Testing

Achieving Classroom Excellence Act (ACE)
Frequently Asked Questions and Answers
End of Course Projects

1. **What is the purpose of End of Course Projects?**

    The purpose of the End of Course Projects is to provide students an alternate way to demonstrate mastery of the content as provided by the *Achieving Classroom Excellence Act* (ACE), which states:

    Beginning with students entering the ninth grade in the 2008-2009 school year, every student shall demonstrate mastery of the state academic content standards (Oklahoma's Priority Academic Student Skills [PASS]) *in the following subject areas in order to graduate from a public high school with a standard diploma:*

    > *(a) Algebra I;*
    > *(b) English II; and*
    > *(c) Two of the following five:*
    > > *(1) Algebra II,*
    > > *(2) Biology I,*
    > > *(3) English III,*
    > > *(4) Geometry, and*
    > > *(5) United States History.* (70 O.S. § 1210.523)

    Students who do not meet this requirement through end-of-instruction (EOI) tests may graduate from a public high school with a standard diploma by demonstrating mastery of state academic content standards through alternate test(s) and/or End of Course Project(s) as approved by the State Board of Education. (70 O.S. § 1210.523)

2. **What are End of Course Projects?**

    End of Course Projects are designed by committees of teachers, administrators, higher education faculty, business representatives, and non-profit organization representatives. They have been approved by the Oklahoma State Board of Education. End of Course Projects require students to integrate and apply the knowledge and skills gained throughout a course to address a practical, real world challenge. They include a student reflection on how the project has contributed to the student's learning and ability to apply knowledge to the real world.

3.   Who may complete an End of Course Project?

Any students who do not score at least at the proficient or satisfactory level on an EOI may complete an End of Course Project if they have already retaken the EOI at least once or if they have taken at least one alternate test.   In addition, students with special circumstances (e.g., transferring from out of state, private school, or home school) may, under specific conditions, complete an End of Course Project prior to taking an EOI, retaking an EOI, or taking an alternate test.   This process is explained in greater detail in the ACE Implementation Guide under ACE Testing Frequently Asked Questions.   It is also outlined in the ACE Flowchart, available on the Oklahoma State Department of Education Web site, <www.sde.state.ok.us>.

4.   For whom are the End of Course Projects designed?

While any student meeting the qualifications described in Question #3 may complete an End of Course Project, the projects are designed for students who have mastered the state academic content standards (PASS) in Algebra I, Algebra II, Biology I, English II, English III, Geometry, and/or United States History.   The target student for an End of Course Project is one who has the knowledge and skills required in a course but for whom multiple choice tests are not the best method of demonstrating that knowledge.

These students may have short attention spans, emotional reactions to high stress situations, medical concerns, or any number of other reasons that prevent them from demonstrating their knowledge in formal testing situations.   These students may be gifted or have strong propensities for spoken communication, performance demonstrations, hands-on activities, or written responses.

5.   How will students demonstrate their knowledge of the state academic content standards (PASS) through End of Course Projects?

The End of Course Projects are designed to be open-ended so that students may demonstrate their knowledge in a variety of ways.   Student Guides for each project will give students specific directions on what must be done to demonstrate their knowledge as well as what options they have for presenting that information.   Work may be presented in a variety of ways, including multi-media presentations, constructed objects, artistic expression, written documents, and spoken expression.

6.   May a student complete an End of Course Project instead of taking the end-of-instruction (EOI) test for that course?

No. (70 O.S. § 1210.508)   If a student takes a course in an Oklahoma public high school, the student must take the EOI.   Students who complete courses in public schools outside of the state of Oklahoma, private schools, or home schools may complete an End of Course Project without first completing an EOI.   (OAC 210:10-13-2)

7. Why are the End of Course Projects confidential?

Since the End of Course Projects are being used to meet a graduation requirement, it is important to preserve the integrity of the projects by making them confidential. Just as the end-of-instruction tests are all confidential, so too are the End of Course Projects. All work submitted in an End of Course Project must be done only by the student in order to meet the core values of academic integrity: truth, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility.

