A Guide to Student Occupational Competency Testing in Pennsylvania 2023-2024

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pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Introduction

This guide is provided to assist school personnel in preparing for the required student occupational competency testing of all secondary concentrators in approved career and technical education (CTE) programs in the commonwealth. It was developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to be used as an informational resource and addresses policies and procedures for participating in federal and state mandated occupational competency testing. Complete materials, guidebooks, and required forms are available on the [Student Occupational Competency Testing program website](#).

Student Occupational Competency Testing Program Policies

PDE requires all secondary concentrators (refer to the definitions on the next page), anticipated to graduate from their high schools and approved CTE programs, to take a state-approved occupational competency test. This requirement includes students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP).

This testing policy meets the requirements of the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (P. L. 115-224) (Perkins V) and Chapter 4 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code, specifically 22 Pa. Code § 4.31(a). All concentrators who anticipate graduating are expected to participate in occupational competency testing. Failure to comply will affect Pennsylvania's ability to meet the requirements of the statewide system of measures and standards and may result in sanctions against a school under 22 Pa. Code § 4.31(a), 22 Pa. Code § 339.4(e)(1)(i), or Perkins V.

Accountability of school programs becomes more significant each year to students, parents, instructors, administrators, school boards, and PDE. The occupational competency tests used in this program are based on state, national, and/or industry-based standards. These standards are usually consistent with local curricula; however, local administrators are encouraged to identify gaps between the local curriculum and national standards and exert efforts to close any identified gaps.

Requirements Governing the Testing of Career and Technical Education Students

Several state and federal requirements dictate the testing of CTE students. 22 Pa. Code § 4.31(a) requires an occupational competency measure for all career and technical education program concentrators who have completed a CTE program. In addition, Perkins V requires that each state develop a system of core performance measures and standards for the purpose of evaluating its secondary, adult, and postsecondary CTE programs. Lastly, Pennsylvania is a unified state where federal and state CTE programs are part of the Governor's Executive Order for the Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board, which calls for an integrated workforce investment system with core performance measures and standards. Testing results are used to address the federal and state performance accountability requirements Perkins V and 22 Pa. Code § 339.4(e)(1)(i), both of which involve the use of third-party end-of-program occupational tests to measure technical skill attainment.

Definitions

The following definition should be used by school personnel to identify students required to participate in this occupational competency testing program:

Secondary Concentrator – A student who completes at least two state-defined CTE courses. Pennsylvania defines a CTE course as a minimum of 240 technical instructional hours as planned per year in a PDE-approved CTE program. Completing at least 480 technical instructional hours is required for PDE-approved one-year CTE programs.

NOTE: Completing means passing the course and earned credit.

Contact Kevin Springman in PDE's Bureau of Career and Technical Education at (717) 783-6623 or kspringman@pa.gov for more information on this definition.

Who Should Be Tested?

22 Pa. Code § 339.22(a)(9)(ii)(c) requires approved programs to end in grade 12. If a student is a secondary concentrator and anticipated to graduate at the end of the current school year, then that student should be tested whether or not they will complete the program's technical hours. A student with an IEP whose Transition Plan indicates they will be staying in school for extended years beyond the grade 12 should be tested in the spring of the final year in school.

If a student transfers schools, the school where the student is enrolled after transferring should determine the amount of the student's program hours from the former school's CTE program which can be counted toward the number of technical hours completed by the student during the CTE program. If the total number of technical hours completed in a program is 480 or more, then the student is a secondary concentrator and should be tested.

For a student who changes programs, the secondary concentrator definition must be followed when determining if a student is eligible to participate in occupational competency testing. This is a local decision similar to applying hours for a student transferring from a CTE program at another school.

Who Should Not Be Tested?

1. Juniors who are not graduating high school;
2. Students who will not meet the definition of a secondary concentrator by the end of the school year in which they are anticipated to graduate;
3. Students who are attending less than two hours of technical coursework per day at a sending high school while enrolled in a full-day, one-year CTE program at a career and technical center; and
4. Students who meet the requirements for the Pennsylvania Alternative System of Assessment (PASA).

Students who take the PASA are considered exempt from participating in this occupational competency testing program; however, students who take the PASA may be tested with the recommendation of the IEP team. See the Accommodations section in this guidebook.

Mandatory Use of PAsecureID Numbers

As part of the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS), PAsecureID numbers have been assigned to all pre-kindergarten through grade 12 public school students. These unique, permanent student identification numbers:

1. Eliminate the need for a Social Security number to identify a student;

2. Protect personally identifiable information;
3. Improve security and confidentiality; and
4. Enable student records to be safely and appropriately linked between systems and across time to make longitudinal data analysis possible.

PDE's Bureau of Career and Technical Education **requires** student PAsecureID numbers to be used as student identifiers in this testing program for all NOCTI and National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS) tests. It is the school's responsibility to ensure all PAsecureID numbers are accurate.

Failure to provide accurate PAsecureID numbers will result in student data not being reported on federal and state annual reports and could impact continued CTE approval status.

Approved Tests

PDE has identified NOCTI and NIMS as approved occupational testing agencies. Additional information about these approved agencies is provided below. Tests must be administered in their entirety to be considered a complete test. Only students who take a complete test will be considered a complete test taker for the PIMS completion code. Only complete tests will count towards the eligibility of Pennsylvania certificates. Partially administered tests will be identified as incomplete tests.

NOCTI Tests – These tests consist of two components. The multiple-choice component assesses factual knowledge, technical information, and the understanding of principles and problem solving. The performance component allows students to demonstrate the skills they have learned to function in their desired job. NOCTI tests are nationally normed and must be given in their entirety. Reported scores on NOCTI tests are both criterion-referenced and norm-referenced. NOCTI tests are designed around criteria for job readiness. Raw scores are provided for the criteria as well as local, state, and national norms. To be considered a complete test taker for the PIMS completion code, students must take both the multiple-choice and performance components of the test.

NIMS Credentialing Tests – PDE has mandated the use of NIMS Machining Level 1 tests as the acceptable occupational competency test for students in machining-related approved CTE programs. The NIMS credentialing tests are drawn from industry-validated metalworking standards. Both performance and theory tests are developed and piloted by the industry. To be considered a complete test taker for the PIMS completion code, students must take at least three NIMS Level 1 Machining credentialing tests. NIMS credentialing tests without the performance affidavits submitted are not considered complete and are not counted towards certificate eligibility or state reporting.

Ordering and Costs

NOCTI Tests – PDE will assume the costs of online multiple-choice tests, student performance test booklets, scoring, and reporting services for schools meeting the requirements of this testing program. Costs are automatically assumed by PDE when orders are processed directly through the Education Resource Center at Penn State Greater Allegheny using the online PDE order form found on the NOCTI Client Services Center. Costs of materials and supplies required for performance tests are the responsibility of the school.

