



CATALOG OF ASSESSMENTS

Job Ready

*Your Assessment and
Accountability Partner*



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(The number following the test title is for ordering purposes.)

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Have new tests been added over time, and if so, why?

Kentucky started with just 7 assessments in 1999, with tests associated with career clusters that had the highest enrollments. In 2000, the state added 3 new tests on a pilot basis. In 2001, the existing 10 tests were administered and 8 additional tests piloted bringing the total number of state assessments to 18 in 2003. One additional test was piloted in 2003; however, the state is also dropping its Housing and Interiors assessment in the 2005-06 school year due to lack of interest in schools. Another test may eventually be added for Fashion/Interior Design.

Test Structure

What types of skills are assessed?

State exams are focused on occupational, employability, and academic competencies. The occupational skills account for 50 percent of test items, with employability and academic skills each accounting for 25 percent of the exam.

How many tests exist?

There are a total of 18 KOSSA assessments in the 11 identified career clusters. The state also relies on industry-recognized certifications in certain health science and Information Technology fields.

How is local curriculum aligned to state assessments?

The Kentucky Department of Education has worked with teachers to help them understand the importance of aligning their curriculum with state standards. In particular, the state has sponsored summer conferences to train teachers in curriculum alignment.

What are the test components?

State KOSSA tests include both multiple-choice items and a problem-based scenario. Multiple scenarios are presented to the students, who select one that they respond to with a one-to-two page essay. The test takes a total of two hours, with one hour devoted to the multiple-choice and one to the scenario. Educators may choose to split the test into two parts, administered over more than one day. The cut off score for passing the assessment is 70% on both the multiple choice and scenario sections.

Are state tests transferable?

The certifications that students gain from passing the assessments are endorsed by Kentucky businesses only. They have not been endorsed nationally or reviewed by national industry groups, in part because most Kentucky students stay and work in Kentucky after graduation. Consequently, it is unlikely that state standards and assessments would readily transfer across states.

Test Administration

Which students take tests?

All Kentucky students completing or planning to complete a sequence (3 courses) of a career and technical education program are required to take KOSSA. Generally, only junior and seniors are assessed; however, in some cases sophomores may qualify for assessment. Student unable to pass the assessment in their junior year are eligible to participate as a senior. Although the assessments are voluntary, schools are expected to assess as many students as possible, and to seek to maximize their participation rate.

When are tests administered?

During the 2004-05 testing year, the testing window occurred from February 14 to March 11. The state has also begun piloting, in the spring of 2005, an online assessment to enable students to complete the KOSSA on an interactive website.

Who pays for the assessment?

The state pays for all assessments. The only cost to the district is related to shipping completed tests back to the state for scoring and reporting. Staff at the state Division of Career and Technical Education electronically score the multiple-choice component of the exam. Scoring of the performance based constructed response scenario of the assessment is performed by task force members in each skill standard area, who use a scoring rubric that indicates performance levels. Scoring is double blind, with students required to obtain a score at or above 3 on a 4-point scale.

How are testing results used?

Test results are used for Perkins accountability purposes. Kentucky measures CTE skill proficiency based on the number of students earning a certificate relative to those taking the exam. In some instances, industry organizations are endorsing the state standards and calling for their members to recognize the value of the state standards and assessments. Students who have received certificates have also been featured in industry newsletters and magazines.

Lessons Learned

A state official thinks the process Kentucky has been using to implement the assessments has been a good one. Their teachers have “grown tremendously” in understanding the importance of having current, aligned curriculum.

She stated it has taken a lot of hours from outside partners to make the assessments possible and that it is important to have these partners involved in every step because they help identify the standards that Kentucky employers want and are looking for.

She also stated there are many things they could do to improve their assessments but that it’s not possible due to budget restrictions. In particular, they could do more to test the reliability and validity of the questions. She said they had thought about outsourcing before but again it is not possible due to budget constraints.

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NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina assesses occupational skill attainment of CTE students using post assessments contained within its state developed VoCATS system. VoCATS is a comprehensive, competency-based, criterion-referenced computerized instructional management system. The system is designed to support CTE educators in planning instruction; assessing students before, during, and after instruction; evaluating student mastery of competencies; documenting student achievement; and providing accountability data.

Assessment History

Standardized assessments have been used since 1990 to document student achievement in CTE courses. The system went statewide in 1992-93 and was used to provide data about student technical attainment required by federal Perkins legislation beginning around 1995. The statewide assessments are aligned to course blueprints that show exactly what objectives are to be covered. School systems also receive banks of assessment items aligned to the course objectives for use in interim testing.

