

# General FAQs

## Frequently Asked Questions for the South Carolina Alternate Assessments

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\*FAQs will be regularly updated as new information becomes available.

# Overview and Changes for 2018

## What are the South Carolina Alternate Assessments?

The South Carolina Alternate Assessments are an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The South Carolina Alternate Assessments are administered to students who meet the participation guidelines for alternate assessment and who are ages 8–14 or age 16 on September 1 of the assessment year (these are the ages of students who are typically in grades 3–8 and 11).

## What are the changes for the spring 2018 administration?

The spring 2018 administration is in the second year of the transition to a fully online testing system, to be completed for spring 2020. The following are the major changes in the tests:

- SC-NCSC ELA and Math will be delivered online in grades 3-8.
- The Science tests are delivered online.
- The Grade 11 tests in Biology, Algebra 1, English 1, and US History and Constitution are delivered online.
- Only students taking the SC-Alt Social Studies in grades 5 and 7 will take the unscored Independent Field Test, also in Social Studies.
- The Social Studies assessments will only be delivered in grades 5 and 7.
- The Science assessments will only be delivered in grades 4, 6, and 8.
- Second raters will be assigned to the SC-Alt Social Studies assessment.

For 2018 the Alternate Assessment is composed of three different assessments:

- The **SC-Alt Social Studies** is administered to students who are ages 10 and 12 (grades 5 and 7) on September 1st of the assessment year. This assessment is delivered on paper as in previous administrations.
- The **SC-NCSC ELA and Mathematics** are administered online by grade and to students who are ages 8-13 or 16 on September 1st of the assessment year. These tests will be administered online through the TA and Student Interfaces. TAs for any students that have paper accommodations will enter their responses in the Data Entry Interface.
- The **SC-Alt Online Assessment** is divided into two field tests. This is the first year that this assessment is scored. All SC Alternate Assessments will be delivered as SC-Alt Online Assessments by Spring 2020. These tests will be administered online through the TA and Student Interfaces. Student participation in the SC Alternate Assessments is an IEP team decision and should be documented in the student's IEP.
  - The **SC-Alt Online Assessment Operational Field Test (OFT)** in Science (ages 9, 11, and 13 as of 9/1/17) and all Grade 11 tests (age 16 as of 9/1/17) are administered by grade. This assessment is scored.
  - The **SC-Alt Online Assessment Independent Field Test (IFT)** is administered to students who are ages 10 or 12 on September 1st of the assessment year. This corresponds to tested grades 5 and 7. Social Studies is the only IFT this year, since the operational test is still delivered on paper. The IFT assessments are NOT scored.

More information on the assessments being administered in the spring 2018 administration can be found in the [Age and Grade Reference Sheet](#) and the [Overview of the Alternate Assessments](#) document on the [SC Alternate Assessment Portal](#).

## When and how will the South Carolina Alternate Assessments be administered?

Schools have a seven week window during which they will administer the alternate assessments, **February 26 – April 13, 2018**. These windows were chosen to provide schools ample time to assess all eligible students at their own pace. There are no time restrictions inherent to the assessment itself, and students may stop and resume the assessment at any point. All test results must be submitted by the Test Administrator for the student before the end of the testing window. There will be no extensions.

More information on the assessments being administered in the spring 2018 administration can be found in the [Age and Grade Reference Sheet](#), the [Student Age Calculator](#), and the [Overview of the Alternate Assessments](#) document on the [SC Alternate Assessment Portal](#).

Test	Ages	Grades	Delivery
SC-Alt Social Studies	10, 12	5, 7	Paper, DEI
SC-NCSC ELA	8-13	3-8	TA and Student Interfaces
SC-NCSC Math	8-13	3-8	TA and Student Interfaces
SC-Alt Online Assessment Science	9, 11, 13	4, 6, 8	TA and Student Interfaces
SC-Alt Online Assessment Grade 11 Tests	16	11	TA and Student Interfaces
SC-Alt Online Assessment IFT Social Studies	10, 12	5, 7	TA and Student Interfaces

## Who can administer the South Carolina Alternate Assessments?

All Test Administrators must be trained to administer the SC Alternate Assessments and must be one of the following:

- A certified employee of the district.
- An employee of the district who is a critical needs teacher and has a letter of eligibility, an interim certificate, or a critical needs certificate.
- A substitute teacher who is certified and employed by the district on an as-needed basis.
- Someone who was a certified teacher but has allowed the teaching certificate to expire owing to retirement, change of career, or some other reason, and has been approved by the District Test Coordinator or the District Test Coordinator for Alternate Assessment (DTC-Alt) as a qualified test administrator.
- Someone who is not certified but has been employed by the school district in an instructional capacity and has been approved by the DTC-Alt as a qualified TA

Test administrators may not administer the assessment to close relatives (e.g., children, grandchildren). If the SC Alternate Assessments are administered in a location other than the school, the test administrator must meet the same criteria specified above.

# Eligibility and Test Assignments

## Who determines eligibility for the South Carolina Alternate Assessments?

The IEP team determines whether a student will participate in the SC Alternate Assessment using the [South Carolina Participation Guidelines](#).

## Which subject is assigned a second rater?

For the spring 2018 administration, a random selection of students taking the SC-Alt Social Studies assessment will be assigned a second rater. Second raters will not be given their own test materials. They should use available test materials or follow along with the test administrator in their test booklet. Second rater assignments will be posted in TIDE on January 16, 2018.

## Which tests does my student take?

Students are assigned tests based on their age as of 9/1/17. These dates are inclusive. A student born on 9/2/2008 or 9/1/2009 is Age 8.

