



# Vermont Alternate Assessment

## Test Administration Manual

English Language Arts/Literacy,  
Mathematics, and Science

2020-2021

Published March 12, 2021

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## Resources and Help Desk Information

### Vermont Alternate Assessment Program Portal

<http://vt.portal.cambiumast.com>

### Vermont Alternate Assessment Program Help Desk

1.844.218.1184 | [VTHelpDesk@cambiumassessment.com](mailto:VTHelpDesk@cambiumassessment.com)

The Help Desk is open Monday–Friday 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. outside of the summative testing window and Monday–Friday 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. during summative testing.

The Help Desk may be contacted for situations and questions that include some of the following:

- Testing environment down or unavailable
- User accounts not available or users are not able to administer tests
- Student information or test session incorrect or missing
- Loading student data or settings into the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE)
- Appeals functionality in TIDE
- Preparing for online testing—downloading the secure browser, etc.
- Password resets for district and school users;
- Test settings inaccurate

When contacting the Help Desk, provide the representative with as much detail as possible about the issue(s) encountered and the system on which it occurred. This should include the following:

- Type of device being used within the system
- Any error message(s) that appeared (code and description)
- Operating system and browser information
- Network configuration information
- Your contact information for follow-up, including email address and phone number
- Any relevant and authorized student and school information, including statewide student identifier (SSID), grade level, and assessment.

# Section I. Overview of the VTAA

## I.I Background and Purpose

The primary purpose of the Vermont Alternate Assessment (VTAA) is to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities have the opportunity to participate in a challenging, standards-based curriculum that encourages high academic expectations. An assessment that provides a measure of student achievement and an opportunity to participate in the state's education accountability system facilitates this goal.

According to Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) regulations, an alternate assessment may be based on alternate achievement standards, and the results may be included in the federal accountability calculations as long as the number of participants does not exceed one percent (1%) of all students in the grade tested at the state level.

All students must be included in the state's assessment system by participating in the state assessments with or without accommodations or in the state alternate assessments. Decisions regarding the method of assessing students with disabilities must be made on an individual basis by the student's individualized education program (IEP) team and documented in the student's IEP.

The VTAA is designed to meet the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These laws mandate that all students participate in assessments that measure student achievement of grade-level content standards.

## I.II VTAA Overview

In spring 2021 the VTAA will be a Computer-Adaptive Test (CAT) that will be administered online. For students who are not able to interact well with a computer, even with assistance from the Alternate Teacher (ATE), Paper Response Options can be ordered by contacting the VT Help Desk. The Alternate District Administrator (ADA) will need to order the Paper Response Options. Please allow 4-5 business days for materials to be shipped to the district. In addition, the ADA will need to select "Paper Test Booklet" under Non-Embedded Accommodations for that student in TIDE.

### VTAA Format

- The Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) for each content area serve as the content specifications and are the foundation for the development of the assessment items for the VTAA.
- The ALDs range in complexity from high to low and are designed to assist teachers in providing access to the assessment items for students with significant cognitive

disabilities. The ALDs are designed with the understanding that a student's communication and cognitive levels are not always the same. Students' communication skills can fall in a range from abstract to concrete to pre-symbolic.

- The Test Delivery System (TDS) uses scripted directions to pose specifically worded questions to the student through audio recordings.
- The response options for each item will be presented as a series of images on the screen. Each response option image may contain a combination of Mayer-Johnson Picture Symbols, words, or numbers.
- Each item includes an introductory sentence and various stimuli, including images and short reading passages, to help a student respond.
- Students may take the online tests independently by responding to items with a computer mouse, touch screen, or other interactive technology.
- Students may also take the online test with Alternate Teacher (ATE)/Alternate Test Administrator (ATA) assistance. The student can therefore respond using the mode of communication that they use during instruction. These response modes include but are not limited to oral response, pointing, eye gaze, sign language, or an augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device. Once the student has communicated a response, the ATE/ATA may need to assist the student in touching the on-screen response option or may touch the response indicated if the student is unable to do so, even with assistance.

*Please note the ATA role for the alternate assessments is like the Test Administrator (TA) role for the Vermont Smarter Balanced and the Vermont Science Assessments. This role is designed for users that will be either administering or helping administer the VTAA. Unlike the ATE, the ATA role will not have access to student scores.*

The VTAA provides eligible students with significant cognitive disabilities in Grades 3–9 and 11 the opportunity to demonstrate what they know in English language arts (ELA), mathematics and science. An overview of the VTAA is summarized in [Table 1](#).

**Table 1. Overview of the VTAA**

VTAA Component	Description
<b>Tested Content Areas</b>	English language arts (ELA) in grades 3–9 Mathematics in grades 3–9 NGSS Science in grades 5, 8 and 11
<b>Security</b>	All items, passages, response options are <b>secure</b> .
<b>Test Window</b>	March 16–May 28, 2021 May 31 – June 11, 2021 (make-up window)

**Table 1. Overview of the VTAA**

VTAA Component	Description
<b>Training</b>	All Alternate Teachers (ATEs) and Alternate Test Administrators (ATAs) administering the VTAA must complete the online TA Certification Course, available on the Vermont Comprehensive Program Portal at <a href="https://vt.portal.cambiumast.com">https://vt.portal.cambiumast.com</a> . At the end of the course, they will take a short certification quiz. To be flagged as “TA Certified” in TIDE, they must correctly answer 80% of the questions in the online TA Certification Course. In addition, all ATEs and ATAs must complete the VTAA specific TA Certification Course and pass the quiz. This is also available on the VTCAP portal.
<b>Testing Time per Student</b>	Testing time will vary for each student. Testing may be paused and resumed, based on the needs of the student within the testing window.
<b>Embedded Tools and Accessibility Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audio Recording</li> <li>Color contrast</li> <li>Expandable Passages and Items</li> <li>Highlighter</li> <li>Line Reader</li> <li>Mark for Review</li> <li>Masking</li> <li>Mouse Pointer</li> <li>Print-on-Demand</li> <li>Print Size</li> <li>Strikethrough</li> <li>Volume Control</li> <li>Zoom</li> </ul>
<b>To Non-Embedded Accessibility Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>American Sign Language</li> <li>Assistive Technology (AT) for viewing, responding, or interacting with test items (must be used with permissive mode)</li> <li>Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices</li> <li>Non-verbal indication of answer choices (e.g., eye gazing, pointing)</li> <li>Verbal dictation of answers from the student</li> <li>Read Aloud (Items, Directions, Response Options, Passages)</li> <li>Scribe</li> </ul>

**Table 1. Overview of the VTAA**

VTAA Component	Description
<p><b>Non-Embedded Accommodations</b></p>	<p>Paper Response Options. For students who are not able to interact with a computer, even with assistance from the ATE or ATA, ADAs may order Paper Response Options by contacting the VT Help Desk. Please see <a href="#">Accommodations</a> for more details. Please allow 4-5 business days for materials to be shipped to the district. All paper response options must be ordered by May 28, 2021. Please note that “Paper Test Booklet” will also need to be selected for the student within TIDE under Non-Embedded Accommodations.</p> <p>Enlargement of Paper Response Options. The student may require response options to be enlarged on a smartboard or similar technology to accommodate their visual needs. The ATE or ATA may enlarge materials as appropriate. If the enlarged materials are provided on paper, they must be sent to CAI after the assessments are completed.</p> <p>Braille Test Materials. The ATE or ATA may use paper response options to create tactile graphics or braille materials for any VTAA paper response option cards that they feel are appropriate for a particular student. The ATE or ATA may assist the student in examining tactile graphics to orient the student to the materials.</p>

## Pausing and Resuming Administration of the VTAA

If a student exhibits frustration, lack of engagement, refusal to participate, or if a student becomes sick during the administration of the VTAA, pause the test by clicking on the **Pause** button at the top of the student interface within the Test Delivery System and take a break. A break may consist of a few minutes to a few days, depending on the student’s needs. Student responses will automatically be saved. Resume administration of the test at an appropriate time for the student. The ATE or ATA may pause and resume the administration of the VTAA as often as necessary during the testing window, based on a student’s needs. Tests will not expire until the close of the testing window.

## VTAA Training Test

All ATEs/ATAs and students have access to sample items for ELA, mathematics and science prior to administering the VTAA. The items allow the ATE and student to engage with, and become familiar with, the online item presentation and test any assistive technology required. Training tests are available on the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal (<https://vt.portal.cambiumast.com/vtaa-training-tests.stml>).

## Learning Characteristics Inventory

The Learning Characteristics Inventory (LCI) will be required for each student eligible for the alternate assessment. The LCI will be used to collect evidence to analyze for external validity purposes. Through the LCI, the ATE provides information on a student’s achievement based on



observations conducted throughout the school year. The survey responses will then be correlated with the student’s performance on related items administered on the VTAA.

The LCI is submitted through the Data Entry Interface (DEI). The LCI is completed only by the ATE because it is comprised of questions regarding the student’s abilities and achievement throughout the school year. The ATE may access and download the brochure *Completing the Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI) in the Data Entry Interface (DEI)* from the Portal (<https://vt.portal.cambiumast.com/resources/resources/>).

Before the VTAA can be administered to eligible students, ATEs must complete the LCI. Students will not be able to access the VTAA until the LCI has been submitted. The LCI needs to be entered only once each year for each student who will be tested.

**IMPORTANT:** The LCI must be completed once per student per year before administration of any VTAA assessments.

## Alternate Assessment Indicator

District Administrators (DAs) and ATEs will use TIDE to confirm that all students participating in the VTAA have their Alternate Assessment Indicator for each content area set to “Y” in TIDE. The indicator cannot be set until an LCI has been submitted for each student that will be taking an alternate assessment. All students participating in the VTAA must be pre-identified in TIDE prior to testing. If the LCI has been submitted by February 26, 2021, the indicator will automatically be set. If the LCI has been submitted after that date, please call the VT Help Desk for assistance setting the Alternate Assessment Indicator.

