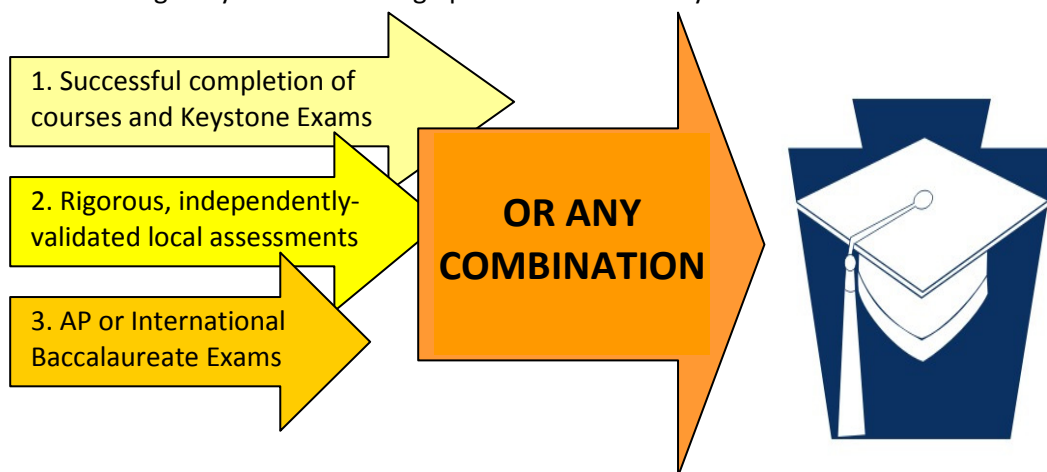## KEYSTONE EXAMS

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Keystone Exams are end-of-course assessments designed to assess proficiency in the subject areas of Algebra I, Algebra II, Biology, Chemistry, Civics and Government, English Composition, Geometry, Literature, U.S. History, and World History. They will be offered in both paper/pencil and online formats.

The Keystone Exams are one component of Pennsylvania's new system of high school graduation requirements. To receive a diploma, students must also meet local district credit and attendance requirements, complete a culminating project, and pass any additional district requirements.

For the graduating classes of 2015 and 2016, students must demonstrate successful completion of secondary level course work in Algebra I, Biology, English Composition, and Literature for which the Keystone Exams serve as the final course exams. Students' Keystone Exam scores shall count for at least one-third of the final course grade.
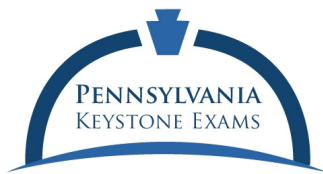
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Under the new regulation and beginning with the class of 2015, students can meet graduation requirements through any of the following options determined by the district.

1. Successful completion of courses and Keystone Exams

2. Rigorous, independently-validated local assessments

3. AP or International Baccalaureate Exams

OR ANY COMBINATION

In addition to taking the Keystone Exams, students must also successfully complete the courses needed for high school graduation. No student will be denied a high school diploma based on test scores alone as teacher assigned grades will constitute a majority (about 67%) of the course grade.

The regulation also responds to calls for reduced testing in Pennsylvania's high schools. Pending approval from the U.S. Department of Education (for the 2012–13 school year), the Algebra I, Biology, and Literature Keystone Exams will replace the 11th grade Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) tests. This change will reduce annual testing time by approximately 18 hours, which is equivalent to three school days. The PSSA will be retained for use in the elementary and middle school grades.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (CONTINUED)

OPTION 1 - DEMONSTRATE PROFICIENCY IN CORE SUBJECTS

Students in the classes of 2015 and 2016 will demonstrate proficiency in Algebra I, Biology, Literature, and English Composition with a Keystone Exam. The Keystone Exam will count for one-third of the final course grade.

For the classes of 2017 and beyond, requirements under this option will be expanded to include the following.

