SAT® Suite of Assessments Technical Manual Supplement: Test Administration Process

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2019

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Introduction

The College Board works to ensure that all test scores are valid for their intended uses and that all test takers have a fair testing experience. This supplement to the *SAT® Suite of Assessments Technical Manual* documents how the SAT Suite of Assessments is administered, as well as the steps taken to protect test materials and prohibit the inappropriate sharing of test information during the test administration. In keeping with best practices and the AERA/APA/NCME (2014) *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, the College Board implements several steps to ensure these factors are taken into account during all phases of testing.

Because these processes and policies are continuously updated, this supplement to the *SAT Suite of Assessments Technical Manual* is provided separately and will be published annually to remain current with practices and policies. The specific manuals for test coordinators and proctors are updated in parallel to ensure that policy and process are consistent. This supplement is current for our paper-based testing administrations through the 2018-19 school year.

Section 1 discusses the policies and procedures involved in uniform test administration, an important component in providing a fair and equitable testing situation and ensuring that the scores produced from all administrations of an assessment are valid for their intended uses. We discuss the specific procedures undertaken to maintain uniform test administration and the rationale behind them. We also examine the roles and qualifications of the testing staff involved in the process.

Section 2 discusses some of the specifics of test security and the ways in which we prevent scenarios that would provide an unfair advantage and compromise the scores for their intended uses. We discuss these procedures as they apply to test materials and test takers, as well as the rationale behind these procedures.

1. Administration

In keeping with best practices and the AERA/APA/NCME Standards, the College Board has an established procedure that ensures the assessments in the SAT Suite are administered to all test takers in a fair, equitable, and standardized manner (AERA, APA, and NCME, 2014). The goal of the standardized administration process is to enable all test takers to experience a uniform set of conditions so that test scores from different administrations can be used interchangeably for reporting, counseling students, and making admissions and placement decisions.

The SAT is administered in two different models:

Weekend Administration. Test takers register to sit for the test at a nearby test center that may or may not be the school they regularly attend. They may register at any center with available seats. The administration takes place on an announced Saturday or Sunday, with Sunday administrations limited to test takers preapproved to test on Sunday due to religious conflicts. The weekend administration of the SAT occurs seven times during the school year in the United States (and four times internationally—increasing to five in the 2020-21 school year) from August to June.

SAT School Day Administration. Test takers sit for the test at the school that they attend. The administration takes place on an announced school weekday. The SAT School Day administration occurs once in October, twice in March, and twice in April, on a school weekday.

The PSAT-related assessments (PSAT/NMSQT®, PSAT™ 10, and PSAT™ 8/9) are administered in a school-based model. Test takers sit for the test at their schools, either by electing to participate by signing up with their school or because they are in a cohort whose testing is sponsored by their district or state.

The PSAT/NMSQT is administered on three announced days: two school weekdays and one Saturday. The administrations are typically held on (1) a Wednesday in mid-October, (2) the following Saturday, and (3) a Wednesday in late October or early November. Schools select one administration for all of their participating students.

The PSAT 10 is administered during two spring test windows—the first is typically available in late February through March; the second running in April.

The PSAT 8/9 is administered during two distinct test windows, one in the fall and one in the spring. The fall test window typically begins in late September and ends in March. The spring test window is in April.

Schools select a PSAT 10 and/or a PSAT 8/9 administration date within the test window that is best for their scheduling needs. State partners will often choose testing dates that align with SAT test dates.

Unless specifically noted otherwise, the procedures and policies described in this section apply to all administrations in the SAT Suite of Assessments.

Mode

The SAT Suite of Assessments is currently offered as a series of assessments in either paper and pencil or digital formats. Digital versions of the SAT School Day and PSAT 10 are currently offered to select state contracts. Digital versions of PSAT 8/9 are offered to state contracts and district contracts, and are being piloted in individual schools.

Procedures

Highlights of the procedures and policies necessary to maintain test validity and fairness appear in the following text, but the most complete set of details can be found in the various administration manuals sent to the educators who administer the assessments.

The manual for SAT School Day can be found in the Educator Downloads collection at: https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/k12-educators/sat-school-day/downloads

Manuals for weekend SAT administrations can be found in the Resource Library at: https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/k12-educators/resource-library

The manuals for PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT 10 can be found in the Resource Library at: https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt-psat-10/k12-educators/resource-library

The manual for PSAT 8/9 can be found in the Resource Library at: https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/psat-8-9/k12-educators/resource-library

Standardization

Uniform procedures are essential to a standardized testing program. The AERA/APA/NCME Standards state, "test administration conditions should be standardized for all examinees" (AERA, APA, and NCME, 2014). By strictly following College Board policies and procedures, test center staff members provide test takers with a fair testing experience that ensures comparable and valid scores across all administrations of an assessment. These policies and procedures entail staff adhering to the same testing procedures and delivering instructions exactly as they appear in the test administration manuals.

