

# Answers to Questions from the *Science Test and Item Specifications Release* webinar presented January 24, 2018

## Introduction

This document contains answers to questions submitted using the Q&A or Chat functions during the live Zoom webinar. The questions have been grouped by categories and numbered for ease of reference. If multiple participants asked the same question, we have only listed it once; if multiple participants asked similar questions, we have grouped them together and tried our best to give a comprehensive answer; and if a question might belong in more than one of the categories, we have listed it in both areas.

## WEBINAR LOGISTICS

**Q1:** Can we get a copy of the PowerPoint after the presentation?

**A1:** Yes, it is posted on the Science Assessment webpage (<http://www.k12.wa.us/Science/Assessments.aspx>) just to the left of where you found this document.

**Q2:** Will we be able to view a recording of this training later?

**A2:** Yes, you will be able to view this training later. The recording is posted in two places: 1) On the Science assessment webpage at the end of the sentence where this document is posted, and 2) within the WAMS application in EDS for District Test Coordinators (DC) to access. DCs should follow this file path: Assessment Operations—File Downloads—2018 Administration. Then scroll to the bottom where the category “Science Webinar Audio Files” is listed.

**Q3:** Is there a participation certificate we can print out at the end of this course?

**A3:** No, we do not have a participation certificate available.

**Q4:** I am unable to click on any of the links in the presentation. Will those be available later?

**A4:** Yes. First, download the PowerPoint file from the [Science Assessment webpage](#). Then put the PowerPoint in presentation mode and click on the links on your screen. The links should then work.

## TOOLS, SUPPORTS, ACCOMMODATIONS

**Q5 version 1:** How will accommodations be available for English language learners or students who are on IEP's for reading and writing?

**Q5 version 2:** Will ELL students have accommodations as well?

**A5:** Please refer to [Guidelines on Tools, Supports & Accommodations](#) (GTSA) for information about accommodation for EL students and students with an IEP or 504 plan. The figure of Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations on page 5 includes the Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science (WCAS). The tables throughout the rest of the document reference “Science.” Most of the settings appropriate for EL students will be listed in the Designated Supports sections.

**Q6:** Will there be an option for the test to have the ability to be read to students (similar to the SBA)?

**A6:** The Embedded Designated Support of **Text-to-Speech** will be available for the WCAS. This is when a computer voice reads the text out loud for the student. The student will need to wear headphones

## **Answers to Questions from the Science Test and Item Specifications Release webinar presented January 24, 2018**

during the test. Please see page 19 of the [Guidelines on Tools, Supports & Accommodations](#) (GTSA) for information about which students this support might be appropriate for. The [Non-Embedded Designated Supports](#) of **Read-Aloud-English**, **Read-Aloud-Spanish Only**, and **Read-Aloud-Student** will also be available. Please see the table on page 23 of the GTSA for information about how and when to use these supports. If not used regularly during instruction, these supports may be confusing and may impede the performance on assessments.

**Q7:** How many languages is the WCAS available in?

**A7:** The [Embedded Designated Support](#) of **Glossary-Translations**, like what is seen in Smarter Balanced Math items, will be available in the following languages: Arabic, Cantonese, Filipino, Korean, Mandarin, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese. We recommend that when choosing one of these translated glossaries for students that the option which also includes the English glossary be chosen. (For example, choose “Arabic & English Glossary” instead of just “Arabic Glossary”. The “English” part of the glossary will be the English definition of the word, the “Arabic” part will be the word itself translated into Arabic.) Please see page 18 of the [Guidelines on Tools, Supports & Accommodations](#) (GTSA) for information.

**Q8:** For ELL, will there be a stacked translation?

**A8:** Yes, the [Embedded Designated Support](#) of **Translations-Stacked (Spanish only)** will be available for the WCAS. The [Embedded Designated Support](#) of **Translated Test Directions** are automatically turned on when **Translations-Stacked** is set in TIDE. Please see page 20 of the [Guidelines on Tools, Supports & Accommodations](#) (GTSA) for information.

**Q9:** Will there be translated CDs?

**A9:** No, we will no longer have translated CDs for the science test. See the [Paper Test Designated Support](#) of **Translation Test** on page 27 of the [Guidelines on Tools, Supports & Accommodations](#) (GTSA) for information.

