At ACT, our mission is helping people achieve education and workplace success. We understand the critical role that assessments play in making that vision a reality.

But what, exactly, is success? And how do educational institutions and business organizations measure it among their learners and employees? ACT Consulting Services helps institutions and organizations build psychometrically-sound assessments and programs that not only help our customers define success, but also measure it, consistently, over time.

Our Approach

We ground our consulting services in research and best practices and utilize well-defined, customer-centric planning and implementation processes to deliver the highest quality solutions.

ACT provides comprehensive and targeted solutions to support your assessment program. Our engagement begins with a needs analysis to help us understand the goals of your assessment as well as your requirements related to:

- Content Development and Management
- Research and Analysis
- Technology Infrastructure
- Data Management
- Test Security
- Scoring
- Reporting

From the needs analysis, we create a report detailing the components and describing the solution for your assessment program. The report organizes information into the areas of:

- Assessment Design
- Assessment Development
- Content Management
- Test Validation
Assessment Services

Assessment Design

What are your goals?
The design process begins by establishing a clear understanding of what and who are being assessed and how scores are to be interpreted and used. What concept, or construct, is the assessment intended to measure? Who are the intended examinees? What claims are to be made about the scores that examinees receive?

What test design is necessary to provide information to support your claims?
ACT will work with you to develop test blueprints that articulate what content standards will be assessed and how test items and scores are organized and reported.

Is your assessment optimally designed?
Based on your needs analysis, we’ll work with you to determine key assessment features, including the number of test items on each assessment, item types, points per item type, the number of testing sessions and breaks, and the amount of testing time. We’ll also provide guidance on topics like form and pool creation and field testing.

How well do your examinees demonstrate their mastery of content standards?
Performance level descriptors outline the knowledge, skills, and abilities demonstrated by examinees at defined levels of achievement. We will work with you to ensure that test items reflect the full range of content, difficulty, and cognitive complexity exemplified by the performance level descriptors.

Are your content standards and test items properly aligned?
We will work with you to ensure that test items are clearly aligned to your content standards and support valid interpretations of test results.

Assessment Development

In developing your assessment, it’s important to begin with the end in mind.
With item writing specifications, that means defining how test items for each content standard or skill should be written, including what should and should not be tested. Item writing specifications may include sample items and descriptions of effective and ineffective answer choices.

Are you and your SMEs feeling the need for more and more test items?
We understand this trend, driven by demand for computer-based testing and computer-adaptive and on-demand testing. Our Automatic Item Generation (AIG) service combines cognitive theories, psychometric practices, content expertise, and computer-based algorithms to create the number of high-quality test items necessary to support your program.
Quality is as important as quantity.

In the item review process, our expert staff review each item for established criteria, including accuracy, alignment to standards, sensitivity, and accessibility. Our editors review and edit items for grammar, punctuation, style, and format. During test assembly, we ensure that your test forms adhere to your test design, blueprint, and psychometric requirements. In preparing test materials for print and online presentation, our specifications for art and page design ensure high-quality accessible materials for all examinees.

Content Management

Test and item specifications, test items, rubrics, stimulus material, and item statistics.

All elements of your assessment system must be managed throughout their lifecycle. Whether you have an existing content management system in place and need to address specific needs, or you’re starting from scratch, we can help. We can also assist with translation and adaptation. We work with experienced translators to produce translated or transadapted test materials in many languages.

Test Validation

Ensuring that test results are fair, consistent, and provide useful information to administrators and test takers is the essence of test validation.

Each of the following types of studies provides a precise view of the user’s performance and plays a key role in test validation. Our consulting teams will ensure that your testing program includes the most appropriate studies to meet your program needs.

- Field Testing
- Standard Setting
- Alignment Studies
- Think Aloud Interviews/Cog Labs
- Prediction Studies
- Growth Modeling
Assessment Services

Why ACT?

ACT is trusted as a national leader in test development. We provide high-quality assessments including the ACT® test – the college entrance exam gold standard, ACT® WorkKeys®, and ACT® Tessera™. Our custom solutions are scalable, secure, and integrate current assessment technology and interoperability with multiple devices and operating systems.

We provide actionable data and insights through high-quality assessments built by experts, using best practices.

- Our team has deep knowledge of academic standards. Many team members have experience teaching in K–12 and college classrooms, while others have provided workforce development instruction.

- Our researchers are highly-experienced psychometricians, research scientists, and research statisticians with academic and operational experience in the testing industry. Our nationally-recognized staff of psychometricians have high-stakes assessment experience in multiple areas and disciplines, including: K-12, higher education, workforce, social and emotional learning, and certification and licensure. We uphold highest-in-the-industry standards for reliability, validity, and data integrity.

- Our team has published widely in the area of educational assessment and measurement. Their work is cited in scholarly and applied literature and has received multiple awards from the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME).

- Our team complies with the highest professional standards governing the development, administration, and use of tests.

- Our organization is guided by the AERA / APA / NCME Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing.

- Our item development is guided by both Evidenced-Centered Design (ECD) and Universal Design (UD) principles.