In further keeping with AERA/APA/NCME Standards, the College Board is committed to test takers receiving comparable treatment during their test administration (AERA, APA, and NCME, 2014). Even though the test forms or testing conditions might be slightly modified based on the needs of a particular student (e.g., accommodations for students with disabilities), the construct being tested and the meaning of the score remain unchanged. No student is to have a disadvantage or gain an advantage of any kind because of race, religion, gender, or disability. To maintain standardization across all administrations, all test takers are also to be protected from disturbance or other irregularities.

Testing Staff Qualifications

Each location where the SAT Suite is administered is supervised by an experienced educator provided with detailed instructions and scripts for administering the assessment in a uniform manner. The coordinator is responsible for all aspects of the test

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administration, including identifying staff who meet College Board qualifications, planning the use of facilities, and maintaining the security of test materials from the arrival of materials until their return. Qualified and competent test center staff is integral to maintaining a fair testing experience and scores that are valid for intended uses across all administrations (AERA, APA, and NCME, 2014). The test center staff should reflect the diversity of the test takers, and is expected to act in a fair, courteous, nondiscriminatory, and professional manner. Prior to each test administration, the coordinator meets with staff to assign roles and responsibilities for the upcoming administration. As part of this preparation, the coordinator and staff review the rules and procedures involved in correctly administering the assessments, including those related to test security.

Proctors and monitors assist the coordinator. The proctor checks test taker identification, reads the test administration script verbatim to the test takers, and manages all other aspects of the administration taking place in their assigned room. In rooms with more than 34 test takers, one or more room monitors will assist the proctor; the ratio is 1 room monitor to every 50 test takers (for digital administrations, the ratio is 1 room monitor to every 25 test takers).

The staff members in each room are responsible for distributing and collecting test materials and telling test takers when to begin and end each test section. While students are working on the test, staff members walk around the room to guard against misconduct and to make sure that each test taker is working on the appropriate section of the test and using and recording their responses appropriately. Staff members are also responsible for making sure that no test content or materials leave the room and for reporting any irregularities to the coordinator.

Among other qualifications, test center staff should:

- Have unquestionable integrity and sound judgment.

- Be fluent in English and experienced in working with test takers.

- Not work for private test preparation for pay that is sponsored by non-school agencies or companies.

- Not have taken any of the assessments in the SAT Suite in the 180 days prior to administering the test.

- Not handle the test materials or administer the test to a family member.

- Adhere to all published policies and procedures.

Detailed procedures and instructions for staff are provided in the test administration manuals. All staff are required to sign a statement agreeing to follow all testing policies and procedures.

The College Board offers a wide variety of required and optional professional development activities through in-person and technology-based options designed to prepare high school assessment coordinators, test administrators, and proctors for a successful test experience.

Timing

Each assessment in the SAT Suite is administered as three tests (Reading Test, Writing and Language Test, and Math Test). The SAT includes an optional Essay. The Math Test is divided into portions, one with calculator use allowed and one without. The timing of each portion, including breaks, is listed in Tables 1 through 3. To ensure a standardized testing experience, staff should provide test takers with the appropriate amount of time, as specified in the testing manual, in which to take the assessment—no more, no less. The tables don't include administrative activities such as distributing and collecting test materials and the test taker's completion of identifying information.

Table 1

Standard Timing of the SAT Assessment Including Breaks

Test	Time (in minutes)
Reading Test	65
Break	10
Writing and Language Test	35
Math Test – No Calculator	25
Break	5
Math Test – Calculator	55
Break (if taking Essay Test)	2
Essay Test (Optional)	50
TOTAL SAT/SAT with Essay	**195/247**

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Table.2

Standard Timing of the PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT 10 Assessments Including Breaks

Test	Time (in minutes)
Reading Test	60
Break	5
Writing and Language Test	35
Math Test – No Calculator	25
Break	5
Math Test – Calculator	45
TOTAL PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT 10	**175**

Table 3

Standard Timing of the PSAT 8/9 Assessment Including Breaks

Test	Time (in minutes)
Reading Test	55
Break	5
Writing and Language Test	30
Math Test – No Calculator	20
Break	5
Math Test – Calculator	40
TOTAL PSAT 8/9	**155**

