COLLEGE OF MARIN

PROGRAM REVIEW FOR THE OFFICE OF TESTING AND ASSESSMENT

OCTOBER 29, 2007

SUBMITTED BY PATRICIA TORRES
COORDINATOR OF TESTING AND ASSESSMENT
PROGRAM REVIEW
Office of Testing and Assessment (OTA)

Introduction

1) Program Overview: Placement testing has high stakes not only for our students, but also for the student learning outcomes that can be achieved in our courses and for our institutional effectiveness overall. The results of placement testing determine whether students will enroll in the college courses from which they can make progress towards their goals, rather than being needlessly delayed in a course below their level or left to founder in a course that is beyond their ability to understand. We need to take seriously our responsibility to be effective, to constantly self-assess, and to be aware of changes in best practices in the field. By the same token, the abilities of students who are placed at a given level can strongly affect the character of the courses at that level, so we need to seek and utilize information from instructors about how well our tests are working. Finally, testing is often the first face that the institution presents to new students, so we need to be welcoming, professional, communicative and accommodating, rather than disorganized, impersonal, confusing or forbidding.

Some tests, like the Ability to Benefit (ATB), have even higher stakes for students, determining whether they can access financial aid. Students who fail this test four times over their lifetimes are determined to be permanently ineligible for federal aid funds. Yet research and our practice have demonstrated that the way in which students are greeted, the ways in which the tests are explained to them, and the conditions in the testing space can make a difference in whether they can pass this test. Considering the life-altering consequences for our students, we have an ethical obligation to optimize the conditions under which high-stakes tests are offered to our students in ways that are fair and equitable. This obligation is the mission of the Office of Testing and Assessment (OTA).

2) Program definition
OTA conducted 4,988 placement tests on two campuses in 2005-06 (the last year for which we have complete records) in the following areas: 1,593 English, 1,928 Math, 439 credit ESL, 1,063 noncredit ESL, and a small number of Chemistry. We also serve as the county-wide GED testing site and have administered GED tests five times each year. GED testing necessitates closing OTA for two consecutive days since students must be here for two five-hour sessions to complete the battery of tests. Students from our intensive English program at the Indian Valley Campus as well as potential international students take the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) test with us. We administered the ATB (Ability to Benefit) test for 36 students who do not have a high school diploma or GED to enable such students to qualify for federal financial aid. In spring 2008, OTA will begin to administer a state-mandated Nursing Placement Exam to all students applying for our Nursing Program.

It should be noted that as outreach has increased and student populations have changed, COM has administered a greater number of tests to students from nontraditional populations. For example, in noncredit ESL we have tested 55% more students since January of this year than for the same period in 2005. Similarly, our numbers of students taking the ATB have increased; for example, we saw a 58%
increase between AY 05-06 and 06-07.

a) **Purpose, Goals, and Objectives of the Program**

Our main purpose is to provide accurate and fair placement testing that lets our students know where their most effective starting point is so that they can progress toward their goals. To make placement information credible to students, faculty, and other stakeholders, we need to be consistent in our testing practices and ensure that every student has the same opportunity to demonstrate their prior knowledge, skills and understandings. Fairness, then, is our most important objective. Ideally we should administer each and every test under the same conditions each time; in fact, this is the technical definition of the term *standardized*.

OTA also has the responsibility for maintaining accurate documentation for student placement scores and keeping sensitive placement information confidential in keeping with FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) regulations.

b) **How the program meets the overall mission and goals of COM.**

The work of OTA addresses College of Marin’s mission to “provide excellent educational opportunities for all members of our diverse community…by offering student-centered services.” To better achieve this goal, OTA has recently begun to work with standards for testing centers developed by the National College Testing Association (NCTA) to ensure that our policies and practices are in keeping with national standards. These standards are available in Appendix A and are addressed in the *Needs Assessment* section of this report.

3) **Program Profile**

a) **Staff:**

1) The program currently employs a full-time Testing Coordinator who has overall responsibility for administration and supervision of all tests, is responsible for the overall functions of the office, including budget as well as planning and coordinating with other departments on campus (academic and student services), and provides some advising to students regarding testing and placement. The Coordinator also acts as Chief Examiner for the GED test and ATB testing, including liaison with government regulatory offices. (Job description pending) The current staff member is bilingual Spanish/English.