Why were assessments instituted?

The VoCATS system was developed to support CTE educators in improving CTE instruction, documenting student gains, and demonstrating student competency mastery.

Development Process

Who participated in design/purchase?

Teams of North Carolina teachers developed VoCATS materials with input from business and industry representatives. To date, hundreds of business representatives and local administrators, and thousands of teachers have been involved in development curriculum materials.

How long did it take to develop/institute assessments?

It takes about three years to develop a course, including the blueprint and the classroom and secure item banks. Once developed, courses are revised as needed, at least once every five years. During the revision process, there is one “field testing” year when data are not collected for state accountability purposes.

What was the cost of developing state tests?

Test development is imbedded in the state curriculum development effort and cannot be reported separately.

Have new tests been added over time, and if so, why?

Existing materials are continuously updated and new materials are developed as needed. For example, in the 2003-04 school year the state worked to validate and assess the reliability levels for student assessment measures contained in 64 course blueprints, aligned 5 courses with national curriculum standards, and developed 59 test item banks.

Test Structure

What types of skills are assessed?

VoCATS is a competency-based and criterion referenced instructional management system. Assessments are aligned with course blueprints that document the skills students need to know and be able to do in specific occupational areas. Classroom banks provide assessment measures for both cognitive and performance skills. Statewide post assessments assessed cognitive components only. A project is currently underway to incorporate performance measures in the state assessments.

How many tests exist?

As of Summer 2005, VoCATS curricular blueprints existed for 131 courses.

How is local curriculum aligned to state assessments?

Course blueprints lay out the framework of the curriculum for a given course. Included in the blueprint are the units of instruction, the core competencies in each unit, and the specific objectives for each competency. The blueprint illustrates the recommended sequence of units and competencies and the cognitive and performance weight of the objective within the course. Teachers use the blueprint to help in the planning of a course of work for the year, preparing daily lesson plans, and constructing instructionally valid assessments.

Teachers may also draw on 116 banks of assessment items that are distributed electronically, 100 curriculum guides, and a generation of secured post assessments for courses supported in the Programs of Study. Staff development is also available.

What are the test components?

Tests are course specific and are designed to assess specific occupational skills taught within a course. The state is currently considering adding a performance component to the state assessment process.

Are state tests transferable?

Classroom assessment banks are available to users in other states. However, these banks are aligned directly with course blueprints, so their use is not appropriate without modification of the curriculum. Secure state post assessments are not available outside of North Carolina.

Test Administration

Which students take tests?

All high school CTE teachers use VoCATS as an assessment tool on an ongoing basis for pretests, interim tests, unit tests, 9-week tests, midterms, etc. All LEA are using VoCATS-designated software and 95 percent of all high schools and many elementary and middle schools have computer hardware to run this software. In addition, all CTE students are to take the state assessments unless the student has an IEP that calls for alternate testing. In the 2003-04 program year, post assessment data were reported for 298,438 of the 388,766 students identified as enrolled in CTE courses for which there were end-of-course tests. Currently the state is working on ways to increase the number of students for whom data are reported and to collect data for students who take alternate tests.

When are tests administered?

Interim tests are administered on an ongoing basis throughout the school year. Post assessments are administered at the end of each term.

Who pays for the assessment?

Curriculum development occurs at the state level using Perkins funds. Development of tests is imbedded in the curriculum development system and is difficult to separate out. A very rough estimate is that the state spends about \$100,000 annually on the testing effort, including development of test items, validation and reliability testing, creation of tests, development of manuals used in testing, and electronic duplication. Local systems pay for duplication of hard copies of the tests and purchase software necessary for system operation.

How are testing results used?

Local school systems use the data to develop strategies to improve student attainment of technical competencies. Post assessment results are reported to the federal government for Perkins accountability purposes, and to the North Carolina State Board of Education.

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Utah

Utah uses state-developed, end-of-program assessments to assess the occupational competency of CTE concentrators. In some program areas, end-of course assessments are also available.

Assessment History

When were assessments instituted?

In the late 1980s, the Utah Department of Education piloted competency testing in limited courses in Business. These were production tests.

In 1995, the Utah State Legislature determined that up to 20 percent of Applied Technology funding would be allocated based on student performance. In 1995 the state recognized, where appropriate, national exams and began developing end-of-course tests with performance assessment done in the classroom and a state objective multiple-choice test. Since that time, competency based testing has become an integral part of the state's CTE curriculum. As part of the 1995 initiative, 10 percent of CTE funding was earmarked for distribution through the state Skill Certificate program. In 1997, this percentage increased to 12 percent for incentive funding.