- Passing 2 English courses (Composition and Literature)*;
- Passing 2 Mathematics courses (Algebra I, Algebra II, or Geometry);
- Passing 1 Science course (Biology or Chemistry); and
- Passing 1 Social Studies course (Civics and Government, U.S. History, or World History).

*PDE recommends administering the English Composition exam at the end of English 9 and Literature at the end of English 10.

OPTION 2 - PASS LOCAL ASSESSMENTS

Districts may choose to use locally designed and independently validated assessments. This regulation preserves local control but sets consistent standards for locally developed measures to ensure rigorous assessments, fair administration, and reliable results. The state will share validation costs with local districts.
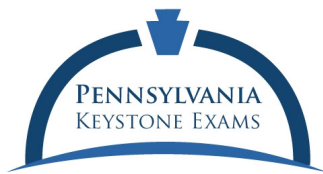
On September 16, 2010, the State Board of Education voted to allow districts to make the local policy decision to use a Keystone Exam as a stand-alone graduation requirement in a given content area; this local assessment option would be "deemed approved" for validation requirements in that content if students are required to score proficient or above.

OPTION 3 - PASS RIGOROUS NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

National assessments are the Advanced Placement (AP) Exams and International Baccalaureate (IB) Exams. Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) will issue policy guidance regarding the minimum score required on an AP or IB Exam to satisfy graduation requirements.

ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

A student who does not score "proficient" on a Keystone Exam after two attempts will be eligible to complete a project-based assessment. The student must also have taken the course and met local attendance and supplemental instruction requirements. The project-based assessment is designed expressly to help students supplement a Keystone Exam score in order to meet the graduation requirement of proficiency. A project-based assessment can raise a student's Keystone score to the "proficient" cut score but not beyond it.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (CONTINUED)

The regulation also includes a waiver provision. The Secretary of Education is allowed to exempt individual students from the new graduation requirements based on personal crisis, family crisis, or other extenuating circumstances. The waiver must be accompanied by an endorsement from the student's local superintendent.

TESTING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

All students with special needs and English Language Learners are entitled to accommodations during instruction and testing. Accommodations are indicated in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan. Specific questions about a student's program of study and participation on state tests should be directed to the student's teacher or IEP team.

KEYSTONE EXAMS SCHEDULE

The table below lists the dates when the different Keystone Exams will be available.

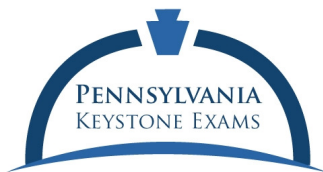| Course	Field Test	Available For All Schools
Algebra I, Biology, Literature	Fall 2010	Spring 2011
Algebra II, Geometry, English Composition	Spring 2011	January 2012
U.S. History	Fall 2012	Spring 2013
Chemistry, Civics & Government, World History	Spring 2015	TBD

KEYSTONE ASSESSMENT ANCHORS/ELIGIBLE CONTENT

The Keystone Exams are aligned to the Pennsylvania Keystone Course Standards, Assessment Anchors/ Eligible Content, and the Curriculum Frameworks. All were developed by Pennsylvania educators. The Pennsylvania Keystone Course Standards, Assessment Anchors/ Eligible Content, and Curriculum Frameworks are available on the Standards Aligned System website at www.pdesas.org.

CONTENT AREAS

For the 2010–2011 school year, the Algebra I, Biology, and Literature Keystone Exams will be available. Each Keystone Exam will assess material from specific topic areas listed in the Assessment Anchors/Eligible Content documents.

CONTENT AREAS (CONTINUED)

ALGEBRA I

The first administration of the Algebra I Keystone Exam with operational items is scheduled for May 2011. Each Algebra I Keystone Exam spring operational form will also have embedded field test items. The Algebra I Keystone Exam will assess students' mastery of the Algebra I Assessment Anchors as defined by the Eligible Content and be aligned to the Concepts and Competencies. The table below shows how the standards will be separated between the two modules on the operational form.