2) The only other permanent staff for OTA is a 75% Testing Technician who proctors the various tests (not including ESL). The Technician serves as the Alternate Examiner for the GED test, maintains office supplies and the appointment calendar and serves as the administrative assistant to the coordinator. (Job Description pending).

b) **Facilities, Technical Infrastructure, and Other Resources**

Currently all tests are paper and pencil. OTA has a two-person office for the
Coordinator and Testing Technician, one testing room with 23 tab-arm desks, and one lockable storage room. In fall 2007, OTA has begun development of a computerized testing option and has ordered computer equipment and furnishings.

c) Relation to Curriculum and Instruction
For many years, the testing office has had minimal contact with Math, English, and science departments in developing placement policies and review test currency. OTA has worked more closely with the ESL department, some members of whom pinch-hit to provide staffing for large testing sessions. If ESL staff did not provide this voluntary assistance, testing conditions for these incoming students would be unacceptable.

In spring 2007, faculty approved and COM funded a faculty liaison and external consultant to conduct validation studies and pilot a new English placement test, Accomplice. This test, which is used by many California community colleges for placement assessment, is interactive and thus provides more reliable and less time-consuming testing for students. The pilot project has recently expanded to include Math faculty and it is estimated that Accuplacer will be validated and presented to the faculty for adoption in spring 2009.

d) Effect on Student Success
Although placement testing should ideally be seen as a starting point for students, at COM many entering students may be understandably disappointed by their placement, since an unusually high percentage place into pre-college courses in both English and Math. As evidenced in Table A, COM’s rate of placement into English classes below college level over the past four years has averaged 96.4%, as compared with 74.9% statewide. In Math, the numbers are less exceptional, but are still out of sync with state averages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College of Marin Spring 2005- Fall 2006¹</th>
<th>California Community College State Averages²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>27%</td>
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</table>

Further study is in process to determine the reasons for these discrepancies and their effect on students; however, it should be noted that the test currently used for

¹ Data from Melody Creel, Office of Organizational Development & Planning
² Data from Environmental Scan: A Summary of Key Issues Facing California Community Colleges Pertinent to the Strategic Planning Process, Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges, 2005, p. 6.
placement at COM (the 1984 College Board placement test) has been revised many times since that version was in general use. In particular, newer versions such as Accuplacer have been revised for fair placement based on differences in students’ cultural backgrounds.

Best practices for imparting results to students have been defined by various professional organizations. They mandate that staff be highly professional and encouraging to students when we give them their results. The student needs to fully understand the implications of his or her placements and needs to know what the next step is for them to work towards their particular goals. For example, NCTA standards recommend that testing personnel “address examinee concerns with empathy while maintaining the integrity of the administration; make referrals to other campus offices and testing resources, as needed, to provide students and clients with the most appropriate services of the institution and community.” Lack of time and staffing at COM make these goals difficult or impossible to achieve, since massive testing sessions of up to 150 students must often be run by one staff member, sometimes with a part-time helper who has been hastily pressed into duty and who may not be adequately trained. A particular need that must be addressed is the need to have counseling, or at least advising, staff present and available for each and every testing session, whether or not they occur at off-peak hours.

We need to rethink ways in which we treat students who receive remedial placements and never imply that a student “failed” the test because they did not test directly into college-level coursework. We need to be sensitive to the particular needs of the student in front of us at any given time and be very careful not to make inaccurate or demeaning generalizations. A particular challenge exists as we attract increasing numbers of students who are the first in their families to attend college, especially those whose linguistic abilities present an additional challenge during a mass testing situation, the consequences of which may seem devastating to their hopes for a better future. These students need information and orientation specifically tailored to their needs and goals, rather than being asked to participate in a long generic orientation, much of which is either confusing to them or fails to address their specific reasons for coming to the College.

e) Services, Community Outreach, and Economic Development
Currently COM conducts on-site placement testing at local high schools, including Novato, San Marin, San Rafael, Drake, Terra Linda, Redwood, and Mount Tamalpais, every spring after COM’s high school outreach counselors have visited the schools. Last year for the first time we administered on-site ESL testing at San Rafael, as a step towards serving the large unserved population of English Language Learners there. OTA also worked with Early Childhood Education faculty and personnel from financial aid and Student Affairs to organize a College Day for the Marin Cares program and tested the potential students in English or ESL on a Saturday in conjunction with an orientation. These sessions demonstrate COM’s admirable commitment to reach out to the community and address the needs of potential students, but often student participation is low. This could be the result of inadequate prior publicity regarding the programs that COM offers that would be attractive to the specific populations targeted at those schools.

3) Testing Center Descriptive Specifics
We have basic information about OTA on-line on the COM website but it is very limited. All appointments are made by phone. Current hours are Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM until 4:00 PM. Many evening and Saturday tests are also scheduled, but staffing for these sessions is uneven and often cobbled together at the last minute. We currently do not track missed appointments. Students test in our testing office or at the various Student Success Workshops.

4) Needs Assessment: Where do we want to be in five years?

