

October 2010

What's New About GED in Iowa?

GED Testing Service® Answers Your Questions

Each month GED Testing Service will answer your questions about the GED® 21st Century Initiative. This month's questions come from several GED coordinators and teachers. See below for answers organized according to topic area:

Computer-Based Testing (CBT)

1. ***We have heard that the computer-based testing will begin in 2014 and be the *only* form of the test. Is this true or will paper/pencil still be available?***

This week, Marty Kehe, Deputy Executive Director of the GED Program at GED Testing Service announced that CBT Phase 2: Adding CBT to the GED Testing Program is starting in November with the first cohort of jurisdictions. This means that a few jurisdictions will start the steps to make computer-based testing available. All other jurisdictions will be organized into cohorts and work with GED Testing Service on CBT Phase 2 in a staged process. **CBT (computer-based testing) will be available in addition to paper-based testing.** Phase 2 is expected to last a few years as all jurisdictions go through the 4-6 month start-up process with GED Testing Service. **Our current plan is that all jurisdictions will be offering computer-based testing in addition to paper-based testing (PBT) no later than mid-2013.**

2. ***We have heard that CBT will occur in traveling "bookmobile" vehicles and that students will thus be required to take their tests in this environment if they do not live near a test center. Is this true and if so, tell us more about the nature of these traveling vehicles.***

Every decision of the computer-based testing (CBT) project is made with the needs of the test-taker first. In planning for operational CBT we are looking at a variety of alternatives to ensure that test-takers in remote locations have access to the computer-based version of the GED Tests. **We have not made any final plans as to how those needs will be met, but are looking at a number of alternatives.** For the initial launch of computer-based testing, however, the only places that will be offering the computer-based version of the GED Tests are 1) authorized testing centers from our technology partner, or 2) current GED testing centers who wish to go through the set-up to become computer-based testing centers as their jurisdiction implements CBT Phase 2.

3. ***When will the GED Tests have its first administration on the computer-based (CBT) format?***

GED Testing Service expects the first cohort of jurisdictions to complete CBT Phase 2: Adding CBT to the GED Testing Program no later than June 2011. At that time, computer-based testing will be offered as an option for test-takers in those jurisdictions. **Iowa is not presently involved in this pilot, so computer-based testing will not be available in the near future.**

4. ***How will the essay work? Will students have to type their essays? What about students who are unfamiliar with computers? What about GED programs that do not have access to computers to help students prepare?***

Test-takers who are comfortable using computers will be invited to take the computer-based version of the tests. **Test-takers will be required to type their essays and will be able to see immediate score results for all test parts except for the essay.** As part of the CBT Phase 2: Adding CBT to the GED Testing Program, each jurisdiction will develop solutions for needs in their area. GED Testing Service encourages areas that have unique needs, such as access to computers, to contact your GED Administrator so that this requirement can be met during the implementation period. As an example, one possible solution for this requirement may include partnering with learning centers or libraries that offer computers. You can also see the results of the Phase 1 usability study to learn more about how candidates performed on computer-based GED practice tests.

The new GED assessment

1. ***How closely aligned to the common core standards will the 2020 version be? Will the revised test still be introduced in 2012?***

The new GED assessment is not associated with any calendar year - it will be introduced as part of the GED 21st Century Initiative. No new edition of the GED Tests will be introduced in 2012.

The next-generation GED assessment *will* be aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). However, CCSS are standards for *instruction* in the K-12 environment. CCSS do not directly represent standards that are *assessable*, and they may not include all the skills and competencies that are needed by adult learners for success in career and postsecondary education. As a result, the first part of the development process for the new GED assessment is the creation of testing content frameworks and assessment targets which will be aligned with (*but not identical to*) the CCSS. Other standards will be taken into consideration as well, such as those that form the basis of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP). Also recall that currently, CCSS only address the content areas of English language arts and mathematics. The new GED assessment will also include content coverage in the areas of science and social studies.

2. ***Will test scores expire? Will spelling be given more weight in the Essay scoring guide?***

It is still too early to determine the operational characteristics of the test including scoring and score expiration. We are working to first determine the framework for what will be measured and what the test scores will mean. Score expiration is, however, an important factor to test-takers and it will be addressed as soon as we have enough measurements and other work completed to make an informed decision. Content frameworks for the tests are also still in development but will be shared with the field as soon as possible.

Although it is much too early for guidelines for scoring of essays and other possible constructed response items on the new GED assessment to have been developed, it is highly unlikely that spelling will be evaluated in these types of items. Adults in the 21st Century generally have access to spelling tools, and so evaluation of responses to assessment items would likely take that fact into account. As the new GED assessment continues in development, GED Testing Service will share the expectations and scoring guidelines with the field.

3. ***I have heard the new test will be on-line.***

The next-generation GED assessment, to be launched sometime within the next 5 years, will be administered primarily through computer-based testing (CBT) methods, although paper-based testing (PBT) will still be available under certain circumstances or as an accommodation. Until the next-generation test is launched, the 2002 Series GED Test will be administered in both PBT and CBT formats. The computer-based version of the GED Tests will only be offered at Official GED Testing Centers. The test will not be administered via the Internet ("online testing") outside of those official centers. This is crucial for GED Administrators and examiners to understand in promoting security for test-takers who may fall victim to online diploma mills or scams.

4. ***When is the projected date?***

This is a question we hear a lot. However, the new GED 21st Century Initiative is not a single event or product launch. It is a new way of thinking about the GED testing program. The GED 21st Century Initiative is our commitment to helping more adults become career- and college-ready by transforming the GED Test into a comprehensive program. By building a more robust assessment, complete with preparation tools and transitions to college and careers, GED Testing Service and ACE hope to increase the number of adults who can enter and succeed in college and the workforce. It's a long-term program and we need your support to do it!