## Online Systems

The VTAA utilizes online systems to facilitate test administration. These systems are accessed via the Portal at <https://vt.portal.cambiumast.com>. A summary of the systems can be found in [Table 2](#).

**Table 2. Online Systems**

System	Description
<b>Test Information Distribution Engine</b>	<p>The Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) stores district and school information. It provides DAs with the tools to add and manage users for administrative tasks associated with the VTAA.</p> <p>TIDE allows authorized users to add, view, edit, and remove district- and school-level users; add, view, edit, and remove student information; and submit test irregularities, including submitting appeals to invalidate or reset an assessment.</p> <p>Through the Monitoring Test Progress task, authorized users can monitor student participation and testing throughout the testing window.</p>
<b>TA Certification Course</b>	All ATEs/ATAs are required to complete the general online TA Certification Course. Completing the course will flag your TIDE account as “TA Certified”.

<b>VTAA TA Certification Course</b>	All ATEs/ATAs are also required to complete the VTAA specific TA Certification Course, in order to be flagged as “Alternate TA Certified” for VTAA assessments. Only ATEs and ATAs who have completed the course and passed the quiz will be able to administer the VTAA.
<b>Test Administrator Interface</b>	ATEs/ATAs use the TA Interface to establish test sessions and approve students to test. Using the TA Interface, ATEs/ATAs can also pause students’ tests and stop test sessions. The TA Interface is part of the Test Delivery System (TDS).
<b>Student Interface</b>	The live, operational Student Interface, or student testing site, can only be used by students eligible to take the VTAA (this is confirmed by completion of the LCI) and their ATEs/ATAs to access the VTAA. It is accessible only via the CAI Secure Browser or app, which must be installed on the student’s device before testing. The Student Interface is part of the TDS.
<b>Training Test</b>	Students, parents, and district/school personnel can use the Training Test section of the Portal to review sample content and item types, become familiar with online test navigation, practice responding to items, and practice using online test tools, including audio recordings.

## Section II. Roles and Responsibilities for the VTAA

Before beginning the VTAA, each District Administrator (DA), Alternate District Test Administrator (ADA), School Test Coordinator (SC), Alternate Teacher (ATE), and Alternate Test Administrator (ATA) should review this manual to become familiar with the responsibilities of all testing.

In addition to the DA and ADA, providing oversight of the VTAA at the district level, the SC works within the school building to ensure that the VTAA is administered as intended and that the ATEs/ATAs and students have the support needed for a successful administration.

Regardless of the number of individuals who perform the duties, the responsibilities of each role must be completed.

### II.1 DA Responsibilities

Essential tasks that are required for the DA before, during, and after administration of the VTAA are outlined in [Table 3](#).

**Table 3. Responsibilities for District Administrator**

Before Test Administration
Identify all ADAs, SCs, ATEs and ATAs in the district and ensure they have been provided with the appropriate TIDE account based on their user role.
Identify all students in the district who will be participating in the VTAA and ensure they are included in TIDE with the correct demographic information.
Ensure ATEs/ATAs have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• completed the general assessment TA Certification in TIDE and are TA Certified in TIDE;</li> <li>• completed the VTAA TA Certification course and are Alternate TA Certified in TIDE; and</li> <li>• access to the Test Delivery System and the Data Entry Interface with a school email address and password associated with their TIDE account.</li> </ul>
Ensure that the Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI) has been submitted through the DEI by the ATE for each eligible student. <b>Note: If the LCI is submitted and the Alternate Assessment Indicator is not yet set to “Y” in TIDE and the district is ready to test the student, the DA/ADA must contact the VT Help Desk to initiate the procedure for setting the Alternate Assessment to “Y” in TIDE, allowing student access to the Alternate Assessment.</b>
Communicate all information received from the AOE regarding the VTAA to ADAs, ATEs/ATAs.
Ensure system technological requirements are met. Work with district/school IT personnel to ensure that the CAI Secure Browser is loaded on necessary computers and that the online Test Delivery System is accessible and functioning on every computer that is used for testing.
Support ATEs to develop a testing schedule so that all tests are submitted within the test window.

**Table 3. Responsibilities for District Administrator**

During Test Administration
Monitor to ensure implementation of appropriate test practices and appropriate student participation so that the VTAA administration is completed by the end of the test window.
Ensure students and ATEs/ATAs have the materials and resources needed to administer the VTAA.
Maintain test security by ensuring all test materials are in a secure and locked location when not testing.
Report inappropriate test practices and irregularities to the AOE.
After Test Administration
Investigate and report any inappropriate test practices and suspected irregularities to the AOE.

## II.II Alternate District Administrator (ADA) Responsibilities

Essential tasks that are required for the ADA before, during, and after administration of the VTAA are outlined in [Table 4](#).

**Table 4. Responsibilities for Alternate District Administrator**

• Before Test Administration
Identify all ATEs and ATAs in the district.
For students that are unable to interact with a computer screen, even with assistance from the ATE, order and distribute any required VTAA paper response options by calling the VT Help Desk. The ADA will need to select “Paper Test Booklet” under Non-Embedded Accommodations for each test in TIDE. The Help Desk will ship the paper response options to the district. Please allow 4-5 business days for materials to be shipped to the district. <b>All paper response options must be ordered by May 28, 2021.</b>
Work closely with SCs to distribute materials to ATEs. Ensure response option materials are returned to CAI following the test administration.
If the ATE anticipates a student will not exhibit evidence of a response during an assessment, review the student’s IEP and discuss this with the ATE before testing begins.
Ensure that the Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI) has been submitted through the DEI by the ATE for each eligible student.
<b>Note: If the LCI is submitted and the Alternate Assessment Indicator is not yet set to “Y” in TIDE and the district is ready to test the student, the DA/ADA must contact the VT Help Desk to initiate the procedure for setting the Alternate Assessment to “Y” in TIDE, allowing student access to the Alternate Assessment.</b>

**Table 4. Responsibilities for Alternate District Administrator**

• During Test Administration
<p>If a student does not register a response with a communication mode (i.e. verbal, gestural, or with assistive technology), the ATE or ATA will select “Mark as No Response” in the student test interface. If the student is unable to respond to the first four questions in the test and the ATE or ATA selects “Mark as No Response”, they should then contact the ADA to determine if the lack of response is consistent or inconsistent with the student’s daily performance in other situations and settings. A review of the student’s IEP is also recommended. If lack of response is consistent, the ADA will indicate that the Early Stopping Rule is being applied by selecting “No Communication” in the drop-down for Testing Accommodations for Alternate Assessment in TIDE. If inconsistent, testing can resume. Once the test is submitted by the ATA or ATE and the ADA has selected “No Communication” in TIDE, the test is complete for that subject. The ATE and ADA will need to complete this process for each test (ELA, mathematics, and science).</p> <p><b>Please note: Once the first four questions on the test have been completed, those questions cannot be returned to without submitting an appeal.</b></p> <p><b>Please note: No communication should not be selected in TIDE by the ADA prior to the student meeting the Early Stopping Rule requirement and the ADA confirming it.</b></p>
• After Test Administration
<p>Ensure any response option materials that were ordered are returned CAI as soon as testing is complete, but no later than June 18, 2021. Securely shred any additional printed materials that may have been used during administration of the VTAA and ensure all secure materials are removed from computers, assistive technology, and AAC devices.</p> <p><b>All paper response option materials must be returned to CAI no later than June 18, 2021.</b></p>

## II.III School Test Coordinator (SC) Responsibilities

Essential tasks that are required for the SC before, during, and after administration of the VTAA are outlined in [Table 5](#).

**Table 5. Responsibilities for School Test Coordinator**

Before Test Administration
Serve as a liaison between the school and the DA.
Identify all students in the school who will be participating in the VTAA and ensure they are included in TIDE with the correct demographic information.
Communicate all information received from the DA regarding the VTAA to ATEs/ATAs.
For students that are unable to interact with a computer screen, even with assistance from the ATE, work closely with ADA to distribute paper response option materials to ATEs.
Support ATEs to develop a testing schedule so that all tests are submitted within the test window.

**Table 5. Responsibilities for School Test Coordinator**

During Test Administration
Monitor to ensure implementation of appropriate test practices and appropriate student participation so that all tests for the VTAA administration are completed by the end of the test window.
Ensure students and ATEs/ATAs have the materials and resources needed to administer the VTAA.
Maintain test security by ensuring all test materials are in a secure and locked location when not testing.
After Test Administration
Ensure any response option materials that were ordered are returned to the ADA as soon as testing is complete, but no later than June 11, 2021. Work with the ADA to securely shred any additional printed materials that may have been used during administration of the VTAA and ensure all secure materials are removed from computers, assistive technology, and AAC devices. <b>All paper response option materials must be returned to the ADA no later than June 11, 2021.</b>

## II.IV Alternate Teacher (ATE) Responsibilities

### Requirements for ATEs/ATAs

ATEs have primary responsibility for administering the VTAA. ATAs may assist in the administration of VTAA. ATEs play a key role in implementing the student’s IEP. ATEs/ATAs must be trained to administer the VTAA and must be one of the following:

- A certified employee of the district
- An employee of the district who is an Intensive Special Educator
- A substitute teacher who is certified and employed by the district on an as-needed basis
- A previously certified teacher who has allowed the teaching certificate to expire due to retirement, change of career, or some other reason and who has been approved by the DA as a qualified ATA
- Someone who is not certified but has been employed by the school district in an instructional capacity and has been approved by the DA as a qualified ATA

Table 6 indicates the ATE responsibilities before, during, and after the administration of the VTAA.

