

Guidelines and Procedures for
MontCAS Assessment Test Security

MontCAS



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Purpose

Test security guidelines have been developed by the Montana Office of Public Instruction to be used by system test coordinators and test administrators in order to maintain the integrity of all Montana Comprehensive Assessment System assessments. Following these guidelines will ensure no student has access to any form of assistance or material that could provide an unfair advantage.

This Guide is to be used in conjunction with the MontCAS test coordinator, test administrator, and accommodation guides and manuals for each MontCAS assessment. The guidelines and procedures in this document are intended to help test coordinators and test administrators to protect the integrity of all MontCAS Assessments.

Although the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) specifies the following policies and guidelines, all possible testing situations cannot feasibly be covered. If a testing issue arises that is not addressed in this document, apply the following guideline:

No student taking a MontCAS Assessment should have access to any form of assistance or material that could provide an unfair advantage.

All tests must be administered in strict accordance with the instructions contained in these guides and manuals. Questions and uncertainties that cannot be answered by these materials or by your System Test Coordinator should be directed to Jessica Eilertson, State Assessment Director, at the Office of Public Instruction.

Jessica Eilertson, State Assessment Director

Montana Office of Public Instruction

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P.O. Box 202501

Helena, MT 59620-2501

Testing Staff

Assigning Testing Staff

OPI recommends that the following roles be assigned as part of testing staff with the understanding that school systems vary in size and sometimes one person may have multiple roles:

- **System Test Coordinator** – It is the responsibility of the County or School System Superintendent to assign **one System Test Coordinator** to each system. The System Test Coordinator will be the primary assessment contact for OPI and will be responsible for reviewing applicable training and assessment materials and attending training sessions as offered and provided by OPI.
- **School Test Coordinator** – A school system/System Test Coordinator may decide to assign a school test coordinator to each school within the system. This person would oversee the administration of the MontCAS assessments for the assigned school, receive training from the System Test Coordinator, train the school’s testing staff, and report to the System Test Coordinator and the School Principal.
- **Technology Coordinator** – It may be necessary for a school system/System Test Coordinator to assign a technology coordinator for any or all online MontCAS assessments, including the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment and the NCSC Alternate Assessment.
- **Test Administrator** – OPI advises that classroom teachers are assigned as test administrators who will be responsible for administering the test to students and reporting any testing irregularities that occur to the System Test Coordinator and/or the School Coordinator.

TRAINING

All persons involved with testing, including proctors, scribes, and test administrators, should receive annual training on the following:

- Test Administration Procedures
- Test Security
- Accommodations

All MontCAS Assessments must be administered to students only by Montana licensed professionals who have been trained, are familiar with standardized testing procedures, and are employed by the School System.

- **Montana licensed substitute teachers** may administer the test **only** if they are employed by the School System and if they have received all of the necessary training. **Student teachers** may administer the assessment if they are under the direct supervision of the licensed educator.
- **Paraprofessionals** may assist with the administration when they are under the direct supervision of a licensed educator employed by the system and if they have received all of the necessary training. Direct supervision means within sight and hearing of the licensed educator.
- **Parents/Community Members** may not assist with or observe the administration of any MontCAS Assessment.

Avoiding Testing Improprieties

An unusual circumstance that has a low impact on the individual or group of students who are testing and has a low risk of potentially affecting student performance on the test, test security, or test validity.

Preventing Disturbances During Testing

Testing improprieties are often small disturbances or disruptions of the test session. Not all improprieties can be prevented, but below are tips to make them less likely:

- Designate time before the test session for students to use the bathroom.
- Instruct students at the beginning of the session to remain quiet for the duration of the session.
- Unless it is an emergency, don't allow a student to leave the testing room unattended.

Handling Medical Emergencies

Medical emergencies sometimes occur during a testing session. When a medical emergency occurs, you should take the following steps:

1. Assist the student. If you can, call an adult to escort the student to the nurse's office.
2. Make note of the item number the student was working on.
3. If **paper-pencil testing**, close the student's answer document inside their test booklet*. If **online testing**, close the student's session.
4. Contact your system test coordinator immediately and follow his/her instructions.

