

FAQs

National Needs Alter Plans for GED Test, 5th Edition

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With the announcement of altered plans for a 5th Edition GED Test release, will the current 2002 test series continue beyond January 1, 2012?

- Yes, the current test series will continue.
- The release of a new GED Test will be built upon the college- and career-ready content benchmarks of GED 20/20, which will be aligned with the emerging Common Core national content standards introduced by the National Governor’s Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers– the organization representing the chief education officers in each U.S. state.

What should I tell the public, the adult educators and testing professionals in my jurisdictions about changes to the GED testing program and changes in the 5th Edition release?

- Over the past several months the movement towards more rigorous national standards for high school education has gained momentum.
 - Economic challenges currently facing the U.S. have contributed to renewed thinking about GED testing and its impact on the larger picture of our nation’s educational and economic systems.
 - President Obama recently asserted the need to graduate more high school students and to support their transition to postsecondary education or career training programs. “By 2020, America will once again have the world’s highest proportion of college graduates in the world.” (Address to Joint Session of Congress, February 24, 2009)
 - To meet President Obama’s goal, the U.S. will need to produce an additional 1 million college graduates each year until 2020.
 - All educational organizations and providers, including the GED testing program, must enhance the way they do business in order to meet the President’s ambitious goals.
 - Currently there are 39 million U.S. adults without a high school diploma – or 18 percent of the adult population¹.
 - There are an estimated 1.3 million students who drop out of high school every year².
- The conversation was furthered with the introduction of Common Core standards supported by the governors of 48 states and three territories through the National Governors Association, alongside the Council of Chief State School Officers – the organization representing the chief education officers in each U.S. state.
- This changing national conversation on what it means to be a high school graduate and what is needed to be college- and career-ready, has a direct impact on the GED Test.

¹ 2000 U.S. census data. *Adult population is defined as those age 16 or older.

² Editorial Projects in Education (EPE). Diplomas count 2009: Broader Horizons: The Challenge of College Readiness for all Students. *Education Week*, special issue, 28(34).

- GED Testing Service® must introduce changes and improvements to the GED Test that are aligned with this new direction, and this includes the planned GED Test 5th Edition slated to be released in 2012.
- As a result, GED Testing Service will not introduce the GED Test, 5th Edition, on January 1, 2012.
- Because of the changing national landscape, the program will transition directly from the current test series to a new, more comprehensive assessment program.
- This new program, GED 20/20, will dramatically increase the number of test-takers and GED credential recipients who are prepared to pursue postsecondary education opportunities.
- Elements of the new program will introduced as early as 2010.

What elements of the GED 20/20 Initiative will begin in 2010?

- ACE has appointed Nicole M. Chestang to the position of vice president and executive director of GED Testing Service. Chestang is the former chief operation officer of the Graduate Management Admissions Council, sponsor of the General Management Admission Test (GMAT). Additionally, Martin Kehe has been promoted to deputy executive director, GED Testing Service. More information can be found in the official announcement on the ACE web site:
http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Press_Releases2&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=34354
- A computer-based testing (CBT) pilot will begin in 2010. The pilot will include a study to determine equivalency of CBT to paper-based versions of the tests, and assist in understanding a variety of issues related to CBT delivery.
- GED Testing Service has begun steps in commissioning alignment studies to look at test specifications set for the previous 5th Edition GED Test and the Common Core standards. These studies, being completed by Achieve, will clearly identify the gaps between the content on which we have based test development to date and the more rigorous college- and career-ready content expectations in the Common Core.
- In late 2010 GEDTS will begin field testing new types of items aligned with the emerging national standards.
- GEDTS is engaged in work with the Bridgespan Consulting Group, a respected nonprofit consulting organization. This work will assist in the planning process for GED 20/20. Key elements of the work will emphasize; academic preparation, the revised and more rigorous GED test, and a springboard of connections to postsecondary education and expanded career opportunities.

Will test-takers be able to combine test scores past January 1, 2012?

- Currently, GEDTS guidance is that test scores may be combined as long as they are within the same test series.
- We will continue conversations with GED Administrators to determine if an allowable timeframe should be placed upon allowable score combining (e.g. should scores only be combined if all tests were taken within five years, etc.).
- Any changes to the policy of combining scores would likely require a year or more of advance notice to test-takers and adult educators.

When will a new GED Test replace the current test series?

- There is no planned release date at this point. The alignment studies must be completed and some agreement on common national standards must solidify first.
- Preliminary analysis indicates that much of the content and items developed for the 5th Edition will be applicable to the new college- and career-ready GED Test.
- GED Testing Service realizes that developing a more rigorous test, to prepare credential recipients for postsecondary education and careers that provide a sustainable living wage, will require investment in academic preparation programs and post-credential transition programs. Accordingly until support systems pre and post test are improved, GEDTS will not launch a more rigorous test.

How far in advance will jurisdictions be notified of a new test series release?

- Due to the amount of advance notice required, GEDTS plans to keep GED Administrators and the field informed as planning for a new GED Test advances.
- GEDTS also understands the advance notice required by states that operate on a bi-annual budget cycle, and will make every effort to provide notice several years in advance of a release date.

How will the Computer-Based Testing (CBT) pilot jurisdictions be selected?

- GEDTS will work with psychometric and other internal units, as well as the CBT vendor, to determine 3-4 states that would be ideal to participate in the pilot.
- Some of the characteristics that are desired may include:
 - Size
 - Wait times for testing
 - Scoring site vendor
 - Coverage of pilot CBT testing location, compared to eligible test-takers
 - Diverse population of test takers to ensure representation in the study of key subgroups
- We will have conversations with a number of jurisdictions that fit most of the desired characteristics, and determine with them the final pilot partners.

What are the goals of the CBT pilot?

- The primary goal of the CBT pilot is to determine equivalency of CBT and paper-based testing scores.
- GEDTS will also begin to understand how test-takers respond to technology in real time; how the process of registration can be made easier for test-takers; and how quicker access to reliable data and reporting can benefit the jurisdictions, the test-taker, and GEDTS.
- The pilot will be a partnership between GEDTS and each participating jurisdiction. This partnership, working through details of state-specific policies, scoring site processes, and other issues will help determine how CBT could eventually be expanded to work within the complex system of state-specific policies in other jurisdictions.

How will jurisdictions not participating in the pilot be involved or informed of the details?

- GEDTS will confirm participating jurisdictions as soon as the list is finalized.
- GED Administrators not participating in the pilot will receive details of the study design as the discussion progresses, as well as regular updates as the pilot enters into implementation.

Further Questions:

- Additional questions and answers will be added to this document as they are submitted and answers are available.