Tests must be ordered at least four weeks prior to the scheduled testing date(s) to allow for

processing, shipping, and to avoid any additional shipping charges to the school, including a 10 percent rush order fee (minimum $25) imposed by NOCTI. Additional fees will be applied based on expedited shipping selection; these fees will vary depending on each order. Contact NOCTI to determine additional costs associated to expedited shipping.

If any tests require rescoring due to an error on the part of the school or Test Site Coordinator, such as incorrect PAsecureID entered in NOCTI's online system, the school is responsible for the costs associated with rescoring.

NIMS Credentialing Tests – For each student who wishes to receive NIMS credential certificates, PDE will assume the cost of an Entry Level I Machining 1-year subscription and scoring and reporting services for this occupational competency testing program. Included in the subscription are 12 Machining tests and one Metalforming test with unlimited retakes. Restrictions are put into place after the second failed attempt.

Pennsylvania's 2023-2024 account code **CVS3SA** and a valid PAsecureID must be used to purchase subscriptions for students on the NIMS online testing system. There is no separate registration fee, and students can print their earned NIMS credential certificates at any time. This code must be used only by secondary students who are part of this statewide testing program.

Instructors who are interested in taking any of the NIMS credential tests for their own certification are NOT permitted to use PDE's student account code. NIMS waives test fees for instructors. Contact NIMS to receive a fee-waiving code at support@nims-skills.org.

Defined Roles and Responsibilities

PDE – To meet federal and state data reporting requirements, PDE is responsible for developing and administering the mandatory statewide testing program for students enrolled in approved CTE programs. In addition, PDE reports the required federal and state data.

Education Resource Center at Penn State Greater Allegheny – This center oversees the management and organization of the statewide testing program including verifying and processing test orders, communicating with school personnel, providing informational materials, maintaining all testing program records, collaborating with testing agencies, verifying the disposal of all test materials, and providing student certificates to schools.

NOCTI – This testing agency is a PDE-approved agency for student occupational competency testing and provides job-ready tests and student data to Pennsylvania. NOCTI tests are composed of a multiple-choice component and a performance component. The online multiple-choice component measures the technical knowledge acquired by students. The performance component allows students to demonstrate their acquired skills by completing actual jobs using the tools, materials, machines, and equipment of the occupation. The NOCTI Client Services Center is a one-stop tool for managing a successful assessment program and can be accessed at clientservices.nocti.org. Through the Client Services Center, test site coordinators can access key resources, place orders, manage online user codes, and access score reports.

NIMS – This credentialing agency is a PDE-approved agency for student occupational competency testing in machining-related approved CTE programs and provides tests and student data for Pennsylvania. NIMS tests include online theory and performance components.

School Administrator – This individual oversees the occupational competency testing program at a school. A school administrator must sign the NOCTI Testing Agreement indicating commitment to the occupational testing program by:

1. Ensuring proper training for the school's test site coordinator;
2. Approving selection of and ensuring proper training of proctors and evaluators;
3. Overseeing the conduct of school staff and testing personnel; and
4. Reporting security violations or suspected violations to testing agencies and PDE.

Test Site Coordinator – This individual oversees the testing program at a school. The test site coordinator is responsible for the overall facilitation, promotion, guidance, and monitoring of the testing program. The test site coordinator must adhere to the policies and procedures in this guide and those set by the testing agencies. The test site coordinator acts as the liaison to manage the testing program for the school. Specific responsibilities include:

1. Serving as the school's contact person for all test activities;
2. Attending training provided by PDE;
3. Overseeing test administration;
4. Coordinating test ordering;
5. Ensuring that testing is scheduled within the testing window;
6. Confirming receipt of testing materials and notifying Education Resource Center at Penn State Greater Allegheny of any discrepancies;
7. Maintaining security of all test materials before, during and after testing;
8. Reviewing test security policies with school staff, instructors, proctors, and evaluators;
9. Scheduling and conducting training sessions for proctors and evaluators;
10. Monitoring test administration;
11. Ensuring that all student and test information data is accurately completed including test title, student name, and PAsecureID;
12. Ensuring accuracy of all student demographic information;
13. Ensuring that all online tests have been released to the testing agency for scoring;
14. Ensuring that students with IEPs are correctly tested and receive required accommodations;
15. Immediately notifying administrators of any security issues and reporting security violations to testing agencies and PDE;
16. Distributing score information to administrators and instructors;
17. Organizing test materials for shipment to the Education Resource Center at Penn State Greater Allegheny and test answer sheets (if applicable) for shipment to NOCTI;
18. Verifying that all test materials have been properly destroyed and notification sent to the Education Resource Center at Penn State Greater Allegheny;
19. Manually transferring performance test ratings to the NOCTI online system; and
20. Maintaining testing records.

Proctor – This person is a designated individual who oversees the administration of online tests consistent with established procedures and policies. Responsibilities include:

1. Reviewing the NOCTI *Proctor Guide for Online Testing* , located in the resources section of the NOCTI Client Services Center, and being familiar with the instructions and procedures for test administration;

2. Conducting the testing process in accordance with established procedures and policies;
3. Informing students of proper test taking procedures;
4. Discussing test security with students;
5. Monitoring students during test administration;
6. Monitoring the multiple-choice testing session to prohibit talking or cheating in order to minimize disturbances and distractions;
7. Documenting relevant discrepancies, comments, or irregularities; and
8. Reporting any suspected security violations to the test site coordinator.

Per the NOCTI Security Policy, the following individuals are prohibited from serving as proctors for their own students or students in a similar CTE program:

1. Secondary instructors of the program being assessed; and
2. Paraeducators and instructional assistants of the program being assessed.

Acknowledgement forms provided by NOCTI must be reviewed and signed by each proctor and retained by the school.

Evaluator – This person is a business and industry representative who evaluates the performance component of the NOCTI test. Evaluators should be experts in their field with a minimum of three years recent experience. Evaluators must be available for training and the scheduled performance session. Each evaluator should be:

1. Knowledgeable in the program being tested;
2. Qualified to evaluate student performance objectively;
3. Capable of setting up the necessary equipment and supplies;
4. Familiar with the administration of performance-type testing; and
5. Able to follow directions for conducting evaluations.

The evaluation should be consistent with the established procedures and policies including the NOCTI Security Policy and other test administration guidelines for selecting performance evaluators. Evaluators rate student performance on each specific task for each job on the test as the task is completed. Responsibilities include:

1. Reviewing the NOCTI *Evaluator Guide,* located in the resources section of the NOCTI Client Services Center, provided with each test to become familiar with the student and evaluator instructions, scoring criteria, and procedures for test administration;
2. Working with the school's test site coordinator to ensure that the performance jobs are set up appropriately;
3. Administering the testing process consistent with established procedures and policies;
4. Ensuring compliance with safety guidelines and protocols;
5. Discussing test security with students;
6. Informing students of proper test taking procedures;
7. Monitoring students during the testing session;
8. Monitoring testing time;
9. Maintaining a presence in the testing area to discourage talking or cheating;
10. Protecting students from disturbances and distractions as they complete the performance jobs;
11. Evaluating and recording each student's performance in accordance with the criteria provided in the NOCTI *Evaluator Guide,* located in the resources section of the NOCTI Client Services Center, for the specific test being administered;
12. Documenting relevant discrepancies, comments, or irregularities;

13. Returning test materials to test site coordinator; and
14. Reporting any suspected security violations to the test site coordinator.

