity Level 1 for all grade-level assessment tasks. The teacher may have to cue or prompt to allow the student the

opportunity to respond. The student must be evaluated on his or her performance on each of the Level 1 assessment tasks.

Administering TAKS–Alt

20. Question: What are the steps for administering TAKS–Alt?

Answer: Teachers should view the TAKS–Alt training modules and successfully complete the qualification activities for each module. After instructing students on the targeted skills, the teacher should follow these steps for the administration of TAKS–Alt:

- Choose the assessment task for each required essence statement.
- Provide instruction and practice on the selected task.
- Determine the best implementation plan of the assessment task for the observation.
- Observe and document student performance on predetermined criteria.
- Evaluate student performance and enter the information into the online instrument.

21. Question: What do I need to do to prepare for an observation?

Answer: Before conducting the observation, the teacher should

- select a comfortable, non-distracting environment for the observation,
- plan for personnel who can assist with the assessment task, if needed,
- review the predetermined criteria to ensure focus is on what the student is expected to do,
- check that needed supports and materials are available, and
- review cueing and prompting terms.

If the teacher has a student that has been selected for the inter-rater reliability study, the teacher will need to plan in advance of the observation to ensure a second observer is available, has successfully completed the modules and qualification activities, and has been trained in the necessary interrater procedures.

22. Question: What do I need to do during the observation?

Answer: During the observation, the teacher will need to focus on the student’s performance on each of the individual predetermined criterion. If the student begins to have difficulty with the task, the teacher should cue the student before using any prompts. The teacher must record observation notes that include the student’s performance on each criterion as well as any cues and/or prompts used. The state has developed pre-populated documentation forms for recording observation notes. The forms are available on the TAKS–Alt Resource Page of the TEA Student Assessment Division website at http://www.TexasAssessment.com/TAKSAlt_09-10_forms.

23. Question: What happens if I cannot elicit any observable measurable response from my student?

Answer: The teacher should consider if the supports provided to the student for the assessment tasks are appropriate. The teacher should review the presentation supports, materials, and response modes implemented to ensure the student has the opportunity to demonstrate what has been learned. If after careful consideration the teacher is still not able to get an authentic response from the student, the teacher can select the “No Response Observed” designation for that essence statement. Once one essence statement for a subject has been submitted as NRO, the online system will automatically apply the NRO designation to the remaining essence statements for that subject.

24. Question: What happens if a student has completed some of the needed observations for TAKS–Alt but then becomes ill and misses the remainder?

Answer: In extreme cases, a Partial Score may be necessary for some students. The “Partial Score” option might be appropriate if a student moves into the district after March 26, 2010 or if the student has a medical condition or emergency that results in an incomplete assessment. At least one task must be evaluated in the online instrument for this option to be applied to that subject area. Teachers cannot submit an assessment as “Partial Score”. The online instrument will automatically designate an assessment as “Partial Score” on the last day of the assessment window (April 16, 2010) if at least one essence statement for a subject has been evaluated.

25. Question: What do I do after the observation is completed?

Answer: Once the primary observation is completed and determined to be fair, the student’s performance will need to be evaluated by answering a series of questions in the online instrument (<http://www.taksalt.com>) using the observation notes.

26. Question: Can a teaching assistant or other support staff help me?

Answer: Depending on the assessment task, the best person to conduct the observation may be the speech therapist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, auditory or visual impairment instructor, content-area teacher, or a teaching assistant. Other personnel may take notes as the teacher works with the student during the assessment observation. However, the teacher the student is assigned to must be the one to evaluate the student’s performance on the online instrument.

27. Question: When is a second observation needed?

Answer: If the teacher feels that the observation was unfair, the teacher should consider doing the observation again. Additionally, if the online instrument indicates that the student earned the opportunity for Generalization of Skill, then a second observation *must* be conducted. An observation should not be repeated, however, for the sole purpose of

improving the student's performance. An observation should reflect the student's typical performance.

28. Question: How will I know if the observation was fair?

Answer: The teacher will need to determine whether the observation provided a true and accurate reflection of the student's typical performance throughout the year. The teacher should consider the amount of instruction the student has received on the skill, the amount of time allotted for the assessment observation, the attentiveness of the student, the environmental conditions during the observation, and the level of cueing or prompting that occurred during the activity.

Accommodations/Presentation Supports and Cueing and Prompting

29. Question: What is the difference between accommodations/presentation supports that a teacher plans to use during the TAKS–Alt assessment task and cues and prompts used after the task begins?

