

Increased Rigor for STAAR Alternate

This document outlines the various methods that were used to increase the rigor of the STAAR Alternate assessments. The following table lists the ways the rigor was increased through increasing the cognitive complexity of items or tasks, establishing stricter test administration guidelines, increasing the difficulty of the test through the scoring rubric, and/or increasing the performance standards.

General characteristics of the STAAR Alternate assessment program that are expected to make the assessments more rigorous
<p>The rigor of the <u>tasks</u> was increased by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• linking the tasks to curriculum that assesses skills at a greater depth and higher cognitive complexity• assessing higher grade-level prerequisite skills and having the prerequisite skills increase by grade-level across all complexity levels• requiring students to generalize the skill using different materials rather than completing the task with different personnel or in a different environment; thus focusing on academic expectations and application of knowledge rather than situational factors• requiring students completing Complexity Level 3 tasks to perform more complex tasks• requiring students to perform more than one skill in some predetermined criteria for Complexity Levels 2 and 3 tasks and to complete all parts of a predetermined criterion successfully before getting credit for demonstrating the skill• requiring students completing Complexity Level 1 tasks to demonstrate more performance: more “participating” and “responding” instead of “exploring” and “acknowledging” <p>The rigor of the <u>test administration</u> was increased by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• allowing only two completed primary and two completed generalization observations limiting the practice-effect of repeating the observation multiple times before evaluating the student• requiring documentation for students whose observations were deemed No Response Observed for one essence statement in each subject as evidence that the teacher preplanned and observed the student not responding• requiring teachers to use different materials for instruction than were used during the assessment observation to ensure that students demonstrate the skill and not simply duplicate or rotely repeat the responses given during instruction• disallowing the combination of Complexity Level 1 tasks with Complexity Level 2 because a student who can make a choice is developmental beyond beginning awareness and should be challenged with all Complexity Level 2 tasks <p>The rigor of the <u>scoring rubrics</u> was increased by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• allowing points to be obtained for each predetermined criterion only when a student responds using the preplanned response mode• increasing the expectation for obtaining points for generalizing the skill by differentiating the scoring based on the amount of support needed to complete each predetermined criterion successfully• increasing the expectation of the primary observation for demonstration of skill by awarding no points if a student must be prompted to complete the task; a prompt is an invasive support that takes the student step-by-step through the task leading to a direct answer <p><u>Performance standards</u> were increased by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• setting the standards so that they require a higher level of student performance than was required on the TAKS–Alt assessments• reviewing performance standards at least once every three years and, if necessary, adjusting them so that the assessments maintain a high level of rigor
<p>For the 2012-2013 STAAR Alternate administration, additional rigor was increased by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• allowing only a total of three observations including any observations that were started whether they were completed or not• recording of the description of the change in materials on the state-required documentation form that will be part of the audit• allowing combinations of Complexity Level 1 tasks and Complexity Level 2 tasks if the test administrator feels the student is between levels as described by TEA documents (Note: For 2014, the ARD committee will be required to make the complexity level decision and note the decision in the student’s IEP.)