### TESTING LOGISTICS FOR PLANNING

**Q10:** Where will we have students log-in to take the science test?

**A10:** Students will take the WCAS in the same test delivery system used for the Smarter Balanced tests, which is also the same test delivery system that has been used for online science tests the past few years. That system is referred to as the Washington Secure Browser. Please see the [Online Training Test Support](#) document for details.

**Q11:** How much time is this test supposed to take students?

**A11:** The Grade 5 test is estimated to take 90 minutes. The Grade 8 test is estimated to take 105 minutes. The Grade 11 test is estimated to take 120 minutes.

**Q12:** Do the estimated times include test directions, student computer login, etc. or are they simply question times?

## **Answers to Questions from the Science Test and Item Specifications Release webinar presented January 24, 2018**

**A12:** No, these times do not include listening to test directions or student computer login procedures. Yes, they are simply the time we estimate students will spend responding to questions. If your school or district decides to break the test into multiple sessions, the additional login procedures will lengthen the overall time spent on the WCAS.

**Q13:** Can we do the optional 3 test sessions this year or next year?

**A13:** The option to break the science test into multiple testing sessions is new this year with the premiere of the WCAS. This will bring the science test more in line with the math and ELA tests. We are recommending **no more than 3 sessions** total. All tests will expire at the end of the online testing window; the last day of the testing window is currently scheduled to be June 8.

**Q14:** Do students have to complete the test in continuous days or can there be breaks in between the testing days?

**A14:** There can be breaks between the testing days.

**Q15:** Tests will expire at the end of the test session - June? When in June?

**A15:** The online testing window for Grades 5 and 8 is from April 16 through June 8. The online testing window for Grades 11 is from May 4 through June 8. Any test that was started, but not completed, will **expire at the end of the day on June 8**. (Our previous online science tests expired after one day as they were intended to be completed in one sitting by the students.)

### **THE TEST DESIGN AND ITEM SPECIFICATIONS DOCUMENT**

**Q16:** Where can I find/download Item Specifications? Are they on the NGSS site?

**A16:** The three *Test Design and Item Specifications* documents (one per grade level tested) are posted on the Washington Science Assessment webpage (<http://www.k12.wa.us/Science/Assessments.aspx>). Additional Test Design and Item Specifications, when they are available, will be posted on that same page.

**Q17:** Does this document include how item types will be scored?

**A17:** Yes. See the last two paragraphs of the *Multipart Items* section on page 7 of the document.

**Q18:** Are standalone items always first?

**A18:** Yes, the student test will always start with some standalone items.

**Q19:** Am I correct in thinking that “*the Item Specification coding system with 4 codes for the 4 possible item specifications*” from the PowerPoint means each PE will only be assessed with the SEPs and CCCs referenced in the standards for that specific PE (or bundle of PEs)?

**A19:** Yes, you are correct.

# Answers to Questions from the *Science Test and Item Specifications Release* webinar presented January 24, 2018

## VOCABULARY

**Q20:** Is there a list of expected vocabulary for the DCI or just the SEP and CCC?

**A20:** The expected DCI vocabulary are in the bottom row of the first page of each of the Item Specifications.

**Q21:** Where can the list of expected SEC and CCC vocabulary be found?

**A21:** The list is on the last page of the *Test Design and Item Specifications* documents.

**Q22:** Can we give students a list of Expected SEP and CC Vocabulary before taking the exam?

**A22:** The words on the expected DCI, SEP, and CCC lists are called “construct-relevant” terms because they are part of the construct being assessed. Students should be given the opportunity to learn the words as part of their science instruction. The words are included in the *Test Design and Item Specifications* documents to help teachers identify the words. The words listed as expected in the documents will **not** be glossed for students during the WCAS, and will not appear on any state approved glossaries. Students cannot have a list of the expected DCI, SEP, and CCC vocabulary with them while taking the WCAS.

**Q23:** Since you will not be releasing a vocabulary list with definitions, where can we find a vocabulary list with definitions for the standards that will cover these terms? Teachers need to be able to know what is required.

**A23:** The *Test Design and Item Specifications* documents for Washington’s science assessments have always had lists of words that students were expected to know and be able to read for the state-wide exam, and definitions of the words have never been included. OSPI cannot endorse any particular resource or curriculum, therefore we cannot direct anyone to a particular source for the definitions.

