



# Appendix A

## Quality Control System (QCS)

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Prior to reporting test results, an extensive and comprehensive process, called the Quality Control System (QCS), is enacted by the Texas Education Agency to verify the quality and accuracy of final reports for Texas assessments. The eight-step process, along with the details of each step, is summarized below.

1. Prepare a test design for each test administration. A test design in the QCS context is a set of specific instructions for preparing fictitious student documents that are used as test cases.
  - Check the proposed document for the upcoming administration for any design changes that might affect the QCS process (for example, new or revised fields in the student document).
  - Determine whether any new policies have been established since the last administration of the assessments that would affect how student documents are edited or how test scores are reported. Decide how these policies affect the QCS process and whether these new edits should be tested with additional test cases.
  - Create a new database of test cases. A new test administration will have most of the same test cases as the previous administration of the same assessment, but with additions or changes necessary to reflect new reporting policies and/or new conditions that should be tested.
  - Prepare a written test design consisting of coding and gridding instructions to Pearson.
  - Send the test design and text file to Pearson according to an approved schedule of processing deadlines created for the particular test administration.
2. Receive raw score to scale score (RSSS) conversion tables from Pearson.
  - Pearson sends a raw score to scale score (RSSS) conversion table to TEA. The RSSS table shows the scale score corresponding to each achievable raw score point for an assessment. These RSSS tables are used to convert the raw scores to scale scores and assign a passing status (for TAKS and STAAR) or proficiency rating (for TELPAS) for each test case. The tables are verified, approved, and incorporated into computer programs that produce the student and district/campus files and reports. Refer to the Equating section in chapter 3 for more information about RSSS conversation tables.
3. Create a student-level data file. This file contains the data from the simulation of the processing of student documents from the test cases.
  - Verify that the “resolved” fields are correct in the database of test cases. The resolved fields simulate the changes that would be made in the Pearson editing process if coding or bubbling errors are made on the student document.
  - Export the student-level data file from the database.

4. Receive a student-level data file from Pearson.
  - Pearson sends an independently generated student-level file to TEA with student names, demographic data, and scores. This file is the result of a procedure that, using the instructions in the test design provided by TEA, simulates the completing of student documents by districts, followed by processing, editing, and scoring of student documents by Pearson.
5. Compare Pearson and TEA student-level data files.
  - For each test case, compare every variable in the Pearson student-level data file with the corresponding variable in the TEA student-level data file.
  - Investigate each mismatch, if any, and determine the source and reason for the discrepancy.
  - Make corrections, if necessary, in accordance with established policy and edit rules.
  - Repeat the process by regenerating student-level data files, comparing, and resolving discrepancies until the files from Pearson and TEA are identical.
6. Print reports.
  - Pearson prints reports (all standard and optional individual and aggregated reports) for three fictitious districts and sends them to TEA.
  - A corresponding TEA report is produced for each Pearson report.
  - Reports by TEA and Pearson are generated with independently produced computer programs.
7. Verify reports.
  - Reports are compared to verify that they contain identical information.
  - Any discrepancies found are investigated and corrected.
8. Approve reports.
  - When all the reports for the fictitious districts are verified to be free of error, TEA notifies Pearson that reports can be posted on a secure website and/or shipped to school districts when Pearson's quality assurance process is complete.