*If a student's materials were damaged by bodily fluids such as blood or vomit, make note of the form number and the item the student was working on when the medical emergency occurred. Put the damaged materials in the Special Handling envelope. When the student returns to the session, have the student begin with fresh materials with the same form number.

Avoiding Testing Irregularities

Testing irregularities are unusual circumstances that may impact the performance of a student or group of students but has no or little impact on the validity of the assessment, and has no statewide or nationwide implications

Maintaining Standardized Testing Procedures

Most testing irregularities can be prevented by maintaining standardized testing procedures. All MontCAS test administration materials, policies, and guidelines should be reviewed before any tests are administered. Tests must be administered in strict accordance with the instructions and policies contained in these materials. Directions should not be modified in any way, unless specified in Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), or plans for students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) or eligible for services under section 504.

Standardized testing procedures are in place in order to prevent a student or group of students from having an unfair advantage among peers in the school, state and nation. Please refer to Tables 2.1 and 2.2 for standardized testing room and administrator guidelines.

All MontCAS assessments should be administered to students only by licensed professionals who have been trained and are familiar with standardized testing procedures. Substitute teachers and student teachers should not administer the tests unless they have been trained in these procedures, and are under the direct supervision of a licensed educator. Paraprofessionals may assist with the administration when they are under the direct supervision of a licensed teacher/educator.

If at any point there is a testing irregularity or any unusual circumstance, follow the procedures outlined on page 10.

Preventing Accommodation-Related Testing Irregularities

Test administrators should be trained in the accommodations guidelines for each test in order to prevent testing irregularities related to the misadministration of student accommodations. Failure to comply with the accommodations guidelines must be reported as a testing irregularity.

COACHING

Coaching is a testing irregularity that gives an unfair advantage to a student or group of students. Examples include:

- providing answers to students
- changing student responses,
- suggesting students change their responses
- influence student responses to test questions by offering hints, clues, cues, facial expressions, nods, voice inflections or any other manner of assistance that could impact a student's answers
- not following the explicit directions for accommodations that are listed in the accommodations manual.

The following accommodations reminders should be addressed during training and monitored closely to avoid a testing irregularity:

- Accommodations must be determined on an individual basis.
- There is no standard accommodation (including oral presentations) that provides an opportunity for a student to request or receive help on a specific word, phrase, line, pronunciation, definition, item, question, answer choice or any part of the assessment.
- Standard accommodations do not override standard administration of an assessment or the need for independent work by the students.
- Allowable standard accommodations for any MontCAS assessment that are described in a student's IEP/504 Plan should match those used during the administration of all MontCAS assessments.
- Non-standard accommodations for MontCAS assessment that are described in a student's IEP/504 Plan should be used during the administration of MontCAS assessments.
- Accommodations coded with * are suggested as appropriate for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students.
- Accommodations coded with ** are intended for use with students identified as IEP/504/LEP. These accommodations must be listed in the student's IEP, 504 plan, or LEP Plan.
 - In unusual circumstances, approval may be requested for a general education student (not identified as IEP/504/LEP) to be administered a MontCAS assessment with an accommodation keyed with **. In most cases these are students who may have a medical emergency at the time of testing. In medical emergency cases, please contact Jessica Eilertson, 406-444-3656 or jeilertson@mt.gov.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR GENERAL ED STUDENTS

For prospective cases in which a request for **standard accommodations for general education students is not related to a medical emergency, the four guidelines below should be followed.

1. The accommodation has been in place and used regularly in classroom instruction for at least three consecutive months.
2. A team made the decision about the appropriateness of the accommodation for instruction and formalized assessments.
3. There are data to demonstrate the effectiveness of the accommodation for the student on formalized assessments.
4. The accommodation is used in the administration of ALL other formalized assessments such as MAPS, chapter tests, unit tests, and other tests administered to groups of students.