**Table 6. Responsibilities for Teacher Administering the Alternate Assessment**

Before Test Administration
Ensure you have access to the Test Delivery System and the Data Entry Interface with a school email address and password associated with your TIDE account.

**Table 6. Responsibilities for Teacher Administering the Alternate Assessment**

<p>Complete the required training to administer the VTAA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the general assessment TA Certification Course located on the Portal; and</li> <li>• Complete the VTAA specific TA Certification Course located on the Portal.</li> </ul>
<p>Read this Test Administration manual and be familiar with test administration procedures and test security policies.</p>
<p>Offer guidance to the IEP team regarding the student’s current abilities, skills, and social integration as related to the decision-making process for selecting the appropriate assessment.</p>
<p>Submit the Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI) through the DEI for each eligible student prior to testing.</p> <p><b>Note: If the LCI is submitted and the Alternate Assessment Indicator is not yet set to “Y” in TIDE and the school is ready to test the student, the DA/ADA may contact the VT Help Desk to initiate the procedure for setting the Alternate Assessment to “Y” in TIDE, allowing student access to the Alternate Assessment.</b></p>
<p>Access the Training Test to familiarize students with the Test Delivery System, accessibility features, and to confirm compatibility of Assistive Technology and AAC devices.</p>
<p>Review <a href="#">Appendix C</a>: Teacher/Test Administrator Checklist for VTAA.</p>
<p>Ensure the student is taking the appropriate grade-level test.</p>
<p>Review the <a href="#">Early Stopping Rule</a> section of this manual prior to testing and the <i>Early Stopping Rule Flowchart</i> on the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal.</p>
<p><b>During Test Administration</b></p>
<p>Administer the VTAA to all eligible students and provide optimal testing conditions including embedded and non-embedded accessibility features, as needed.</p>
<p>If the student does not register a response with a communication mode (i.e. verbal, gestural, or with assistive technology) to the first four questions in the test, review the Early Stopping Rule requirements. Confirm the student was provided the appropriate communication and accessibility supports during testing and sufficient response time. Then discuss this with the ADA. The ADA will make the final determination after reviewing the student’s IEP. Refer to <a href="#">Early Stopping Rule</a> for additional information.</p> <p><b>Please note: Once the first four questions on the test have been completed, those questions cannot be returned to without submitting an appeal.</b></p>
<p>Report technology concerns to the DA/SC or Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program Help Desk.</p>
<p>Maintain test security by ensuring all test materials are in a secure and locked location when not testing.</p>
<p>Report inappropriate test practices and irregularities to the DA/SC.</p>
<p><b>After Test Administration</b></p>
<p>Report any inappropriate test practices and suspected irregularities to the DA/SC.</p>
<p>Return any paper response option materials or any additional printed materials to the ADA.</p> <p><b>All paper response option materials must be returned to the ADA no later than June 11, 2021.</b></p>

**Table 6. Responsibilities for Teacher Administering the Alternate Assessment**

Remove any secure materials from computers, Assistive Technology, and AAC devices.
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

## II.V Student Participation

Students who exhibit a significant cognitive disability are those whose records indicate a disability, or multiple disabilities, that require intensive or extensive levels of direct support that is not of a temporary or transient nature. These students require specially designed instruction based on alternate academic standards derived from their age appropriate grade level content standards to acquire, maintain, or generalize skills in multiple settings including the home, school, workplace, and community. The student's disability must significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Adaptive behavior is defined as actions essential for an individual to live independently and to function safely in daily life. Having a significant cognitive disability is not determined by an IQ test score, but rather a holistic understanding of a student.

The decision about a student's participation in the VTAA is made by the student's IEP team and documented in the student's IEP. The following criteria must be met for a student to be eligible to participate in the VTAA:

1. The student meets the definition for a student with a significant cognitive disability.
2. Student is currently receiving services under an active IEP.
3. The student's program is aligned to the Vermont academic content standards (e.g., Common Core, Next Generation Science Standards) and designed to provide access to the general education curriculum.
4. The student requires extensive, direct, individualized and substantial supports in order to access, participate and make progress in the grade level general education curriculum.
5. The IEP team has identified the need for an alternate assessment and the student's parents or guardians have been notified that the student will be assessed against alternate academic achievement standards.

## II.VI Testing Conditions

### Preparing a Secure Testing Environment

Students are administered the VTAA individually, one-to-one, most likely in their classroom or a similar environment familiar to the student. A secure test environment includes, but is not limited to:



- Administering the test only through the password-protected testing environment, the Test Delivery System
- Viewing of test items only by the student taking the test and the trained ATE/ATA administering the test
- Removing electronic devices and photography technology that could jeopardize test content in the test-taking environment
- Ensuring a quiet test-taking environment, void of talking or other distractions, and one that does not permit other students hearing the responses to the test items of the student being tested

## Optimal Testing Conditions

All ATEs/ATAs must provide each student an appropriate testing environment during every testing session. The ATE can ensure an appropriate testing environment by providing:

1. Optimal testing conditions for every student
2. Accessibility features that are appropriate for individual students
3. Accommodations defined in the student’s IEP that are consistent with AOE testing policies

Optimal testing conditions, appropriate accessibility features, the accommodations defined in student’s IEP that are consistent with AOE policies allow student access to the VTAA so that they may demonstrate their knowledge. Implementation of these practices must be planned for prior to testing the student. Each of these is discussed in detail below.

Optimal testing conditions must be provided for every student before and during the test administration as outlined in [Table 7](#).

**Table 7. Optimal Testing Conditions**

Before Administering the Test
Review the Accessibility Features and prepare for use as appropriate for individual students.
Identify the accommodations defined in the student’s IEP that are consistent with AOE policies and prepare for implementation during testing.
Make sure that the computer, any AAC and/or assistive technology device a student may use to interact with the test items meet the minimum requirements (located in the <i>Quick Guide for Setting Up Online Testing Technology</i> ), and are in working order, are available for testing, and are compatible with the Test Delivery System.
Log on to the Test Delivery System before testing to ensure that the computer, login information, and the Accessibility Features are working as intended.

**Table 7. Optimal Testing Conditions**

Before Administering the Test
Review the sample items in the Training Test with the student, and practice using appropriate Accessibility Features and accommodations defined in the student’s IEP that are consistent with Vermont policies.
Arrange to administer the VTAA in a familiar setting that is free of noise and distractions.
Develop a schedule to administer the VTAA during the best time of day for the student; consider time needed for breaks for the student.
During Test Administration
Manage testing materials and the assistive technology or AAC required by the student.
Provide scratch paper for student to make notes or solve math items. All scratch paper must be submitted to the ADA for secure shredding.
Pause the test administration and resume at a later time or another day as indicated by student needs. The VTAA may be administered over multiple days but must be completed by the end of the testing window.
Provide appropriate student positioning, access to appropriate accessibility features, and accommodations identified by the student’s IEP that are consistent with AOE policies.
Provide encouragement to support student engagement and focus. Phrases that <u>do not</u> indicate either the correct or incorrect response are appropriate for use. Examples of acceptable encouraging phrases include: “I like the way you are listening and following directions.” “Only one more to go!” “Just five minutes until a break!” “Keep working!”

## VTAA Accessibility Features

Accessibility features support student access to the test. Accessibility features are either embedded in the TDS or are non-embedded and provided by the ATE/ATA. Most accessibility features are enabled by the ATE/ATA at the time of testing and do not need to be set in TIDE by the ADA prior to testing. The test is designed to have all passages, items, and response options read to the student by the audio recording. Refer to the *Test Administrator (TA) User Guide* for descriptions of the accessibility features and the directions to enable them.

Table 8 and Table 9 provide lists of all accessibility features available for the VTAA.

**Table 8. VTAA Embedded Tools and Accessibility Features**

Embedded Accessibility Feature	Description
<b>Audio Recording</b>	Text is read aloud to the student via audio recording.

**Table 8. VTAA Embedded Tools and Accessibility Features**

Embedded Accessibility Feature	Description
<b>Calculator</b>	An embedded calculator is available for all Math tests.
<b>Color Contrast</b>	<p>Allows for different background or font color based on student needs or preferences. Color contrast can be set in the TA interface. Available options are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Black on White (default)</li> <li>▪ Black on Rose</li> <li>▪ Yellow on Blue</li> <li>▪ Medium Gray on Light Gray</li> <li>▪ Reverse Contrast (White on Black)</li> </ul>
<b>Expandable Passages</b>	Each passage or stimulus can be expanded so that it takes up a larger portion of the screen.
<b>Highlighter</b>	A digital tool for marking desired text, item questions, item answers, or parts of these in yellow.
<b>Line Reader Tool</b>	Allows the highlighting of an individual line of text in a passage or question. This tool is not available when the highlighter tool is in use.
<b>Magnification</b>	The size of specific areas of the screen (e.g., text, formulas, tables, graphics, and navigation buttons) may be adjusted by the student with an assistive technology device.
<b>Mark for Review</b>	Allows items to be flagged for future review during the assessment.
<b>Masking</b>	Masking blocks off content that is not of immediate need or that may be distracting, allowing the focus of attention to be on a specific part of a test item by masking selected content.
<b>Mouse Pointer</b>	Allows the mouse pointer to be set to a larger size and also for the color to be changed. A test administrator sets the size and color of the mouse pointer prior to testing.
<b>Periodic Table</b>	Available for Grade 11 Science tests.
<b>Print on Demand</b>	Paper copies of items can be printed for students from the student interface in the Test Delivery System.
<b>Print Size</b>	Font size can be adjusted in the TA interface.
<b>Strikethrough</b>	Allows users to cross out answer options.
<b>Volume Control</b>	Audio can be adjusted.
<b>Zoom</b>	A tool for making text or other graphics in a window or frame appear larger on the screen. The test page can zoom in up to eight levels.

