

Frequently Asked Questions
Life Science Instructional Supports and Biology End of Course Webinar
September 14, 2011

Web-Posting Questions

1. Where do we find the Moodle site?

The Moodle site is <http://moodle.ospi.k12.wa.us/>. The link to the Biology End of Course Supports can be found toward the end of the course listings.

2. Will this webinar be posted on the OSPI Science site for future reference?

Yes, the web address is <http://www.k12.wa.us/Science/Standards.aspx>.

3. Can we get a copy of the slide show?

Yes, the PowerPoint is posted at: <http://www.k12.wa.us/Science/Standards.aspx>.

Future Webinars

4. Is the time for future webinars 3:00-4:30?

Yes, the 3:00-4:30 schedule is a new time. Many teachers requested a later start time.

5. Who should be at these webinars?

Teachers, curriculum directors, assessment directors and other interested parties are invited to participate in these webinars. Information about the theme of each webinar can be found at <http://www.k12.wa.us/Science/Standards.aspx>.

Elements of Effective Science Instruction (EESI)

6. What about cultural relevance in the Elements of Effective Science Instruction (EESI) model?

We will try to use the October webinar to continue our discussion about the EESI model. Information about the theme of the webinar will be posted on our website. (<http://www.k12.wa.us/Science/Standards.aspx>). We will address this question during that webinar.

7. Can we get a list of research that was used to create the graphic on the EESI model?

Yes, we can provide the research during our next webinar.

8. I looked on the Elements site but couldn't find the visual that combines the four elements in the EESI model. Am I missing it?

The visual can be found at <http://tnl.esd113.org/cms/lib3/WA01001093/Centricity/Domain/29/Principals/EESI%20for%20Principals.pdf>.

"Common National Standards" (Next Generation Science Standards or NGSS) and SMARTER/Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC)

9. Is it safe to assume there will be substantial changes again as we consider switching to national standards?

The new science standards will not be completed for at least another 13 – 15 months (estimated December, 2012). If Washington adopts the Next Generation Science Standards, there will be changes especially in regards to engineering and technology standards.

10. When can we expect the state to shift to common national science standards?

As with the state's decision to adopt the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics, we will undertake a careful review of the NGSS in light of Washington's current K-12 Science Learning Standards. The decision to adopt would not be made until after the NGSS are finalized (anticipated in late 2012).

11. Is the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) working on a science assessment?

No, the consortium assessment will address only the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics, per funding available from the Department of Education.

Additional EOCs

12. Will there be end of course exams for science in other content areas in the future?

There is currently no funding for additional science end of course exams. Both Superintendent Dorn and the legislature have indicated an intent to investigate the possibility of science EOCs for other courses (e.g., physical science) once funding is available.

Who takes the test

13. Will students who do not take biology be required to take the biology EOC?

Yes, the biology EOC is a graduation requirement for all students in the class of 2015 and beyond. All students in the class of 2015 and beyond must take and pass the biology EOC by the time they graduate.

14. Are 11th and 12th grade students in a biology course required to take the biology EOC in 2012?

All students in a biology course scheduled to receive biology EOC test booklets will receive a test booklet. They are expected to take the test.

Class of 2014

15. Will sophomores be required to take the biology EOC if they have not taken Biology?

Yes, all sophomores will be required to take the biology EOC and will be pre-identified to receive a test booklet. This is because the State must test one high school grade level in science for NCLB each year. Washington state tests all 10th graders.

16. Students in 10th grade are not required to pass the biology EOC for graduation purposes. Why are all 10th grade students required to take the EOC this year?

Students in 10th grade are required to take the biology EOC to meet the requirement of No Child Left Behind that all students take a test in science during high school.

Class of 2015

17. Are students taking biology as 9th graders required to take and pass the biology EOC?

Yes, 9th graders in 2011-2012 are the class of 2015 and are required to pass the biology EOC for graduation purposes. They will take the test during their 9th grade year if they are in a biology course. Ninth-grade students who take and pass the biology EOC will have met that graduation requirement and do not need to test in science in their 10th grade year. Ninth graders not enrolled in or not having taken biology will take the biology EOC in their 10th grade year.

Class of 2016 and Beyond

18. Will 8th graders who are accelerated in science and taking the HS Biology course take the Biology end of course exam this year or at the end of their 9th or 10th grade year?

Students taking a biology course for high school credit in 8th grade will take the biology EOC in their 8th grade year in their biology class. These students will also be required to take the grade 8 Measurement of Student Progress (MSP).

Courses/Students Pre-Identified for EOC Booklets

19. Which students will receive a pre-ID'd booklet?

Students will receive their pre-ID'd booklets through information provided in Comprehensive Educational Data and Research System (CEDARS), and verified in the Pre-ID verification tool in WAMS. All students enrolled in a biology course with the designated state course code (Biology 03051) and all 10th-grade students would automatically be pre-ID'd to take the Biology EOC.

Integrated Science

20. If a student is enrolled in an integrated biology and chemistry course over their 9th and 10th grade years, would they be pre-identified to receive a test booklet their 9th grade year or 10th grade or both? About half of the life science standards are taught each year.

Students in a course with the state course code for biology (Biology 03051) will be pre-ID'd to receive a test booklet. Districts will need to enter in WAMS any additional courses/students that should receive biology EOC test booklets.

AP Biology

21. Will students enrolled in AP Biology be automatically pre-ID'd to receive test booklets?

Since AP Biology is most often a second-year biology course, only students in AP biology who are also 10th graders will be pre-ID'd to receive test booklets.

IB Biology

22. Why are tests being administered in IB Biology? Typically, these students have already taken a general Biology course.