Unforeseeable Circumstances

In the event a student suffers from an unforeseeable circumstance immediately before or during testing, the student may be provided with allowable standard accommodations as appropriate. Please contact the OPI Assessment Office with any questions. Examples of unforeseeable circumstances are:

- **Injuries**: If a student is unable to write or needs special accommodations to participate in the testing, please refer to the accommodations guidance. The student may require a standard accommodation coded **. If that is the case, please contact the OPI Assessment Office.
- **Illness**: A student may not return to interrupted test sessions which the student has begun except in rare cases, when a student becomes ill during a session and partially completes it. In those, such as nosebleeds or coughing spells, the student may return to the session as long as the student completes the session the same day. If the student cannot return to the session and complete it, it is a medical emergency and qualifies for an AYP appeal. Please keep careful records. In both cases, if there are sessions the student has not begun, the student must take those within the specified window.
- **Damaged materials**: In the event an answer document is damaged and unable to be scored, answers may be transcribed to a new answer document as long as student answers are transferred exactly the same. If the document is damaged during a test session, the student may continue to answer the questions on a new answer document (ensuring the student is using the same for of test booklet at the number they left off. Previous answers can later be transcribed by a trained test administrator. Please contact the State Assessment Director for guidance.
- **Interruptions/emergencies**: In the event that testing is interrupted due to an emergency, the System Test Coordinator should be notified. If students are able to resume testing after the emergency, the time should be extended so that the students are allowed full time allocation. If, however, the test is interrupted during a timed portion, consult with your System Test Coordinator who should contact the State Assessment Director for Guidance.
- **Disruptive students**: If a student becomes disruptive during testing, the student may be removed from the testing location so that other students can continue testing without disruption. If the disruptive student is unable to finish the test section (session) at that time, that section (session) may not be continued on a different day. However, the student may finish the section (session) in a different location on the same day.
- **Student refusal/non-compliance**: If a student refuses to test, refuses to complete a test, or engages in random marking or bubbling, the answer document must still be sent with used answer documents for scoring.
- **Cheating**: Students should not be allowed to share information with or obtain information from other students in any way. All instances involving cheating should be reported.

Not all unforeseeable circumstances can be accounted for in this manual. If anything unusual occurs, always contact OPI for further instructions.

Avoiding Test Security Breaches

Test security breaches are incidents that compromise the integrity of an assessment, typically by exposing secure test materials. The implications of breaches can affect all students participating in the assessment statewide and nationwide.

Maintaining Test Security Before, During and After Testing

MontCAS requires that the test questions remain secure. To maintain the security of the tests, only authorized persons are permitted to use the test questions and stimulus passages. All test questions, as well as stimulus passages and performance tasks, are to be regarded as secure instruments and are for the sole purpose of the MontCAS. Testing personnel should not reproduce, discuss, or in any way release, share or distribute the test questions. Any other use of these materials may constitute a security breach.

Secure test materials should be stored in a secure location, accessible only to authorized personnel, who have been trained in handling secure test materials. Test administrators and students should only have access to secure testing materials at the time of testing. All test booklets and answer documents must be returned to the vendor on time. Late or missing booklets constitute a serious security breach and could result in the invalidation of student results for schools and/or system.

Questions and stimulus passages released by OPI with official reports, on the OPI website, or in practice and training tests **are not** considered secure test materials.

Test administrators must be trained to maintain test security while secure materials are in their possession during testing. Test booklets and answer documents should not be left unattended at any time and should be stored in a secure location such as a locked file cabinet when not in use. Students should not have access to technology which may be used to record, print, or otherwise expose test questions or stimuli to other students or outside sources at any time while test materials are present.

Tables 1.1 and 1.2 list methods of avoiding test security breaches. Please note, it is impossible to cover every potential incident, so questions and uncertainties should be reported to OPI.

If a test security breach occurs, follow the test security incident procedures outlined on page 10.

Procedure for Reporting Breaches and Irregularities

Any concern about breaches in test security, testing irregularities, and/or noncompliance with test administration procedures must be reported immediately to the school principal/ authorized representative, System Test Coordinator, and OPI by phone or in person within three days of the incident. The system superintendent should also be notified. The MontCAS online [Testing Irregularity Report \(TIR\)](#) is to be completed within five days of the incident.

