

Vermont Alternate Assessment (VTAA)

Selection Process & the Learner Characteristic Inventory (LCI)

Who Assesses with the VTAA?

Who takes the VTAA?

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Vermont defines students with the most significant disabilities as:

Students who exhibit a significant cognitive disability are those whose records indicate a disability, or multiple disabilities, that require intensive or extensive levels of direct support that is not of a temporary or transient nature. These students require specially designed instruction that are aligned with the grade appropriate Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards, or extensions of those standards, to acquire, maintain, or generalize skills in multiple settings including the home, school, workplace, and community. The student's disability must significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Adaptive behavior is defined as actions essential for an individual to live independently and to function safely in daily life. Having a significant cognitive disability is not determined by an IQ test score, but rather a holistic understanding of a student.

Who Assess? (cont.)

What does the VTAA measure?

- Assessment based on Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards essence statements.

When do the students assess?

- Students who take the VTAA assess in the same grades as their peers who take the general assessments (Smarter Balanced and Vermont Science Assessment).

How do I register for the Alternate Assessment?

- Once your IEP Team determines, and has documented in the IEP, that the appropriate assessment for the student is the VTAA, you will need to complete the Learner Characteristic Inventory (LCI) on the Vermont Common Assessment Portal (VTCAP). The LCI is completed by selecting the Data Entry Interface (DEI) card under the Vermont Alternate Assessment Page.

Criteria Checklist

Participation Criterion	Participation Criterion Description	Agree (yes) or Disagree (no)? Provide Documentation for each
1. Student has an active IEP	Student is currently receiving services under an active IEP.	Yes/No
2. The student program includes extensions from grade-level academic standards in ELA, Mathematics, Science, and English Proficiency (if applicable)	a. Goals and instruction listed in the IEP for this student include the enrolled grade-level content standards or extensions derived from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English and Math and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) for science.	Yes/No
	b. The student's parents or guardians have been notified that the student will be assessed against extended academic achievement standards.	Yes/No
<p><i>*Alternate English Language Proficiency standards are under development. Teachers should reference Alternate Model Performance Indicators in the IEP.</i></p>		

3. The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measureable gains in the grade-and-age-appropriate curriculum.	The student a. Requires extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and support that is not of a temporary or transient nature and	Yes / No
	b. uses substantially adapted materials and individualized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate, and transfer skills across multiple settings.	Yes / No
4. The student meets the criteria for participation in the alternate assessment	The IEP team has identified the need for an alternate assessment.	Yes/No

Non-considerations are located on page 1 of the Criteria Checklist.

Importance of Accurate Test Selection

1. Least Dangerous Assumption

- When in doubt, the IEP Team should default to the general assessment.
- Students should not be assigned to take the VTAA because "it is easier" or "the student will perform better."

2. Provides Accurate Data

- The assessment given to a student needs to provide a level of rigor in order for students to demonstrate an accurate skill level.

3. 1% Waiver

- Under ESSA, the percent of students taking the alternate assessment in each state should not exceed 1% of the total number of students testing.
- There are consequences for states who do not meet this requirement such as needing to apply for a 1% Waiver.

Benefits

Alternate (VTAA) vs. General (Smarter Balanced & VTSA)

Benefits of the Alternate Assessment

- Assess against fully aligned content standards (CCSS and NGSS)
 - If these students are assessing with the VTAA, the standards mentioned in the IEP must indicate so.
- Uses essence statements for each of the Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards that describe the core skills and knowledge measured by the VTAA.
- Provides access points to grade level content standards that can be noted in the IEP.
- Alternate Assessment is administered 1:1 and many accommodations used on the general assessment are built into the alternate platform as universal supports. Assessments can be administered over several days with frequent breaks.
- [Early Stopping Rule](#) for students with no mode of communication. (Must be validated by the ADA)

Benefits of the General Assessment

- Provides total scale scores, achievement level on the overall test, claim scores with achievement level descriptors and student growth in scale score and achievement level over time.
- Administered with peers using a variety of general assessment accommodations and flexible scheduling so the student can take frequent breaks and administration can be done over multiple days.
- Alignment to focused or comprehensive interim assessments which can be used as additional data points to support learning and instruction throughout the school year.
- Interim Assessments can be administered off grade with all accessibility features available as the summative assessment
- Summative Assessment and the Interim Comprehensive Assessment (ICA) provide Lexile and Quantile measures in the score reports.
- Interims are linked directly to lessons in Tools for Teachers. All educators have access to this resource, and all lessons, including attachments, are accessible

General Assessment Accommodations

Accommodations available to all students with IEP or 504

(Accommodations assigned on any statewide assessment should be used in daily instruction. Accommodations on any assessment should not be assigned if not used in the general education setting.)

