

Flexible Policies for Administering PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT 8/9

As schools continue to deal with uncertainties due to the coronavirus, the top priorities for College Board are the health and safety of you and your students.

To provide the most opportunity for the greatest number of students, we've added administrations and adapted policies and procedures. These changes allow for more flexibility around ordering and ease the process of administering the PSAT/NMSQT™ and the PSAT™ 8/9 for in-school testing during the September 2020–January 2021 testing period.

These options currently apply for the PSAT/NMSQT in October or January, and the PSAT 8/9 from September to January. Schools can use these options independently or in combination with one another.

This supplement to your Coordinator Manual explains how the flexible policies will affect how you administer the tests at your school.

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(including winter PSAT/NMSQT)
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IMPORTANT: If you must unexpectedly close your school for testing, do the following:

- Call the Support Hotline immediately.
- Communicate with your testers.
- Follow the instructions for returning/destroying unused test books that apply to your test date (see [No Charge for Unused Tests](#) on page 5).

Procedural Updates

Changes to PSAT/NMSQT Procedures for the Alternate Test Date

The test date for the PSAT/NMSQT alternate administration has been changed from Wednesday, October 28, to Thursday, October 29. This change will result in a few differences from the directions in your Coordinator Manual:

1. The test books will have the date of “Wednesday, October 28” printed on the cover. Instructions and fields in the Coordinator Manual and on the CRF also refer to October 28.
2. **If you're testing students on the alternate administration date for the PSAT/NMSQT, your students must test on Thursday, October 29, to receive valid scores.**
3. When returning answer sheets, if testing on Thursday, October 29, select the option for the original test date (Wed, Oct 28) in field 3 when completing the CRF and fill in the actual date of Oct 29, 2020, in field 4.

Image 1: Detail of fields 3 and 4 from the PSAT/NMSQT CRF

3		Test Date		
<input type="radio"/>	Wed, Oct 14, 2020			
<input type="radio"/>	Sat, Oct 17, 2020			
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Wed, Oct 28, 2020			

4		Actual Test Date		
Month	Day	Year		
Oct	29	20	20	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Oct	<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 0	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 2020	
	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 1		
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 2		
	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 3		
	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 4		
	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 5		
	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 6		
	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 7		
	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 8		

Handling Answer Sheets

We encourage you to exercise caution (e.g., by wearing disposable gloves, etc.) when handling used answer sheets, but you must not alter the procedures for returning used answer sheets as given in your Coordinator Manual. We can't process used answer sheets that are individually bagged or placed in sleeves. Doing so may delay or invalidate scores.

Revised Administration Dates

Based on educator feedback, we've added more test dates and adjusted some of the original test dates to provide opportunities to test on different days of the week. College Board added a January administration for PSAT/NMSQT to allow schools to test in the fall or winter.

Updated Test Dates for Fall–January 2021:

PSAT/NMSQT

Wednesday, October 14

Saturday, October 17

Thursday, October 29 (Revised Alternate Date)

Tuesday, January 26, 2021*

*Added for the 2020-21 school year only

Testing may only occur on the dates listed above. Testing on unapproved dates, regardless of what is printed on the cover of the test book, will result in score cancellation and/or scholarship ineligibility.

The PSAT/NMSQT alternate test must be administered on the revised date of October 29 and not on October 28.

Option to Test Across Multiple Dates

Schools can administer the PSAT/NMSQT on multiple administration dates. This flexibility already exists for the PSAT 8/9.

For the PSAT/NMSQT, schools can administer the test on the primary test date (October 14) or the Saturday test date (October 17), plus the alternate test date (October 29). In addition, the January 26 test date may also be used alone or in combination with any of the others.

To split your order across multiple test dates or to reorder for a new test date, visit the Test Ordering Site (ordering.collegeboard.org). If you already placed an order for the original alternate PSAT/NMSQT test date (Wednesday, October 28), your order will be automatically shifted to Thursday, October 29.

How can this help my school?

Schools operating under local health guidelines can take advantage of multiple administration dates to reduce the number of students reporting to school on a single test date. Schools that are unable to test some or all their students in the fall now have an additional chance to test on a different day of the week in January.

What else do I need to know?

General:

- There is no minimum for the number of students who can test on any of the administration dates.
- Test books shipped to the school for use on a particular test date cannot be used for a different test date.
 - ◆ Scores may be canceled or made ineligible for scholarship consideration for schools that test using materials intended for a different administration day.
 - ◆ To keep from testing with the wrong materials on the wrong day, please store test materials for different administration days separately and securely.
- To ensure timely and accurate reporting, you must return materials immediately following each administration as instructed in your Coordinator Manual using the return packaging, labels, and forms provided in your test shipment for that date. Do not hold materials or try to consolidate return materials from different test dates.
- If you're testing on more than one date, keep test materials from different dates separate. Don't return answer sheets from different administration dates together; this may result in delayed or invalidated scores.
- Schools that are concerned about testing students who do not regularly attend their classes may use the multi-admin ordering option to order tests for both the Primary and the January test date. This would allow them to test their regularly attending students on a separate date from nonattending students.