Procedures for Test Administrators

If a test security breach or testing irregularity occurs, the System Test Coordinator should follow the steps below:

- Step 1: Immediately complete the Test Security Incident Worksheet and contact your System Test Coordinator.** OPI needs certain information that is often most effectively obtained at the time of the testing irregularity. The Test Security Incident Worksheet is on page 12, and a copy should be kept in the testing location.

Contacting the System Test Coordinator early when a testing irregularity occurs can help to minimize the impact the irregularity has on a student's test.

- Step 2: Wait for instructions from your System Test Coordinator before proceeding with affected tests.**

Procedures for System Test Coordinators

If a test security breach or testing irregularity occurs, the system test coordinator should follow the steps below:

- Step 1: Gather as much information as possible.** Test coordinators should train Test Administrators to keep a Test Security Incident Worksheet (see page 12) and return the completed form to the Test Coordinator as soon as possible after an incident has occurred.

Contacting OPI early when a testing irregularity occurs can help to minimize the impact the irregularity has on a student's test.

- Step 2: Contact OPI within 3 days of the incident.** OPI will provide guidance on how to proceed with testing.

- Step 3: Relay OPI instructions to test administrator.**

Reporting Testing Irregularities on the MontCAS Online System

The MontCAS Online System is connected to other OPI applications, such as CSI Plan, Traffic Education, or MAEFAIRS. If you use these applications, the login process is the same.

For first-time OPI Application Users

The MontCAS Online System is at the following link: <https://apps.opi.mt.gov/MontCAS/frmLogin.aspx>. When you follow the link, you will be taken to a login page. Please use the following steps to enter the application.

1. Type your username in the space provided. Your username will be the capitalized first initial followed by your last name with the first letter capitalized. For example, Jane Doe's username would be: JDoe.
2. Click "Forgot your password". A password will be sent to your work email address. Please contact Marcy Fortner if you have questions about your email address.
3. Copy the password from the email into the MontCAS Online System login page and click Enter.
4. Change your password to something you can remember as soon as you are logged in. You can do this by clicking on "Change Password".

Reporting a Testing Irregularity

1. Hold your mouse over "Data Entry" at the top of the page. Click on "Enter Testing Irregularity".
2. Answer all of the questions provided. Please note you will need the state student ID numbers for all students involved in the incident. You will be able to choose the testing irregularity(ies) which apply. They are separated into four categories to make your selection easier. Check all that apply (see Appendix B for the list of examples) or you may need to check other and type a short description.

Be sure to include the following information, as this will determine whether an entire session has been affected and potentially invalidated or only certain questions. These may need to be addressed in the "Describe the Incident" section of the report:

- a. Whether the entire test or only part of the test was affected
 - b. Session and questions affected (Example, "Questions 23, 34, & 25 of Science Session 3 were affected.")
4. Click "Submit this request to OPI." You will receive an email confirming submission. OPI may contact you with further questions.

Please refer to the Guidelines and Procedures for Spring CRT Testing document for more information about CRT test security and testing irregularity reporting procedures.

Appendix A: Test Security Incident Worksheet

Instructions: Keep a copy of this worksheet in any location where testing occurs. In the event of a test security incident, complete **all** of the fields of this form and immediately contact your System Test Coordinator. Please note, this is **not** an official Testing Irregularity Report (TIR) which is to be completed online by the System Test Coordinator. For their records and convenience, it is recommended that System Test Coordinators also complete this form.

Remember to always use a secure transfer site when sending state student ID(s).