This program review has revealed the following OTA practices that are not in keeping with national standards and best practices as cited by NCTA and outlined in AAHE’s “Nine Principles of Assessment” (Appendix B):

a) The Placement Tests that we are currently using are not in line with the college mission; in fact, the English placement test we use will soon be out of compliance with standards established by the California Community College Chancellor’s Office because it is outdated and not in line with current testing theory and practice, including elimination of bias based on cultural differences. In this regard we are not serving our current population well. In response to this challenge, we are currently piloting a new test, Accuplacer, to better meet the mission of our school. However, the fact that this situation reached a crisis level before any action could take place speaks to the need for regular review (perhaps annually) of testing policies, procedures, and instruments by a team of faculty and staff including representation from all the departments that are stakeholders: English, ESL, Math, Chemistry, GED preparation, etc.

b) OTA lacks a mission statement, one of the practices recommended by NCTA and other national organizations. In addition, OTA lacks clear and consistent policies and practices that would ensure that fair, equitable, and supportive conditions for testing are maintained for all students.

c) OTA lacks sufficient staffing to ensure optimal conditions for all students taking tests. For example, ESL testing has insufficient staffing, often necessitating students' waiting too long to receive their tests and/or students’ being unable to meet with counselors to explain their placement for weeks. These practices cause students to be confused and sometimes profoundly concerned about their educational prospects. While ESL faculty and staff regularly pitch in and provide assistance, staffing for this function needs to be planned and reliable rather than extending some staff work hours in unpredictable ways. Ideally, the ratio of testees to staff should be 20:1. For noncredit ESL staffing is often closer to 40:1.

d) The role of counseling/advising in the placement and orientation process needs to be examined. Our current practice does not permit regular and predictable inclusion of counseling support for the placement process.

e) OTA needs to create more effective testing processes for students who come from a linguistic background that has been termed by educational researchers “Generation 1.5.” According to researcher Meena Singhal, Generation 1.5 students are English learners, often educated in the US, who have limited proficiency in their first language but, at the same time, who “have not acquired
the academic English necessary to meet the cognitive and linguistic demands of discipline-specific academic classes in English institutions of higher learning." 

These students require sensitive approaches to communication. They are characteristically unfamiliar with traditional academic practices and terminology, and may require more sensitive treatment to keep them from being baffled and frightened by placement testing.

f) There seems to be some confusion regarding how students challenge the results of placement testing in English. Some instructors make requests to allow a student to enter a class at a given level; others send students back to OTA for retesting. To maintain a fair process for all students, we should publish the method for challenging test results so that it can be equitably applied.

g) Resolution must be achieved regarding testing for students who require extended time accommodations through DSPS for tests that are part of their regular classes. OTA was originally assigned to conduct these tests. That arrangement has continued for more than a year on a "one more semester" basis. The College should examine the resources available to provide the best testing for these students. If the resolution is that OTA must conduct these tests, they should add additional staff who are professionally trained to conduct such testing. OTA is not an appropriate site for distraction-reduced testing.

h) Testing services should be offered regularly on the IVC campus in order to create a bridge for vocational students and others who may wish to enroll in English, Math, or ESL classes without coming to Kentfield.

5) **Program history or background, philosophy, and unique characteristics relevant to the program review**

In past years, discipline review of The Testing Office did not concentrate on fair and consistent practices and procedures, in part because the Office was tasked with a wide range of testing responsibilities in addition to placement testing. In fact, until last year, placement testing was not held during finals week and the week preceding finals in order that the Testing Office could be used by students taking make-up finals for their courses. This office has begun examining such practices that do not support a "Students First" approach, and with the support of the Vice President of Student Learning has begun the process of standardizing practices and procedures. In spring of 2007, College of Marin developed an alternative testing site for Distance Education courses and make-up exams for traditional classroom courses. This has enabled OTA to concentrate more fully on creating fair and equitable conditions for placement testing.

Particular emphasis has been placed on a previously-overlooked element of our student population: those who come from underserved backgrounds and ethnicities. Since these students make up an increasing proportion of our current and future population, their needs must be understood and addressed by the Testing Office. Past practices often further marginalized these students; for

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example, past policy relegated ESL testing to secondary status, after all other testing had been scheduled. In addition, one of the writing prompts for the test to challenge English placement results asked students to describe how cultural diversity “impinge(s) on their lives.” Taken together, these policies and practices seem to have created an environment that fails to welcome students from underserved populations.

a. **Human Resource Needs**

The Coordinator of Testing should be a classified supervisor so that the person in this position can more effectively manage the program and staff and can make decisions in a more independent manner. Educational Requirement should be increased to BA degree-Master’s degree preferred. (Currently BA degree). This person should be bilingual Spanish/English and have a very high degree of cross-cultural competence.