Algebra I Keystone Exam Test Design for Standards

	Module 1	Module 2
Assessment Anchors Covered	Operations; Linear Equations & Inequalities	Linear Functions; Data Organization
Number of Eligible Content Covered	18	15

The table below shows the types of items and number of items covered in the Algebra I Keystone Exam spring operational form.
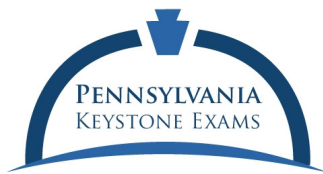
Algebra I Keystone Exam Breakdown of Item Types

	Module 1		Module 2		Total	
	Multiple Choice Items	Constructed Response Items	Multiple Choice Items	Constructed Response Items	Multiple Choice Items	Constructed Response Items
Number of Operational Items	18	3	18	3	36	6
Number of Field Test Items	5	1	5	1	10	2
Total	23	4	23	4	46	8

The table below shows the types of items and number of points covered in the Algebra I Keystone Exam spring operational form.

Algebra I Keystone Exam Breakdown of Points

	Module 1	Module 2
Number of Operational Multiple Choice Items	18 items at 1 point each = 18 points	18 items at 1 point each = 18 points
Number of Operational Constructed Response Items	3 items at 4 points each = 12 points	3 items at 4 points each = 12 points
Total Number of Points	30 points	30 points
Percentage of Points for Entire Test	50%	50%

There will be a total of 60 points (Module 1 and Module 2 combined), with approximately 60% multiple choice points and 40% constructed response points.

CONTENT AREAS (CONTINUED)

ALGEBRA I (CONTINUED)

The table below shows the estimated time a typical student would need to complete Module 1 and Module 2 of the Algebra I Keystone Exam spring operational form.

Algebra I Keystone Exam Estimated Time

	Operational Items	Field Test Items	Total Items
Number of Minutes = 149	114	35	149

The Algebra I Keystone Exam will have two different types of constructed response items. Both types of constructed response items will be scored on a scale ranging from 0 – 4 points.

Scaffolding Completion Items are constructed response items that elicit two-to-four distinct responses from a student. When administered online, the responses are electronically entered by the student and are objective and concise. Some examples of student responses may be *5 gallons*, *vertex at (5, 11),* or *y = 3x + 9*. A designated answer space/box will be provided for each item. No extemporaneous work or explanation will be scored. To the greatest extent possible, automated scoring will be used to determine the point value of the responses. When applicable, Inferred Partial Credit Rubrics and Scoring Guides will be used to award partial credit to qualifying responses.
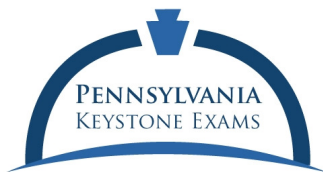
Extended Scaffolding Completion Items are constructed response items that require students to respond with extraneous work or explanation for at least part of the item. For example, the student may be asked to "Show all of your work," "Explain why the curve is not a parabola," or "What is the error in Jill's reasoning?" When administered online, responses can be typed by the student, but scoring will not be automated. Item-specific scoring guides will be used by scorers to award credit, including partial credit, for responses.

BIOLOGY

The first administration of the Biology Keystone Exam with operational items is scheduled for May 2011. Each Biology Keystone Exam spring operational form will also have embedded field test items. The Biology Keystone Exam will assess students' mastery of the Biology Assessment Anchors as defined by the Eligible Content and be aligned to the Concepts and Competencies. The table below shows how the standards will be separated between the two modules on the operational form.

Biology Keystone Exam Test Design for Standards

	Module 1	Module 2
Assessment Anchors Covered	Cells; Cell Processes	Continuity; Unity of Life
Number of Eligible Content Covered	16	22

CONTENT AREAS (CONTINUED)

BIOLOGY (CONTINUED)

The table below shows the types of items and number of items covered in the Biology Keystone Exam spring operational form.

Biology Keystone Exam Breakdown of Item Types

	Module 1		Module 2		Total	
	Multiple Choice Items	Constructed Response Items	Multiple Choice Items	Constructed Response Items	Multiple Choice Items	Constructed Response Items
Number of Operational Items	24	3	24	3	48	6
Number of Field Test Items	6	1	6	1	12	2
Total	30	4	30	4	60	8

The table below shows the types of items and number of points covered in the Biology Keystone Exam spring operational form.
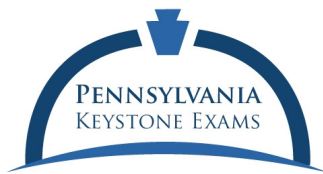
Biology Keystone Exam Breakdown of Points

	Module 1	Module 2
Number of Operational Multiple Choice Items	24 items at 1 point each = 24 points	24 items at 1 point each = 24 points
Number of Operational Constructed Response Items	3 items at 3 points each = 9 points	3 items at 3 points each = 9 points
Total Number of Points	33 points	33 points
Percentage of Points for Entire Test	50%	50%

There will be a total of 66 points (Module 1 and Module 2 combined), with approximately 73% multiple choice points and 27% constructed response points.

Biology Keystone Exam Estimated Time

	Operational Items	Field Test Items	Total Items
Number of Minutes = 144	108	32	140

Each constructed response item on the Biology Keystone Exam will be scored on a scale ranging from 0 – 3 points. The student will type the response in narrative format online or write the response in the space provided in the answer book.

CONTENT AREAS (CONTINUED)

LITERATURE

The first administration of the Literature Keystone Exam with operational items is scheduled for May 2011. Each Literature Keystone Exam spring operational form will also have embedded field test items. The Literature Keystone Exam will assess students' mastery of the Literature Assessment Anchors as defined by the Eligible Content and be aligned to the Concepts and Competencies. The table below shows how the standards will be separated between the two modules on the operational form.

Literature Keystone Exam Test Design for Standards

	Module 1	Module 2
Assessment will Cover	Fiction Literature	Nonfiction Literature
Number of Eligible Content Covered	25	31

The table below shows the types of items and number of items covered in the Literature Keystone Exam spring operational form.
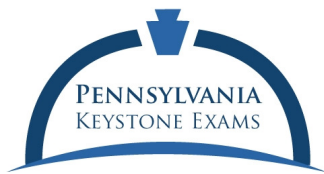
Literature Keystone Exam Breakdown of Item Types

	Module 1			Module 2			Total		
	Passages	Multiple Choice Items	Constructed Response Items	Passages	Multiple Choice Items	Constructed Response Items	Passages	Multiple Choice Items	Constructed Response Items
Number of Operational Items	2	17	3	2	17	3	4	34	6
Number of Field Test Items	1	6	1	1	6	1	2	12	2
Total	3	23	4	3	23	4	6	46	8

The table below shows the types of items and number of points covered in the Literature Keystone Exam spring operational form.

Literature Keystone Exam Breakdown of Points

	Module 1	Module 2
Number of Operational Multiple Choice Items	17 items at 1 point each = 17 points	17 items at 1 point each = 17 points
Number of Operational Constructed Response Items	3 items at 3 points each = 9 points	3 items at 3 points each = 9 points
Total Number of Points	26 points	26 points
Percentage of Points for Entire Test	50%	50%

There will be a total of 52 points (Module 1 and Module 2 combined), with approximately 65% multiple choice points and 35% constructed response points.

CONTENT AREAS (CONTINUED)

LITERATURE (CONTINUED)

The table below shows the estimated time a typical student would need to complete Module 1 and Module 2 of the Literature Keystone Exam spring operational form.

Literature Keystone Exam Estimated Time

	Operational Items	Field Test Items	Total Items
Number of Minutes = 146	104	42	146

Each constructed response item on the Literature Keystone Exam will consist of a stem and be scored on a scale ranging from 0 – 3 points. The student will type the response in narrative format online or write the response in the space provided in the answer book.