

Texas
Profile of State High School Exit Exam Policies

State exit exam policy	Students entering the 9 th grade prior to the 2011-12 school year are required to pass all sections of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in order to graduate. Students entering the 9 th grade during or after the 2011-12 school year will be required to participate in the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) program, which requires a minimum passing standard on end-of-course (EOC) assessments in order to receive a high school diploma. In addition, a student’s score on each EOC assessment will be worth 15% of the student’s final grade for that course.
Type of test	TAKS- Comprehensive, standards-based STAAR- End-of-course, based on Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for that subject
Purpose	The purpose of the STAAR program is to measure students’ academic performance in core high school courses and to become part of the graduation requirements beginning with the freshman class of 2011–12. The EOC assessments for lower-level courses must include questions to determine readiness for advanced coursework. The assessments for higher-level courses must include a series of special-purpose questions to measure college readiness and the need for developmental coursework in higher education.
Major changes in exit exam policy since the 2009-10 school year for financial reasons	None
Major changes in exit exam policy since the 2009-10 school year for <i>other</i> reasons	Campus and district accountability rating will not change for the 2011-2012 school year. Current rating (2010-2011 school year) will remain in effect until testing data from the 2012-2013 school year data is available.
Year first administered	TAKS was administered for the first time in spring 2003, when it replaced the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills, which had served as the state assessment since 1990. STAAR will be first administered to entering 9 th grade students during the 2011-12 school

	year.
Year diplomas first withheld	<p>The state began withholding diplomas for students who had not passed the TAKS in spring 2005.</p> <p>Diplomas will first be withheld based on STAAR in the spring of 2015.</p>
Subjects tested on exam	<p>TAKS- English language arts (an integrated reading/writing test), mathematics, science, and social studies</p> <p>STAAR- English I, II, and III; Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II; Biology, Chemistry, Physics; World Geography, World History, U.S. History</p>
Subjects required for graduation	<p>TAKS- English language arts (an integrated reading/writing test), mathematics, science, and social studies</p> <p>STAAR-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduation Requirements for the <i>Distinguished Achievement Program</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Take all 12 STAAR EOC assessments -Meet cumulative score requirement in each of the four core content areas -Achieve Level III: Advanced Academic Performance (postsecondary readiness) on English III and Algebra II • Graduation Requirements for the <i>Recommended High School Program</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Take all 12 STAAR EOC assessments -Meet cumulative score requirement in each of the four core content areas -Achieve Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance on English III Algebra II • Graduation Requirements for the <i>Minimum High School Program</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Take STAAR EOC assessments for courses in which they are enrolled and for which an EOC assessment exists (8–12 tests) -Meet cumulative score requirement in each of the four core content areas for courses specifically required on the MHSP (could be as few as 8

	tests)
Grade exam first administered	TAKS- 11 th STAAR- Varies according to grade level in which specific courses are taken
Grade(s) exam aligned to	TAKS- Varies. TAKS measures content from various high school courses, including Algebra I, geometry, biology, integrated physics and chemistry, U.S. history, world history, world geography, and English III. STAAR- EOCs aligned with Readiness and Supporting Standards for each course
Number of retakes allowed <i>before</i> the end of grade 12	TAKS- four STAAR- All 12 STAAR EOC assessments will be administered at the end of the first semester, at the end of the second semester, and in the summer, giving students three testing opportunities each year.
Number of retakes allowed <i>after</i> grade 12	TAKS- Students who meet all graduation requirements except passing TAKS may continue to retake the tests after 12 th grade without limits on age or number of retakes. STAAR- Students who meet all graduation requirements except reaching the required cumulative score on EOC tests may continue to retake the tests after 12 th grade without limits on age or number of retakes.
Is the exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability purposes?	TAKS- No. Grade 10 assessments in mathematics and English language arts, rather than the exit level (grade 11) assessments, are used to fulfill NCLB high school testing requirements. STAAR- No
Is the same cut score used for graduation and NCLB accountability purposes?	TAKS- not applicable STAAR- not applicable

<p>Considerations given to changing the cut score needed to pass the exam for graduation purposes in the past year</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
<p>Alternate paths to graduation for students other than English language learners (ELLs) or students with disabilities</p>	<p>TAKS- No alternate paths to graduation currently exist for students in general education programs.</p> <p>STAAR- TEA will be conducting studies to examine the test results of students who take both the STAAR EOC assessments and other assessments (e.g., AP, IB, and SAT subject tests) to determine if these assessments are at least as rigorous as the STAAR EOC assessments and may be used to meet the cumulative score requirement. If the research supports the validity of substitute assessments, a substitution policy may be implemented as early as the 2013–14 school year.</p>
<p>Determination of eligibility to pursue these alternate paths to graduation</p>	<p>TAKS- Not applicable</p> <p>STAAR- To be determined</p>
<p>Number and percentage of students who used alternate paths in 2010-11 school year</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
<p>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</p>	<p>TAKS- None. English language learners are not eligible for an exemption from exit-level testing. Like other Texas public school students, they must perform satisfactorily on all four exit level tests to meet graduation requirements. Although exemptions are not permitted, the language proficiency assessment committee may postpone the initial exit level administration of the test for ELL students who first enrolled in a U.S. school no more than 12 months before. This deferral is called a one-time ELL postponement.</p> <p>There are no accommodations specific to English language learners taking the exit-level TAKS tests; however, accommodations that are based on individual students’ special needs are available to all students if they meet eligibility criteria.</p>