Test Materials

Paper-based testing materials, including test books, answer sheets, and administration manuals, are shipped via traceable courier to schools according to details gathered during the registration process. Digital testing administration manuals and other supporting materials are shipped to schools via a traceable courier service. To maintain test security and expedite score reporting, SAT test materials are returned as soon as possible after the completion of testing. Depending on the administration date chosen, PSAT/NMSQT, PSAT 10, and PSAT 8/9 answer sheets are returned immediately; however, test books are either returned after the completion of testing or they're

securely retained at the school to be given back to students when score reports become available. Whether or not materials are returned is explained at the time of ordering and again in administration instructions. To prevent irregularities, test administrators are responsible for the receipt, distribution, and return of all relevant materials and for maintaining the security of these materials during the assessment process. We discuss security procedures in more detail in the following section.

Collecting Irregularity Reports

To maintain the integrity of the assessment, it is College Board policy that all irregularities (security related and non-security related) are documented, along with any actions taken at the test center to remedy the situation. Coordinators are provided with instructions for dealing with many common irregularities. All reports of irregularities are reviewed by the College Board to determine whether the occurrences were severe enough to invalidate the test scores of the test taker(s) involved.

Complete irregularity handling procedures can be found in the test administration manuals.

Accommodations and Supports

The College Board believes that, in keeping with the AERA/APA/NCME Standards, all test takers should have the full opportunity to demonstrate their standing on the construct being measured (AERA, APA, and NCME, 2014). To this end, we provide testing accommodations to test takers who, due to a disability, demonstrate a need for accommodations on College Board tests. This need is most commonly demonstrated by an existing Individualized Education Program (IEP), 504, or other formal school plan that is entered into a College Board system to allow for proper materials to be provided on test day and that the student's accommodations can persist through multiple College Board test administrations.

To ensure proper accommodated administrations, test takers registered with accommodations are identified at the test site via coordinator rosters and their own admission tickets (weekend administrations). Testing staff should administer accommodated forms in accordance with the instructions provided to them pertaining to that particular accommodation. In adhering to the practice of standardization and in keeping with the standards, all accommodated administrations are designed to be comparable to the standard administration (AERA, APA, and NCME, 2014). See Section 3.5 of the *SAT Suite of Assessments Technical Manual* or the test administration manuals for complete details and a listing of the types of accommodations provided.

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Supports for English Learners

To make the assessments even more accessible to students who are English learners (ELs), the College Board has worked with educators and state partners to provide testing supports for English learners for the SAT School Day, PSAT 10, and PSAT 8/9.

EL supports include:

- Translated test directions

- Use of bilingual word-to-word glossaries

- 50% extended testing time

EL students who use supports during SAT School Day will receive scores they can send to colleges.

Students who meet the following criteria at the time of testing can use EL supports:

- They are enrolled in an elementary or secondary school in the U.S. or U.S. territories.

- They are an English learner as defined by their state or by federal policy.

- They use the same supports in class or for other assessments.

Translated test directions are available in over 10 languages each for SAT School Day, the PSAT 10, and the PSAT 8/9. Schools download translated directions from collegeboard.org or their state's website and give them to students on test day. It isn't necessary to request these in advance of test day.

Word-to-word glossaries that students use on test day must be from the College Board–approved list of over 100 languages, available at collegeboard.org. Schools will provide the necessary glossaries to students on test day, collecting them when testing is complete. It isn't necessary to request these in advance of test day.

To ensure that student scores are processed correctly and on time, school staff must go to the College Board EL supports tool to register the student for extended time. When EL students use 50% extended time on test day, time is added to each test section. Students using 50% extended time for EL purposes will test in the same room(s) and use the same test materials as all other students who are using 50% extended time for Reading. Extended time for EL students can only be used on the test date for which it was requested. Unlike accommodations for students with disabilities, EL supports are temporary. Requests aren't needed for PSAT 8/9, unless approval is required by the school's state.

Additional guidance about who should/should not apply for or use EL supports should be determined by the school, district, or state, depending on which authority is coordinating assessments.

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2. Security

As stated previously, the College Board is dedicated to providing students, educators, colleges, and universities with scores that can be used for their intended purposes across all administrations and to ensuring that no test taker receives an unfair advantage on any assessment. To that end, and in keeping with the AERA/APA/NCME Standards, a number of procedures are executed to maintain test security at all times, particularly during the test administration. An overview of the most important of these procedures is provided in this section. An in-depth description of the administration procedures can be found in the test administration manuals.

All coordinators are trained, via written manuals and online training, to adhere to and enforce these strict security procedures.