**Table 9. VTAA Non-Embedded Accessibility Features**

Non-Embedded Accessibility Feature	Description
<b>American Sign Language</b>	The Trained ATE, or qualified interpreter, signs all VTAA items, directions, response options, and passages. Student may respond using sign language.
<b>Assistive Technology</b>	Hardware and software tools used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. The ATE/ATA must enable Permissive Mode within the TA Interface in order to use accessibility software and assistive technology.
<b>Augmentative and Alternate Communication</b>	Methods of communication used to supplement or replace speech or writing for those with impairments in the production or comprehension of spoken or written language. These systems of communication may be aided or unaided.

## Accommodations

Accommodations are changes in the materials or procedures of the assessment that do not alter the construct being measured.

For the VTAA, a student may use the accommodations that are included in their IEP that are consistent with the secure standardized administration of the VTAA.



**Alert:** The ATE/ATA may use physical prompting, however, the use of hand-over-hand prompting, invalidates the results of the test for the student. The use of hand over hand is considered to be a modification or change to the test administration. **Hand-over-hand prompting is not permitted and is considered to be an inappropriate test practice and a test irregularity that should be reported.**

Accommodations with specific access information are indicated in [Table 10](#).

**Table 10. Accommodations and Access Information**

Accommodations	Access Information
<p><b>Assistive Technology (AT)</b></p> <p>Assistive technology devices for viewing, responding to, or interacting with the test items. The student with ATE support should use the AT device with the practice test to ensure that it functions properly with the Test Delivery System. The Test Delivery System supports various AT devices, such as alternate keyboard, switches and hub, head mouse, etc.</p>	<p>Confirm the following prior to testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compatibility of AT with Test Delivery System and with accessibility features</li> </ul>

**Table 10. Accommodations and Access Information**

Accommodations	Access Information
<p><b>Paper Version of Item/s</b></p> <p>Paper-based response options are available for students not able to access the items via the Test Delivery System even with assistance from the ATE/ATA.</p> <p>The ATE or ATA may use the paper-based response options to create tactile graphics or braille materials for any VTAA paper response option cards for a particular student.</p>	<p>For students that are unable to interact with a computer screen, even with assistance from the ATE, the ADA may order any required VTAA paper response options by calling the VT Help Desk. The ADA will need to select “Paper Test Booklet” under Non-Embedded Accommodations for each test in TIDE. See <a href="#">Table 11</a> below. Please allow 4-5 business days for materials to be shipped to the district. <b>All paper response options must be ordered by May 28, 2021.</b></p> <p>All paper response options that are ordered by calling the VT Help Desk must be returned to CAI upon completion of the test administration.</p> <p>Any other printed assessment materials are also secure and must be given to the ADA/SC for secure shredding upon completion of the test.</p>

**Table 11. Paper Tester Selection in TIDE**

The screenshot shows the TIDE interface for selecting accommodations. The top section is titled "Non-Embedded Tools" and is for the subject "ELA". Under "Non-Embedded Accommodations", a dropdown menu is open, showing "Paper Test Booklet" as the selected option. Below this, there are several checkboxes for other accommodation options: "None", "Alternate Response Options (Requires F", "Braille Booklet-Contracted", "Braille Booklet-Uncontracted", "Large Print", and "Paper Test Booklet". The "Paper Test Booklet" option is checked.

## Students Who Do Not Provide a Response to the Question

A response is required for every item before moving to the next item. If a student does not respond to a question, the ATE/ATA can select the [No Response] option to move on to the next item. The system will ask the ATE/ATA to confirm that the item is to be marked with a No Response.

## Other Administration Tips

- The ATE/ATA may have the audio recordings reread any portion of the item as needed or requested by the student. The ATE/ATA may also reread any portion of the questions, but he or she must not provide any cues to the correct answers when rereading the script or story.
- The ATE/ATA cannot teach a skill while administering the assessment.
- The assessment is not timed. The ATE/ATA may take breaks as needed for the student.
  - Stop the assessment at any time and resume it later within the testing window.
  - If the student requires a break before completing all the items in the assessment, pick up where you left off. Simply log back in to the Student Interface using the same or a new session ID.
  - Do not re-administer or change answers to any previously administered items.
- Ensure that all technology, including AAC devices, are ready for testing.
- Make sure that two computers, one for the TA Interface and one for the Student Interface, are ready for administration.

## Section III. Ensuring Test Security

The security of assessment instruments and the confidentiality of student information are vital to maintaining the validity, reliability, and fairness of the results.

All VTAA test items and test materials are secure and must be appropriately handled. Secure handling protects the integrity, validity, and confidentiality of assessment items and student information. Any deviation in test administration must be reported as a test security incident to ensure the validity of the assessment results.

Violation of test security is a serious matter with far-reaching consequences. Breaches of test security include, but are not limited to, copying of test materials, failing to return test materials, coaching students, giving students answers, and/or changing students' answers. Such acts may lead to the invalidation of an entire school district's student test scores, disruption of the test system statewide, and legal action against the individual(s) committing the breach including revocation of the individual's license to teach in Vermont. A breach of test security may be dealt with as a violation of the Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers, as well as a violation of other pertinent state and federal law and regulation. The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) will investigate all such matters and pursue appropriate follow-up action.

### III.I Security of the Test Environment

[Table 12](#) describes security requirements for the test environment during various stages of testing. The test environment refers to all aspects of the testing situation while students are testing and includes what a student can see, hear, or access (including access via technology).

Individuals who have witnessed, been informed of, or suspect the possibility of a test security incident that could potentially affect the integrity of the assessments or the resulting data must report such incidents immediately to the DA who will contact AOE.

Refer to [Section IV. Testing Improprieties, Irregularities, and Test Security Violations](#) for more information about prohibited behaviors that may give a student an unfair advantage or compromise the security of the assessments.

**Table 12. Requirements of the Test Environment**

REQUIREMENTS BEFORE TESTING	
Instructional materials removed or covered	Instructional materials <b>must be removed or covered, including but not limited to</b> , information that might assist students in answering questions. This includes materials that may be displayed on bulletin boards, chalkboards or dry-erase boards, or on charts (e.g., wall charts that contain literary definitions, maps, mathematics formulas).
Signage	If helpful, place a "TESTING—DO NOT DISTURB" sign on the door or post signs in halls and entrances rerouting hallway traffic in order to promote optimum testing conditions.

REQUIREMENTS DURING TESTING	
Quiet environment	Provide a quiet environment void of talking or other distractions that might interfere with a student's ability to concentrate or might compromise the testing situation.
Student supervision of electronic devices	Students are actively monitored and are <b>prohibited</b> from access to unauthorized electronic devices that allow availability to outside information, communication among students, or photographing or copying test content. This includes any device with cellular, messaging, or wireless capabilities, including but not limited to cell phones, iPods, smart watches, cameras, and electronic translation devices.
Access to assessments	Only students who are testing can view test items. Students who are not being tested or unauthorized staff or other adults must not be in the room where a test is being administered. Trained ATEs/ATAs may have exposure to test items in the course of properly administering the assessments; however, DAs, ADAs, SCs, TEs, TAs,* and other trained staff may not actively review or analyze any test items.
No answer key development	No form or type of answer key may be developed for test items.
Testing through secure browser	Administration of the VTAA is permitted only through the Student Interface via the secure browser.
No unauthorized logging in to the test delivery system	Only students with assistance from the ATE/ATA may log in to the Student Interface. Students may not use another student's login credentials. Only adults may log in to the Test Administrator (TA) Interface with an authorized account. An adult may not use another person's username and password.
REQUIREMENTS DURING AND AFTER TESTING	
No access to responses	Only ATEs and ATAs are permitted to review student responses in the testing interface or students' notes on scratch paper.
No copies of test materials	Unless needed as printed paper response options or braille accommodation, no copies of the test items, stimuli, reading passages, performance task materials, or writing prompts may be made or otherwise retained.
No access to digital, electronic, or manual devices	No digital, electronic, or manual device may be used to record or retain test items, reading passages, or writing prompts. Similarly, these materials must not be discussed with or released to anyone via any media, including fax, email, social media websites, etc.
No retaining, discussing, or releasing test materials	Descriptions of test items, stimuli, printed reading passages, or writing prompts must not be retained, discussed, or released to anyone.
No reviewing, discussing, or analyzing test materials	DAs, ADAs, SCs, TEs, TAs, ATEs, ATAs* and other staff may not review, discuss, or analyze test items, stimuli, reading passages, or writing prompts at any time, including before, during, or after testing.
All test materials must remain secure at all times	Printed materials from the print-on-demand or paper response option accommodation, scratch paper, and documents with student information must be kept in a securely locked room or locked cabinet that can be opened only by staff responsible for test administration.



REQUIREMENTS AFTER TESTING	
No test materials used for instructional purpose	Test items, stimuli, reading passages, or writing prompts must not be used for instructional purposes.
Destroy test materials securely	Printed test items/passages, including braille printouts, and scratch paper must be collected and inventoried at the end of each test session and then immediately destroyed. See <a href="#">III.II Secure Handling of Printed Materials</a> for details.