**Q24 version 1:** Could we get or access a list of SEP & CCC vocabulary, as they will be used in the Spanish stacked texts?

**Q24 version 2:** What specific vocabulary we can expect in the Spanish stacked screens?

**A24:** At this time, we can only provide the vocabulary words in English.

**Q25:** Will the terms “manipulated” and “responding” be used in conjunction with independent and dependent?

**A26:** In grade 5, we plan to use changed (manipulated), measured (responding), and kept the same (controlled) variables. In grades 8 and 11, we plan to use independent (manipulated), dependent (responding), and controlled (kept the same) variables.

## HOW ITEMS WILL BE SCORED

**Q27 (repeat of Q17):** Does this document [The *Test Design and Item Specifications*] include how item types will be scored?

**A27 (repeat of A17):** Yes. See the last two paragraphs of the *Multipart Items* section on page 7 of the document.

## **Answers to Questions from the *Science Test and Item Specifications Release* webinar presented January 24, 2018**

**Q28:** When and how do we get information about how the open-ended questions are scored? What I am asking is if asked to give a claim, evidence, reason-how will they be scored? What about other short answer items?

**A28:** Our previous science assessments had a series of what we called “templated” short answer questions that appeared regularly on the assessment (e.g., Conclusion, New Procedure, and Research & Explore). Those items were “templated” because, over the years of writing and field testing those items, there became a formula for how the question was phrased and a standard way to approach scoring. The WCAS short answer items are much more varied as a result of the 3 dimensional nature of the learning standards and the 2D and 3D nature of the item specifications, so we do not anticipate developing any templates for WCAS items like we did for our previous assessments.

A few examples of how short-answer items are scored can be found in the [Online Training Test Support](#) document. Look at the answer to Grade 5 question 5 at the bottom of page 19, and the answer to Grade 8 question 6 on page 27.

### REPORTING SCORES

**Q29:** Has the option been discussed at OSPI to not release student scores to students this year since some districts have not aligned science curriculum and instruction to NGSS?

**A29:** No. State law ([RCW 28A.655.090](#)) requires that the results of the state assessments be reported each fall.

**Q30:** What will the level of reporting be (both student & school level).

**A30:** Students will receive an overall scale score, an achievement level (Level 1, 2, 3, or 4), and then three reporting claim scores. The reporting claim categories are listed in the table on page 9 of the *Test Design and Item Specifications* documents. School and district reports will include everything required by [RCW 28A.655.090](#). See the answer to **Q31** for more information.

**Q31:** When and where are we going to be able to check the scores?

**A31:** WCAS scores will be available to school and district staff through the Online Reporting System (ORS) accessed via the Test Administrator or Test Coordinators cards on the [WCAP Portal](#). This is the same system used to report Smarter Balanced ELA and Mathematics scores, and to report the scores from our previous science assessments the last three school years. The exact date for which WCAS scores from spring 2018 will be available in ORS is not known at this time. We can confidently say that the scores will NOT be available before August 15, and that District Test Coordinators will get communication the week of August 15 with an estimated posting date.

**Q32:** Is the longer summer delay for scoring only until there is more certainty about the types of items used, or will scores always be expected to take longer to get than the SBA scores?

**A32:** The WCAS scores will always take longer to get than the SBA scores. This has nothing to do with the item types used; it is caused by the need to do a series of statistical procedures known as “equating.” These procedures cannot begin for the WCAS until after all students have completed testing. We expect

## **Answers to Questions from the Science Test and Item Specifications Release webinar presented January 24, 2018**

that WCAS scores from spring 2019 and onward will be available in the Online Reporting System (ORS) in mid-July.

**Q33:** Will the ETS assessed be included in the students' scores?

**A33:** Yes, the Engineering, Technology, and Applications of Science (ETS) domain items will be included in the students' overall scale scores that determines their achievement level (Level 1, 2, 3, or 4).

### OTHER

**Q34:** How do I give my students chances to practice the released practice items? Is there a website they can go to and get familiar with what the test will look like?

