



Item Writing Process

Standard Creation/Adoption

Whenever new educational standards are created or adopted, a new assessment aligned to those new standards must be created to measure students' understanding of the new standards.

Blueprint Creation

Once standards are chosen, then a blueprint is created to determine the standards that will be assessed. The blueprint determines how many items (questions) aligned to each standard will be included. Typically between three and five items per standard is used to fully measure if students have learned the standard. Additionally, if any standard is to be reported at the student level, it is recommended that the student see at least 8 items. This establishes the length of the test as well as the structure and set up of the test. The blueprint is created by USOE Assessment and Teaching & Learning Content Specialists with input from teachers across the state.

Item Development

Once the blueprint is created then items must be written aligned to the standards as specified by the blueprint. The following steps describe the process to write new test items:

Write/Secure Passages (Language Arts and Listening, and Writing)

Many of the English Language Arts and Literacy questions are connected to passages (reading stimulus material). These passages must either be commissioned (written specifically for use on the test) or secured (rights to real authentic literature purchased).

Passage Review (Content and Bias)

Once passages are chosen, then they are reviewed by teachers and bias panels to assure that they are appropriate. This is done by groups of Utah Educators as well as community members who assure they are socially appropriate, on grade level, and effective for use in a summative state assessment. This panel usually consists of 5-8 Individuals per grade level.

Once passages are reviewed and approved then items are written aligned to those passages (ELA). Math and science are not passage dependent so a separate passage review is not needed.



Item Writing

Items are written by Utah Educators (6-10) per grade level. These items are written and reviewed by multiple educators during the writing process. These items are then edited by USOE staff and entered into the item delivery system before being reviewed by separate content and bias committees.

Item Content Review

Once graphics, tables, or other special content are added to the new items, they are reviewed by another group of teachers (3-5 per grade level) to check for content accuracy, appropriate alignment to the core standards and proper categorization.

Item Bias Review

Items that are approved through the steps described above will be reviewed by a bias committee that will look for appropriateness of items in regards to race, ethnicity, gender, location, and cultural background.

Item Parent Review

Items are then ready to be sent to the Utah Parent review committee who will review items for the appropriateness of the content for Utah's student population.

Every item flagged by the parent committee is reviewed by USOE and a teacher committee to determine the appropriate action based on the parent committee concerns.

Types of Items

All items types go through this same review process. The different types of items include:

Multiple Choice Items

One correct answer out of four correct answer options

Multi-select Items

Multiple Correct Answers out of 5 or more answer options

Natural Language Items

Constructed response items where a student may answer by typing in words, sentences or short phrases as a response to an item. These items use rubrics that list correct responses to determine if a student's answer is correct.

Hot-Text Items

Items where a student highlights or selects an appropriate response within text



Drag and Drop Items

Items where student moves words or objects to appropriate locations to respond to question. These items are also scored using a rubric.

Writing Items

Items where students respond to a prompt by writing a multi-paragraph response.

Post Item Development

Items Field Tested to Students

Once approved by USOE staff, items are given to students during the operational test to examine their functionality, generate statistics for future test use and to determine a student score.

Rubric Validation

After the items have been administered to students, groups of teachers meet to examine student responses to non-multiple choice items to ensure that these items are being scored correctly. Adjustments are made to the scoring rubrics as needed. All responses are rescored with the adjusted rubrics. Once all rubrics are approved and are scoring correctly then data can be reviewed.

Data Review

During data review, groups of Utah Educators look at item statistics to ensure that the item is functioning acceptably. At this point, any item that would possibly have multiple correct answers, appears to be too easy or too difficult would be removed from use in the test. Subgroup scores are also examined to ensure that items are not unfairly biasing student groups. After the data review, student results are scored.

Standard Setting

Standard setting is the process to determine the proficiency levels of the student results. This process involves 200 educators, 15 higher education and 15 stakeholders in a five day process. The recommended proficiency levels are submitted to the State Board of Education for final approval. Student reports are generated after the proficiency levels are approved. This process is also overseen by a third party educational assessment contractor. This process only occurs once, at the beginning of a new test implementation.



Items Become Operational

Once items pass all these levels of review, then they may be used operationally for student scores. The time from initial item writing to operational use for student scores is typically two years. Each year, all items are included in the data review to continue to monitor the item statistics.