*If your student was born between...	They will take the tests assigned to Age...	Which is associated with Tested Grade...
9/2/2008–9/1/2009	8	3
9/2/2007–9/1/2008	9	4
9/2/2006–9/1/2007	10	5
9/2/2005–9/1/2006	11	6
9/2/2004–9/1/2005	12	7
9/2/2003–9/1/2004	13	8
9/2/2002–9/1/2003	14	9
9/2/2001–9/1/2002	15	10
9/2/2000–9/1/2001	16	11
9/2/1999–9/1/2000	17	12

## What if a student does not demonstrate a mode of communication?

For the SC-Alt Online Assessment, students must attempt to complete all questions. If the student does not respond to an item, the TA may click [**Next**] to skip the item.

The procedures regarding students who do not demonstrate a mode of communication have changed for the spring 2018 administration of the SC-NCSC. If a TA believes that a student eligible for the alternate assessment does not have an observable mode of communication, he or she must complete all the steps included in the Early Stopping Rule Flowchart and Checklist. As directed in the

Flowchart, the TA must administer the NCSC Student Response Check, or SRC, to the student three times. The administration of the SRC should take place at a different location and different time of day.

Both the Early Stopping Rule Flowchart and Checklist and the SRC will be located on the on the Portal at [sc-alt.portal.airast.org](http://sc-alt.portal.airast.org) in January 2018.

If the student shows any observable mode of communication during any administration of the SRC, the TA must administer the entire SC-NCSC assessment in both ELA and mathematics. If the student does not show any observable mode of communication, the TA should administer only the first four items of the SC-NCSC in ELA and Mathematics and contact his or her DTC-Alt.

The DTC-Alt will review the student's IEP to ensure communication is addressed in the student's present levels, goals, and services. If developing communication is addressed on the student's IEP, the DTC-Alt will advise the SC-Alt Help Desk that he or she has determined that a student in the district does not have an observable mode of communication and request that the SCDE review the student's IEP. If the SCDE determines that the student does not have an observable mode of communication, the SCDE and AIR will close the student's test.

## Paper Materials

### How do test administrators get a Test Administrator Manual (TAM)?

While the TAM is available for download on the Portal, DTCs-Alt can order paper TAMs for their TAs through TIDE. New test administrators will be given TAMs at their training session.

### Who receives paper testing materials?

The SC-Alt Social Studies is administered in Grades 5 and 7. Test Administrator Kits will be shared by up to four students in a school. Test administrators testing students in the grades 3-8 SC-NCSC ELA and Math assessments will need to download or print out the Directions for Test Administration from TIDE.

If a student has vision impairments and cannot access the SC-NCSC online, the student's DTC-Alt may submit a request to order paper SC-NCSC test booklets and SC-Alt Online Assessment paper response options in TIDE.

While Braille and tactile graphics are not available for the SC-NCSC assessments, the DTC-Alt may request paper test booklets through TIDE and work with the student's TA to apply Braille and tactile graphics to the test materials.

### How are test materials distributed? Should there be one set of materials per student?

Orders for TA Kits are placed through TIDE. On-time orders and orders placed during the Additional Order Window are placed by the DTC-Alt. For the SC-Alt Social Studies, each test administrator needs access to one TA Kit. Each kit contains the test booklet and any necessary passage books and printed manipulatives. Test administrators will provide common items. These items are listed in the

Test Administrator Manual. TA Kits are designed for use with multiple students. Do not order a TA Kit for each student.

Test administrators testing students in the grades 3-8 SC-NCSC ELA and Math assessments will need to download or print out the Directions for Test Administration from TIDE.

If a student has vision impairments and cannot access the SC-NCSC online, the student's DTC-Alt may submit a request to order paper test booklets in TIDE. The SCDE will review each request before approving the order for paper materials.

While Braille and tactile graphics are not available for the SC-NCSC assessments, the DTC-Alt may request paper test booklets through TIDE and work with the student's TA to apply Braille and tactile graphics to the test materials.

All SC-NCSC tests, regardless of whether they are administered online or on paper, require a Directions for Test Administration (DTA) booklet to properly administer the test. These are available for download in TIDE.

### To which address will the test materials be sent?

Test materials are sent to the district. Districts can view the shipping address in in TIDE's "Contact Information" page for the TA Kit Orders. Districts can change their shipping addresses by contacting the South Carolina Alternate Assessment Help Desk at 1.877.231.7789 or [schelpdesk@air.org](mailto:schelpdesk@air.org).

### Who will deliver my test materials? When will they arrive?

The test materials ordered during the initial order window will be delivered by FedEx and arrive in district on February 16, 2018.

### How do I enter my scores for the SC-Alt Social Studies and paper-accommodated SC-NCSC tests?

TAs will input their students' responses in the Data Entry Interface (DEI), either during the test or after administering the assessment. Test administrators who prefer to enter scores into the DEI *after* administering the assessments may use the Optional Scoring Worksheets included in the Test Administration Manual (TAM) and available on the Portal to record scores. All student responses must be entered online in the DEI in order to be scored. It is highly recommended TAs use the Optional Scoring Worksheets.

### What happens if there aren't enough SC-Alt Social Studies materials for all students tested?

TAs should discuss the situation with their DTC-Alt. Similar to previous years, AIR will ship overage test materials to DTCs-Alt. Once these district overage materials are used, DTCs-Alt can order additional materials during the additional order window from February 16 to April 6, 2018. As a reminder, SC-Alt Social Studies TA Kits are intended to be used with multiple students.