\* DA = District Administrator, ADA = Alternate District Administrator, SC = School Test Coordinator, TE = Teacher, TA = Test Administrator, ATE = Alternate Teacher, ATA = Alternate Test Administrator

## III.II Secure Handling of Printed Materials

Paper response options can be ordered for students whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) indicates a need for a paper copy of **the response options** as a non-embedded accommodation. Paper response options can only be ordered by calling the VT Help Desk at 1.844.218.1184, or via email to [VTHelpDesk@cambiumassessment.com](mailto:VTHelpDesk@cambiumassessment.com). This accommodation must be set in TIDE, prior to testing by the ADA to ensure the student has the correct test form to match the paper response options. Please allow 4-5 business days for materials to be shipped to the district. **All paper response options must be ordered by May 28, 2021.**

### Return of Printed Materials and Destruction of Scratch Paper

Printed response options must be returned to CAI following the directions included in the shipment of materials by June 18, 2021. Scratch paper must be kept in a securely locked room or locked cabinet that can be opened only with a key or keycard by staff responsible for test administration. All test materials must remain secure at all times. Printed test items/passages, including braille printouts and scratch paper, must be collected and inventoried at the end of each test session and then immediately shredded according to district and/or state policies or procedures. **DO NOT** keep printed test items/passages or scratch paper for future test sessions.

## **Section IV. Testing Improprieties, Irregularities, and Test Security Violations**

The VTAA policies related to testing integrity and appropriate and inappropriate test practices are described in this section. All personnel (DAs, ADAs, SCs, and ATEs/ATAs) must comply with the AOE's security protocols and procedures. Any breach of test security must be reported to AOE.

Testing integrity is critical to ensure accurate, valid, reliable, and timely information about student academic performance. The responses submitted in the Student Interface must reflect authentic student work and responses. All paper materials must be secured. All secure materials, including any adapted materials, must be returned to the ADA with the other test materials. The ADA must return paper response options that were ordered from the VT Help Desk to CAI and must securely shred any other test materials.

ATEs/ATAs should become familiar with the item administration protocols and prepare necessary accommodations needed for each student. Testing staff must ensure that all aspects of the VTAA are maintained in a secure manner. Items are for the exclusive use of testing and are not to be used for instruction, and are not to be shared, emailed, copied, or distributed in any manner. To do so is a test irregularity and a violation of test security and should be reported. ATEs/ATAs may rehearse administering the assessment tasks and items prior to administering them, either alone or with another ATE/ATA who is trained to administer the VTAA.

### **IV.I Handling Test Materials in a Secure Manner**

The VTAA is a secure online test and all test forms and test materials are available in the Test Delivery System. Secure handling of test materials protects the integrity and confidentiality of test items and the validity of student results. It is essential that unauthorized persons are prevented from accessing or viewing test content in the Test Delivery System or in paper form.

For printed test materials including, paper response options and test item, an ATE/ATA must:

- Maintain all printed test materials in a secure, locked location
- Protect secure materials from view by other students, teachers, parents, school staff, or other individuals
- Refrain from duplicating, reproducing, or sharing items or other secure test materials
- Give ALL printed test item/s or other printed material to the ADA/SC after the test session is completed, for secure shredding
- Delete any test materials, items, or information from the computer and/or any assistive technology used by the student after testing is complete

## **IV.II Test Security Violations and Inappropriate Test Practices**

Teaching staff may not use any portion of the item or related materials for practice with the student prior to conducting the actual assessment. ATEs/ATAs may rehearse administering the assessment items prior to administering them, either alone or with another ATE/ATA who is trained to administer the VTAA.

The content of the items may not be shared with other teachers or staff (except as part of rehearsing the task administration).

Some examples of security violations are listed below (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Giving any student access to secure test items or materials except in the regular course of an authorized administration of the state assessment system
- Giving unauthorized individuals or other persons access to secure test items or materials
- Copying, reproducing, using, or otherwise disclosing any portion of secure test materials in any manner inconsistent with test security regulations and procedures
- Providing answers during the administration of the test orally, in writing, or by any other means to any student
- Coaching any student during testing by giving the examinee the answers to secure test questions, directing or guiding a response, or altering or interfering with the student's response in any way
- Changing any student's incorrect answers to correct answers
- Reminding the student of previously used materials or experiences related to concepts in an item
- Teaching test content immediately before the test or the administration of an item.
- Failing to follow security regulations and procedures for the storage, distribution, collection, and return of secure test materials, or failing to account for all secure test materials before, during, and after testing
- Failing to properly monitor the test administration or failing to return materials used by the student(s) during testing
- Producing unauthorized printed copies of test content, failing to properly destroy authorized printed copies, or allowing printed copies to leave the test site
- Allowing tests to be administered by unauthorized personnel
- Participating in, directing, aiding, counseling, assisting, encouraging, or failing to report any of the prohibited acts
- Refusing to disclose information regarding test security violations

- Refusing to cooperate in the investigation of a suspected breach of test security
- Discussing test questions with other people
- Taking test materials home
- Emailing information to anyone regarding the content of a test
- Allowing non-certified aides to administer the assessment without a certified proctor present in the room at all times.

## Section V. Appeals

Incidents may occur during testing that can impact a student’s scores. These testing irregularities are defined as any situation that interferes with usual or prescribed testing procedures as specified in this TAM.

ATEs/ATAs should report any incident that occurred during testing if it could affect a student’s test score (e.g., an error in administration) to the DA and SC so that a decision can be made regarding the validity of the student’s score. Testing irregularities may necessitate a request for the invalidation of test scores through TIDE. It is not necessary to report minor incidents (e.g., uncooperative or sleeping students) or accidental noises in the environment (e.g., a garbage truck or public-address system).

For security incidents that result in a need to reset, reopen, restore, or invalidate individual student tests, **the AOE must approve the request.** AOE approvals and denials will, in most cases, be processed within 24 hours. In most instances, an appeal will be submitted to address a test security breach or irregularity.

Because the Appeals system is for action only, all appeals should also be entered in the Test Security Incident Log and submitted to the DA/SC. The Test Security Incident Log includes the information needed to process an appeal. The online Appeals process and conditions for use are described in [Table 13](#). The *TIDE User Guide*, located on the Portal, contains specific instructions on submitting appeal requests.

### V.I Online System Appeals Types

**Table 13. Online System Appeals Types**

Type	Description
<b>Invalidate a Test</b>	Invalidating a student’s test eliminates the test. The test will not be scored.
<b>Reopen a Test</b>	Reopening a test allows a student to access a test that was submitted in error or has expired.
<b>Reset</b>	Resetting a student’s test removes that test from the system and enables the student to start a new test.
<b>Restore a Reset Test</b>	Restoring a test reverts the test to the original test opportunity before the test was reset. This action can only be performed on tests that have been reset.

## Section VI. Administration of the VTAA

### VI.I Tasks to Complete Prior to Test Administration

#### Complete Certification Course, Review TAM, and Use the Resources Provided

- a) Watch the TA Certification Course and complete the quiz. You must score 80% on this quiz for your TIDE account to be “TA Certified” so that you can administer tests.
- b) Complete the VTAA TA Certification Course and pass the quiz.
- c) Review this Test Administration Manual in its entirety.
- d) Review the various resources on the Portal that will assist in administering the VTAA.

#### Prior to Administering the VTAA the ATE/ATA will:

**1. Confirm access to the Test Delivery System.**

The ATE/ATA receives a username and password for the TIDE system from CAI when the DA adds the ATE/ATA to TIDE.

**2. Complete the Learner Characteristics Inventory.**

The Trained ATE enters LCI responses into the Data Entry Interface. The ATE may access and download the brochure *Completing the Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI) in the Data Entry Interface (DEI)* from the Portal (<https://vt.portal.cambiumast.com/resources/resources/>).

**3. Determine Student Accommodations.**

- a. Determine the grade-level test and content areas you will be assessing for each student.
- b. Check the testing section of your students’ IEPs for VTAA eligibility. Ensure that any accommodations listed in the student’s IEP will be provided during administration. Note that the VTAA is adaptable by design, and allowable accommodations can be provided for a student even if the accommodation is not recorded in the student’s IEP. However, accommodations that are listed in the student’s IEP must be provided during testing.

## Ordering Paper Response Option Materials

The ADA can order paper response options for students who are not able to access the items via the Test Delivery System, even with assistance from the ATE/ATA. Paper response options can only be ordered by calling the VT Help Desk at 1.844.218.1184, or via email to [VTHelpDesk@cambiumassessment.com](mailto:VTHelpDesk@cambiumassessment.com). Please allow 4-5 business days for materials to be shipped to the district. **All orders must be placed by May 28, 2021.** This accommodation must be set in TIDE, prior to testing to ensure the student has the correct test form to match the paper response options. The ADA will need to select “Paper Test Booklet” under Non-Embedded Accommodations in TIDE for each test.

## Prepare to Use the Test Delivery System

The Test Delivery System is composed of the TA Interface and the Student Interface.

- a) Identify the two computers that will be used in testing. Choose which device will run the TA Interface and which will run the Student Interface.
- b) Ensure that the CAI Secure Browser is installed on every Student Interface device prior to the opening of the testing window.
  - DAs/SCs *must* work with technology coordinators to install the CAI Secure Browser or Secure Test app on each computer, Chromebook, or tablet that students will use for online testing before the testing window opens.
  - Please be sure to review the *Quick Guide for Setting Up Online Testing Technology* located on the Portal at <https://vt.portal.cambiumast.com/resources/technology-for-online-testing/> for detailed information on installing and using the CAI Secure Browser, as well as information on preparing computers and tablets for online testing.
- c) ATEs must have a copy of each student’s SSID and first name as they appear in TIDE to help a student login to the Student Interface. ATEs may find each student’s SSID and first name under the Demographics section of the Student Information task in TIDE. If you cannot locate your student’s demographic information, contact your Test Coordinator.
- d) Check that the volume level is appropriate for the student and that any assistive technologies are available and functioning.