The following individuals are prohibited from serving as performance evaluators:

1. Secondary instructors;
2. Paraeducators and instructional assistants;
3. Program instructor's family members;
4. Recent program graduates;
5. College students;
6. Substitutes; and
7. Recently retired instructors (three years).

Using the program's occupational advisory committee (OAC) members as performance evaluators is strongly encouraged. Other appropriate evaluators include non-instructional district staff and local businesspersons. **Use caution when selecting performance evaluators. The evaluator's role or relationship with the program, teacher and/or students must be considered. Any potential conflict of interest or evaluator selection that may cause the integrity of the testing program to be questioned should be avoided.** Acknowledgement forms provided by NOCTI should be reviewed and signed by each evaluator and retained by the school.

Instructor – The instructor should be accessible during the test administration process for liability purposes and to assist with tasks that the proctor/evaluator cannot complete (locate extra materials, shut off power, give students a restroom pass). To maintain the integrity of the tests, instructors are **not** permitted to have access to any test booklets, answer sheets, performance rating worksheets, or evaluator guides. The instructor must **not** facilitate, observe or participate in the evaluation or administration of the performance component. The instructor should meet with the test site coordinator to make decisions and logistical considerations for successful test administration including:

1. Selecting tests based on program content, test blueprints and the *Pennsylvania Student Test Crosswalk*;
2. Scheduling testing dates/times, including makeup dates, if needed;
3. Determining if multiple-session testing is appropriate to accommodate schedules;
4. Identifying suitable and qualified proctors and evaluators based on NOCTI requirements;
5. Notifying parents/guardians about test administration;
6. Preparing students with study guide materials and encouraging them to do their best;
7. Setting up the performance component according to the NOCTI *Instructor Prep Packs,* located in the resources section of the NOCTI Client Services Center;
8. Reviewing score reports and providing individual reports to students; and
9. Ensuring that accommodations for students with IEPs have been identified and provided.

Testing Window

NOCTI – Post-tests are to be administered in the spring from March 1 - April 30, 2024. All evaluators' performance ratings must be entered for scoring by May 15, 2024. All test materials must be properly destroyed by May 15, 2024. Semester-about programs should assess their students during the final CTE program semester. If students graduate from their CTE programs in January, they should be tested between November and January prior to graduation.

NIMS – NIMS Level 1 credential tests can be administered beginning in the first year that a

student is enrolled in an approved CTE program and continue throughout the student's enrollment in the program. For secondary concentrators graduating, all NIMS credentialing tests must be complete by April 30, 2024. Student data on the *NIMS Verification Form* must be submitted to the Education Resource Center at Penn State Greater Allegheny by May 15, 2024.

Pennsylvania Student Test Crosswalk

The PDE *Pennsylvania Student Test Crosswalk* aligns each Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code to all available tests. Only the eligible test(s) for each CIP code listed on the crosswalk is/are approved to be used in 2023-2024. A CIP code that does not have an approved test is exempt from testing. The crosswalk is to be followed when ordering tests. The *Pennsylvania Student Test Crosswalk* is available on the Student Occupational Competency Testing program website.

Test Makeup

Test makeups are permitted for students who were absent during the initial testing date. Schools must determine 1) when makeup tests are to be scheduled during the testing window and 2) if more than one makeup session is needed. Test security must be ensured to protect the validity of every test.

Test Retakes

Requests for test retakes can be submitted for PDE's review and approval when test administration errors have been made, such as a student with an IEP not receiving required accommodations or an English Learner who did not receive the accommodations normally received for other testing situations at the home district. Test retakes approved by PDE are to be administered following the suggested waiting period in the NOCTI retake guidelines. Requests for test retakes or questions regarding this policy are to be submitted to Kevin Springman in PDE's Bureau of Career and Technical Education at (717) 783-6623 or kspringman@pa.gov.

Disposal of Test Materials

Schools are responsible for the disposal of all NOCTI test materials. Accepted methods of disposal include shredding or incineration. The *Test Materials and Disposal Verification Form* must be signed by the test site coordinator and an administrator and submitted by May 15, 2024. Submission of this form verifies that your school completed all requirements for the testing program and properly disposed of all NOCTI test materials.

Student performance rating sheets completed by evaluators are to be kept in a secure location by the test site coordinator until final score reports are received and verified. After the test site coordinator verifies student scores, performance rating sheets must be destroyed by the test site coordinator.

Related Test Instruments

1. **Calculators** – Students may use the calculator built into the NOCTI multiple-choice test system or a non-programmable calculator during NOCTI tests. For NIMS testing, the calculator developed for machinists from Calculated Industries is permitted to be used.
2. **Formula Sheets** – NOCTI does not permit the use of formula sheets during testing,

unless specified in a particular test. When a formula is required for an item, it is provided as part of the related item(s) for that test.

3. **Electrical Code Book** – Students are permitted to use the *Electrical Code Book* with related tests.

4. **Electronic Devices** – Following the *[PDE Electronic Devices Policy](#)* for tests, all cell phones, smartphones, and other prohibited electronic devices are to be collected as students enter the testing area. Thus, school districts and schools should do the following:

   a. Notify and ensure parents and students fully understand the policy regarding electronic devices, including cell phones;

   b. Inform parents and students that the consequence for using and/or having a cell phone or other electronic device during the test administration will result in the student not receiving a score;

   c. Inform parents and students that, if the student uses a cell phone or electronic device in any manner during the administration of the test, the cell phone or electronic device will be confiscated until such time that the parent or guardian can come to the school, and in the presence of the parent or guardian, the cell phone or other electronic device will be viewed to ensure that no information or material regarding the test is present;

   d. Inform parents and students that violation of the policy will result in discipline and that discipline will vary depending on whether test materials have been compromised; and

   e. Inform parents and students that any item on a test that has been compromised and can no longer be used will have to be replaced, and the parents and students may be responsible for the cost of replacement.

School personnel and students must understand that the integrity of the test cannot be compromised. There have been reports of test information being communicated via cell phones and, for this reason, PDE requests the full cooperation of all school personnel in complying with this policy.

If a violation of this policy occurs: 1) confiscate the electronic device; 2) terminate the student's testing session; 3) remove the student from the testing area; and 4) report the violation to PDE and the testing agency.

Photocopying NOCTI Test Materials

NOCTI test booklets and evaluator guides are not permitted to be photocopied or duplicated, including taking a photograph of any test materials. NOCTI test materials, including current and previous test versions, are protected by federal copyright law which prohibits unauthorized reproduction and use of copyrighted materials. Refer to the [NOCTI Security Policy](#) for additional information.

NOCTI Multiple-Choice Test Requirement

NOCTI multiple-choice tests are required to be taken online. In preparation for online tests, the test site coordinator should meet with proctors to review the *Proctor Guide for Online Testing,* located in the resources section of the [NOCTI Client Services Center](#). Online tests must be administered in a proctored environment. Online tests provide the following benefits:

- Elimination of hardcopy test booklets,

- Time savings during administration preparation and follow-up,
- Immediate results when designated at the time of ordering, and
- Text-to-speech capability and extended-time for IEP accommodations.

For online testing, complete score reports including individual and group analysis are provided within two business days after tests are released for scoring.

If a school has a situation where using online tests is not feasible, the test site coordinator must submit a detailed explanation requesting the use of hardcopy versions of the multiple-choice test. If the school's request is accepted by PDE, the use of the hardcopy versions of the test will be permitted. In addition, the school will be responsible for paying the price difference per test billed by NOCTI for using the hardcopy version. If the waiver is not accepted, the school will be required to use the online version.

Requests should be submitted on school letterhead and sent to the Education Resource Center at Penn State Greater Allegheny, 4000 University Drive, McKeesport, PA 15132 or testing@careertechpa.org. Orders will not be processed until a decision by PDE has been made. This will affect the four-week test order window required by NOCTI.

Administration and Technical Requirements for NOCTI Online Testing

NOCTI assessments must be administered in a proctored environment, and proctor selection must adhere to the NOCTI Security Policy and test administration guidelines. Access to resources through the Internet, local network, mobile devices, or electronic storage media is strictly prohibited during test administration. Because modern HTML5 compliant browsers, such as Firefox, Chrome, and others supported by the NOCTI QuadNet^{TM} Online Testing System allow access to multiple websites NOCTI recommends that testing sites explore network configuration options that will restrict access to the Internet and other areas of the local network where resources may be available during test administration. Appropriate network configuration, along with proctored administration, will ensure a secure and fair testing experience for all participants. Complete information about online testing computer setup requirements may be accessed by test site coordinators in the Resources section of the Client Services Center.

Test Security

In Pennsylvania, it is the responsibility and requirement of the test site coordinator and all school personnel to ensure the security of tests and test materials to protect the validity and integrity of the tests and the testing process. Maintaining security is a critical component of the occupational competency testing program. Any deviation from procedures meant to ensure validity and security is strictly prohibited and will be considered a violation of test security. School personnel with authorized access to test materials cannot discuss, disseminate test information, or otherwise reveal the contents of the test to anyone. Instructors, including instructional staff, are prohibited from:

1. Serving as test site coordinator, proctors and evaluators;
2. Viewing tests, performance jobs and related scoring criteria;
3. Asking students questions about the test; and
4. Having access to the NOCTI Client Services Center.

NOCTI Security – The NOCTI *Site Coordinator Guide for Student Testing* contains additional detailed administration and security procedures for test site coordinators as well as the NOCTI

Security and Testing Agreement. These documents are available for download under the resources section of the NOCTI Client Services Center.

Securing NOCTI Test Materials – All test materials received must be accounted for and kept in a secure location. This includes test booklets, user codes, passwords, and login credentials. Appropriate security measures should include:

1. Inventorying materials upon receipt;
2. Keeping materials in a secure location until test administration;
3. Implementing a check-out/check-in process for distributing materials to proctors and evaluators the day of testing;
4. Keeping materials in a secure location until proper disposal;
5. Promptly destroying (shred or incinerate) all test materials; and
6. Ensuring instructors are not in possession of any test materials.

NIMS Security – The NIMS website provides additional information on policies and procedures. Visit the NIMS website for detailed information. Test site coordinators should work with the program instructor to manage the NIMS testing process.

Reporting Security Violations – If a security breach is discovered or suspected, contact PDE and the testing agency immediately. It is the responsibility of the test site coordinator and school administrators to gather all relevant information related to the security breach and then contact the following:

- Kevin Springman – PDE, (717) 783-6623 or kspringman@pa.gov
- Heidi Speese – NOCTI, 800-334-6283 or heidi.speese@nocti.org
- Joanna Eyer – NIMS, 703-352-4971 or jeyer@nims-skills.org

School personnel should be prepared to provide an overview of the security breach including how the breach occurred, the affected test titles, and any action taken by the school once the breach was discovered.

NOCTI Testing Process

Conducting occupational competency testing requires planning and organization. The testing schedule and administration must be handled in a professional and secure manner since students and outside evaluators are involved. Advanced planning and a timeline that fits the school's calendar will expedite the process. Meetings should be held with instructors to determine test dates and times, test selection, and materials needed. Test ordering through the Education Resource Center at Penn State Greater Allegheny should be completed in a timely manner. The following is the recommended sequence of activities.

Before Test Administration

As indicated at the beginning of this guide, all secondary concentrators are required to take a PDE-approved occupational competency test.

1. **Gather Student Information** – PDE requires the use of PAsecureIDs for occupational tests. It is imperative that accurate PAsecureIDs are used for all students.
2. **Determine Appropriate Tests** – Use the *Pennsylvania Student Test Crosswalk* to select the appropriate test for each CIP code/program. Information on the contents of NOCTI

[tests can be found in the test blueprints](#).

3. **Identify Accommodations** – Review students' IEPs to ensure that required accommodations are provided.

4. **Determine Multiple Session Administration** – NOCTI tests may be administered in multiple sessions. This feature was created to accommodate schools that want to break the test administration into sections in order to give students short breaks or for school schedules where the time it takes to administer the test exceeds the time available in the school day. Schools are permitted to break test administration into a maximum of three sessions. Multiple session administration must be designated on the PDE test order form. Additional information can be found in the *Site Coordinator Guide for Student Testing* under the resources section of the [NOCTI Client Services Center](#).

5. **Order Tests** – Submit a PDE test order. Detailed information on placing orders and required forms is located in the Required Forms section of this document.

6. **Select and Train Proctors/Evaluators** – It is essential for the test site coordinator to meet with proctors and evaluators before the testing day. This meeting should ensure that proctors and evaluators have a thorough understanding of the testing process and procedures. School administrators should verify the qualifications and integrity of proctors and evaluators. Proctors and evaluators cannot share or discuss test content with instructors. Roles and responsibilities of proctors and evaluators are outlined in the Defined Roles and Responsibilities section of this document. In addition, refer to the [NOCTI Security Policy](#).

7. **Prepare for Test Day** – Encourage instructors to review test blueprints and instructor prep packets. Prepare students by encouraging them and explaining the testing process. Ensure instructors have all materials prepared and set up for the performance component.

During Test Administration

1. **Multiple-Choice Component**

   a. Ensure proctors are in assigned areas
   b. Monitor/circulate throughout testing areas
   c. Troubleshoot technical issues
   d. Ensure test security

2. **Performance Component**

   a. Ensure evaluators are in assigned areas
   b. Distribute testing materials and booklets to evaluators
   c. Monitor/circulate throughout testing areas
   d. Troubleshoot technical issues
   e. Collect all testing materials from evaluators
   f. Ensure test security

3. **Off-site Performance Testing** – Students may be tested on the performance component off-site either at another school or a local company. The off-site location should have all necessary materials and equipment for completing the performance jobs required for the test. The test site coordinator or an appropriate designee is required to accompany students to the off-site location and must remain at the location for the duration of the test administration to ensure security procedures are followed. The test site coordinator or designee is responsible for distributing and collecting test materials at the off-site location. Considerations should include security of test materials, the integrity

of the test session, and adhering to school policies.

After Test Administration

All tests must be completed, and test materials destroyed by May 15, 2024. If hardcopy multiple-choice tests were approved and administered, answer sheets must be received at NOCTI for scoring no later than 15 days after the testing date and by May 15, 2024.

1. **Performance Ratings** – The test site coordinator is responsible for ensuring that all evaluator performance ratings are manually entered into the NOCTI Client Services Center for scoring. The student performance rating sheets, completed by evaluators, are to be kept in a secure location by the test site coordinator until final score reports are received and verified by the test site coordinator. After verification of scores, performance rating sheets must be destroyed by the test site coordinator.

2. **Disposal of Test Materials** – To ensure test and testing program security, all used and unused student performance booklets, evaluator guides, unused answer sheets, and related test materials must be properly destroyed no later than 15 days after the testing date and by May 15, 2024. Accepted methods of disposal include shredding or incineration. The *Test Materials and Disposal Verification Form* must be submitted to the Education Resource Center at Penn State Greater Allegheny immediately after disposal of test materials by May 15, 2024.

NIMS Testing Process

Students enrolled in the approved CTE programs listed below are required to use the NIMS Level 1 credentialing tests.

1. 48.0501   Machine Tool Technology/Machinist
2. 48.0599   Precision Metal Working, Other

PDE and NIMS have partnered to provide NIMS credentialing tests in Machining Level 1 areas. Earning NIMS credentials requires a performance test and an online theory test. The performance requirements and theory tests are drawn directly from the NIMS Standards and are written and piloted by industry. Machining Level 1 credentials are designed to meet entry-level requirements for on-the-job skills. Below are the 12 credential test areas.

Basic Skills Tests

1. Measurement, Materials and Safety
2. Job Planning, Benchwork and Layout

Machining Skills Tests

3. CNC Mill Operations
4. CNC Milling Programming Setup and Operations
5. CNC Lathe Operations
6. CNC Lathe Programming Setup and Operations
7. Drill Press I
8. Grinding I
9. Milling I

10. Quality Inspector
11. Turning I (Between Centers)
12. Turning I (Chucking)

The NIMS credentialing tests certify a student's skills as measured against the NIMS Standards. Test site coordinators should manage the NIMS testing process just as they do the NOCTI process, including all policies and security measures. To earn a NIMS credential, students must successfully complete an online test and a performance test.

Online Registration

Below are roles that NIMS offers in the online testing center:

1. **Candidate** – Student pursuing a credential.
2. **Account Administrator** – Individual registered with NIMS and able to access account codes, candidate credentials, and reports.
3. **Evaluator** – Individual who oversees candidate performances and submits affidavits.
4. **Proctor** – Individual who oversees online multiple-choice test administration. This role must be held by a neutral party (meaning the instructor(s) do not qualify).

Test site coordinators or instructors must register all students taking NIMS Level 1 credentialing tests as part of the occupational competency testing program. Online registration is completed on the NIMS website and is required only once per student. PAsecureIDs are required to complete the online registration. There is no fee to register. It is encouraged to complete online registration at least 24 hours prior to online testing.

Online Multiple-Choice Test

All online, multiple-choice tests are administered through the [NIMS Online Testing Center](#). All tests have a 90-minute time limit and require the presence of a NIMS-registered proctor. Proctors must register (for free) at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled online testing. During testing, students may use a pen or pencil, blank paper, calculator, any edition of the *[Shop Reference for Students and Apprentices](#)*, and any edition of the *[Machinery's Handbook](#)*. Proctors are encouraged to view short tutorial videos on proctor accounts and view short tutorial videos on online testing procedures.

Paper versions of the online tests are available. See the Allowable Accommodations section of this document.

Assigning Proctors – NIMS requires that proctors be assigned online to students prior testing. Any account administrator at the school can assign a proctor to student testing by following these steps:

1. Login to www.nims-skills.org
2. Enter the testing center
3. Click on "Manage Candidates"
4. Click on "Assign Candidates"
5. Search by test(s)
6. Select the candidate(s) and test(s) then click "Assign Proctor"
7. Select a proctor of your choosing from the drop-down menu

Performance Test

Each school will administer the performance tests in accordance with the NIMS policies and procedures. Each credential has its own performance test, which requires students to manufacture a specific part, set-up and operate a machine, and/or write a program that will manufacture a specific part. Costs of materials and supplies required for the performance component of the test are the responsibility of the school. (Note: The *Measurement, Materials, and Safety* credential does not have a performance test.) It only requires the online test.

NIMS uses two types of performance tests:

- **Credentialing Achievement Records (CARs)** – When completing a CAR, the student will program, set-up, and operate a CNC lathe or mill. All CARs are available to view or download from the NIMS website. Instructors must supervise students as they complete the CARs. Upon successful completion of a CAR, the student and instructor will complete and sign the final page, the *Affidavit of Successful Completion*.

    Submitting CAR Affidavits: If the program instructor is already a registered user in the NIMS database and requires the evaluator role, they can email support@nims-skills.org and a NIMS representative will add the evaluator role to the program instructor's existing account. When an evaluator is ready to submit an online CAR affidavit, they should follow these steps:

    - Login to www.nims-skills.org and enter the Testing Center
    - Enter their Evaluator role in the top-right hand corner
    - Click the Evaluate Candidates tab at the top of the screen and then Submit Affidavit(s) for the candidates

- **Prints** – When completing a print-based project, the student will manufacture a specific part based on a blueprint provided by NIMS. All prints are available to view or download from the NIMS website. NIMS does not set a time limit on the manufacturing process; however, instructors may set their own time limits.

    To inspect student parts, each school must form a MET-TEC Committee, which is a group of industry employees who are willing and able to inspect student projects on an as-needed basis. Two MET-TEC members inspect each student's part to validate that the part meets all specifications and allowable tolerances. Those members may be employees of the same manufacturing company or of different companies.

    Inspections may occur at the school, at the manufacturing company, or anywhere with access to the appropriate measuring tools. The Job Planning, Benchwork, and Layout credential requires two prints and instructors can inspect both parts. This test does not require participation from the MET-TEC Committee.