**A34:** The online [WCAS Training Test](#) is available to help students become familiar with what the test will look like and increase their understanding of ways test items function. Please read the [Online Training Test Support](#) document for guidance about how to access the Training Tests and how to use it with students. We hosted a webinar on January 10 titled, "How to Work with the WCAS Training Test," that would be useful for you to view. The presentation slides and an FAQ from that webinar are posted on the Science Assessment webpage (<http://www.k12.wa.us/Science/Assessments.aspx>). District Test Coordinators (DC) can access the recording of the webinar within the WAMS application in EDS. DCs should follow this file path: Assessment Operations—File Downloads—2018 Administration, and then scroll to the bottom where the category "Science Webinar Audio Files" is listed. (The recording will also be available next to the FAQ document on the Science Assessment webpage in the near future.)

**Q35:** Somewhere I read something about questions being locked after they are answered. Can you tell me more about this?

**A35:** Please see page 4 of the [Online Training Test Support](#) document for a written explanation. The Grade 8 [WCAS Training Test](#) has multiple locking items that you and students can view and work with to get familiar with how they function. The webinar mentioned in **A34** also discussed locking items in detail.

**Q36:** Can you talk about the pause/time out feature when the test is given over 2–3 sessions?

**A36:** When a student logs back into their test (resumes a test) after the test has been Paused, the system starts the student on the next unanswered question in their test.

**Note:** *If a student entered any text in the short answer response box, including random text (for example, "slkfaslkfj" or "xxxxxxxx"), the testing system will consider the question answered and will restart the student at a later question. This is also true for Smarter Balanced tests. Students should be directed to leave a short answer question completely untouched if they will not be able to finish it before pausing the test.*

- If the test was paused for less than 20 minutes, the student can go back to all previous questions and change their answers to those questions, except for locked items—they will not be able to change their response on locked items.
- If the test was paused for more than 20 minutes, the student cannot go back to see or answer any previously answered questions, they will only be able to move forward from that point in

## **Answers to Questions from the *Science Test and Item Specifications Release* webinar presented January 24, 2018**

the test. They will not be able to change their answers to any previous questions, even if the questions were marked for review. They will not be able to change their response on locked items.

If a school or district decides to administer the WCAS over 2–3 sessions, the TA will direct the students to use the Pause button to pause their test at some point during the first session, which will log the student out of their test. It is very likely that the next scheduled test session for the student will be on a subsequent day, which means that the test will be paused for more than 20 minutes, therefore the second bullet above will apply.

The *Test Administration Manual* (TAM), as well as the *TA Script of Student Directions* for the WCAS will have text for the Test Administrators to use with students when directing them to pause their test. Students will need to review all the questions they have answered thus far, and be sure that they are completely done with their answers to those questions before pausing their test. If the student starts to answer a locking item, and then selects **Pause**, the system will make them finish the locking item and confirm that they are done with it via the Attention box, thus locking the item, before the system goes through the confirmation process to pause the test.

**Q37:** For the contrasting groups study—I have 9th grade Biology students—who would I be predicting exam scores for since they will not take the exam for two more years (grade 11)? Would I be predicting my students from 2 years ago?

**Q37 part 2:** What is the three-hour training?

**A37:** The Contrasting Groups Study (CGS) only occurs in a school year when we are premiering a new assessment and going through the Achievement Level Setting (cut-score setting) process. Teachers will only be able to make predictions for students in grades 5, 8, or 11 that they are currently teaching, since those are the students who will be taking the WCAS in spring 2018. All science teachers are welcome to participate in the CGS training that will be provided on our Moodle site. Teachers will learn about the Achievement Level Descriptors, the Achievement Level Setting process, and how the CGS will be used in that process. There will be some documents to read and a recorded presentation to watch. You can go through the materials at your own pace. We estimate the time required at about 3 hours. We will be offering clock hours for those who participate in the training.

**Q38:** Will there be a “lessons learned” document published this year that reflects student performance on previously field-tested items?

**A38:** No, we will not be publishing a Lessons Learned from Scoring Student Work document this year.

**Q39:** Will there be training offered by SPI about how to teach NGSS for K–5 teachers, or is the test the only aspect of the transition being considered from the state level?

**A39:** OSPI has worked to develop a comprehensive approach to learning, teaching, and assessing the NGSS over the past several years. The standards were adopted in October 2013. Since that time, the Learning & Teaching department at OSPI has been working with districts and science leadership around the state to help schools and teachers transition to the NGSS. The [Learning & Teaching NGSS](#) web page has tabs titled “Background” and “Transition Plans and Timelines” that contain information you might find helpful. Please reach out to your district science leadership or your [ESD Regional Science Coordinator](#) for information about resources or training in your area.