Answer: Accommodations/supports may be used during TAKS–Alt observations if routinely used during regular instruction. These supports should be preplanned and noted on the TAKS–Alt documentation form. These supports “level the playing field” for students with disabilities and allow students to be as independent as possible. The use of these supports does not negatively affect the student's score. Examples of accommodations/presentation supports can be found in the document, “Presentation Supports/Materials for TAKS–Alt” on the TAKS–Alt Resource Page of the TEA Student Assessment Division website at http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/taksalt/standardized_tasks/presentation_supports_materials.pdf.

Technically, cueing and prompting cannot be preplanned since the student may or may not need additional assistance beyond the preplanned supports. The terms listed in the “Hierarchy of Cueing and Prompting” document are used to describe the *additional* assistance that may be needed during an observation when the student is unable to proceed as expected or planned. Cueing and prompting terms do affect the score that the student receives; therefore, it is critical that the teacher use this assistance only if necessary. Additionally, a cue should always be used before a prompt and both should be documented on the TAKS0Alt documentation forms for Level of Support. The “Hierarchy of Cueing and Prompting” document is located on the TAKS–Alt Resources Page of the TEA Student Assessment Division website at http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/taksalt/rubric/hierarchy_of_cueing_and_prompting.pdf.

30. Question: How do I know if the supports I've provided have changed the complexity level of the assessment task?

Answer: The integrity of the complexity level must be maintained. Planned supports and materials cannot modify the assessment tasks so much that the complexity level shifts. The teacher should look closely at the verbs used in the predetermined criteria. For guidance on how to interpret student performance for the verbs, refer to the document entitled, "Ways to Demonstrate the Verbs Used in the TAKS–Alt Assessment Tasks." If the supports and materials result in a change in how the student will demonstrate the skill, then the teacher will need to select another assessment task for that essence statement or review the necessity of the supports being provided. For more information regarding complexity level, view the Standardized Assessment PowerPoint available on the TAKS-Alt Resource Page of the TEA Student Assessment Division website.

31. Question: What is the difference between cueing and prompting for TAKS–Alt?

Answer: For TAKS–Alt purposes, cueing (general assistance) is an action intended to encourage a student to initiate or continue a task that he or she had previously executed. A cue is a hint or a nudge in the right direction that does not provide a direct answer. Prompting (specific assistance) is an action taken when directly assisting a student with the completion of a task. A prompt pulls the student through each step to the end of the task and provides a direct answer.

Although the use of the terms "cueing" and "prompting" varies from teacher to teacher, TEA has developed definitions for various cueing and prompting terms for use with TAKS–Alt in order to provide a standardized tool for the assessment. The "Hierarchy of Cueing and Prompting" lists and defines the terms that must be used when documenting the level of support a student might have required during the TAKS–Alt observation. This document is available at

http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/taksalt/rubric/hierarchy_of_cueing_and_prompting.pdf.

32. Question: I use a different hierarchy of cueing and prompting in my classroom. Is this OK?

Answer: In your everyday classroom instruction, you may use whatever terminology you prefer. For TAKS–Alt purposes, however, the language used must be consistent across the state to ensure standardized evaluation of student performance. Anyone conducting a TAKS–Alt observation must use TEA's cueing and prompting terminology that is specifically described in the "Hierarchy of Cueing and Prompting."

33. Question: Is hand-to-hand assistance allowed on TAKS–Alt?

Answer: When an adult provides physical assistance that results in the teacher moving a student through a task to completion, a prompt has been given and must be counted as such in the evaluation process. In this instance the teacher would be performing the verb

in the predetermined criterion and not the student. Teachers are required to plan out supports for students so that the student can independently perform the predetermined criteria. Prompts can never be written in as supports. If a student has difficulty with the task as planned, the teacher should give a cue, and then a prompt if that is the only way the student can accomplish the task. If a student needs the teacher to move a body part or position the student so that the student can access the stimuli, that is not considered a prompt. The student will still have to show some recognition of the stimuli on his or her own after the stimuli has been experienced. The verbs (acknowledge, participate, explore) must be experienced by the student and an authentic response must be evident to the teacher by whatever response mode is most appropriate for the student.

Documentation of Student Performance

34. Question: Can I use my own documentation forms or do I have to use the TAKS–Alt forms provided by the state?

Answer: The state has developed documentation forms that must be used to document all the necessary information regarding assessment task observations. This form, entitled “TAKS–Alt

Documentation Form of Student Performance,” pre-populates with the assessment task, predetermined criteria, and related objective, knowledge and skills, essence statement and prerequisite skill. A form has been developed for every assessment task.