Submitting a Prints Affidavit: For prints, MET-TEC inspection is required. If your MET-TEC inspectors have not already done so, they must go to www.nims-skills.org and register as an evaluator for your school. Once approved, evaluators will receive a confirmation email. We recommend that evaluators register at least 48 hours prior to evaluation. They will then login to the NIMS website and enter the Testing Center. From there, they will be able to click on "Evaluate Candidates" and submit affidavits.

Assigning Evaluators – NIMS requires that evaluators be assigned online for each student's performance tests. Any account administrator at the school can assign an evaluator to candidate performances by following these steps:

- Login to www.nims-skills.org
- Enter the Testing Center"
- Click on "Manage Candidates"
- Click on "Assign Candidates"
- Search by test(s)
- Select the candidate(s) and test(s) then click "Assign Evaluator"
- Select a due date and the evaluator of your choosing from the drop-down menu

NIMS Reporting

NIMS test results are provided electronically to PDE. Students should be encouraged to make their first attempt on each NIMS credentialing test when they are sufficiently prepared. Additional attempts will not be reported to PDE for inclusion in federal data reporting. Test site coordinators are responsible for verifying student data and submitting PDE's electronic [NIMS Verification Form](#) by May 15, 2024.

NIMS offers Account Administrators 24-hour access to online reporting. NIMS offers four new reporting options: Credentialing Activity Reports, Testing Reports, Account Code Reports, and Performance Activity Reports. When logged into the Testing Center, select the "Reports" tab at the top of the screen to run any report for any date range.

Required Forms

Below is a description of the required forms used for this testing program. All required forms are found on the [Student Occupational Competency Testing program website](#).

NOCTI *Security and Testing Agreement* – A new NOCTI *[Security and Testing Agreement](#)* must be submitted each time the information on the agreement changes including test site coordinator change, administrator change, address and email updates, etc.

Pennsylvania NOCTI Test Order Form – Test orders are to be placed using Pennsylvania's order form under the ordering section on the [NOCTI Client Services Center](#). Tests must be ordered at least four weeks prior to the scheduled test date(s) to allow for processing and shipping and to avoid any additional financial charges to a school.

Pennsylvania *NIMS Verification Form* – All schools with PDE-approved CTE programs that align to NIMS on the *[Pennsylvania Student Test Crosswalk](#)* are required to submit the *[NIMS Verification Form](#)* electronically. This form must be submitted by May 15, 2024.

Pennsylvania *Test Materials and Disposal Verification Form* – All schools must complete the information requested on the *[Test Materials and Disposal Verification Form](#)*. Test Site Coordinators are required to submit this form to complete the testing process at their school for 2023-2024. This form verifies that the school completed all requirements for the testing program and properly disposed of all NOCTI test materials. This form must be submitted to the Education Resource Center at Penn State Greater Allegheny immediately after test administration and disposal of test materials by May 15, 2024.

Scores and Certificates

CTE programs provide an exceptional learning environment for students to acquire both knowledge and skills. Measuring these skills is an essential part of preparing students for their chosen career field and/or postsecondary education upon completion of their CTE program of study. School administrators can use test data to recognize student achievement, promote continuous program and instructional improvement, and meet state and federal requirements. Care should be taken in interpreting the results of the test. Students' scores reflect performance on a single day under standardized administration processes.

Incomplete or partial test scores will not be reported to PDE. NOCTI test takers must complete both the multiple-choice and performance components, and NIMS test takers must complete at least three credentialing tests to be reported to PDE.

Pennsylvania Occupational Performance Level Descriptors

The following performance levels will be used:

1. **Advanced Level** – This level reflects the technical skills, knowledge and abilities required to successfully perform the duties of an entry level job, in a safe and effective manner with minimal supervision.
2. **Competent Level** – This level reflects the technical skills, knowledge and abilities required to adequately perform duties on the very first day of a job, in a safe and effective manner with an appropriate amount of "new employee" supervision.
3. **Basic Level** – This level does not meet the competent level.

Pennsylvania Certificates

1. **Pennsylvania Skills Certificate** – The Pennsylvania Skills Certificate was established by PDE to recognize CTE students who have demonstrated high achievement in their chosen technical area.
2. **Pennsylvania Certificate of Competency** – The Pennsylvania Certificate of Competency was established by PDE to recognize CTE students who have achieved a competent skill level in their chosen technical area.

Pennsylvania NOCTI Student Test Cut Scores

In order to meet the competent or advanced performance levels, students must score at or above the cut scores listed in the *2023-2024 Pennsylvania Student Test Cut Scores* document on **both the multiple-choice and performance components**. This document will be available on the Student Occupational Competency Testing program website in April 2024.

Pennsylvania uses a criterion-referenced approach to develop cut scores for each NOCTI test. These cut scores are established at the competent level for a minimally competent student. This minimally competent student reflects the technical skills, knowledge and abilities required to adequately perform duties on the very first day on the job in a safe and effective manner. Students who perform at or above this cut score will be considered at or above the competent level. In addition to determining a cut score for the competent level, there is a need to establish a cut score for the advanced level to determine which students will receive the Pennsylvania Skills Certificate. All other students will be considered to be performing at a below competent level.

NOCTI tests are revised every two to three years. A new cut score must be determined each time a test is revised and when a new test is developed including Pennsylvania customized tests. For each new/revised test, a committee of 10-12 subject matter experts (SMEs), comprised of active OAC members, is coordinated to review and evaluate the test. The SMEs' evaluation ratings are calculated by determining a competent range, with a minimum competent score and a maximum competent score. The advanced level is set 0.1 percentage points above the maximum competent score. The basic level is set 0.1 percentage points below the minimum competent score.

For Pennsylvania customized tests with no cut score due to insufficient Pennsylvania SME participation, the CIP code/program is not eligible to post-test under this occupational competency testing program. Consequently, program test data will not be available for secondary concentrators in the program and these students will not meet the CTE completer student definition or be eligible for a Pennsylvania certificate. Efforts to recruit Pennsylvania SMEs will continue until a required number participate. When 10-12 Pennsylvania SMEs participate in the cut score development process, a cut score will be developed, and approved programs will be eligible to post-test.

For national NOCTI tests where no cut score can be determined due to insufficient Pennsylvania SME participation, national SME data provided by NOCTI is used with Pennsylvania's calculation process to develop a Pennsylvania cut score. Efforts to recruit Pennsylvania SMEs will continue until a required number participate. When 10-12 Pennsylvania SMEs participate in the cut score development process, the cut score will be recalculated using the Pennsylvania SMEs.

NOCTI student multiple-choice and performance cut scores will not exceed 90 percent.

Multiple-Choice Test Cut Score – The cut score for the multiple-choice component of the test is determined using a statistical model called the Nedelsky method, which is specifically designed for tests which use multiple-choice items. SMEs are trained on the Nedelsky method, and the actual test review is done using the NOCTI Online Criterion-Based Cut Score System.