OSPI is investigating IB Biology further to determine whether districts offer the course most often as first- or second-year course.

23. If IB biology is a two year course in our district which year would students test?

The district will need to determine whether or not students will have had the opportunity to learn the content standards assessed on the biology EOC at the end of the first year or the end of the second year. However, students in the first-year course who are 10th graders in 2011-2012 will be automatically pre-ID'd for a biology EOC test booklet.

Test Logistics and Schedules

24. What is the recommended testing schedule for the Biology EOC?

They can be administered to intact classrooms over three days or in single-session, arena-style, settings. The exam will take approximately three 50-minute class sessions, or about 150 minutes: the first half of the first class session to read instructions and prepare students, the other half to take the first section of the test, and two full class sessions to take the remaining parts of the exam.

25. My school is giving the EOC exam over three days. What happens if a student misses one day?

Students are allowed to make up a missed testing day if it falls within their respective school's EOC testing window. For example, if a student misses the first day of EOC testing, he would take the second day of testing with his class. Then, if the school/district can arrange for that student to take the missed portion separately on the second day, the student could do so. The student cannot take the exam at a different school/building.

This policy would only pertain to schools giving the EOC over multiple days. If a school administers the EOC in one day/session, a student cannot make up the missed testing opportunity the following day because it would not fall within the school's EOC testing window.

26. Can schools within a district have different EOC schedules?

Yes. The district office can determine schedules by building.

27. Can there be different schedules with a single school building?

It depends. For schools with block schedules, the answer is yes if they are giving the exams to intact classrooms. Otherwise, no.

28. Can a school schedule multiple administrations of the EOC Makeup exam?

No. Just like the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE), the EOC Makeup exams must be given at the same district-mandated time within a school.

29. Will the Biology EOC be administered the last three weeks of the school year as is the case with the math EOCs?

Per the state testing calendar (<http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/StateTesting/timelines-calendars.aspx#spring2012>) the EOC test window dates are May 7 to June 15. The EOCs must be administered within three weeks before end of the course based on a locally-approved schedule.

30. Where do students take the test, and who proctors the exam?

Students will take the test in intact biology classrooms or in an arena-style setting. Proctors will be determined by the district/school.

31. What if students are absent in the spring, can they take the mid-year test?

Students who miss the testing window in the spring may take the Biology EOC during the Winter 2013 administration.

Test Content

32. Will the multiple choice questions require factual responses only? Or will they require students to reason through a problem?

The Biology Test and Item Specifications (<http://www.k12.wa.us/Science/TestItemSpec.aspx>) indicate the cognitive complexity for items in each content standard. Appendix A in that document contains an explanation of the various levels of cognitive complexity.

33. Are any concepts from Earth or physical science that support biology concepts like photosynthesis tested on the Biology EOC?

The Biology EOC will only assess content standards from Systems (EALR 1), Inquiry (EALR 2), Application (EALR 3) and the Life Science domain of EALR 4.

34. Can crossed items include content from Earth or physical science?

No, physical science items will not appear on the exam. An item assessing a content standard in Systems, Inquiry, or Application may cross with Life Science content standards only.

35. Will stand-alone items assess only Life Science content standards?

No, stand-alone items could be used to assess any of the EALRs.

36. Will all of the scenarios be biology-based?

Yes, all scenarios will be in the context of Life Science. See the Biology Test and Item Specifications (<http://www.k12.wa.us/Science/TestItemSpec.aspx>) for examples.

37. Are there good samples for us to use since there are no released items from the 2009 standards?

A Science Assessment Update for 2012 for Biology EOC will be posted in October. Check the Educator Resources link of the Science Assessment webpage (<http://www.k12.wa.us/Science/EducatorResources.aspx>).

Alternatives to the EOC

38. What assessment alternatives will be available for students who do not pass the Biology EOC?

Alternative assessments available to students in the class of 2015 and beyond who do not pass the Biology EOC will be similar to the alternatives available for the other high school tests. These include Collection of Evidence and Advanced Placement test scores.

39. Will there be DAPE science tests for special education students in grades 11 and 12?

Yes, there will be DAPE science tests available beginning in November 2013.

40. How are special program students (English language learners, special education) accommodated for the Biology EOC? Is there a basic option?

An EOC basic level score will be an option.

Assessment, Other

41. In Math EOC standards, they have created quick link crosswalk standards. Will you be doing the same for the Biology EOC?

No, the purpose of the End-of-Course Crosswalks in mathematics was to distinguish the standards that were common to Algebra/Integrated Mathematics 1 and common to Geometry/Integrated Mathematics 2 for the purposes of the exams. An equivalent situation does not exist for the Biology EOC so there will be no crosswalk for that exam.

42. Since we have a state mandated biology test, are we now required to move back to a biology course rather than an integrated science curriculum?

The State Board of Education determines credits required for graduation. Currently, two science credits are required. There is no requirement that one of those credits be in biology.

43. Will biological evolution be included on the exam?

Yes, the EALR 4 content standards found in the Biological Evolution Big Idea (LS3) in the K-12 Science Learning Standards will be assessed on the Biology EOC. These content standards will comprise 15 percent of the exam.

44. When will scores on the Biology EOC be available?

We will have to set a new performance standard ("cut score") for this new exam in 2012, just like we did for the end-of-course exams in mathematics in 2011. The State Board of Education will announce the cut scores in August 2012, and the scores will be released by the Superintendent at the end of August 2012. Individual Score Reports will be delivered to districts the first week of September.

45. Where do you find the sign up for the SALT and PEPPER list serves?

Send an email to: science@k12.wa.us and let us know if you would like to get involved (be a SALTer) or just be informed (be a PEPPER), and we will add you.