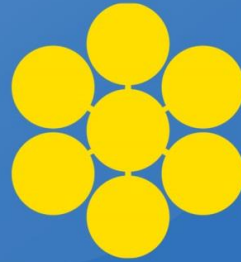




**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# SAS



**Standards  
Aligned  
System**

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## **Project Based Assessments**

**SAS Help Desk:**

**Email:** [helpdesk@pdesas.org](mailto:helpdesk@pdesas.org)

**Toll Free:** 1.877.973.3727

<http://www.pba.pdesas.org/Help>

# Getting Started: Tutor Guidance

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## Project Based Assessment Tutor Guidance

Keystone Exams are state-developed end-of-course assessments. Based upon Chapter 4 regulations, each Keystone Exam is designed in modules that reflect distinct, related academic content common to the traditional progression of coursework. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has developed a project based assessment system (PBA) that is aligned with the modules for each Algebra I, Biology, and Literature Keystone Exam for students who are unable to demonstrate proficiency on a Keystone Exam or Keystone Exam module. Successful completion of a project based assessment (PBA) aligned to the Keystone Exam or Keystone Exam module on which a student did not demonstrate proficiency shall satisfy the Chapter 4 Keystone Exam graduation requirements.

A student who did not score proficient on a Keystone Exam or Keystone Exam module shall be provided supplemental instruction consistent with the student's educational program by the student's school district, AVTS or charter school, including a cyber charter school, until the student can demonstrate proficiency in the subject area via the Keystone Exam or the student begins a project based assessment.

Tutors play a key role in the Project Based Assessment process. Tutors provide instructional support and guidance along the way so that students can successfully complete the projects to meet state graduation requirements.

To access PBA, please visit <http://www.pba.pdesas.org>.

Help Desk

Email: [helpdesk@pdesas.org](mailto:helpdesk@pdesas.org)

Toll Free: 1.877.973.3727

Hours:

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday

8am - 5pm

Tuesday and Thursday

10am -7pm

## Introduction

This document is designed to provide guidance to educators assigned to the role of Tutor in the Project Based Assessment. Listed below are resources to prepare Tutors for the essential role they have in assisting students in successful completion of the Project Based Assessments.

Each resource provides information related to the various aspects of the PBA process. It is recommended that Tutors work through each resource to gain background and knowledge to tutor effectively.

## Resources

1. Frequently Asked Questions (<http://www.pdesas.org/module/assessment/About.aspx>)  
Purpose: The FAQ provides the Tutor with an understanding of project design, student participation expectations, evaluation process, etc.
2. PBA Video (<http://www.pdesas.org/module/assessment/About.aspx>)  
Purpose: This approximate 8-minute video will provide the Tutor with an overview of how the site functions from a student perspective.
3. Roles and Responsibilities (<http://www.pdesas.org/module/assessment/About.aspx>)  
Purpose: This document provides a summary of the roles for all stakeholders in the PBA process.
4. Levels of Tutor Support (See Appendix A at the end of this document.)  
Purpose: This document offers guidance related to levels of support a Tutor may provide. It includes both examples and non-examples of acceptable tutoring.
5. Released Field Test Projects (<http://www.pdesas.org/module/assessment/About.aspx>)  
Purpose: Reviewing field test project will provide insight into the design and flow of the project.
6. Training Materials – User Guide for Tutors  
(<http://www.pdesas.org/module/assessment/About.aspx>)  
Purpose: The User Guide for Tutors provides Tutors with a step by step guide to navigating the PBA site.
7. Tutor Tips  
Purpose: This brief document (Appendix B) provides some specific pieces of advice for Tutors as they prepare for the tutoring experience.

## Appendix A

### Tutor Role Levels of Support

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As Tutors work with students in the Project Based Assessment, there are varying levels of support that may occur. The degree of support necessary for students to move through a Project Based Assessment (PBA) will certainly vary by student background knowledge, prior performance, and remediation that may have already been provided.

NOTE: At no time should a Tutor provide an answer to a student. The goal of the Tutor is to assess what understandings the student lacks so that the student has the skill set to complete the project successfully.

Level 1 Support – Tutor reviews student work at checkpoint and provides feedback via messages. Tutor and student have little or no interaction. Tutor may refer student to online resources for remediation or review.

Example: Tutor reviews a task at Checkpoint and discovers minor errors (e.g., a mathematical miscalculation) and queues student to review work and check calculations. Tutor may also refer student to an Associated Resource or other instructional piece that may refresh learning.