SMEs are instructed to individually review each question by eliminating the incorrect choices (distractors) that a minimally competent student should be able to identify as incorrect. Each question is then given a numerical value between zero and one, depending on the number of items eliminated. The sum of these values is denoted as the SME's probable score of a minimally competent student. Individual SME scores are collected by the NOCTI online system.

The scores from the panel are reviewed by a psychometrician to determine the competent level cut score. Cut scores are finalized by PDE and released to schools and NOCTI. NOCTI uses these cut scores to generate score reports for each school.

Performance Test Cut Score – The Angoff method is used to determine the competent cut score for the performance component of each test. SMEs are asked to estimate the level at which a minimally competent student can perform the required tasks. The scores from the panel are reviewed by a psychometrician to determine the competent level cut score.

Determining Performance Level

In the example below, if a student takes the NOCTI Cabinetmaking test and scores 38.3 percent on the multiple-choice component and 72.7 percent on the performance component, the student

would achieve the basic level. If a student scores 38.4 percent on the multiple-choice component and 72.8 percent on the performance component, the student would achieve the competent level. If the student scores 49.9 percent on the multiple-choice component and 86.6 percent on the performance component, the student would achieve the advanced level.

Cut Scores		Secondary MULTIPLE-CHOICE			Secondary PERFORMANCE		
Test Title	Code	Basic Level	Competent Level	Advanced Level	Basic Level	Competent Level	Advanced Level
Cabinetmaking	3014	38.3% and below	38.4%	49.9% and above	72.7% and below	72.8%	86.6% and above

A student must score at the advanced level on **both** the multiple-choice and performance components of the test to be eligible for the Pennsylvania Skill Certificate. The Pennsylvania Certificate of Competency is awarded to students scoring at the competent level on both the multiple-choice and performance components **or** scoring at the advanced level on either the multiple-choice or performance components and at the competent level on the other component.

Receiving Certificates for NOCTI Tests

NOCTI will supply the list of students who earned a Pennsylvania certificate and individual student scores to the test site coordinator, and at the same time, will notify the Education Resource Center at Penn State Greater Allegheny of students who have achieved the advanced and competent levels. Certificates will be sent to the school when all test materials have been properly destroyed and all required forms are submitted and approved.

Receiving Certificates for NIMS Tests

PDE and NIMS have partnered to provide 11 NIMS credentialing tests in Machining Level 1 areas. The credentialing tests are as follows:

1. Measurement, Materials and Safety
2. Job Planning, Benchwork and Layout
3. CNC Milling Operations
4. CNC Milling: Programming Setup and Operations
5. CNC Lathe Operations
6. CNC Lathe Programming Setup and Operations
7. Drill Press Skills I
8. Grinding I
9. Milling I
10. Turning I (Between Centers)
11. Turning I (Chucking)

Only the first attempt for each NIMS credentialing test is reported and used in determining students' eligibility for Pennsylvania certificates. Additional attempts are considered test retakes, which are not permitted and are not accepted by PDE. (Refer to the Test Retakes section in this document.)

Both PDE and NIMS recognize the Measurement, Materials and Safety and the Job Planning, Benchwork and Layout credentialing tests as being basic skills tests (numbers 1-2 above); therefore, only one of these two tests may be counted towards a Pennsylvania certificate.

Students that take only the NIMS machining skills tests (numbers 3-11 above) are eligible for a Pennsylvania certificate if they meet the performance level requirements. The following performance levels and requirements are used:

1. **Advanced Level** – To achieve a Pennsylvania Skills Certificate, a student must pass **four** or more credentialing tests, including either *Measurement, Materials and Safety* or *Job Planning, Benchwork and Layout*.
2. **Competent Level** – In order to achieve a Pennsylvania Certificate of Competency, a student must pass **three** credentialing tests, including either *Measurement, Materials and Safety* or *Job Planning, Benchwork and Layout*.
3. **Basic Level** – This level does not meet the competent level. Students who do not meet above the basic level are not eligible for Pennsylvania certificates.
4. **Incomplete** – This means the student did not take at least three NIMS credential tests.

Certificates will be sent to test site coordinators after the *NIMS Verification Form* has been submitted to and approved by the Education Resource Center at Penn State Greater Allegheny.

Accommodations

Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

Students with IEPs must be included in the test process. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) mandate that students with disabilities be included in state- and district-wide tests. **If a student with an IEP participates in the Keystone Exams, then that student must also participate in this occupational competency testing program.** Allowable accommodations for all students are described in the *Accommodations Guidelines 2023 PSSA and Keystone Exams*. It is strongly suggested that schools review this entire document and solicit support from school district special education certified personnel in order to provide allowable accommodations to all students. Also available is the *Accommodations Guidelines 2023 for English Learners (ELs)*.

Students who take the PASA are considered exempt from participating in this occupational competency testing program; however, students who take the PASA may be tested with the recommendation of the IEP team.

Any required accommodations included in a student's IEP must be provided on both the multiple-choice and performance components of the occupational competency test. It is important that IEPs for secondary concentrators who take an occupational competency test contain the appropriate test-taking accommodations. IEPs should list clear and specific accommodation information necessary for occupational testing. Often these accommodations are removed from the IEP once the student has completed their Keystone Exams.

Once a student has been identified as a secondary concentrator who is anticipated to graduate in the current school year, the test site coordinator, the instructor, and the IEP team should discuss accommodations for administering the test while maintaining the security of the test.

1. The readability of all tests corresponds to the reading level necessary to be job ready as judged by industry experts. As a result, NOCTI does not recommend reading the multiple-choice component of the examination to a student unless required in the student's IEP. However, it is the responsibility of the test site coordinator and special education personnel to determine if reading the test to the student is appropriate

following the accommodations guidelines in the *PSSA and Keystones Accommodations Guidelines*. English Learners accommodations should align with those in the *Accommodations Guidelines for English Learners*.

2. If the student's disability requires a large print version of the test, the request must be made to the Education Resource Center at Penn State Greater Allegheny at the time of ordering. Students will respond directly in the large print test booklet. The test site coordinator, not the instructor, is responsible for transferring the responses to the student's answer sheet.

An accommodation can only be provided if it is 1) indicated in the student's IEP under Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) and 2) used throughout the student's regular instruction/curriculum. Accommodations cannot be included in an IEP only for NOCTI testing. All testing accommodations must be the same as those defined for a student's regular curriculum (i.e., a reader for tests in academic courses also applies to the CTE program.)

NOCTI Allowable Accommodations

The following accommodations are available for NOCTI tests for students with IEPs:

1. **Text-to-Speech (TTS)** – NOCTI online multiple-choice tests are available for delivery in Text-to-Speech format. This online delivery option provides the test taker with the ability to view questions and answer choices in a larger font and hear questions and answer choices via a computerized voice that speaks the questions and the answer choices. Text-to-Speech is intended to be an online delivery alternative for students with IEPs. Some examples include test takers who may have a learning disability, such as dyslexia, or who may have difficulty reading. When planning online test administration, consideration should be given to the level of noise that will be generated due to the Text-to-Speech option. Headphones for each Text-to-Speech test taker are recommended. Information on Text-to-Speech online tests, computer/equipment specifications, and instructions for administration may be found at the NOCTI Client Services Center.