## Training Test

If you or your student would like to practice administration, a Training Test is available on the Portal. This test replicates the testing environment. Please see the Training Test Directions located on the portal at <https://vt.portal.cambiumast.com/vtaa-training-tests.stml>.

## VI.II Early Stopping Rule

In this section, we will discuss the following topics related to the Early Stopping Rule (ESR):

- What is the ESR?
- What are some general characteristics of students who may be eligible for the ESR?
- What are the ESR considerations for test administration?
- What are the alternate assessment expectations for students who may qualify for the ESR?
- What are my next steps if I have a student who may qualify for the ESR?

### What is the ESR?

Generally, students with significant cognitive disabilities will be able to participate in the VTAA for ELA and mathematics in grades 3–9 and science in grades 5, 8 and 11. For a relatively small group of students who are not able to participate fully in the alternate assessment because they have not yet established a mode of communication, a process called the ESR has been established.

### General Characteristics of Eligible Students

Typically, the students who are eligible for the ESR are those students who have the most complex needs as compared to their peers with significant cognitive disabilities. Often, these students do not use oral speech, nor do they have an established communication system and they may be unable to respond with any communication mode (i.e. verbal, gestural or with assistive technology). They may be learning about cause and effect in order to utilize Augmentative or Alternative Communication (AAC) supports. These students are not able to use objects/textures, regularized gestures, pictures, signs, etc., to communicate with consistency. Furthermore, they may have an uncertain response to sensory stimuli.

### ESR Considerations for Test Administration

For this specific group of students with significant cognitive disabilities, there is a process that ATEs or ATAs follow if they think their student may be eligible for an ESR. When following the appropriate process, and if approved by the ADA, eligible students will be reported as participants on the alternate assessments.

### Alternate Assessment Expectations for Students Qualifying for the Early Stopping Rule

In order to qualify for the ESR, ATEs or ATAs must attempt to administer each alternate assessment. For example, if your student is in Grade 5, you will need to plan to administer each content area test (ELA, mathematics, and science).

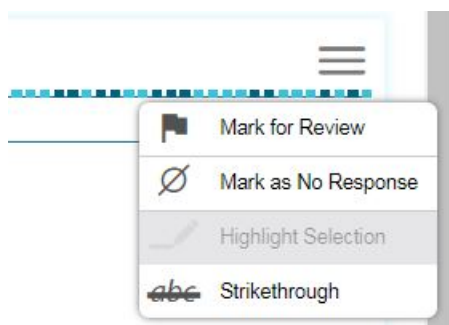


When initiating administration of each VTAA content area test, administer the first four test questions and attempt to elicit a student response using the types of strategies incorporated in everyday activities. If a student does not register a response with a communication mode (i.e. verbal, gestural, or with assistive technology), the ATE or ATA will select “Mark as No Response” in the student test interface. If the student is unable to respond to the first four questions in the test and the ATE or ATA selects “Mark as No Response” please follow the steps outlined in the next few topics.

## ESR Next Steps

The [Early Stopping Rule](#) will be instituted if all of the following conditions are met:

1. The student does not register a response with a communication mode (i.e. verbal, gestural, or with assistive technology) to the first four items in the assessment.
2. The "Mark as No Response" option is selected for the student by the ATE or ATA using the context menu for each of the four items.



3. The ATE or ATA confirms that the student was provided with appropriate communication and accessibility supports during testing and sufficient response time.
4. The ATE or ATA will pause the test and then contact the ADA to determine if the lack of response is consistent or inconsistent with the student’s daily performance in other situations and settings. A review of the student’s IEP is also recommended.
5. If lack of response is consistent, the ADA will indicate that the Early Stopping Rule is being applied by selecting “No Communication” in the drop-down for Testing Accommodations for Alternate Assessment in TIDE. If inconsistent, testing can resume. **Please note that once the first four questions on the test have been completed, those questions cannot be returned to without submitting an appeal.**
6. If the Early Stopping Rule is being applied, the ATE or ATA will then return to the test and submit it. Once the test is submitted and the ADA has selected “No Communication” in TIDE, the test is complete for that subject. **The ATE and ADA will need to complete this process for each test (ELA, mathematics, and science).**

**Please note: No communication should not be selected in TIDE by the ADA prior to the student meeting the Early Stopping Rule requirement and the ADA confirming it.**

The Early Stopping Rule criteria is available in each content area test that the student is eligible to take, depending on their grade level (ELA and Mathematics in Grades 3-9 and Science in Grades 5, 8, and 11). ATEs will still be required to complete the LCI prior to the start of content area testing for each VTAA identified test-taking student even if the ATE expects the student will qualify for the Early Stopping Rule.

## Section VII. Online Test Administration

The TA Interface and the Student Interface deliver the VTAA. ATE/ATAs will need access to two computers or devices so that the TA Interface and the Student Interface can be open at the same time.

The Student Interface is the system that students use to take the VTAA. It is accessed via the CAI Secure Browser. The CAI Secure Browser must be downloaded from the Portal before testing can begin. The CAI Secure Browser is designed to ensure test security by prohibiting students from accessing any other programs or websites during testing. If any other programs or websites are running when the student is logged in to the CAI Secure Browser, the student will not be allowed to start the test.

When helping the student respond to test items, the ATE/ATA serves the role of a scribe. The ATE/ATA may use the student's mouse to select responses in the test based on the student's mode of communication. For example, the ATE/ATA may select an answer based on the student's verbal response, pointing, or eye gaze. In this case, the student's response must be clear and unambiguous. If a student's response is ambiguous, the ATE/ATA must ask him or her to verify the response. Under no circumstances may the ATE/ATA provide cues to the right answer or enter a response other than what the student has indicated.

### Logging in to the TA Interface and Creating a Test Session

1. Prior to starting the assessment, log in to the **TA Interface** to create a test session. The Test Selection window will open by default.
2. **Create a Test Session** – Select the test(s) you wish to administer. You may select all available tests listed for all grade levels and all content areas. Students will only have access to tests that they are eligible to take. Once you select your tests, the **Start Live Session** button in the lower-right corner of the window activates.
  - Tests are grouped according to the type of assessment, grade, and subject. Click the plus sign, [+], next to **VTAA** to view the VTAA Online Assessment tests available for each grade.
3. Click the [**Start Live Session**] button. The system will automatically generate a session ID. After clicking [**Start Live Session**], this ID will appear in the top-right of your screen. Record this session ID; you will need it when logging students in to the test session.

Figure 1: Test Selection Tree

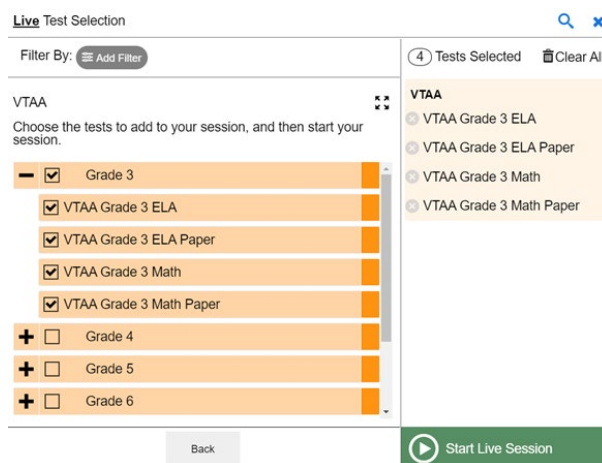
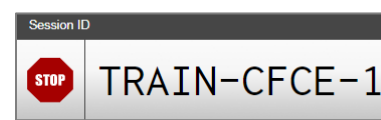


Figure 2: Test Session



## Logging in to the Student Interface

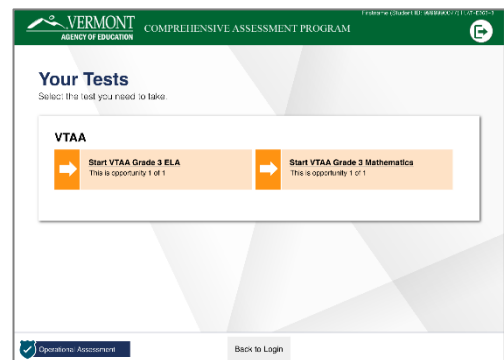
1. To log a student in to the online testing system, launch the CAI Secure Browser on a separate computer or device from the one used to access the TA Interface.
  - You must enter three pieces of identifying information: the student’s first name, their SSID, and the current session ID determined by the TA Interface.
  - Only the session ID is unique for each test administration and each proctor, so this is the only information that can change during the testing window.
  - When the information has been entered, click the **[Sign In]** button to log in to the test.

Figure 3: Entering Student Information



2. View and verify the student’s personal information in the screen titled “**Is This You?**” If their information is correct, click **[Yes]** to proceed to the “**Your Tests**” screen. If their information is incorrect, click **[No]** to return to the login page and contact your SC.
3. On the “Your Tests” screen, you will see a list of the student’s assigned tests for this test session. If a test has already been completed, the test selection button will be grayed out. Once you select a test, you will see a message that says “Waiting for Approval...” The request for approval appears in the TA Interface. Once the TA approves the test, the Student Interface automatically moves to the next page.

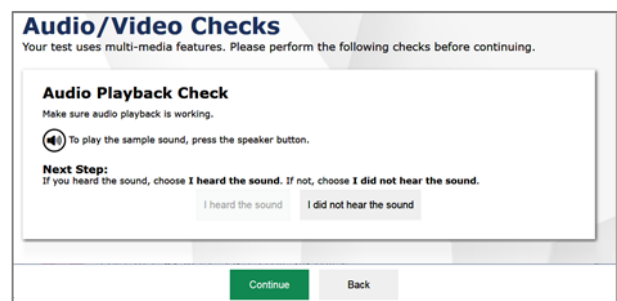
Figure 4: Your Tests



*As a reminder, students will only view the tests for which they are eligible.*

4. After selecting the test, you will see an Audio Check screen to test the student’s sound settings. You will be prompted to click the sound icon and indicate whether you and the student heard the chime by clicking either **[I did not hear the sound]** or **[I heard the sound]**.
5. After the Audio Check, you will see an Instructions and Help page. You can review the student’s test settings and access the Help Guide via this page.