Why were assessments instituted?

The primary purpose of the state's assessment system is to improve CTE program curriculum and instruction through the use of performance-based incentives. The Skill Certificate program is also used to report CTE skill attainment for the federal Perkins accountability system.

Development Process

Who participated in design/purchase?

State CTE administrators have taken the lead in developing statewide assessments. They have been assisted by testing consultants, district directors, and a state committee that provides oversight and guidance.

How long did it take to develop/institute assessments?

In 1995 state CTE administrators approached the State Legislature and requested additional funding for CTE; legislators agreed to provide additional funding, but tied resources to performance. In particular, the legislature stipulated that the state implement a CTE testing program and use the results to award up to 20 percent of Applied Technology Education funding based on student performance. Over time, competency based funding has grown to become an integral part of the CTE curriculum. .

A first step in the test development process entailed identifying state CTE standards for each program area. To do so, the state consulted national standards and consulted with industry representatives and teachers to identify a set of objective statewide standards.

What was the cost of developing state tests?

Data on the initial cost of test development is not available. The state has used teacher teams to develop exams, and test item revision is an ongoing process.

Have new tests been added over time, and if so, why?

Assessments have been added over time to address new areas. The state also conducts annual test-item analysis, revising tests as necessary.

The state also pilot questions that are not counted in the student's score, but are used to continually update the test item data bank from which the multiple-choice questions are drawn.

Test Structure

What types of skills are assessed?

State CTE Skill Certification Tests are organized by program area, around a distinct set of occupationally specific skills. In some program areas, multiple assessments have been developed to assess students with different levels of skill. For example, the state offers three assessments in the Drafting program area, corresponding to beginning, intermediate, and advanced skills.

How many tests exist?

Tests are offered in all CTE program areas, including Agricultural Education, Business Education, Family and Consumer Sciences, Health Science & Technology Education, Marketing Education, Technology Education, Trade & Technical, and Information Technology. As of 2005, the state had developed 133 state exams and identified 25 national industry developed and licensure certification exams.

How is local curriculum aligned to state assessments?

Standards and objectives have been developed for each test in the assessment system. Standards are broad statements by category of knowledge and skills that describe what students should be able to do. Objectives are sub-standards or competencies included within a standard. Test questions on both the multiple choice and performance assessments are written to measure the attainment of an objective within a standard.

What are the test components?

Students must pass both a performance assessment and a multiple-choice exam to qualify for a certificate. This aspect of combining the performance and objective performance has been in place for about five years. Before this time each program area had its own criteria.

Performance assessments are administered in class and evaluated by a student's teacher prior to the multiple-choice exam. All performance objectives must be completed and evaluated prior to the written test. To pass the performance exam, student must achieve a level of 'moderately' to 'highly' skilled on all performance objectives included in the performance assessment. Each element within the performance assessment is tied to a standard and objective from the course. Students may take the performance assessment at any time during the course, and may repeat the objectives until they are judged to perform at the required level.

Skill Certificate program tests are multiple-choice, consisting of up to 80 questions with four possible answer choices. Each test item is linked to a single standard and objective, which is used for scoring, reporting and program improvement purposes. While each question is counted equally for scoring purposes, particular standards may be weighted more highly through the use of additional questions tied to that standard.

Are state tests transferable?

Since state assessments align with the state's CTE performance standards and competencies, it is unlikely that the state exam can be readily transferred to other states.

Test Administration

Which students take tests?

Participation in the Skill Certification program is voluntary; however, all districts within the state participate in the program. This is due, in part, to the incentive funding tied to student performance: districts that achieve higher success rates can qualify for additional funding. In the 2003-04 school year, over 165,00 students participated in the assessment program.

When are tests administered?

Tests are designed to be taken at the end of a course and are administered at the end of each trimester or semester. The state has a one to two day turnaround time on scoring.

Who pays for the assessment?

The Utah State Office of Education developed tests that are provided to students free-of-charge. In some cases, typically involving licensure exams, students may be required to pay for the exam and licensure. The state pays for the testing program using Perkins funding and by assessing participating districts a fee for services. The annual cost of statewide testing is roughly \$400,000 per year, with half of funds coming from Perkins and the remaining amount from districts.

How are testing results used?

Program test results are used to award incentive funding to districts based on the number of students who earn a certificate by receiving a substantial score, 80 percent, on both the performance and objective tests. Outcomes are also aggregated and reported to the U.S. Department of Education for federal accountability purposes.