2. **Readers** – A human reader may be used to read and clarify, as appropriate, all sections of the test to students who have been identified as needing this accommodation. However, the reader may not provide clues or any other form of feedback to the student. Students having this accommodation should be tested individually. When using online tests, questions are scrambled therefore, a reader is required for each test taker.

   NOTE: There is a difference between Text-to-Speech and a human reader. TTS must be indicated in the IEP for it to be used as an accommodation. If the IEP indicates a reader is required, a human reader must be used. If an IEP indicates a student needs a reader or TTS, then either is acceptable.

   Extended Time – Extended time should be given if required in the IEP. Defining "extended time" should be very specific and should leave no allowances for differing interpretation. If extended time is listed in a student's IEP for Keystone testing situations, then it will also apply to NOCTI testing and must be defined based on the specific needs of the student and must be clearly worded with specific language. The IEP team is required to make these decisions based on that specific student's disability deficits. The amount of time granted should be delineated on the IEP (i.e., time and a half, extra 15 minutes, extra 30 minutes, etc.). It should be based on how the disability impacts

performance. Time extensions are permitted for both the multiple-choice and performance component for the test. IEP teams should ensure that an accommodation for extended time is written to reflect the functional characteristics of the specific student.

NOTE: If extended time is indicated in a student's IEP, it can be provided for the performance test. Students should receive credit if they complete the job within their extended time, even if the test rubric indicates a specific timeframe; i.e., 20 minutes.

3. **Visual Assistance** – Online test takers can click on a graphic or diagram to enlarge it for easier viewing. Contact the Education Resource Center at Penn State Greater Allegheny to order hardcopy or large print tests necessary to satisfy IEP requirements.

4. **Interpreters** – Tests can be reviewed prior to test administration by an interpreter (similar to performance test evaluators). Test materials must remain in possession of the test site coordinator before and after the review. Copyrighted materials CANNOT be duplicated.

For the NOCTI performance component, a reader, as defined above, is permitted to be used. An accommodation is not permitted if it negates the validity of the test (i.e., reading a reading test to a student). Since the performance component is assessing the ability of the student to perform a particular skill; i.e., car repair or preparing a menu, then having the task performed for the student by another person would negate the validity of the test.

NIMS Allowable Accommodations – Review [NIMS accommodations](#) online. NIMS offers the following accommodations for learners with IEPs:

1. **Readers** – The NIMS Online Testing Center has a built-in reader that can read all test questions and answers aloud. Alternatively, a third party (not an instructor) may sit with a student to read the exam aloud. In similar fashion, translators may sit with any student needing language assistance during testing. NIMS does not require notification when readers are used.

2. **Visual Assistance** – Paper versions of the online tests are available. Schools may request paper tests by sending the student's name, test name, and proctor's contact information to support@nims-skills.org. Schools may request multiple paper tests once and NIMS will ship the test kits in a single mailing. NIMS always mails paper tests directly to the test proctor.

   The paper test kit includes one test, one scantron form, and one pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelope for returning the test to NIMS for scoring. During paper test administration, students may use a pen or pencil, blank paper, calculator, any edition of the *Shop Reference for Students and Apprentices*, and any edition of the *Machinery's Handbook*. When test administration is complete, it is the responsibility of the test proctor to return the tests to NIMS using the provided envelope. When requesting a paper test, schools are encouraged to contact NIMS 7-10 business days prior to scheduled testing to allow for ample time to mail the test kit(s).

English Learners

Each school must involve the appropriate school personnel in the determination of appropriate accommodations for English Learners. The English as a Second Language (ESL)/bilingual

teacher, the ESL/bilingual education coordinator, other classroom teachers, the test site coordinator, a parent, the principal or counselor, and the student (when appropriate) may be involved in this determination. Identifying the appropriate accommodations should be a collaborative process and should include a content area teacher consulting with English as a Second Language/bilingual teachers. For dually identified students, the IEP team should be aware of the specific needs for English Learners and should cooperate in identifying specific accommodations for those students.

English Learner students are permitted to use readers and dictionaries for translation. It is recommended that students receive the same accommodations that they are receiving for other testing situations such as Keystone Exams.

Resources

Pennsylvania Testing Program Website

Pennsylvania testing requirements, materials, guidebooks, and forms are available on the [Student Occupational Competency Testing program website](#). This website includes information on PDE requirements, test site coordinator resources, general resources, test security, required forms, accommodations, NOCTI and NIMS resources, NOCTI test blueprints, NOCTI pre-tests and study guides, cut scores and certificates, Pennsylvania cut score development activity, informational videos, and NOCTI pilot testing.

NOCTI Resources

The NOCTI information and materials listed below can be found on the [Student Occupational Competency Testing program website](#).

1. *Online Testing Computer Setup* – This document describes the system requirements needed for NOCTI online tests and outlines the system, network, and configurations.
2. *Online Test Administration Guidelines* – This document provides detailed task-related information to use the NOCTI online test system as quickly as possible.
3. Test blueprints – Test blueprints include the competencies on which the test is based, scopes for both test components, sample questions and sample performance jobs.
4. Other publications and materials – Materials are available from NOCTI that provide information on the testing process. The following publications are available on the [NOCTI Client Services Center](#):

   a. Instructor Prep Packs
   b. Site Coordinator Guide for Student Testing
   c. Proctor Guide for Online Testing
   d. Proctor Guide for Paper/Pencil Testing
   e. Evaluator Instructions for Performance Testing
   f. Performance Test Rating Entry Instructions

Pennsylvania Teacher Resource Center – This is a password-protected site to assist program instructors with planning and managing Pennsylvania's NOCTI student assessment system. This site provides instructors the ability to locate resources such as Instructor Prep Packets, view program(s) to which the teacher is linked, track progress of test administration, assign digital study guides, add accommodations (permission-based function), and access reports.

NIMS Resources

Visit the NIMS website to view and download the following resources:

1. Guide to Establishing a MET-TEC Committee
2. Paper Testing & Other Accommodations
3. Credentialing Video Tutorials
4. Machining Credentialing Toolkit

Schools may also request a (free) one-on-one consultation with a NIMS representative to review all roles, responsibilities, and processes, and to explore the updated testing website. For assistance with NIMS credential testing process, contact NIMS Testing Support at support@nims-skills.org. For questions on Pennsylvania requirements or PDE's Student Occupational Competency Testing Program, contact Lori Bell, Education Resource Center at Penn State Greater Allegheny at (412) 675-9065 or email lvb6@psu.edu.

Contacts

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Education Resource Center
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