Figure 5: Audio Check



## Approving Student Entry in the TA Interface


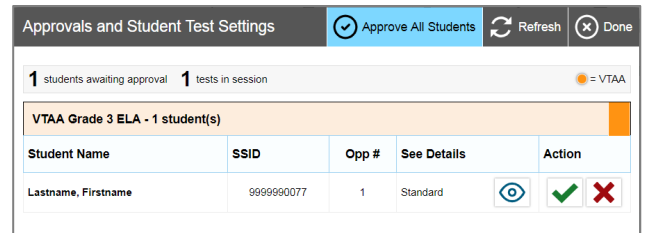
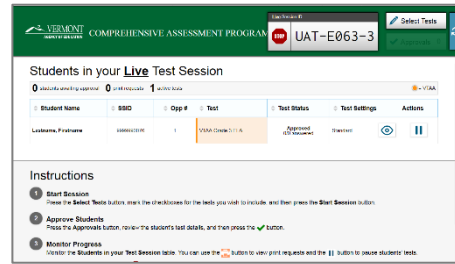
1. After starting a session, the session ID appears at the top of the TA Interface along with a **[Stop]** button. After you sign the student in to the test session, an **[Approvals]** button will appear next to the session ID. Once you approve the student for testing, the Test Session table will appear in the center of the TA Interface, displaying the student's testing progress.
2. Once the student is logged in, you must approve his or her test selection and test settings before testing can begin. By default, test settings for all accessibility features will be turned on for all students. Accessibility features can be adjusted at the time of testing by clicking the  icon in the See Details column. Information on accessibility resources can be found in the [Accessibility Features](#) section.

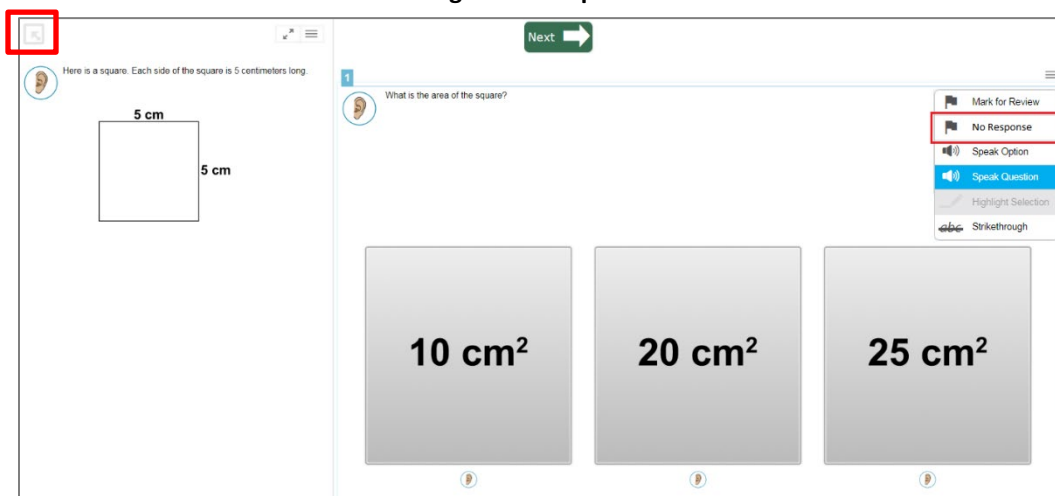
Figure 6: Approving Student Entry in the TA



## Taking a Test in the Student Interface

Once you have moved through all the pre-test screens, you and your student will enter the test environment. An item page like the one below appears. Please note that there are different layouts for different items. The item below has a passage on the left and the item and responses on the right.

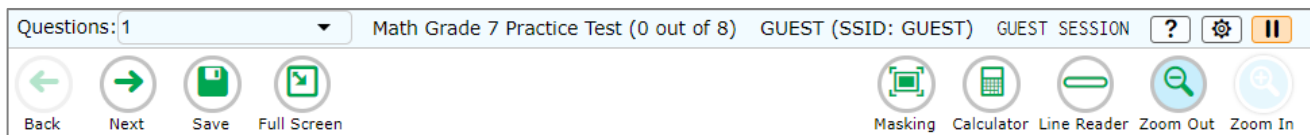
Figure 7: Sample Item



To select an answer, click one of the answer options. To move to the next item, click the **[Next]** button at the top of the page. To activate the audio recording, click the ear icon next to the passage, item, or response options. If the student does not respond to a question, click the context menu and then **[Mark as No Response]** as indicated by the red box in [Figure 7](#).

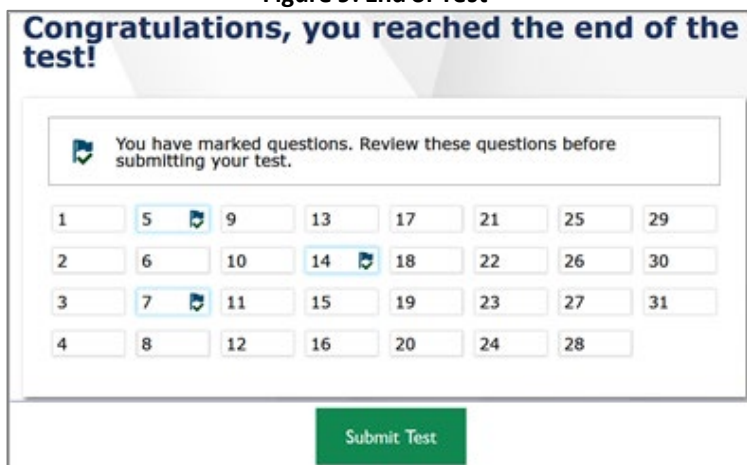
Additional functions and features are accessible via the toolbar, which is hidden by default. To access the toolbar, click the gray button at the top left of the page (see [Figure 7](#)). You are prompted to enter a password, which will always be the student’s first name as it appears in TIDE. The toolbar appears.

**Figure 8: Sample Toolbar**



Additional navigation and accessibility features appear (see [Figure 8](#)). To close the toolbar again, click **[Full Screen]**. To pause a test, click the pause button at the top right. This will log the student out of the test environment. To resume testing from the previous stopping point, log in again using the student’s first name, SSID, and session ID. Please note that the session ID will change if the TA ends the session in the TA Interface. To resume testing, simply enter the new session ID, and testing will resume at the point that the student previously logged out. When you or the student clicks **[Next]** after reaching the last question on the test, a message appears announcing the end of the test. Click **[OK]** to return to the last question on the test. In the toolbar, the **[End Test]** button appears. Click it to end the test. Once you or your student ends the test, an item review page appears. Items that were marked for review appear with a blue flag. Click an item to return to revisit that item, or you may submit the test immediately. Once you are ready to submit the test, click **[Submit Test]**.

**Figure 9: End of Test**



## **VII.I Monitoring Test Progress in TIDE**

All users can view participation data through the Monitoring Test Progress task in TIDE. ATEs are encouraged to confirm that a test has been submitted by following the steps provided in the [TIDE User Guide](#), which is also located on the Portal.

## Section VIII. Following Test Administration

When the test administration is complete, the ATE and SC will prepare all VTAA printed materials for return to the ADA. The ADA will return any paper response options ordered from CAI to CAI following the directions for returning materials provided in the original shipment. The ADA will securely shred any other printed VTAA materials that were used during the administration.

All paper response options ordered from CAI must be returned to CAI, even if the materials were not used. ADAs will verify all materials have been included in the return shipment. All testing materials must be returned to CAI by **June 18, 2021**.

### Tips for ADAs to Facilitate the Return of Materials

- Work with all ATEs and SCs immediately after all testing is concluded to collect all the materials that must be returned to CAI.
- Keep all VTAA paper response option materials in secure, locked storage with limited access until you have all of them ready for return. All secure test materials must be accounted for after the completion of testing.
- Follow the directions for returning materials provided in your shipment of materials from CAI.

Please retain the tracking numbers for your records in case of any delay in shipment.



Federal law—the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act—prohibits the release of any student’s personally identifiable information. All paper response options ordered from CAI must be returned to CAI. Any printed test materials must be securely stored and then destroyed.



## **Section IX. Scores and Reporting**

Preliminary scores for the VTAA will be available soon after the opening of the testing window on a rolling basis upon test submission. Final statewide results will be made available in late summer or early fall.

## Appendix A. Information on Assistive Technology

Communication systems and technology are essential for some students with significant cognitive disabilities to demonstrate what they know and can do. This section outlines a continuum of examples of accommodations and instructional and assistive technology. Although not exhaustive, the list presents a range of options for a variety of students. In some cases, multiple accommodations may be necessary to enable a student to respond.

The legal definition of assistive technology as it appears in IDEA is “any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.” An assistive technology device is defined by the Assistive Technology Act of 1988 as “any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.”

### Assistive Technology items can be described as “low-tech,” “mid-tech,” or “high-tech.”

- Low-tech items are usually inexpensive, simple to make, and easy to obtain. Some examples of low-tech devices are pencil grips, slant boards, paper communication boards/cards, highlighting, specialized paper, or a program modification such as increased time or access to classroom notes.
- Mid-tech devices are calculators, eyeglasses, splints, digital recorders, magnifying glasses, single switches, BIGmac switch, cause-and-effect software programs, and static display communication devices.
- High-tech items include wheelchairs, dynamic display augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, complex computer software programs that involve speech-to-text and text-to-speech components, infrared mouse options, and computers.