Date: _____

Assessment: _____

(CRT Science, CRT-Alt Science, Smarter, NCSC Alternate)

Test: _____

(ELA non-performance task, ELA performance task, Math non-performance task, Math performance task, Science)

Session Number/ID: _____

Grade: _____ State Student ID(s) _____

Describe the Incident:

Appendix B: Test Irregularity Examples

Student Test Security Incident Examples	Level of Severity
Student(s) making distracting gestures/sounds or talking during the test session that creates a disruption in the test session for other students.	Impropriety
Student(s) leave the test room without authorization.	Impropriety
Student experienced a medical emergency (i.e. nose bleed, nausea and/or vomiting, fainting, etc.)	Impropriety
Student cheated or provided answers to another student.	Irregularity
Student accessed the internet or any unauthorized software or applications during a testing event.	Irregularity
Student possessed and/or used unauthorized electronic equipment (cell phones, PDAs, iPods, or electronic translators) during testing.	Irregularity

Administration Test Security Incident Examples	Level of Severity
Administrator left instructional related materials on the walls or desks in testing environment.	Irregularity
Administrator gave student the incorrect test booklet and/or answer document (CRT Science and CRT-Alternate Science)	Impropriety
Disruption to a test session such as a fire drill, school-wide power outage, earthquake, or other emergencies	Irregularity
Administrator did not meet the qualifications of a licensed, Montana educator employed by the district who is trained in test administration by the system test coordinator.	Irregularity
Classroom activity was not presented prior to performance task.	Irregularity
Administrator allowed students to test beyond the end of the test window.	Irregularity
Administrator provided coaching or other type of assistance to students which may have affected their responses	Irregularity
Administrator allowed inappropriate designated supports and/or accommodations during test window.	Irregularity

Appendix B: Test Irregularity Examples

Accommodations/Designated Support Test Security Incident Examples	Level of Severity
Student did not receive accommodations.	Irregularity
Student received incorrect accommodations.	Irregularity
Student's accommodations were administered incorrectly (ex. Passages were read to the student during the ELA or reading assessment).	Irregularity
Student who did not need accommodations received accommodations.	Irregularity

Student Data/Test Item Security Incident Examples	Level of Severity
Administrator or Coordinator gave own username/password to another person.	Breach
Administrator, Coordinator, or any other school personnel provided secure student information protected by FERPA (such as the student's name) by unsecure email, voicemail, postal mail, or any other medium that potentially violates student privacy.	Irregularity
Administrator allowed someone other than a student to log in to the test (unless prescribed in the students IEP)	Breach
Administrator or coordinator provided access to a student's work/responses to another student or person.	Irregularity
Administrator or coordinator modified a student's response or records.	Breach
The live Student Interface or TA Interface was used for practice.	Breach
Adult or student posted item(s) or test materials on social media, website, or any other form of media.	Breach
Administrator allowed students to take home printed test items, reading passages, writing prompts, or scratch paper that was used during the test.	Breach
Administrator failed to securely store and/or destroy secure test materials, including printed items, student login information, student notes, etc.	Breach
Adult or student copied, discussed, or otherwise retained test items, reading passages, writing prompts, or answers for any reason.	Breach

Appendix C

Test Coordinator Checklist: Avoiding Test Security Breaches

	Inventory all test materials when they arrive.
	Store materials in a secure location until the test window opens.
	Train test administrators in maintaining test security.
	Do not test before the test window opens or after it closes.
	Do not copy or otherwise reproduce test materials.
	Do not discuss test questions with students or faculty.
	Record the number of test booklets and answer documents that are given to each test administrator.
	Record the number of test booklets and answer documents that are returned by each test administrator.
	Inventory all test materials before repackaging them.
	Return test materials to vendor by the deadline.
	To maintain student privacy, for Smarter tests, distribute index cards with student log in information at the time of testing. Collect all the cards after each session and store in a secure location. After testing is complete, shred the cards.

Test Administrator Checklist: Avoiding Test Security Breaches

	Store materials in a secure location when not in use.
	Do not allow students to have access to technology which may be used to record, print, or otherwise expose test questions or stimuli to other students or outside sources at any time while test materials are present.
	Do not give students access to secure test questions prior to testing or discuss test questions at any time.
	Do not leave students unattended with testing materials or to take them unaccompanied to another location.
	Store all test materials together to avoid misplacing or losing any. Immediately return them to their storage place after each session.
	Do not copy or otherwise reproduce test materials.