35. Question: Where do I record the planning of supports, materials, and response modes to make the task accessible for my student?

Answer: Teachers are required to use the state-developed documentation forms to document how the assessment task will be made accessible for the student. The documentation forms include sections with the headers, Presentation Supports/Materials and Student Response Mode for teachers to use to describe these preplanned components of the observation. A planning template entitled, “Template for Planning Standardized Assessment Tasks for TAKS–Alt,” has been created to help teachers plan out this section of the documentation forms which can be located on the TAKS–Alt Resource page at http://www.TexasAssessment.com/TAKSAlt_09-10_standard_tasks .

36. Question: What do I do with my documentation form after the TAKS–Alt observation?

Answer: After completing all observations for a subject area and filling in all sections of the documentation forms, the teacher will need to use the forms to evaluate student performance in the online instrument. After that, the forms should be maintained locally per district guidelines. If your student is selected for inclusion in the audit, all documentation forms pertaining to that student will need to be sent to Pearson for review by a panel of educators.

The Online Instrument

37. Question: How can I keep track of all my students' assessments?

Answer: The TAKS–Alt online instrument provides an Assessment Status Report which tracks the progress of the assessment by student for each subject and essence statement. You can access this report by clicking on the Assessment Status tab, then on the classroom where your student is assigned, and the report will display.

38. Question: How can I ensure that I have done everything to complete TAKS–Alt?

Answer: The online instrument has color-coded icons to assist teachers throughout the process.

- Red plus sign = not yet started
- Blue writing pen = in progress
- Gold star = completed
- Green checkmark = submitted

The online instrument includes an Assessment Status Report which tracks and displays the progress of the assessment by student for each subject and essence statement. The system also alerts teacher when the assessment has been successfully submitted. A teacher can also use the TAKS–Alt Checklist located on the TAKS–Alt Resource Page of the TEA Student Assessment Division website to determine if everything has been completed. This list provides the steps a teacher should follow to ensure all parts of the assessment are completed.

39. Question: Where can I go to get more information about the online system?

Answer: The following resources are available to help you with the online system:

- *2009–2010 TAKS–Alt Manual for District and Campus Coordinators* and *2009–2010 TAKS–Alt Manual for Test Administrators*
http://www.TexasAssessment.com/TAKSAlt_09-10_manuals
- Resources section within the online system (<http://www.taksalt.com>)
- TAKS–Alt Training Module 3
(<http://www.texasassessment.com/taksaltonlinetraining/>)
- Support Services for Online Instrument
877-825-7258 (1-877- TAKS–Alt)

Evaluating the Student

40. Question: How do I evaluate my student's performance?

Answer: After instruction has occurred and the assessment task observation conducted, the student's performance will need to be recorded on a documentation form. These notes will become the basis for evaluating the student's performance in the online instrument. Once you enter the online instrument, you will answer a series of questions relating to the student's demonstration of skill and level of support for each of the predetermined criteria.

It is important to evaluate the primary observation early enough so the system can alert you that the student has earned the opportunity for Generalization of Skill. You must do another observation and go back to the system to evaluate the generalization performance.

41. Question: Who can enter and submit the student's evaluation in the online system?

Answer: Personnel other than the teacher can work with students and give observation documentation to the teacher. However, the teacher to whom the student assigned in the online system must evaluate, enter, and submit the student's performance in the online instrument. Qualification activities for Modules 1-3 of the web-based training modules for TAKS–Alt must be successfully completed by all test administrators before evaluating students in the online instrument.

42. Question: What is the impact of cueing and prompting on the score?

Answer: Teachers are required to plan out the supports/materials and response modes for a student that will allow the student the best opportunity to independently perform the predetermined criteria. If the student is having difficulty performing the skill with the preplanned supports, the teacher should first try cues. If the student is still unsuccessful, the teacher should provide a prompt. If the student can perform the task with a prompt, he or she will still get points for Demonstration of Skill. A prompted response is still a "Yes" rating in the online system. A student should only receive a "No" for Demonstration of Skill when the student is unable to perform the task even with a prompt. A prompt will result in no points for Level of Support, thus prompts should be given as a last resort. A cue will result in one point being given for Level of Support, Giving a student a "No" rating, without providing cues and/or prompts, will result in an unfair observation for the student.