8. Since the End of Course Projects are confidential, are there sample projects that students, parents, and teachers may view to better understand what will be required of a student when completing a project?

Sample End of Course Project Student Guides are available on the Oklahoma State Department of Education Web site, <www.sde.state.ok.us>. These sample Student Guides and sample Project Coordinator and Evaluation Panel Guides will demonstrate for students, parents, and teachers what is required by the confidential projects.

9. What is the process for a student to gain access to a *confidential* End of Course Project Student Guide?

In order for a student to gain access to a *confidential* End of Course Project Student Guide, several steps must be followed.
1. The superintendent must download, sign, and return the District Assurances available on the Oklahoma State Department of Education Web site, <www.sde.state.ok.us> and on the School District Reporting Site (SDRS). The District Assurances will only need to be completed once for the district.
2. All personnel who work with the End of Course Projects must sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement to be kept at the district level for at least five years. The Non-Disclosure Agreement is available on the Oklahoma State Department of Education Web site, <www.sde.state.ok.us> and on the School District Reporting Site (SDRS).
3. The student must work with a Project Coordinator to complete the Student Agreement available on the Oklahoma State Department of Education Web site, <www.sde.state.ok.us> and on the School District Reporting Site (SDRS).
4. The student may then be given a copy of the *confidential* End of Course Project Student Guide for the project that the student is choosing to complete. The Student Guide will only be available through the School District Reporting Site (SDRS). The Project Coordinator should make sure the student understands the scope of the project and is ready to begin work on completing the project as directed in the Student Guide.

10. What happens after a student has completed an End of Course Project as directed in the Student Guide?

Once a student has completed an End of Course Project as directed in the Student Guide, several steps will be required to score or evaluate the project.

1. The Project Coordinator will assist the student in completing the <u>Project Submission Form</u>. The Project Submission Form is available on the Oklahoma State Department of Education Web site, <www.sde.state.ok.us> and on the School District Reporting Site (SDRS).

2. The Project Coordinator will submit the completed project and the Project Submission Form to the Project Evaluation Panel.

3. The Project Evaluation Panel will score the project as directed in the *confidential* <u>Project Coordinator and Evaluation Panel Guide</u> for that project, using the <u>Performance Level Rubric</u> for that content area. The Project Coordinator and Evaluation Panel Guide will only be available through the School District Reporting Site (SDRS). The Performance Level Rubric for each content area is available on the Oklahoma State Department of Education Web site, <www.sde.state.ok.us> and on the School District Reporting Site (SDRS).

4. The Project Evaluation Panel will submit the <u>Review Panel Recommendations Form</u> to the district superintendent. The Review Panel Recommendations Form is available on the Oklahoma State Department of Education Web site, <www.sde.state.ok.us> and on the School District Reporting Site (SDRS).

5. The district superintendent will notify the student of the Performance Level attained on the project, based on the Performance Level Rubric used by the Project Review Panel to evaluate the project.

6. The district superintendent will notify the Oklahoma State Department of Education of the Performance Levels attained by students completing End of Course Projects and will submit completed project documentation to the Oklahoma State Department of Education for verification purposes. This documentation will be submitted by April 1, August 1, and November 1 of each year.

7. Completed projects or digital copies of completed projects will be retained at the school or district for a minimum of five years from completion.

11. What is the timeline for completion of an End of Course Project?

The student and the Project Coordinator will determine an appropriate timeline for completion of the project. The Project Coordinator will review a student's progress toward completion of the project at the indicated CHECK POINTS and adjust the student's completion timeline if necessary. While all students are different and work at different paces, students should expect to spend approximately 15-30 hours completing a project.

12. What is the role of the Project Coordinator?

The Project Coordinator is an important part of the End of Course Project process. The Project Coordinator's role is to make sure the student understands the scope of the project, manage the paperwork, review a student's progress toward completion of the project at the indicated CHECK POINTS, and adjust the student's completion timeline if necessary.

