



Smarter Balanced and Higher Education: Preparing Young People for Postsecondary Success

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is creating next-generation assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts/literacy and mathematics. With more than 40 states implementing the CCSS, the Smarter Balanced assessment system will allow states to certify that students have the knowledge and skills to meet the requirements of entry-level, credit-bearing postsecondary courses in these key subject areas.

Key Features of Smarter Balanced

- ▶ **A college- and career-ready evaluation** based on the CCSS with results that are comparable nationwide and internationally benchmarked.
- ▶ **High school scores indicate readiness** for credit-bearing postsecondary courses.
- ▶ **Extensive collaboration with higher education**, including representation from key higher education leaders on the Smarter Balanced Executive Committee and integration of representation of higher education in and across the advisory structure.
- ▶ **Innovative item types** go beyond multiple choice questions to include constructed response and performance tasks that measure critical thinking and problem solving needed in college-level courses.

Common Core State Standards

Developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Governors Association and 48 states—with significant input from higher education faculty—the CCSS define the knowledge and skills students need to know to succeed in college and the workplace. A recent survey of 1,800 higher education faculty found that the standards are sufficiently challenging to prepare students for entry-level postsecondary courses.

The Smarter Balanced assessment system—including summative and interim assessments and formative resources for teachers—will measure progress toward college- and career-readiness, providing accurate information about what students know before entering college.

Higher Education Involvement

Collaboration with higher education leaders and faculty is critical to ensuring the Smarter Balanced assessments allow

students to demonstrate college-readiness. Representatives from higher education are involved in key design decisions—with the goal that colleges and universities across the Smarter Balanced member states will accept the assessment as evidence that high school students are ready for entry-level, credit-bearing coursework.

Each state is represented in the Consortium by a higher education lead. These leads coordinate engagement in their states and are assisted by the director of higher education collaboration and a cadre of regional senior consultants. Representatives from higher education hold two of nine seats on the Executive Committee and serve on key work groups.

Assessment Implementation Timeline

- ▶ **Fall 2011**—Higher education leads established
- ▶ **Winter/Spring 2013**—Pilot testing of assessment items and performance tasks
- ▶ **Spring 2014**—Field testing of summative and interim assessments
- ▶ **2014-15 School Year**—Implementation of assessment system
- ▶ **August 2014**—Proficiency standards for college/career readiness established

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Visit SmarterBalanced.org to learn more about the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and sign-up to receive our monthly eNewsletter. For more information, please contact Jacqueline King (Jacqueline.King@SmarterBalanced.org), director of higher education collaboration.