For PSAT/NMSQT:

- Students taking the PSAT/NMSQT may not take the assessment more than once. Scores may be delayed or canceled if answer sheets for the same students are returned from multiple administrations.
- Schools can use the Test Ordering Site to place orders for multiple test dates. Ordering for the January administration will open in mid-October.
- Schools may test on all four dates; however, this isn't recommended as it introduces additional complexities. For example, test books for the Saturday and the January test dates must be returned immediately after test day, and score reports won't include question-level detail.
- If your school will be using the test books from the PSAT/NMSQT primary date to review results with students, please ensure that books are clearly marked and stored securely and separately from test materials for other administration dates.
- College Board is providing opportunities for schools to upload bulk registration files for the October and January administrations. If testing multiple times in October, consider using the optional codes to help sort groups of students by test date.

Additional tips:

- Schools should define a set of criteria to determine which students will test on which test dates. For example, students with last names starting with the letters A–L test on the first day, all other students test on the second, etc.
- If administering the PSAT/NMSQT on multiple dates, plan to review scores with the students testing at different times in separate sessions. Scores for answer sheets from the October administrations that are returned on time will be available on the K–12 reporting portal in late November or early March for the January administration.

Table 1: Example of 3 different multi-administration testing plans for the PSAT/NMSQT

	School A (250 students)	School B (250 students)	School C (250 students)
Wednesday, October 14	125 students test	None	None
Saturday, October 17	None	50 students test	None
Thursday, October 29	125 students test	150 students test	None
Tuesday, January 26	None	50 students test	250 students test

Flexible Start Times

For the PSAT/NMSQT and the PSAT 8/9 schools can start testing earlier and/or later than usual and split their students across multiple testing groups.

How can this help my school?

Schools operating under local health guidelines can stagger arrivals and dismissals to be certain they have enough space to meet social distancing requirements.

What else do I need to know?

All requirements for timing and breaks still apply, and all testing must be completed within the same day (unless students are approved for a multiday testing accommodation).

Local health and safety guidelines may require that only a limited number of students may access the restroom or hallways at a time. In such cases, you may elect to double the time of scheduled breaks (including accommodated breaks) to ensure that students can access the restroom or hallway in an orderly fashion. Hall monitors should help ensure that students do not share any test content if they leave the room and that students reenter their assigned testing rooms in a safe way.

Important reminders:

- All testing must start before the first group to test completes testing; that is, no group of students can begin testing after another group has completed the test.

- A group must have completed all testing before they are dismissed for lunch.
- Mobile phones may be returned to exiting groups of students as they complete testing only after the last group of students has begun testing.
- Schools can use flexible start times when testing groups of students taking the same assessment or taking different assessments. (For example, if administering both PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT 8/9, the group of PSAT/NMSQT testers could begin first, with PSAT 8/9 testers starting at a later time.)

Additional tips:

- Consider multiday test takers and students with extended time when assigning test groups. College Board recommends assigning students testing with extended time to the earliest testing group.
- Work with school administrators to keep track of when students will arrive at school for testing. This will affect testing group assignments.
- Plan for any necessary changes to attendance-taking procedures for early and late testing groups.
- Assign rooms for separate testing groups in different areas of the school building to limit contact between students.
- Allow students to consume snacks and drinks while standing behind their desks (away from test materials). Snacks and drinks must still be stored under desks during testing.

Table 2: Example of multiple start times when administering the PSAT/NMSQT

Group A Time	Group B Time	Task
6:45 a.m.	8:45 a.m.	Staff reporting time and facility preparation.
7 a.m.	9 a.m.	Review staff assignments and room assignments. Distribute materials to staff, including Testing Room Materials Report forms.
7:15 a.m.	9:15 a.m.	Staff report to their rooms and prepare for student arrival.
7:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	Students report to the designated assembly area.
7:45–8 a.m.	9:45–10 a.m.	Admit students to assigned testing rooms and collect electronic devices (if applicable).
8 a.m.	10 a.m.	Close testing room doors.
8–8:30 a.m.	10–10:30 a.m.	Distribute materials and read preliminary instructions.
8:30 a.m.	10:30 a.m.	Begin testing.
11:25 a.m.	1:25 p.m.	Testing ends for standard timing of the PSAT/NMSQT.

No Charge for Unused Tests

Schools won't be charged test fees if they're unable to administer:

- September to February PSAT 8/9
- October or January PSAT/NMSQT

How can this help my school?

As the covid-19 pandemic continues to evolve, we understand many schools and districts are pursuing partial or full virtual instruction options and experiencing shifting schedules. We know the decision to test may not be made until closer to the administration dates, so we're providing this additional flexibility.

What else do I need to know?

- Please adjust your test book volumes the best you can by the ordering deadline of December 4 for the January PSAT/NMSQT.
- If you end up only using some of your test books for PSAT/NMSQT or are unable to test any students, follow the instructions in your Coordinator Manual for returning materials:
 - ♦ For Oct 17 test date: Return test books no later than the next school day after testing is completed.
 - ♦ For Oct 14 or 29: Discard all unused test books.
 - ♦ For Jan 26 test date: Return test books no later than the next school day after testing is completed.

Off-Site Testing

Schools don't need to submit an off-site plan for approval for their PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT 8/9 administrations if they have a Level II AI code. For the PSAT/NMSQT and the PSAT 8/9, you'll simply select the sites you want to use and order materials for those sites accordingly.

How can this help my school?

Schools following local health guidelines can use this option to distribute students among multiple locations, allowing for more distance between test takers.

What else do I need to know?

- To ensure accurate test material tracking, security, and adherence to test administration policies:
 - ♦ Record the off-site location name and testing room code(s).
 - ♦ Provide test books in intact bundles—don't open shrink wrap prior to test day.
 - ♦ Record the number of test books provided to each off-site location.
- Order extra materials in proportion to the number of off-site locations you are using to avoid the need to break test book bundles.
- You must return all materials for the off-site and primary locations following each administration.
- College Board recommends that schools return materials from off-site and primary testing locations in one consolidated shipment for each test administration date, if possible. If you plan to return materials directly from each site, contact customer service using the contact information listed in the Coordinator Manual to request additional test return kits.

For Planning Purposes:

- Assign an off-site test coordinator for each off-site location.
- Each location's test coordinator is responsible for ensuring the off-site location meets the requirements for test material security, room configuration, seating (round tables are prohibited for testing), and test day staffing, as described in the applicable assessment Coordinator Manual.

- Make sure off-site test coordinators and proctors are provided with the appropriate training.
- Plan for secure transport of materials to each off-site location and ensure each off-site location is supplied with the necessary materials prior to test day. Off-site test coordinators must be available to accept materials and securely store them until they are returned after testing.
- For locations that are not owned by your school, make sure there is somebody available to address any problems that arise on test day. Also ensure that you are able to disable bells, alarms, and intercoms for the entirety of test day.
- Plan for any necessary changes to attendance-taking procedures for off-site testing and ensure your school administration is appropriately informed of all students' whereabouts on test day.
- Take steps to ensure the testing experience for students is not disrupted or negatively impacted by their environment. If this is not possible for a given location, consider a different one. This is especially critical if a school chooses an outdoor site.

Additional tips:

- Consider libraries, religious institutions, or community centers as viable off-site testing choices.
- Make a plan early and clearly communicate it to staff, students, and parents to limit test day confusion.
- Work with your SSD coordinator to plan for students with accommodations.
- Schools that are concerned about testing students who do not regularly attend their classes may use an off-site testing location to administer the test to these students. To ensure there is no conflict of interest, all staff, including the staff at the off-site location, must meet the guidelines outlined in the Coordinator Manual.

We're Here to Help

We're pleased to give schools these options for administering our assessments during this unprecedented time. Schools will be required to follow local public health guidelines and should be prepared to implement last-minute changes and effectively communicate them to students. College Board supports efforts to help ensure the safety and comfort of their staff and students. Recommended precautions include:

- Requiring and/or providing face masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, or other PPE.
- Spacing students at least 6 feet apart to adhere to social distancing guidelines.
- Encouraging students and staff to practice regular handwashing and stay home if they are sick.

If your school will be closed on your scheduled test date, College Board must be notified immediately.

If you have already received test materials and are unable to test on your scheduled test date, please ensure materials are safely secured:

- PSAT/NMSQT materials cannot be reused later and must be destroyed or returned to College Board when school resumes and it is safe to do so:
 - ♦ For PSAT/NMSQT, follow instructions under [No Charge for Unused Tests](#) on page 5.
 - ♦ Please notify PSAT-related Assessments that you cannot test.
- If your school was scheduled to administer PSAT 8/9, test materials can be used later in the testing window.

College Board is committed to giving you and your students a positive testing experience. We'll continue to provide detailed updates for schools as well as professional learning opportunities.

PLEASE CONTACT US WITH ANY QUESTIONS.

PSAT-related Assessments Support Hotline:

+1-212-237-1335

Email: psat@info.collegeboard.org

For details on these updates and options, visit: sat.org/covid19