Although the assessment system is not a formal certification program, students can use their certificates as evidence of their accomplishment when applying for employment or further education and training.

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Appendix E:

**Profiles of State Using
State-Developed,
End-of-Program Assessments**

Wyoming

Wyoming

Wyoming monitors the skill attainment of CTE concentrators using the Wyoming Career Technical Assessment (WyCTA), an electronic, state-developed testing program designed to objectively assess whether students master a broad set of academic and technical work readiness skills common to all CTE programs offered in the state. Some scenarios also ask students to perform some program specific skills, such as setting up equipment to perform a task. Students are assessed based on performance: at the beginning of the testing period students (or groups of students) are provided with a scenario that they are asked to solve within a given time period. A trained evaluator, who uses state-developed testing rubrics and grading procedures to assess student performance, rates student performance.

Assessment History

When were assessments instituted?

The first iteration of the WyCTA was developed in approximately 1992 to respond to the accountability provision contained in the 1990 Perkins Act, which required states to develop accountability systems for secondary and postsecondary vocational education programs. Due to the cost associated with other testing systems, such as ACT's Work Keys program, the state collaborated with the National Center for Research in Vocational Education to develop a performance-based assessment. The assessment was revised in 2002 to align with newly developed state CTE standards. To facilitate this alignment, the State contracted with V-TECS to assist in redesigning the testing rubrics to align with newly identified content standards.

Why were assessments instituted?

The assessments were initially instituted to respond to federal Perkins reporting requirements. The assessment approach adopted was intended to take into account three issues:

Cost: To avoid recurring costs associated with test administration of program specific assessments (e.g., WorkKeys), the state sought to develop a single exam that could be administered by districts without charge.

Instructional Time: Rather than have to take time out of the instructional day to support testing, the state opted for an authentic testing approach that could be incorporated into the school day. Students would also have an opportunity to learn from the testing program, rather than have to simply respond to questions testing their knowledge.

Local Control: Wyoming is a rural state with a tradition of local control over curriculum and assessment. Although the WyCTA prescribes a testing approach, local educators have some flexibility in how it is administered and scored.

Development Process

What was the framework for development?

The original WyCTA was designed to assess skills identified in the influential 1991 SCANS report, *What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for American 2000*, published by the

Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, as well as recommendations in the National Career Development Guidelines, developed by the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC) in 1989. All necessary skills found in the SCANS were assessed in the original WyCTA, and continue to be addressed in the revised exam.

In 2000-2001, the state began a process to develop formal CTE content and performance standards. Regional meetings were convened where participants compiled drafts using local district standards. The state committee, consisting of regional representatives, then used the regional documents to draft the state standards. National standards and several states' standards were referenced to establish the rigor of the Wyoming Career/Vocational Education Content and Performance. In 2002-2003 the standards were reviewed and revised. The WyCTA was revised subsequent to standard identification and adoption.

Who participated in design/purchase?

Regional groups consisting of representatives from each of the districts participated in WyCTA development. Community college, universities, students, and business representatives also contributed ideas to the design process.

How long did it take to develop/institute assessments?

The WyCTA was planned to include training and dissemination that took approximately two school years to implement. It has been continuously reviewed and updated as necessary.

What was the cost of developing state tests?

Initial costs were related to the development of the aligned rubrics used to develop scenarios. The cost in the design and alignment was approximately \$20,000. The WyCTA is scheduled for upgrade upon reauthorization.

Have new tests been added over time, and if so, why?

The WyCTA assessments are not secure, meaning that the state will need to draft additional scenarios over time. To maintain the quality of assessments, the state analyzes the internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach's Alpha) and inter-rater reliabilities of assessment rubrics. Validity is assessed in a number of ways: 1) face validity by experts in the area of CTE education who helped design and continually improved the assessment; 2) factor analyses demonstrate that the assessment areas are measuring the constructs of interest; and 3) concurrent validity was established through a study in which the WyCTA results were correlated to the ACT Work Keys

Test Structure

What types of skills are assessed?