If a student completes any component of the project in a form other than written documents, those components need to be documented through electronic files, video recordings, audio recordings, or other documentation method for accurate scoring and efficient storage. The Project Coordinator may assist the student with this documentation process by photographing, recording, or otherwise making digital copies of student work. The Project Coordinator may not assist in completion of the student work.

In the case of a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or an English Language Learner (ELL) plan, the Project Coordinator should consult the student's records and resource personnel to ensure that all appropriate accommodations allowed on the Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests (OCCT) are provided on the End of Course Project.

Once the student has completed the project, the Project Coordinator will prepare the paperwork necessary to submit the project to the Project Evaluation Panel. To the extent possible, it is recommended that the Project Coordinator serve only as a facilitator of the evaluation process rather than as an active participant of the Project Evaluation Panel.

13. Who may serve as a Project Coordinator?

Any certified educator may serve as a Project Coordinator. The Project Coordinator must not complete any portion of the End of Course Project. All work submitted in the End of Course Project must be done only by the student in order to meet the core values of academic integrity: truth, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility.

14. What is the role of the Project Evaluation Panel?

The Project Evaluation Panel is an important part of the End of Course Project process. The Project Evaluation Panel's role is to provide a recommendation to the District Superintendent regarding the overall performance of the student on the project. The Panel will make this recommendation without bias, adhering to the procedures and guidelines set by the Oklahoma State Board of Education, and using the scoring criteria and Performance Level Rubric included in the Project Coordinator and Evaluation Panel Guide.

It is *recommended* that Project Evaluation Panel members participate in professional development related to the use of the ACE End of Course Projects prior to evaluation of a project. This professional development is available through videoconferences, Web casts, and on-site training conducted by the Oklahoma State Department of Education staff.

15. Who may serve on the Project Evaluation Panel?

The Panel must consist of at least three certified educators. The Panel must include at least one teacher who is highly qualified in the content area of the project. To the extent possible, it is recommended that all panel members be highly qualified in the content area of the project. It is also recommended that the Panel include at least one educator who does not currently have the student in class and at least one administrator. Schools and districts are encouraged to work collaboratively with other schools and districts to develop Project Evaluation Panels that include qualified individuals who can provide a fair assessment of student mastery of content.

16. What are the Evaluation Requirements that must be followed in order to determine student mastery of state academic content standards through End of Course Projects?

End of Course Projects will be assessed at the local school district level. They must be evaluated according to the requirements of the Oklahoma State Board of Education listed below, including the use of the Performance Level Rubrics approved by the Oklahoma State Board of Education.

Projects must be evaluated as follows:

1. School districts must establish a Project Evaluation Panel for each student project. This panel may differ for each project evaluated in a district, or it may consist of the same members for several projects.

2. The Project Evaluation Panel must consist of at least three certified educators.

3. The Project Evaluation Panel must include at least one highly qualified teacher in the content area of the project. To the extent possible, it is *recommended* that all panel members be highly qualified in the content area of the project.

4. It is *recommended* that Project Evaluation Panel members participate in professional development related to the use of the ACE End of Course Projects prior to evaluation of a project. This professional development is available through videoconferences, Web casts, and on-site training conducted by the Oklahoma State Department of Education staff.

5. It is *recommended* that the Project Evaluation Panel include at least one educator who does not currently have the student in class and at least one administrator.

6. Schools and districts are *encouraged* to work collaboratively with other schools and districts to develop Project Evaluation Panels that include qualified individuals who can provide a fair assessment of student mastery of content.

7. The Project Evaluation Panel must follow the directions provided in the Project Coordinator and Evaluation Panel Guide for assessing the student's completion and accuracy of the project.

8. The Project Evaluation Panel must use the Performance Level Rubric to determine the student's mastery of state academic content standards through and End of Course Project.

9. The Project Evaluation Panel must complete the Panel Recommendation Form, verifying that the evaluation was made without bias and that all procedures and guidelines for evaluation were followed.

10. District superintendents must report to the Oklahoma State Department of Education the Performance Level of each student who completes an End of Course Project based on the criteria established and the recommendation of the Project Evaluation Panel.