Procedures

Several steps are taken to eliminate "opportunities for test takers to attain scores by fraudulent and deceptive means" (AERA, APA, and NCME, 2014). Three important facets to the security of a test administration are: (1) preventing any test taker from having inappropriate access to the content of the assessment; (2) confirming that the test taker who is present is indeed the person registered for the assessment; and (3) preventing any test taker from receiving or giving assistance in completing the assessment. All of these procedures facilitate a fair testing experience for all test takers and ensure scores that are valid for intended uses across all administrations of the SAT Suite of Assessments.

The physical security of all test materials (for paper-based testing) and systems and access credentials (for digital testing) is fundamental to a fair and equitable administration.

For paper-based testing, the coordinator is responsible for receiving the test materials, checking that they correspond with what was supposed to be shipped, and storing the materials in a locked storage area that isn't accessible to test takers or other staff. Test materials are accounted for at several points during the day of testing—when the test books and answer sheets are distributed to test takers, when they are collected from test takers, and as they are packed for return to the College Board. Coordinators are instructed to return specified paper test materials to the College Board immediately after the administration is complete.

For digital testing, the coordinator is responsible for printing and securing the access credentials for students taking the assessments during a digital administration. The test coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the devices to be used for testing are appropriately set up in advance of testing to ensure that students can test using our digital testing platform using access credentials assigned to them. All devices must be navigated to the CB Secure Browser for testing. The CB Secure Browser will keep accurate time for all students in the room. When all students' testing time expires, the

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session will automatically end, and student responses will be securely transmitted for scoring and reporting.

By maintaining the physical security of test materials and systems and access credentials (for digital testing), administrators make certain that no one has any access to the assessment that would provide them with an unfair advantage that might affect the scores.

For weekend administrations of the SAT, admission to test centers is carefully monitored to confirm that the individual taking the assessment is indeed the person who registered. In addition to their SAT admission ticket, test takers are instructed to bring an acceptable photo ID, which is checked against both the admission ticket and an attendance roster previously provided to the coordinator.

For SAT School Day and the PSAT-related assessments, students who take the test at the school they attend are required to show a photo ID only if the coordinator or proctor doesn't recognize them. Students, including those who are homeschooled and/or who take the test at a school they don't attend regularly, are asked to display an acceptable photo ID. For digital testing, students who are properly identified are provided unique access credentials needed to access their testing session for the assessments

Test takers aren't permitted to choose their own seats at the administration. They are assigned seating by test day staff to minimize the opportunity for preplanned collaboration among friends. No unauthorized person is permitted to enter the testing room after the administration has begun.

In order to prevent test takers from receiving unfair assistance during the assessment, the materials that test takers may have on their desks during the administration are limited to the materials required and/or permitted for the administration. For paper-based testing, test takers may only have a test book, answer sheet, No. 2 pencils, and, for the relevant portion of the Math Test, an authorized calculator on their desk. For digital testing, test takers may only have school-provided equipment (laptop or tablet) for testing, school-provided scratch paper, No. 2 pencils and, for the relevant portion of the Math Test, an authorized calculator. The only exceptions to this rule are materials approved as accommodations for test takers with disabilities or approved EL supports.

Test takers are strictly prohibited from using cell phones or smartphones; audio players/recorders, tablets, laptops, notebooks, or any other personal computing devices; separate timers of any type; cameras or any other photographic equipment; any devices, including digital watches, that can be used to record, transmit, receive, or play back audio, photographic, text, or video content; protractors; compasses; rulers; dictionaries or other books; pamphlets; papers of any kind; highlighters; and colored pens or pencils. If test takers have been preapproved by the College Board for specific accommodations, or are participating in digital testing, they may be permitted to use some of these materials.

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Cell phones are also not allowed at the test center. We require that the test center staff collect them upon entry and return them after the administration. For SAT School Day testing this requirement is a strong recommendation, but variation is allowed so schools can follow their established policy and any relevant laws.

Violation of any of these prohibitions could lead to dismissal from the testing session, cancellation of test scores, or banning from future administrations of College Board assessments, including the SAT, SAT Subject Tests™, and Advanced Placement® Exams.

Additional Test Security Procedures

Beyond the procedures undertaken at the test administration, the College Board executes several additional procedures to ensure test security. These procedures include test center audits, secure materials handling, and posttest analysis. Details of these procedures are kept confidential to maintain their efficacy as security measures.

For school-based assessments (not weekend SAT administrations), states or districts may adopt additional procedures to ensure administration of the assessment with fidelity across districts and/or schools. An example might be state or district representatives monitoring individual school administrations. As long as these procedures don't contradict policies provided in administration manuals, they are the responsibility of the state or district to execute and document.

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Reference

AERA, APA, and NCME. 2014. *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

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