Appendix D

Standardized Testing Room Checklist

	Instruct students to store all electronic communication devices, such as cell phones and headphones, before the test session begins. Inform students that they are not permitted to access any such devices until the end of the test session even if they finish before other students.
	Follow directions regarding dictionaries, thesauri, to have access to dictionaries, thesauri, or other reference sources.
	Do not allow students to use calculators when not specified.
	Cover or remove bulletin boards, posters, or other instructional displays that could aid students during testing. This includes instructional items that are not available to all students taking the test such as graphic organizers or multiplication tables.
	Collect notes from the Smarter Classroom Activity and store in a secure place until they can be shredded. Notes are not permitted during the Smarter Performance Tasks. All paper must be collected and shredded before students begin or continue with the Performance Tasks.
	Minimize distractions during testing, including intercom announcements.
	Place “Do Not Disturb” signs on doors where testing is occurring.
	Make sure testing environment is comfortable and has appropriate lighting.
	Utilize testing proctors at a recommended ratio of one proctor to not more than 30 students.

Appendix E

Table 2.2 Standardized Test Administration Guidelines

	Maintain a positive attitude about testing before, during and after testing.
	Allow students to take rest room breaks in advance of testing. Observe instructions regarding breaks; if they are during an online test, please be aware of the procedures so the students can return to their testing.
	Check to see if all eyeglasses and/or hearing devices are working and being used, if needed.
	Clear main/home screen of calculators both before and after calculator use sessions.
	Make sure if a test session is started that it is finished in the specified time period, unless otherwise specified by OPI, the assessment manual, or a student's IEP.
	Keep voice inflections neutral in the event a required and allowable test accommodation is to read portions of the test aloud.
	Monitor students as they test.
	Do not allow students to leave the room unaccompanied by an adult once the student has begun a session.
	If a student asks a question, the test administrator may respond, "I'm sorry I can't help you; just do your best."
	If a student is utilizing the scribe accommodation, scribe exact student responses, including incorrect responses, when scribing is a specified accommodation. Include all grammatical and punctuation errors when scribing answers to constructed response questions.
	Transcribe exact student responses, including incorrect responses, when a student's test booklet has been damaged or an alternate format has been used (such as Braille).
	Do not coach any students.

Appendix F

2015-2016 Confidential Test Irregularity Report

This form is intended only for parents, concerned community members, and school personnel who are concerned about ramifications from local reporting of a test security incident. **In most cases**, school personnel should follow the test security incident reporting procedures through their system test coordinator.

Instructions

Please complete the attached test security incident report.

- Any concern about breaches in test security, testing irregularities, and/or noncompliance with test administration procedures must be reported immediately to the school principal/authorized representative, System Test Coordinator, and OPI by phone or in person within three days of the incident. The district superintendent should also be notified.
- The Testing Irregularity Report (TIR) is to be completed within five days of the incident.
- If additional time is necessary, the reporting individual should call the State Assessment Director to request an extension.

Please respect student privacy

- DO NOT include any student's name anywhere on the report.
- DO NOT save the file by the student's name.

Mail or FAX

Please mail or fax the completed form to:

Jessica Eilertson, OPI State Assessment Director,
P.O. Box 202501
Helena, MT 2501
FAX to 406-444-0743

If you have questions, please contact:

Jessica Eilertson, State Assessment Director, 406-444-3656 or jeilertson@mt.gov
Marcy Fortner, Administrative Assistant, 406-444-3511 or akoehler2@mt.gov
Yvonne Field, Assessment Specialist, 406-444-0748 or yfield@mt.gov

Confidential Test Security Incident Report

Date: _____

Name of person completing this form: _____

Role: _____ School and School System: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Assessment: _____

(CRT Science, CRT-Alt Science, Smarter, NCSC Alternate)

Test: _____

(ELA non-performance task, ELA performance task, Math non-performance task, Math performance task, Science)

Session Number/ID: _____

Grade: _____ State Student ID(s) _____

Describe the Incident: