



# An Overview of the Testing Program

The purpose of the New Mexico Teacher Assessments™ is to help the state meet its goal of ensuring that all candidates seeking licensure in New Mexico have the basic skills and professional teaching and content knowledge necessary to perform the job of an educator in New Mexico public schools.

For current information on requirements and program policies for the New Mexico Teacher Assessments, see the most recent version of the registration bulletin. You are encouraged to read these requirements and policies carefully and to determine with your academic advisor the best time for you to take the tests.

The State of New Mexico Public Education Department and National Evaluation Systems, Inc. (NES®) are available to answer questions you may have. Select "Contacts" from the New Mexico Teacher Assessments Web site at [www.nmta.nesinc.com](http://www.nmta.nesinc.com) for more information.



## TEST DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Creating the New Mexico Teacher Assessments is a complex, ongoing process. The major steps in the process are outlined below.

Task	Description
Develop Test Frameworks	<p>The content of each test is documented in the test framework. The test frameworks consist of a set of test competencies organized into test subareas and a set of descriptive statements that elaborate on the content of each test competency.</p> <p>During the development of the test frameworks, key state and national documents and New Mexico educators were consulted. Committees of New Mexico educators reviewed the test frameworks and made revisions, as necessary, to ensure that the test frameworks are accurate, free of bias, job related, representative of the diversity of the state, and consistent with the purposes of the program.</p>
Validate Test Content	<p>Randomly sampled practicing New Mexico K–12 educators and educator preparation program faculty completed a content validation survey to ensure that the test frameworks reflect the knowledge and skills considered to be important for performing the job of an educator in New Mexico.</p>
Develop Test Questions	<p>Test questions were developed to assess the content defined by the test frameworks. Committees of New Mexico educators were convened to review and approve the test questions. Several hundred students preparing to teach at different certification levels field-tested the questions at field test sites throughout New Mexico.</p>

Task	Description
Set Passing Scores	A committee of New Mexico educators was convened following the first test administration to recommend the passing score for each of the New Mexico Teacher Assessments. The final passing scores have been established by the New Mexico Public Education Department.



## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ASSESSMENTS

The New Mexico Teacher Assessments™, i.e., the New Mexico Assessment of Teacher Basic Skills™, the New Mexico Assessment of Teacher Competency™ (Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary), and the New Mexico Content Knowledge Assessments™, compose a comprehensive and integrative assessment program for educator licensure in New Mexico. The New Mexico Teacher Assessments satisfy the basic skills and knowledge testing requirement for educator licensure in New Mexico and, except for some licensure under interstate reciprocity, are required for individuals seeking an initial New Mexico license. Each assessment covers a different component of important knowledge and skills required of New Mexico educators. Please refer to the following table for specific information about each assessment.

New Mexico Teacher Assessments	Assessment Information	Content
<b>Basic Skills</b> 01 New Mexico Assessment of Teacher Basic Skills	Designed to measure fundamental communication and mathematical skills that New Mexico requires of classroom educators and that are needed to effectively complete a New Mexico educator preparation program. Assesses three broad areas of knowledge and skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading comprehension</li> <li>• Written communication</li> <li>• Mathematics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100 selected-response questions</li> <li>• 1 constructed-response assignment</li> </ul>
<b>New Mexico Assessment of Teacher Competency</b> 03 Elementary 04 Secondary 05 Early Childhood	Designed to measure professional/pedagogical knowledge and skills. Examinees need to pass only one level of this assessment (Early Childhood, Elementary, or Secondary) for licensure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 75 selected-response questions</li> <li>• 3 restricted-response assignments</li> <li>• 1 extended-response assignment</li> </ul>

<b>Content Knowledge Assessments</b> —Designed to measure the subject-matter knowledge and skills that are needed to teach effectively in New Mexico schools.		
<p><b>Middle Level Assessments</b></p> <p>23 Middle Level Language Arts            24 Middle Level Mathematics            25 Middle Level Science            26 Middle Level History, Geography, Economics, Civics and Government</p>	<p>An option for K–8 licensed educators to demonstrate that they meet the standard of "highly qualified" in a subject-matter area according to requirements of the "No Child Left Behind" legislation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100 selected-response questions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Secondary Level Assessments</b></p> <p>12 Language Arts            14 Mathematics            15 Science            16 History, Geography, Economics, Civics and Government</p>	<p>Intended for individuals who are seeking a 7–12 educator license.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100 selected-response questions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Language Assessments</b></p> <p>18 French            19 German            20 Spanish</p>	<p>Intended for individuals who are seeking an endorsement in modern and classical languages.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 65 selected-response questions</li> <li>• 1 written constructed-response assignment</li> <li>• 1 oral constructed-response assignment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other Content Knowledge Assessments</b></p> <p>11 Elementary Education            13 Reading            21 Music            22 Visual Arts            27 Family and Consumer Sciences            28 Health Education            29 Physical Education            30 Library/Media            31 Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)            32 Special Education            33 Educational Diagnostician            34 School Counselor            35 Educational Administrator</p>	<p>Intended for individuals who are seeking an initial license or an endorsement in one of the listed fields.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100 selected-response questions</li> </ul>



## TEST ADMINISTRATION AND SCORE REPORTING

The New Mexico Teacher Assessments are administered several times a year at selected sites in New Mexico. See the most recent version of the New Mexico Teacher Assessments Registration Bulletin for information on test dates, sites, fees, registration procedures, and policies.

Unofficial scores will be available on the Internet by 4:00 P.M. mountain time on the official examinee score reporting mailing date for each test administration. To access your unofficial score(s), go to [www.nmta.nesinc.com](http://www.nmta.nesinc.com) and follow the instructions provided on the "Score Reporting" page.

Official scores will be mailed approximately five (5) weeks after the test date. Refer to the registration bulletin for official examinee score report mailing dates.

Your score report will provide a total score for the assessment. The Assessment of Teacher Basic Skills, the New Mexico Assessment of Teacher Competency (Early Childhood, Elementary, Secondary), and the Content Knowledge Assessments of French, German, and Spanish include constructed-response assignments. For these assessments, the total score will be based on the combined score from the selected-response section and the constructed-response section of the assessment. Passing status for each of the New Mexico Teacher Assessments is determined on the basis of your total score. Please refer to the **Score Report Explanation** on the back of your examinee score report for further information.



# How to Prepare for the Assessments

This section of the New Mexico Teacher Assessments study guide provides information to help you prepare for the tests.



## PLAN YOUR COURSE OF STUDY

Follow the steps outlined below to prepare for the New Mexico Teacher Assessments.

To . . .

Do the Following . . .

Assess your  
content  
knowledge

**Read the test frameworks.**

The test framework for each assessment is the only source that specifies the information covered by the test(s) you are taking.

- 1. Read through the entire framework to get a general picture of the material the test covers.**
- 2. The competencies included in the framework form the foundation and focus for the test questions. The descriptive statements that follow each competency (indicated by bullets) provide examples of possible content covered by the competency. Read each competency and its descriptive statements carefully for a more specific idea of the knowledge and skills you will be required to demonstrate on the test.**



Improve your  
test-taking  
skills

**Answer the sample questions.**

After you have become familiar with the test competencies, review the test directions and try to answer the sample test questions for the test(s) you are taking. Set aside several hours for this exercise. If possible, take the sample test questions in a quiet room to simulate the testing environment. Time yourself as you complete the sample test questions to estimate the amount of time you will need to allow for questions on the actual test.



Develop a  
study plan

**Focus your studies.**

- 1. Identify the most appropriate resources.** These may be textbooks from courses you have taken. You may also wish to consult your class notes and materials and publications from professional education organizations.
- 2. Develop a study schedule.** Consider reviewing a book on study skills development or studying with other people who will be taking the test by forming or joining a study group.



# The Day of the Test: Helpful Hints

Following are some suggestions for preparing for the test administration and some strategies you may wish to use while taking the test.



## PREPARING FOR THE TEST

The following tips will help you prepare for the day of the test.

### Start early

- Make sure you allow plenty of time to have a good breakfast or lunch and to travel to the test center.
- Arrive on time so you are relaxed and ready to begin the test when instructed to do so.



### Dress comfortably

- Anticipate fluctuations in room temperature by wearing layers of clothing.
- Wear soft-soled shoes so you will not disturb other candidates when you leave your seat.



### Follow the rules

- Review the "Rules of Test Participation" section of the registration bulletin.
- Be aware that using a cell phone during the testing session, removing notes or test materials from the site, and other violations may result in your score(s) being invalidated.



## TAKING THE TEST

The following tips for taking standardized tests may contribute to your success and confidence during the test session.

### Follow directions

- At the beginning of the session and throughout the test, follow all directions carefully. This includes oral directions from the test administrators and any written directions in the test booklet.
- The test booklet contains directions for the selected-response questions and the constructed-response assignment(s) (if the test you are taking includes constructed-response assignments). If you do not understand the directions, raise your hand and ask a test administrator for assistance.



- Pace yourself**
- Each test session is four hours long. The test schedule is designed to allow sufficient time to complete the test.
  - Before starting the test, flip through the booklet to review the number of selected-response questions and constructed-response assignments and to set a pace for answering them.
  - You may find that you need less than four hours to complete the test, but be prepared to stay for the entire time.
  - Do not make any commitments for this time period that may cause you to work more quickly than you should.
  - Do not spend a lot of time on a selected-response question that you cannot answer promptly; skip that question and move on.
  - If you skip a selected-response question or constructed-response assignment, mark it in your test booklet so that you can return to it later.
  - If you skip a selected-response question, be sure to skip the corresponding row of answer choices on your answer sheet.



- Read carefully**
- Read the directions and the test questions carefully.
  - Read all response options.
  - Remember that the test questions call for the *best* answer. Do not choose the first response option that seems reasonable; read and evaluate all choices to find the best answer.
  - Do not skim the test questions in an effort to save time; you may misread key words and select the wrong answer or spend more time than needed on a test question. For example, if a test question calls for an *approximate* answer but you skip over that detail, you could waste time performing a long computation.
  - Read the test questions, but don't read *into* them. The test questions are designed to be straightforward, not tricky.



- Clearly mark your answers**
- Your answers to the selected-response questions will be scored by a machine; therefore, clearly mark your answer sheet and select only one answer.
  - If you change your mind about an answer, erase your original answer completely.
  - Do not make any stray marks on the answer sheet.
  - If you skip a selected-response question, be sure to skip the corresponding row of answer choices on your answer sheet.
  - If the test you are taking includes one or more written constructed-response assignment(s), your answer(s) must be recorded in the appropriate section of the answer document. Responses to the written constructed-response assignments that are recorded in the test booklet will not be scored.



- Guess wisely**
- As you read through the selected-response answer choices, try to find the best answer. If you cannot quickly determine the best answer, try to eliminate as many of the options as possible. Then, choose one of the remaining answer choices.
  - Your score on each test will be based on the number of selected-response questions you have answered correctly combined with your score(s) on the constructed-response assignments (if the test you are taking includes any).
  - There is no penalty for incorrect selected-response item answers, so it is better to guess than to not respond at all.



- Check your accuracy**
- Use any remaining time at the end of the test session to check your work.
  - Go back to difficult test questions to review or rework them.
  - Check your answer sheet to be sure that you have clearly marked your answers and have completely erased changed answers.