

Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA)

CAAP Guidelines 2009-2010

Testing Dates

CAAP tests are available for administration during a two-week period selected by the institution. Freshmen must be tested early in the fall semester, and seniors must be tested within 6 months of graduation. *Extension of the two-week window will be considered upon request to ACT.*

Test Administration

For purposes of the VSA both the **Writing Essay** and **Critical Thinking** tests must be administered to at least 200 freshmen and 200 seniors.

Sample Size

- Cross-Sectional. For VSA purposes, **ACT requires a minimum of 200 freshman and 200 seniors tested on each of the two required CAAP modules in order to produce valid results.** (For institutions that have freshman or senior enrollment less than 200 please contact ACT for sampling estimates.) Students should be randomly selected. However, this is not always possible, and convenience sampling that captures the best possible representative sample of your population will be acceptable. Institutions will need to determine what constitutes a representative sample of your student population. For more information on the requirements for sampling for the VSA please refer to <http://www.voluntarysystem.org/docs/cp/LearningOutcomesInfo.pdf>, pages 2-4.
- Longitudinal (optional). To augment your evaluation of student learning gains your institution may consider a longitudinal study – testing the same cohort as freshmen and again as seniors. Should you decide to conduct a longitudinal study (optional only – not a VSA requirement) we recommend that you consider the number of students needed at the time of post-testing and then calculate back to establish the number to be tested as freshmen. This number will vary depending upon the local attrition rates, but ACT recommends that you pretest 3 to 4 times the number that you plan to post-test.

Security/Return of Test Materials

CAAP materials are secure items. You must provide locked storage for test materials and maintain all aspects of test security as defined in the *CAAP Test Administration Manual*. Please be sure that all staff involved with CAAP testing are aware of security requirements. *The security of the CAAP test requires that all test materials be returned to ACT within 2 weeks of the two-week administration period.*

Participation Agreement Form/Ordering

Institutions must complete and submit the **2009-10 CAAP VSA Participation Agreement** prior to testing. To order CAAP materials for VSA testing use the **2009-10 CAAP VSA Order Form – do not use the standard national form.** Orders should arrive at ACT at least two weeks before the beginning of your two-week test period. ACT will ship test materials to arrive seven days before the beginning of the test period; if materials are not received within this time frame, please call 319/337-1576.

Fee Schedule/Billing

Institutions are billed when the exams are scored. Institutions are responsible for the costs to return test materials to ACT by a traceable means (i.e., FedEx, UPS, etc.)

Scoring

Objective tests are normally scored by ACT within 10 working days of receipt of the answer folders. Essay tests rated by ACT are normally scored within 20 working days of receipt of answer booklets.

Standard Reporting

Standard reports include two copies of each student's score report, a Certificate of Achievement for all students who have earned scores at or above the national mean, a Student Roster Report, and an Institutional Summary Report. The Institutional Summary Report provides descriptive statistics for your entire group of examinees as well as general comparative information.

Institutions Must Provide Student ACT or SAT Scores – Due June 30, 2010

Upon completion of both freshmen and senior testing institutions must provide ACT with one of the following for each CAAP-tested student:

- Student name, Grade Level, CAAP scores, and ACT Composite Score **OR**
- Student name, Grade Level, CAAP scores, and SSN for each student who took the ACT (when their ACT Composite Score cannot be provided) **OR**
- Student name, Grade Level, CAAP scores and SAT Score (CR + M or CR + M + W)

A data template is available by request at outcomes@act.org. A password-protected CD with this data file (Excel or csv format) can be mailed to ACT CAAP Research (64), 500 ACT Drive, Iowa City, IA 52243, or emailed to caap.research@act.org, Subject Line – CAAP VSA Report. Deadline for receipt of data file for 2010 CAAP VSA Report is June 30, 2010.

2010 CAAP VSA Report

The CAAP VSA Report will provide the mean scores for both freshmen and senior test samples and the expected learning gains (per VSA methodology) on CAAP Critical Thinking and Writing Essay tests. The report will also include the mean ACT (or mean ACT-SAT concorded score) of the test group. This report will be mailed to your institution at the end of the academic calendar year, approximately late August 2010. In order to receive the CAAP VSA Report you must provide your tested students' ACT, SSN info, or SAT scores (as indicated above) and you also must test the minimum required sample. (As noted, smaller institutions may contact ACT for minimum sample size information.) For information on the methodology for calculating student learning gains for the VSA please refer to page 3 of <http://www.voluntarysystem.org/docs/cp/LearningOutcomesInfo.pdf>.

Optional CAAP Test Modules

If you choose to administer additional CAAP objective tests we strongly recommend that you administer them to a different group of students – not those who are taking the CAAP tests for the VSA (Critical Thinking and Writing Essay).

Getting Started/Action Steps

1. Complete the 2009-10 CAAP VSA Participation Agreement and fax to 319-337-1467.
2. Complete two separate 2009-10 CAAP VSA Materials Order Forms – one for freshman testing and one for senior testing – and fax to ACT at 319-337-1467.
3. *If you plan to administer additional CAAP tests (other than the Writing Essay and Critical Thinking) complete the back of the CAAP-VSA Materials Order Form. You will only receive one billing per scoring and reporting order.*

ACT CAAP Customer Services (70), P.O. Box 1008, Iowa City, IA 52243-1008
Telephone 319/337-1576 Fax 319/337-1467

