

KEYSTONE PROJECT BASED ASSESSMENT SYSTEM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Introduction

Keystone Exams are state-developed end-of-course exams. Based upon Chapter 4 regulations, each Keystone Exam will be designed in modules that reflect distinct, related academic content common to the traditional progression of coursework. Students who do not score proficient or above on a Keystone Exam module may choose to complete a project based assessment for that module based upon the requirements as detailed below.

If a student is unable to meet the requirements in § 4.24(b)(1)(iv)(A) (relating to high school graduation requirements) after two attempts on a Keystone Exam, the student may supplement a Keystone Exam score through satisfactory completion of a project-based assessment. Points earned through satisfactory performance on one or more project modules related to the Keystone Exam module or modules on which the student did not pass shall be added to the student's highest Keystone Exam score.

Students may qualify to participate in one or more project-based assessments if the student has met all of the following conditions:

1. has taken the course.
2. was unsuccessful in achieving a score of proficient on the Keystone Exam after at least two attempts.
3. has met the district's attendance requirements for the course.
4. has participated in a satisfactory manner in supplemental instructional services under § 4.24(i).

1. We are aiming to create 2-3 project based assessments per module in May.

a. If a student chooses the project based assessment pathway to proficiency, how many projects per module will s/he be required to complete?

One project based assessment will be required for each module not passed.

b. Will we create new projects each year?

Yes

c. Why are we creating 2-3 assessments for each module?

While only one project per module will be required and offered to students, there is a need for field testing and fallback assessments, if necessary.

2. To what should a project based assessment be linked? Is there an optimal number of AA/EC we should aim for?

Project based assessments are module specific and should be tied to as many AA/EC as is reasonable to create a cohesive project. One project may include multiple tasks.

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- 3. If a student fails a module and chooses to complete a project based assessment for that module, what is the number of hours, on average, the project should require for completion?**

A project should average 5-7 hours.

- 4. What direction will districts have in terms of a timeline for student completion of projects?**

Districts will be encouraged to have monitors work with students to develop and follow a reasonable timeline for project completion.

- 5. What is the district's responsibility in terms of oversight of the Keystone Exams and projects?**

A student who has not demonstrated proficiency on a Keystone Exam after a first failed attempt shall be offered, per Chapter 4 regulations, supplemental instructional support by the student's school entity. The supplemental instructional support must assist the student to attain proficiency.

After a second failed attempt on a Keystone Exam, the district should provide supplementary instruction related to the Assessment Anchor/Eligible Content (AA/EC) for the module in which the student did not score at a proficient level in the Keystone Exam.

When a student begins the project based assessment, s/he should be assigned a monitor. The role of the monitor is to administer the project, check progress, and submit the project for regional review.

The district monitor may refer a student to a subject area teacher for remediation/ supplementary instruction related to the Assessment Anchor/Eligible Content (AA/EC) for the module in which the student is doing a project. The monitor may identify specific project related AA/EC for which the student requires instruction; however, no direct assistance on the actual project may be provided.

- 6. Is the expectation for students to work on projects during school hours or independently either at home or school?**

Schools must provide a monitored environment in which students work independently before, during, or after school.

- 7. How do we address cheating/plagiarism?**

A student contract will include details on the project's timeline, expectations, and a warning related to plagiarism and cheating. Parent/guardian will receive a copy of the student contract.

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8. Who scores the project based assessments?

The project based assessments shall be scored by intermediate unit coordinated regional panels composed of teachers, principals, and curriculum specialists. Projects will be submitted and scored according to scoring protocols and rubric developed by PDE. There is no requirement for students to be present when the panel reviews their projects.

9. If a student starts a project and chooses not to complete it, may s/he retest on the Keystone?

The opportunity to retake the Keystone Exam is always available to the student.

10. If a student's project is deemed failing by the review panel, what is the next step?

Upon receipt of a project not deemed to be at the proficient level, the student may redo the project and request its submission to the regional review panel.

11. Will PDE define time frames when IU panels must convene?

PDE will provide guidelines to intermediate units for scheduling the review panels.

12. If a monitor determines that the project does not meet the defined criteria, can s/he stop the project from moving to the IU review panel?

Monitors may make a recommendation as to whether or not a project should move to the regional review panel. The final decision on whether or not to move a project to the regional review panel rests with the principal.

13. Is there a direct path for special needs students to go directly to the project?

A student's IEP is the guide for student participation in the Keystone Exams and project based assessments.

14. Will projects be offered in other languages and will students be able to complete them in their native language?

Subject to funding, math and science projects will be available in Spanish.

15. Will there be an opportunity to submit projects electronically (via an online student portfolio)?

The plan is to develop a secure, online portal for project submission.

16. How will the projects be vetted after initial design (prior to implementation)?

Projects will be reviewed by a Content Review Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee. Approved projects will then be field tested in fall 2011.