11. Completed project documentation must be submitted to the Oklahoma State Department of Education for verification purposes.

12. Completed projects or digital copies of completed projects must be retained at the school or district for a minimum of five years from completion.

The district superintendent will notify the Oklahoma State Department of Education of the Performance Levels attained by students completing End of Course Projects and will submit completed project documentation to the Oklahoma State Department of Education for verification purposes. This documentation will be submitted by April 1, August 1, and November 1 of each year. (OAC 210:10-13-16)

17. What accommodations may be made on End of Course Projects for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)?

In the case of a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), the Project Coordinator should consult the student's records and resource personnel to ensure that all appropriate accommodations allowed on the Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests (OCCT) are provided on the End of Course Project. For example, a student who has the ACE Algebra I End-of-Instruction test read aloud as an approvable accommodation could also have the Algebra I End of Course Project read aloud as an approvable accommodation. (Note: Reading the test aloud to a student is not permitted on OMAAP English II, ACE English II, and ACE English III End-of-Instruction tests; therefore, it is not permitted on the English II and English III End of Course Projects.) See the Oklahoma School Testing Program Test Preparation Manual for a list of approved accommodations.

18. **What accommodations may be made on End of Course Projects for students with an English Language Learner (ELL) plan?**

In the case of a student with an English Language Learner (ELL) plan, the Project Coordinator should consult the student's records and resource personnel to ensure that all appropriate accommodations allowed on the Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests (OCCT) are provided on the End of Course Project. For example, a student who uses a word-to-word dictionary (dictionary that does not give word definitions) as part of classroom instruction on a regular basis and on the end-of-instruction tests could also use a word-to-word dictionary on the End of Course Projects. See the Oklahoma School Testing Program Test Preparation Manual for a list of approved accommodations.

19. **What documents and resources are available on the Oklahoma State Department of Education Web site, <www.sde.state.ok.us>?**

In addition to general resources about the *Achieving Classroom Excellence Act* (ACE), there are resources specific to the End of Course Projects listed with the ACE Resources on the Oklahoma State Department of Education Web site. These resources include:
- District Assurances
- Non-Disclosure Agreement
- Student Planner and Agreement
- Project Submission Form
- Project Evaluation Panel Recommendation
- Evaluation Requirements
- Sample Student Guides
- Sample Project Coordinator and Evaluation Panel Guides
- Presentations

20. **What documents and resources are available on the School District Reporting Site (SDRS)?**

Confidential documents are stored on the School District Reporting Site (SDRS) and may be accessed by district superintendents. These include:
- Student Guides
- Project Coordinator and Evaluation Panel Guides

In addition, resources that may be helpful in using the confidential documents have also been placed on SDRS for your convenience. These resources include:
- District Assurances
- Non-Disclosure Agreement
- Student Planner and Agreement
- Project Submission Form
- Project Evaluation Panel Recommendation
- Evaluation Requirements

21. How will completed End of Course Projects be stored?

Completed projects or digital copies of completed projects must be retained at the school or district for a minimum of five years from completion. If a student completes any component of the project in a form other than written documents, those components need to be documented through electronic files, video recordings, audio recordings, or other documentation method for accurate scoring and efficient storage. Written documents may be stored as paper documents or converted to digital copies for efficient storage. The Project Coordinator may assist the student with this documentation process by photographing, recording, or otherwise making digital copies of student work. The Project Coordinator may not assist in completion of the student work.

22. How will End of Course Projects be documented and reported?

For each student, use of End of Course Project to demonstrate mastery in required subjects as allowed by OAC 210:10-13-16 must be documented on the student's ACE Demonstration of Mastery Cumulative Record.

In addition, districts will be required to report through the School District Reporting Site (SDRS), by school site, the number of students issued diplomas based on alternate tests, End of Course Projects, exceptions, and/or exemptions. This report will also include the category of test, method, exception, or exemption granted. (70 O.S. § 1210.523)

Beginning October 1, 2012, the Board shall provide an annual report of this data to the Governor, President Pro Tempore of the State Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives. (70 O.S. § 1210.523)