State Career/Vocational Standards specify what students must master. They are not instructional curricula or technical documents used by teachers to guide day-to-day instruction. Teachers ensure that students achieve the career/vocational standards by using a range of instructional strategies that they select based on their students' needs. All state standards are identified for grades K-4, 5-8, and 9-12 with benchmarks at grades four, eight, and eleven. These standards have been organized into six major strands:

1. Resources: Students effectively manage time, money, materials, facilities and human resources.
2. Interpersonal Skills: Students acquire and demonstrate interpersonal skills necessary to be successful in the workplace.
3. Information: Students acquire and use workplace information.
4. Systems: Students demonstrate an understanding of how social, organizational and technological systems work.
5. Technology: Students demonstrate the ability to use a variety of workplace technologies.
6. Careers: Students develop skills in career planning and workplace readiness.

The strands were modeled after the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) and the National Career Development Guidelines. The graduating class of 2006 will be required to meet these as well as all state standards for language arts, math, social studies, science, health, physical education, foreign language and fine and performing arts.

An alignment of performance assessment areas within the WyCTA to the career/vocational standards are directly linked to specific content standards areas. The WyCTA is also compatible with the performance assessment components of the benchmarks. Assessment alignment with state standards is a critical component of state accreditation and future graduation requirements.

How many tests exist?

The state has developed a set of 18 scenarios. Each scenario aligns with a different content standard and benchmark, and each offers students an opportunity to demonstrate their mastery of a skill component and sub-skill area. It is not expected that all of the Performance Assessment Criteria will be used to assess all Standards. The scenarios are structured to measure progress against the Content and Performance Standards, using the specific Performance Assessment Components and Sub-skills that can be linked with the standards.

How is local curriculum aligned to state assessments?

Wyoming's CTE standards specify general skills students are expected to perform. They are not intended to serve as either instructional curricula or technical documents to guide day-to-day instruction; rather, teachers are expected to help students achieve the state standards by offering differentiated instructional strategies selected based on their students' needs.

The WyCTA is directly aligned to the state CTE standards, and has been updated as changes in programming and data collection are made. The exam is also compatible with the performance assessment components of the benchmarks. Consequently, local instructors that incorporate the skills contained in the state content standards are preparing their students for WyCTA assessment.

What are the test components and how are they administered?

The WyCTA consists of performance rubrics covering six content areas: Communication, Applied Math, Affective and Thinking, Technology, Pre-Employment, and Employability. Within each of these content areas are sub skills for actual rating purposes.

State assessment is performance based: students are rated based on their ability to demonstrate skills specified in a set of statewide rubrics. Students are judged on their performance by educational staff who are trained to serve as WyCTA evaluators, and who are able to observe

students throughout the school year. Whenever possible, CTE instructors are the first choice to serve as raters, although academic instructors, guidance counselors, etc., may also serve as raters.

Evaluators are provided with a standardized set of rubrics, rubric instructions, and a set of sample prompts. Evaluators use these rubrics to assign a rating to students on each WyCTA sub skill area, based on observations that the evaluator makes in the classroom or other work situation throughout the academic year. Students have between one to two weeks to complete their assigned problem. All student ratings using the WyCTA performance rubrics must be completed as of April of the current school year. In addition to rubrics and prompts, portfolios, projects, and written assessments may be included for use in triangulating ratings.

Are state tests transferable?

The WyCTA assessment is a performance-based exam that is directly aligned with state CTE standards. Skill assessment focuses on broad, occupationally generic work readiness skills common across all program areas. While it is likely these skills can be identified in all CTE programs, Wyoming tailored its content standards to reflect state-identified needs. As such, it is unlikely that the state's assessment system could be transferred without substantial changes made to the content standards, performance rubrics, and rubric instructions.

Test Administration

Which students take tests?

The WyCTA is administered to all CTE students in 10th grade (i.e., those who have taken at least 2 semester courses) and all CTE concentrators in the 11th and 12th grades (i.e., those who have taken 3 or more semester courses in a vocational program).

When are tests administered?

Testing occurs throughout the school year, with administration completed by April. Although most scenarios are designed for administration in a one or two-week period, a large project may, at the discretion of the instructor, be broken into parts or administered over a longer period of time. Alternatively if students work together on a problem as a team, project work may take less time than stipulated in the rubric. Scenarios are not intended to be time sensitive.

Who pays for the assessment?

There is no charge associated with testing. Local district and school staff administer the assessment and enter data into an electronic database. The WDE contracts with PRES Associates Inc., located in Jackson, Wyoming, to assess the reliability and validity of the CTE assessment and to collect and run the analyses on the raw data that are compiled annually.

How are testing results used?

WyCTA assessment scores are obtained from all local education agencies on an annual basis to monitor and evaluate instructional activities. The 10th grade data are used for district monitoring and for program improvement for students still in school. Data from the 12th grade are used for federal reporting and state improvement purposes.

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