Generalization

43. Question: Do all students get an opportunity for Generalization of Skill?

Answer: No. Students accessing Level 1 assessment tasks are not eligible for Generalization of Skill since student performance is being measured at a beginning awareness level.

Students assessed on complexity Level 2 or Level 3 must meet certain conditions on the primary evaluation to earn the opportunity for generalization.

44. Question: How do I know if my student earned the opportunity to generalize the skill?

Answer: The student is eligible for Generalization if:

- The student is assessed with a Level 2 or 3 assessment task
- The skill was successfully demonstrated for all three predetermined criteria
- There was no prompting on any of the three predetermined criteria

Students accessing Level 1 assessment tasks are not eligible for Generalization of Skill since student performance is being measured at a beginning awareness level.

Teachers are advised to access the online instrument to evaluate the student’s primary observation early in the assessment window because the online system will alert you if your student has earned the opportunity for generalization. Additionally, you will need to allow time to provide generalization opportunities if earned. If the student earns the opportunity to generalize the skill, then a generalization opportunity *must* be given, recorded, and evaluated in the online instrument.

45. Question: Which of the predetermined criteria should I select for generalization?

Answer: All three predetermined criteria must be repeated in a new context for the generalization observation. The student will earn one point for each predetermined criterion he or she successfully generalizes without prompting.

46. Question: How does the primary observation compare with the generalization observation?

Answer: The generalization observation measures the same predetermined criteria and utilizes the same supports and response modes as planned for the primary observation. The teacher must select what change in context is most meaningful and challenging for the student. The change in context must be a change in environment, materials, and personnel. The generalization observation must be done on a different day from the primary observation.

Qualification Activities

47. Question: What training is required for teachers before TAKS-Alt can be administered?

Answer: New teachers to the TAKS–Alt process must view the three training modules and successfully complete the qualification activities. Teachers that have previously passed the qualification activities will be required to complete a new module entitled, “Beyond the Basics.” No qualification requirement is associated with this module. New teachers are

encouraged to view the new module, but this is only a recommendation and not a requirement. All teachers must receive test administration and security training from district personnel. All teachers are also required to sign an oath before beginning the assessment.

48. Question: What are qualification activities?

Answer: Qualification activities are a set of questions following each of the three training modules that a teacher must answer and pass prior to administering TAKS–Alt. Teachers have five attempts to achieve 80% or higher on the qualification activity for each module.

49. Question: Why am I being required to pass qualification activities in order to assess my students on TAKS–Alt?

Answer: After the first operational administration (2007-2008) for TAKS–Alt, the USDE mandated that the Texas Education Agency monitor the effectiveness of the web-based training for TAKS–Alt. The qualification activities allow the state to verify that teachers understand how to administer TAKS–Alt.

50. Question: What happens if I don't score 80% on each qualification activity even after five attempts?

Answer: After the fifth unsuccessful attempt, a test administrator must be under the supervision of a local administrator who has successfully completed the qualification activities with a score of 80%. If a district does not or cannot provide an appropriate supervisor, the student must be moved to another test administrator that has successfully completed the qualification activities.

Other

51. Question: What is No Response Observed?

Answer: No Response Observed (NRO) is a designation that can be used if the student is unable to display any observable change in affect or movement due to an ongoing medical condition or the severity of the student's disability.

Once one essence statement for a subject has been submitted as NRO the online instrument will automatically apply the NRO designation to the remaining essence statements for that subject.

52. Question: What is my responsibility for assessing a TAKS–Alt student who enrolls on our campus late in the school year?

Answer: If a student designated to take TAKS–Alt moves into a new school district from another Texas school district, a private school, or from out-of-state after March 26, 2010, the district is not required to test the student. If a student has assessment data in the TAKS–Alt system but the student’s assessment is not complete, the receiving district only needs to ensure that the student data is transferred to the new district. The assessment does not need to be completed or submitted by the receiving district. The online system will automatically finalize the assessment as is on April 16. For students who are in one district for the October snap shot date and in another district on April 16, the students will not count for or against either district for AYP.

53. Question: What are the cut scores for Met the Standard and Commended ratings for TAKS–Alt?

Answer: The Commissioner of Education has approved the following cut scores for TAKS-Alt: **44** for Met the Standard and **68** for Commended.

54. Question: Can a Level 1 student meet the standard?

Answer: Yes, the maximum score that a student assessed with all Level 1 tasks can earn is 48. A total of 44-48 points will allow the Level 1 student to meet the standard with some cueing provided.