

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who scores the Alaska assessments?

Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) has a contract with the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (EED) to score the Alaska Comprehensive System of Student Assessments (CSSA) each year including:

- High School Graduation Qualification Examination (HSGQE)
 - Grade 10-SBA- HSGQE
 - Standards Based Assessments (SBAs) for grades 3 – 9
 - Alternate Assessment for grades 3 – 10
- More information about DRC can be found online <http://www.datarecognitioncorp.com>.
 - More information about the assessments can be found online:
 - HSGQE – <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/hsgqe.html>
 - SBA – <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/sba.html>
 - Alternate Assessment – http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/alternate_optional.html

2. What is a constructed response?

A constructed response is a student response to a test question that is not in the multiple choice format. Students provide written responses, edit paragraphs, and show procedures for solving mathematical problems.

Constructed response items are scored using rubrics that define and articulate each score point. Sample constructed response items and rubrics may be found in the online: http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/SBA_ItemSamplers.html

3. What are the qualifications for being a scorer?

- All DRC scorers have a minimum of a four-year degree from an accredited college or university.
- The degree must be in a field closely related to the content area being scored.
- Many of DRC's scorers have advanced degrees.
- In the screening process, preference is given to candidates with previous experience scoring large-scale assessments.
- Approximately 550 professional test scorers from DRC assess the constructed responses for the Alaska tests each year.

4. How are scorers trained?

- Scorers participate in a comprehensive and intensive 2-3 day training session before scoring begins.
- They are led through training materials that include rubrics, which define the score points that constructed responses may receive and anchor responses, which have been selected to define and articulate the score scale.
- The rubrics and anchor responses serve as the scorers' constant guide through the training, qualifying, and scoring process.
- Scorers must demonstrate their ability to apply the scoring criteria by achieving an acceptable level of scoring accuracy on a set of pre-scored responses.
- Any scorer who does not qualify by the end of this process is released from the project and is not allowed to score any student responses.

5. What is the process for scoring?

- The student response documents are image-scanned and scored online using DRC's Imaging System.
- The Imaging System automatically routes images of the student responses to qualified scorers.
 - The responses are divided by grade, content area, and item. Scorers are not able to view any demographic data.
- The scorers read student responses and enter scores on their imaging stations.
- After receiving a score, the responses are automatically routed to other qualified scorers for any subsequently required scores.

There is no indication that a response has been previously scored; scorers are not able to view any previous scores that have been given by other scorers.
- Rubrics and anchor responses serve as the scorers' constant guide through the scoring process.
 - Team Leaders and Scoring Directors are available to assist readers as needed.
- The Imaging System generates numerous quality control reports that are used to monitor the scoring process and to ensure scoring accuracy.

6. How does DRC ensure that scorers remain accurate?

- The Imaging System generates numerous quality control reports that are used to monitor and maintain scoring accuracy.
- Multiple readers independently score student responses so that inter-rater reliability (reader agreement) rates can be monitored.
- Daily quality control reports detail score point distributions and individual reader production. These reports are available to DRC staff at any time during the scoring process and are shared with the EED to assure that absolutely strict criteria are being used to assign scores to Alaska's students' responses.
- DRC's Team Leaders and Scoring Directors supervise the readers, providing guidance and direction throughout the scoring sessions.
 - Supervisors "read behind" the scorers by reviewing a random selection of scored responses.
 - If the supervisor disagrees with a reader's score, the reader and the supervisor review the response and the scoring criteria and, if necessary, correct the score.
 - The supervisors keep detailed records of read-behinds so that scoring trends may be monitored and, if necessary, corrected.
 - If a reader is not scoring with an acceptable level of accuracy, the reader's scores are deleted, the responses are rescored, and the reader is either re-trained or removed from the project as appropriate.

7. Where are the tests scored?

- The primary scoring facility is located in Minnetonka, Minnesota.
 - 34,000 square foot facility divided into seven large, open scoring rooms
 - Numerous small offices used for conferences and small-group training
 - Break room is equipped with coffee, vending machines, and refrigerators
 - Ergonomically correct chairs for readers
- DRC has also established scoring facilities in Woodbury, Minnesota; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. These facilities are parallel scoring sites with amenities similar to those at our primary scoring site in Minnetonka.

8. How long does it take for DRC to score the constructed responses?

- DRC employs a sufficient number of readers to score the tests in approximately two to three weeks while maintaining high standards of quality control.
- Approximately 550 professional test scorers from DRC assess the constructed responses for the Alaska tests each year.