1. Text to Speech (TTS) – In grades 6 –9, the entire assessment can be read to the student without violating any construct. In grades 3-5, TTS will read everything to students except passages on the ELA CAT.
2. Speech to Text (STT) - Available on all assessments, but rarely needed as most of the assessments are selected response.
3. Students have 45 days to complete the CAT test and 20 days to complete the Performance Tasks. Test availability can be extended with a short call to the Help Desk or anyone on the Assessment Team at the AOE.
4. Students assess with peers and do not need to be removed from the classroom to test.*

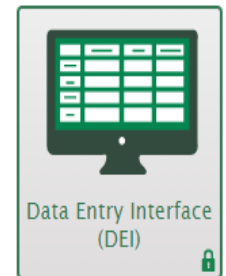
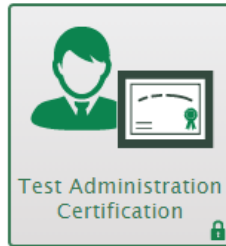
*(STT excluded)

How do I register my student for the VTAA?

Complete the Learner Characteristic Inventory (LCI)

1. Make sure your student(s) is in the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE), and have your DA roster the student to you.
2. Take the General TA Certification training.
3. Access the LCI through the [Data Entry Interface](#) (DEI).

Your student will appear under the general assessment until the last day in February (February 28, 2021). All students with completed LCIs will be switched by the vendor to the alternate assessment.



Helpful Brochures

[Completing the LCI](#)

COMPLETING THE LEARNER CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY (LCI) IN THE DATA ENTRY INTERFACE (DEI)

This document provides instructions describing how to access the Data Entry Interface (DEI) in order to submit the Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI).

Note: Vermont Alternate Assessments (VTAA) must be administered using the Test Delivery System (TDS). They cannot be submitted through the DEI.

[Accessing the DEI](#)

ACCESSING THE DATA ENTRY INTERFACE (DEI)

This document provides instructions describing how to access the Data Entry Interface (DEI) in order to submit the Smarter Balanced and Vermont Science Assessment Standard, large print, or braille paper assessments.

Parent Communication

[\(flip side of the student report\)](#)

Vermont's Definition of a Significant Cognitive Disability

Students who exhibit a significant cognitive disability are those whose records indicate a disability, or multiple disabilities, that require intensive or extensive levels of direct support that is not of a temporary or transient nature. These students require specially designed instruction to acquire, maintain, or generalize skills in multiple settings including the home, school, workplace, and community. The student's disability must significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Adaptive behavior is defined as actions essential for an individual to live independently and to function safely in daily life. Having a significant cognitive disability is not determined by an IQ test score, but rather a holistic understanding of a student.

Who decides if a student participates in the VTAA?

The individualized Education Program (IEP) team, which includes the parents as equal members, determines how students will be assessed.

Why should students with significant cognitive disabilities participate in academic instruction and assessments?

The primary reason to teach academic content to students who also require instruction in functional and life skills is to promote access and equity to educational content all students receive as part of a free and appropriate public education.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Does the VTAA measure Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards?

VTAA assessments are fully aligned with the same academic content standards that apply to all students - the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts and Mathematics, and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) for science.

How are the alternate assessments designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities?

To meet the specific needs of students with significant cognitive abilities, the assessment questions and tasks are focused on the essence of the standards, representing a reduction in depth, breadth, and complexity of the general assessment achievement expectations. The test format and administration procedures, which include direct support from an educator, are designed to maximize the student's assessment experience.

Can a student earn a high school diploma if he or she participates in the VTAA?

Participation in the VTAA does not prevent a student from earning a high school diploma. All students in Vermont who meet local graduation requirements will earn a high school diploma.



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Vermont Alternate Assessments VTAA

WHAT IS THE VTAA?

The Vermont Alternate Assessments (VTAA) were developed to meet the needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to demonstrate their skills and knowledge on the general education assessments even when appropriate accommodations are provided.

The overall purpose of VTAA is to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities have the same educational opportunities as their general education peers by participating in a challenging standards-based curriculum that includes the instructional practices and support that encourages the highest possible academic expectations for all students.

The VTAA measures student proficiency in three academic content areas:

- ELA/Literacy 3-9
- Math grades 3-9
- Science grades 5, 8, and 11

Questions?

Please feel free to contact us.

Assessments

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