### Assistive Technology Terms and Devices

- **Alternative Access/Input Device.** An alternative access/input device allows individuals to control their computers using tools other than a standard keyboard or pointing device. Examples include alternative keyboards, electronic pointing devices, sip-and-puff systems, wands and sticks, joysticks, and trackballs.
- **Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Device.** An AAC device increases or improves the communication abilities of individuals with receptive or expressive communication impairments. The device can include sign language, graphical symbol systems, synthesized speech, dedicated communication devices, and computer applications. AAC technology spans a wide range of products, from low-tech picture boards to high-tech speech recognition programs.
- **Braille Embossers and Translators.** A braille embosser transfers computer-generated text into embossed braille output. Translation programs convert text that has been

either scanned or typed into braille that can be printed on the embosser. Refreshable braille can be used as a screen reader for individuals with visual impairments.

- **Durable Medical Equipment (DME).** DME is any piece of equipment that is used to serve a medical purpose, can withstand repeated use, and is appropriate for use in the home. It is expected to last for a substantial period of time. DME can include devices, controls, or appliances specified in an individual's plan for medical care. The equipment is used to help increase the individual's ability to perform various activities of daily living or to communicate with the community in which they live.
- **Environmental Control Unit (ECU).** ECUs enable individuals to control electronic devices in their environment through a variety of alternative access methods, such as switch or voice access. ECUs can control lights, televisions, telephones, music players, door openers, security systems, and kitchen appliances.
- **Onscreen Keyboard.** Onscreen keyboards are software-generated images of a standard or modified keyboard placed on the computer screen. The keys are selected by a mouse, touch screen, trackball, joystick, switch, or electronic pointing device. Microsoft has a free onscreen keyboard available.
- **Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and Scanners.** OCR software works with a scanner to convert images from a printed page into a standard computer file. With OCR software, the resulting computer file can be edited. Pictures and photographs do not require OCR software to be manipulated. Programs such as Kurzweil, Read & Write Gold, and WYNN have these capabilities.
- **Screen Reader.** A screen reader is a software program that uses synthesized speech to "speak" graphics and text aloud. This type of program is used by people with limited vision or blindness or with a print disability, such as dyslexia. Programs that are widely used by individuals with visual impairments are Microsoft's Narrator and commercial programs such as Job Access with Speech (JAWS).
- **Voice Recognition (sometimes referred to as "speech-to-text").** Different types of voice recognition (also called speech recognition) systems are available. Voice recognition allows the user to speak to the computer, instead of using a keyboard or mouse, to input data or control computer functions. Voice recognition systems can be used to create text documents such as letters or email, to browse the Internet, and to navigate among applications and menus. Examples are Dragon Naturally Speaking and Microsoft Speech Recognition.
- **Word Prediction Programs.** Word prediction programs allow the user to select a desired word from an on-screen list located in a prediction window. The computer-generated list predicts words based on the first or second letter(s) typed by the user. The word may then be selected from the list and inserted into the text by typing a number, clicking the mouse, or scanning with a switch. Free examples include eType and Let Me Type, and paid programs are Co:writer and Word Q.

## **Appendix B: Administration of VTAA to EL Students**

English Language Learner (EL) students who meet the criteria for alternate assessment on alternate achievement standards must take the VTAA.

An EL student is defined as a student who has a first language other than English and is not considered proficient at grade level in the English-speaking classroom as determined by an English language proficiency test and academic content-area assessments.

### **Accommodations**

The VTAA is not available in alternative language formats; all EL students must take the test in English. ATAs may not translate any part of the VTAA into the student's native language.

In addition to the accommodations allowed for all students who take the VTAA, EL students may have additional accommodations related to their limited English proficiency (i.e. use of a language interpreter or for students using paper response options the English word may be translated verbatim to the native language word) in order to access the assessment.

Accommodations should be used only as appropriate for individual students and should not be applied to all EL students indiscriminately. Appropriate accommodations should be based on the student's English language proficiency test scores, teacher judgments, and other evidence, including the accommodations used in the classroom for individual students.

EL students may receive special test preparation instruction prior to the administration of the VTAA. This instruction may cover test format, directions, and test-taking strategies. The ATA may provide practice with released items that are available on the Portal to assist the student in understanding the testing process and procedures.

Directions regarding testing expectations, such as sitting down at the table or focusing on the materials, may be reworded in any format or language. No part of the test items or test directions may be reworded or translated into the student's native language.

Accommodations should be recorded on the student's accommodations form and kept with the student's EL folder.

# Appendix C. VTAA Teacher/Test Administrator Checklist

## Dos and Don'ts for Test Administrators

What Test Administrators Should Do	What Test Administrators Should NOT Do
<b>Test Preparation</b>	
Do take the general online TA Certification course.	Do not administer this assessment if you have not taken the online TA Certification course.
Do take the VTAA TA Certification course.	Do not administer this assessment if you have not taken the online VTAA TA Certification course.
Do ensure a Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI) is submitted for each student eligible to take the VTAA prior to administering any tests.	Do not wait until you're ready to test to submit the LCI.
Do check to be sure the Alternate Assessment Indicator is set to "Yes" in TIDE for each student eligible to take the VTAA prior to testing.	Do not wait until you're ready to test to confirm the Alternate Assessment Indicator is set to "Yes"
Do keep all test materials secure.	Do not leave any test materials on your desk.
Do examine all materials carefully if paper response options were ordered for a student. If something is missing, contact your ADA or SC.	Do not wait to review your materials.
For students that are unable to interact with a computer screen, even with assistance from the ATE, do ensure the ADA has order any required VTAA paper response options by calling the VT Help Desk. Please allow 4-5 business days for materials to be shipped to the district. <b>All paper response options must be ordered by May 28, 2021.</b>	
Do confirm "Paper Test Booklet" is selected under Non-Embedded Accommodations for each test in TIDE for a student that will be taking a test with paper response options. If this accommodation is not set, contact your ADA.	
Do determine where you will administer the assessment (e.g., library, testing room, or classroom).	Do not administer the assessment within the hearing or viewing range of other students.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>What Test Administrators Should Do</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>What Test Administrators Should NOT Do</b></p>
<p>Do use the training test available on the Portal at <a href="https://vt.portal.cambiumast.com/vtaa-training-tests.shtml">https://vt.portal.cambiumast.com/vtaa-training-tests.shtml</a> with students.</p>	<p>Do not practice with students using the secure operational tests or paper response options.</p>
<p><b>Test Design Accessibility</b></p>	
<p>Do provide the accommodations listed in the IEP.</p>	<p>Do not give new accommodations the day of the assessment.</p>
<p>Do provide the accommodations used in daily instruction.</p>	<p>Do not remove any accommodation that the student uses daily.</p>
<p>Do make sure that assistive technology or communication devices are working appropriately.</p> <p>Do determine how the student will use the Assistive Technology (AT) or Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices to make choices on the test.</p> <p>Do consider administering the assessment to students who use technology at the beginning of the testing window to allow time for malfunctions in their equipment.</p>	<p>Do not wait until the day of the assessment to check the availability of communication devices.</p>
<p><b>Test Administration</b></p>	
<p>Do allow time for the student to answer. The assessment is not timed.</p>	<p>Do not rush or lead a student to an answer. Do not administer an item more than once.</p>
<p>Do reread any passage or section as needed.</p>	<p>Do not lead the student to the correct answer in any way.</p>
<p>Do take breaks as needed.</p>	
<p>Do administer all tests individually to students.</p>	<p>Do not lead the student to the correct answer by inflecting your voice, tapping the correct card, or using any other method.</p>
<p>Do encourage the student to begin working and to stay on task.</p>	<p>Do not repeat an item again after the student has given his or her answer.</p>
<p><b>Administering with Paper Response Options</b></p>	
<p>Do add texture to materials as needed, even if it is not listed as an adaptive instruction.</p>	

<b>What Test Administrators Should Do</b>	<b>What Test Administrators Should NOT Do</b>
Do point to the response cards as needed.	Do not lead the student to the correct answer.
Do move the test materials to the student’s optimal visual field or position.	
<b>Returning Test Materials</b>	
Do return all paper response options, any student-generated items, and scratch paper to your ADA or SC as soon as you are finished testing the student. All paper response options must be returned to the ADA no later than June 11, 2021. The ADA will need to return all paper response options to the vendor, CAI, following the directions provided in the shipment no later than June 18, 2021.	
<b>Resources</b>	
Do contact your SC with any questions regarding the administration of the assessment.	
Do contact AOE with questions regarding the standards extensions and instructional planning.	

## Appendix D. Important Contact Information

Contact Information	
Questions about State Policies	Questions about Technology and Overall Administration Procedures
<p><b>Special Populations: Comments, Questions, Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations</b></p> <p>Linda Moreno 802-828-0505 Linda.Moreno@vermont.gov</p> <p><b>Breach/Irregularity Reports</b></p> <p>Gabriel McGann 802-828-0504 Gabriel.McGann@vermont.gov</p> <p><b>Inclusion and Accessibility</b></p> <p>Ana Kolbach 802-828-2569 Ana.Kolbach@vermont.gov</p>	<p><b>Vermont Alternate Assessment Program Help Desk</b></p> <p>During the testing window: Monday–Friday 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time</p> <p>Outside summative window: Monday-Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time</p> <p>844-218-1184</p> <p><a href="mailto:vthelpdesk@cambiumassessment.com">vthelpdesk@cambiumassessment.com</a></p>