

ECE Clearinghouse Test Use Guidelines

The End-of-Course Examinations (ECE) Clearinghouse serves as a warehouse for locally-developed tests provided by Florida school districts willing to share these resources with other districts across the state. The ECE Clearinghouse provides these tests free of charge to districts that have signed security agreements. In order to maximize exam security, tests are provided only to primary or back-up contacts designated by the districts with signed security agreements. It is the responsibility of these district ECE Clearinghouse Contacts to maintain the integrity of these tests within their respective districts by implementing secure administration and scoring procedures. It is the responsibility of districts using exams from the ECE Clearinghouse to use the exams for the purpose that is intended, as pretests or end-of-course exams.

The following guidelines are provided to serve as minimum security procedures designed to supplement existing district test use guidelines that are in use within individual districts. Within each category, best practices are provided to exemplify how these requirements may be met.

Development of Exams: All persons involved in the development, validations, copying, distribution, or scoring of exams shall be notified of their responsibility to maintain the security of the exams. There must be a statement in this notification that those participating in the development, validation, or scoring of exams must not discuss the content of such exams with any individuals other than those participating on the writing team and must not copy or reproduce items or exams.

Best Practices:

- *Training is provided to individuals involved in the development, validations, copying, distribution, or scoring of exams. Such training will include ethical practices in the development and use of tests.*
- *Materials used in the development of exams, including test items and item banks, shall be provided in numbered paper copies only. They will be distributed at the beginning of each work session and collected at the end of each work session.*

Downloading of Exams: Exams may be downloaded directly from the ECE Clearinghouse only by ECE Clearinghouse Contacts. Electronic copies of the exams will be maintained on a secure, password protected computer. The computer must be physically secured, with access by authorized personnel only. Electronic copies of the exams will not be distributed.

Best Practices:

- *Electronic storage of ECE Clearinghouse exams in each district will be limited to one computer that is secured physically by placement in an area that is restricted to authorized personnel only. The computer may be placed in a locked room or in an area of restricted access.*
- *The computer used for storage of ECE Clearinghouse exams must be secured with a password for limited access.*

Distribution of Tests: Each district ECE Clearinghouse Contact is responsible for establishing procedures for distribution and collection of exams. Website access and exam access passwords are to be maintained in a secure manner and are not to be given to individuals other than those authorized in the security agreement. If electronic copies of exams are stored in the district, these will be stored on a secured computer.

Exams are for the use of the ECE Clearinghouse and the receiving districts. They may not be sold or published. They may not be distributed to individuals for any purpose other than use as end-of-course exams in the receiving district.

Charter schools may request exams from the district sponsor in the same manner that other public school sites request use of the exams. Electronic copies of exams will not be provided. The receiving district will maintain a log of exams that are provided to all sites.

Best Practices:

- *Exams are downloaded from the website by the ECE Clearinghouse contact. Exams are then printed for distribution. The ECE Clearinghouse contact will maintain a distribution log of exams that are provided within the district. Electronic copies of exams are not distributed within the district.*

Review of Exams Prior to Administration: While the goal of the ECE Clearinghouse is to provide each district with error-free tests, it is the responsibility of the receiving district to verify the key and proof the exam for accuracy. It is also the responsibility of the receiving district to review the content to ensure the validity of the test for the intended course in the receiving district.

Best Practices:

Procedures for Ensuring the Validity of the Exams:

The following procedures are recommended for reviewing all tests that are shared through the ECE Clearinghouse.

- *Instructional personnel knowledgeable of the content should review the exam for accuracy of the keys.*
- *Curriculum supervisors and/or teachers of students at the level assessed by the test should review the exams to ensure that the content is consistent with the course and the textbooks used in the district.*
- *Test administrators will review the exam for accuracy of the content and format.*
- *The district review team may modify the exam to meet the needs of the district, but a new key must then be created.*

Exam Administration: The ECE semester exams are designed to be administered in a two-period block of time (two 50-minute class periods). Pretests are designed to be administered in one 50-minute class period. These times are only estimates; each district should provide ample time for students to finish the exams.

ECE Clearinghouse contacts will inform test users of the secure nature of the exams and will maintain the security of the exams. Users will receive training on test security and will be provided with a copy of these guidelines prior to distribution. Maintenance of appropriate security will include, but is not limited to, the following guidelines:

- 1) Answer keys are not provided to students.
- 2) Exam materials are not copied or reproduced in any manner that is not consistent with test security rules.
- 3) Exam items are not shared with students prior to testing.
- 4) Students are not coached during testing.
- 5) Exam responses are not altered in any way.
- 6) All materials are returned for storage at the completion of testing.
- 7) Users may not participate in or encourage others to engage in any prohibited acts related to the use of end-of-course exams.

Paper exam copies should be numbered to ensure the return of all copies for storage in a locked cabinet between administrations. Paper copies may be stored at the school or district level. Access to exams must be limited to those with a legitimate interest in the exam, i.e. those teaching the course and those supervising the program. They are to be distributed at the beginning of the test window and collected following administration.

Accommodations: Students who meet the requirements for allowable accommodations based upon a current IEP or students who qualify as “handicapped person” based upon Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Rule 6A-19.001(6), FAC, will be provided with accommodations as appropriate. Allowable accommodations are determined by school personnel and should be congruent with the accommodations provided for other test situations. **All accommodations should be the same accommodations that are used in the classroom.**

Make-Up Exams: Students may take make-up exams within the exam window that is established by the district. A two week make-up window is recommended. Make-up exams will be requested and returned to the storage area following exam administration.

Calculators or Reference Sheets: Students may use calculators and reference sheets as provided by the instructor, if indicated in the exam instructions. All materials will be collected and stored following exam administration.

Feedback on Exams: ECE Clearinghouse users will be provided with forms to provide feedback on exams that are used by members to be returned to ECE Clearinghouse personnel. The ECE Clearinghouse will maintain a file of feedback received and provide such feedback to users upon request. There is no feedback to students other than their score. No item data can be provided.

Scoring and Reporting: As a condition of using the exams from the ECE Clearinghouse, the receiving district will report usage information to the ECE Clearinghouse within two months after the use of the exams. Usage information will include the name of the exam that was used; information as to any modifications that were made to the exam, including a copy of the exam that was used; the number of students taking the exam; and test statistics, if available.

Security Breaches: Suspected security breaches involving exams that are stored in the ECE Clearinghouse must be reported to ECE Clearinghouse personnel. Security breaches include situations such as unusual scores that suggest unethical testing practices, suspected breach of exams stored in secure locations or on a secured computer, student access to exams, and other situations that would compromise exam security. ECE Clearinghouse personnel will notify the Department of Education and the Superintendent of the district in which the infraction occurred. ECE Clearinghouse contacts will be alerted of the reported security breach via email within one business day. The district in which the infraction occurred will be required to provide a written explanation within seven calendar days and may face loss of privileges to the test bank. Districts in which the security breach occurred will follow their protocol for dealing with security breaches, and follow-up information will be provided to ECE Clearinghouse users when received from the reporting district.