



Understanding the Delaware Student Testing Program and Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System

Understanding the DSTP and DCAS

The Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP)/Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) is the assessment program designed to test all students in Delaware in grades 2-8 and in high school. The purposes of the assessment are many: to identify student achievement and areas where instructional support is needed, to assess whether students are achieving the goals of the learning objectives developed by the Delaware Content Standards and to assess the overall achievement levels of schools throughout the state. The content tested on the assessments is aligned to the expectations in the Delaware Content Standards.

Starting in grade 2, students begin to take the DSTP/DCAS Reading and Mathematics assessments. The reading, writing and mathematics assessment at this level is designed to gauge whether a student is meeting, exceeding or below the standards of the grade level.

For students in grades 3-10, the reading, writing and mathematics assessments are scored differently. Students fall into one of five achievement categories: Distinguished, Exceeds the Standards, Meets the Standards, Below the Standard and Well Below the Standards.

The Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) is the online assessment tool used by the state to administer end-of-course exams in Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. This program began in the 2010-2011 school year. This system is being put in place across all grade levels and schools. Graduation requirements in Delaware are changing in 2015 so that starting with graduates of that year students will need to demonstrate proficiency on these assessments.

Format of the DSTP and DCAS

The DSTP paper-and-pencil assessments of mathematics, reading and writing consist of multiple-choice, short-answer and extended-response questions. There is also a writing prompt to complete on the Writing Assessment.

The online format of the DCAS assessments is different to a paper-and-pencil based test. The questions are adaptive, meaning that depending on the performance on the last question answered the computer will generate the next question. This format is designed to deliver results more quickly than paper-and-pencil tests allowing teachers to target instruction for each student in the timeliest manner possible. Testing accommodations are provided to students as required.

Taking the DSTP and DCAS

Students in grades 3-10 take the Reading and Mathematics assessments three times throughout the school year (fall, winter, spring); if students are unsuccessful on the spring assessment there is a retake option. Students in grade 2 only take a reading and mathematics assessment in the spring.

Students in grades 5, 8 and 10 take the Science assessment in the spring. Students in grades 4 and 7 take the Social Studies assessment in the spring.

There are end-of-course assessments for students enrolled in Algebra I, Integrated Math I, English II, Biology and U.S. History.

Students also take a norm-referenced reading and mathematics assessment in grades 3-10 to provide national normative comparison rankings for each student. This program is referred to as the Terra Nova/Norm-referenced reading and mathematics assessment.

Get Your Child Ready for the DSTP and DCAS

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