	<p>STAAR- Revisions to ELL test participation criteria will be made through the commissioner of education rulemaking process and posted on the Texas Education Agency Web site in fall 2011.</p>
<p>Number and percentage of ELL students using alternate paths in the 2010-11 school year</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
<p>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</p>	<p>TAKS- Individualized education program (IEP) teams determine testing requirements for graduation for students receiving special education services. If these students want to graduate under the recommended or distinguished high school plan, they must pass all TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) subject-area tests. If a student’s admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee determines that passing the exit-level TAKS (Accommodated) is an inappropriate requirement for graduation, the student must graduate under the minimum high school plan.</p> <p>Other students with disabilities may be tested using an alternate assessment if their ARD committee determines that neither TAKS nor TAKS (Accommodated) is an appropriate measure of their instruction in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum. Two alternate tests are currently available to these students: TAKS–Modified (TAKS–M), which is based on modified academic achievement standards, and TAKS–Alternate (TAKS–Alt), which is based on alternate academic achievement standards and designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities. TAKS–M was field tested in spring 2008 and became an 11th grade operational test in spring 2009. TAKS–Alt was field tested in spring 2007 and was used for the first time in spring 2008 to assess 11th graders with significant cognitive disabilities.</p> <p>More information is available at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/guidance/graduation.html</p> <p>If students with disabilities want to graduate under the recommended or distinguished high school plan, they must take the TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) exit level tests until they pass all sections.</p>

More information about allowable accommodations is available at http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/admin/AccommManual_2008_09.pdf

STAAR- As with TAKS–M, the new STAAR Modified assessments for grades 3–8 and for EOC will reflect the same content as the general assessments (i.e., STAAR). The STAAR Modified assessments will retain several features of the TAKS–M assessments; however, STAAR Modified will reflect the same increased rigor and focus of the general assessments. The tests will differ from the TAKS–M assessments in the following ways:

- New performance standards will be set for STAAR Modified using available empirical data to link performance across specific grades within a subject and across courses. Additional empirical data will be collected and analyzed to provide information for the standards review process in future years.
 - The STAAR Modified EOC assessments will differ from the TAKS–M high school assessments in that each STAAR Modified EOC assessment will cover only the content from a particular course (e.g., Algebra I will assess only Algebra I content) rather than content from multiple courses (e.g., Algebra I and grade 8 mathematics were assessed on the grade 9 TAKS–M mathematics tests).
 - The number of items on the STAAR Modified assessments will increase from the number of items on the TAKS–M tests. The number of items on the STAAR Modified assessments has been determined by decreasing the number of STAAR Modified blueprint items proportionally from the number of items on the STAAR blueprints—by approximately 20%—for each reporting category.
 - Field-test items will be embedded in the modified assessments rather than administered as stand-alone field tests every three years.
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- Students will be required to respond to writing tasks focused on different purposes for writing. These purposes include personal narrative, literary, expository, persuasive, and analytical writing.

The STAAR Alternate assessments will be similar in design to the TAKS–Alt assessments. Students will continue to perform assessment tasks linked to the grade-level TEKS. However, STAAR Alternate will incorporate a vertical alignment in the program's assessment tasks that will allow scores to be compared across different grades for the same subject and language version. The high school assessments will change from grade-level assessments to course-

	based assessments. STAAR Alternate assessments will reflect the same increased rigor and focus of the general and modified assessments. STAAR Alternate high school assessments will be developed for Algebra I, geometry, biology, English I, English II, English III, world geography, world history, and U.S. history.
Number and percentage of students with disabilities using alternate paths in the 2010-11 school year	Unknown
Is the exit exam used by postsecondary institutions for undergraduate admission purposes?	No
Is the exit exam used by postsecondary institutions for placement purposes?	Level III: Advanced Academic Performance is the postsecondary-readiness indicator for English III and Algebra II. Research will be conducted to investigate a postsecondary-readiness component for STAAR science and social studies EOC assessments.
Are students who meet a certain standard on the state exit exam granted exemptions on college placement exams?	No
Can students receive any form of postsecondary education course credit for their performance on the exit exam?	No
Access to initial and cumulative pass rates on high school exit exams	TAKS- http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/taks/rpt/sum/ STAAR- http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=3978&menu_id=793
State participation in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)	Texas has opted not to adopt either set of the Common Core State Standards.

CCSS testing consortia membership	Texas is not a member of either state testing consortium.
Impact of adoption of the CCSS on high school exit exam policies	Not applicable
Plans to replace or realign current exit exam in English language arts with a new assessment aligned to the CCSS	Not applicable
Plans to replace or realign current exit exam in math with a new assessment aligned to the CCSS	Not applicable
Plans to maintain current exit exams in subjects other than English language arts and math once the Common Core State Standards are fully implemented	Not applicable
Will changes in state exit exams mentioned above make the exams more rigorous, less rigorous, or about the same?	Not applicable
Preparation for students and teachers to transition to new exam	Not applicable