Non-Example: Tutor reviews a task at Checkpoint and discovers a minor error (e.g., a mathematical miscalculation) and identifies the mathematical error in detail (e.g., “You multiplied where you should have divided in Task 1, Activity 2. You know that the answer is 264 yards.”) rather than allowing the student to analyze his/her work and problem solve independently.

Level 2 Support – Tutor observes incomplete or on incorrect responses in the student’s work. Tutor evaluation of student project work to date indicates that student requires more intense remediation/supplementary instruction; whether virtual or face-to-face, Tutor provides supplementary instruction related to the Eligible Content. The instruction is not directly related to the questions and problems posed on the Project Based Assessment; rather, the focus is on the skill set necessary to complete the task/activity successfully.

Example: Tutor reviews a Task and discovers that the student has limited understanding of literary elements and how to identify in terms of how an author employs them to create a cohesive piece. The student is unable to draw evidence from the text to support how an author employs each element. The Tutor may have the student pause in his work on the

PBA as s/he provides more in depth instruction to include instruction on the Eligible Content and other text examples for the student to read and apply the skills.

Non-Example: Tutor reviews a Task and discovers that the student has limited understanding of literary elements and how an author employs them to create a cohesive piece. The student is unable to draw evidence from the text to support how an author employs each element. The Tutor provides supplementary instruction and then asks the student to read the selection aloud, pointing out phrases/sentence in the text that the student should use as evidence.

Level 3 – Tutor observes a severe lack of understanding of Tasks and student responses generally show little knowledge or understanding of the Task. Intense remediation/tutoring must be provided before the student can resume work. Tutor may need to provide in depth instruction on the Eligible Content as well as practice problems/ readings to prepare student to resume work.

Example: In completing a Task on the unique properties of water, the Tutor observes that the student's responses are way off base, incomplete, and/or even partially blank. The Tutor may determine that the student lacks any reasonable understanding of the properties of water and may have the student read about properties of water and access and use resources related to properties of water. The Tutor may provide direct instruction and pose questions to gauge student understanding to determine that the student is ready to move forward.

Non-Example: In completing a Task on the unique properties of water, the Tutor observes that the student's responses are way off base, incomplete, and/or even partially blank. The Tutor delivers a "lecture" to the student in which the answers to the Task are directly provided. The tutoring is not designed to simply provide specific answers; rather, the tutoring should focus on an understanding of the underlying concept (Eligible Content).

## Appendix B

### Tips for Tutors

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- Watch your email! Tutors are assigned by the school's Assessment Coordinator. Once assigned as a Tutor, the PBA system sends a message to the Tutor.
- Read through the entire project. Once assigned to a student, a Tutor should read through the entire project to gain an understanding of the design, flow, and expectations of the project.
- Gain a solid understanding of the PBA Tasks and Activities. Once a Tutor gains access to the PBAs, it is recommended that the Tutor complete all Tasks and Activities. This will assist in assessing student work at each Checkpoint.
- Use the online PBA resources. Online resources are populated in each PBA. Tutors may use these at their discretion – to use them as instructional resources or refer students to them for independent student use. Tutor may also upload teacher-made resources to support the instructional process.
- Check the messaging tab in the PBA portal. As students work through the projects, Tutors will be notified via the PBA messaging system when a task is ready for Tutor evaluation.
- Keep an eye on the Eligible Content. When a student has completed a PBA, the Tutor evaluates the PBA from the perspective of the Eligible Content. When the Tutor deems that all work related to the Eligible Content has been satisfactorily completed, the Tutor submits the PBA for evaluation.
- Provide necessary support and detailed feedback to students. As Tutors evaluate student work in Tasks and provide feedback, they need to determine what level of support is required. (See Appendix A.) The key is to provide students with the background knowledge they need to complete the Tasks correctly.
- Refer to the User Guide for Tutors. While the site is fairly easy to navigate, Tutors are encouraged to refer to the manual to refresh understanding of the PBA tools and functions.

- Maintain Confidentiality. Serving in the role of the Tutor you must maintain the security of the project based assessment (project or PBA). Handling of the project based assessments and promoting a fair and equitable testing environment are essential to obtain reliable and valid student results. When you access the PBA Tutor site for the first time, you must agree to the confidentiality statement in order to continue.
- Contact the Help Desk. The SAS Help Desk is available to assist Tutors with issues related to site access, navigability, site problems, and general troubleshooting. The Help Desk can be accessed via email at [helpdesk@pdesas.org](mailto:helpdesk@pdesas.org) or toll free at 1.877.973.3727.