We should increase our staff to include proctors who can work under the supervision of the Testing Coordinator (Please see NCTA Standard C1 a-l). Currently the Testing Coordinator relies on borrowing staff members from other offices to help staff testing. These proctors should be bilingual (Spanish) and highly skilled cross-culturally. These staff will be required to conduct some testing on their own, after having been trained by the Coordinator, so this position requires the ability to work independently. The educational requirement should be AA degree, BA preferred, and the level of pay should be sufficient to attract committed and competent candidates. OTA needs extremely professional staff if we want to provide excellence.

b. **Instructional and Service Needs**

1) OTA needs to develop regular, effective liaisons with the English and Math departments so that students, faculty, and staff can have clear and exact information concerning placement policies and procedures.

2) The ESL department will need to continue to work with testing and will need to be highly involved with Non-Credit ESL tests due to the level of ESL discipline expertise involved in administration and scoring of these tests. This year the Interim Director of ESL, who is bilingual and bicultural, has been present and hands-on for every one of the testing sessions, which has vastly improved conditions for testing these students.

3) The College should conduct research into the impact of testing on other departments, those whose courses do not involve prerequisites, to determine whether Student Learning Outcomes in those courses are being addressed by the level of preparation the College is requiring.

c. **Facilities Needs**

1) OTA needs to have a completely modernized and computerized testing center. The current purchase of 15 computers begins that process.

2) OTA should have a more inviting environment for testing with some
natural light and more ventilation.
Technology Needs

Beyond the fifteen computers we are adding for placement testing, OTA needs an effective web presence, including a web page that can provide students with the ability to register for some tests online, access to information about testing and its consequences, information about how to access test results most quickly and accurately, etc. This information should be available in English and Spanish and ideally in both text and audio formats.

d. Research Needs  
1) We need a cohort study to determine how many of the students who complete placement testing fail to register for any courses at COM within two or three years. If possible, we need to survey these students to find out why they did not register.

2) As we validate Accuplacer, we need assistance in checking its ongoing validity as a predictor of student success in all courses that have placement levels as prerequisites. For high-risk courses, we should determine whether prerequisite testing levels would improve chances of student success.

e. Marketing and outreach needs  
The testing sessions at the high schools should be publicized for greater attendance.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Resources Needed</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Computerize Testing Center</td>
<td>Spring, 2008</td>
<td>15 computer stations will be installed, including one with ADA access.</td>
<td>Funding is being identified in fall 2007.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Implement Accuplacer for placement of students in Math and English</td>
<td>Fall, 2008</td>
<td>All incoming students will be tested via Accuplacer on computers. Paper and pencil testing will remain available for students who require it.</td>
<td>Funding secured through PFE (President's Fund for Excellence). Additional funding is being identified in fall 2007.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Develop a Mission Statement for OTA</td>
<td>Spring, 2008</td>
<td>Statement will be submitted to College community for feedback.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Coordinator will request annual liaison meeting with department chairs for Math, Science and English.</td>
<td>Spring, 2008</td>
<td>Request will be issued.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Staff training in cultural awareness will be sought through the Basic Skills Initiative (BSI).</td>
<td>Fall, 2008</td>
<td>Proposal will be submitted.</td>
<td>BSI professional development funds will be sought.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6) Testing Coordinator will establish regular dates and times for testing at IVC, including ESL testing.</td>
<td>Fall, 2008</td>
<td>Times and dates will be linked on COM's website.</td>
<td>Additional proctors to supplement OTA staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>7) Increase support for noncredit ESL testing.</td>
<td>Fall, 2007 and continuing</td>
<td>Additional staff assigned to ESL noncredit tests.</td>
<td>Additional proctors to supplement OTA staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Research policies for challenging placement results in English, ESL and Math and publish them along with other pertinent information on testing.</td>
<td>Spring, 2008 and ongoing</td>
<td>Material is published and updated regularly.</td>
<td>English faculty liaison, Website space, printing costs</td>
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</tbody>
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APPENDIX A: NCTA STANDARDS FOR TEST CENTERS

The standards in this document are organized into five sections: Policy, Contractual Agreements, Staffing, Institutional Representation and Coordination, and Physical Environment. Certain items pertain to computer-based testing only. If CBT is not specified, items cover both paper-based and computerized testing:

A. POLICY: Test Centers must adhere to general policies which promote high quality operations, ethical practices as outlined in the Code for Fair Testing Practices in Education, professional mandates, and policies consistent with their institutions and NCTA. They must:

1. Develop and implement a mission statement consistent with the policies and standards set forth in this document.

2. Operate with adequate financial resources to support the mission of the testing program.

3. Maintain adequate physical facilities and location suitable to the requirements of the testing program.

4. Operate in a diligent manner to promote honesty, integrity, and fairness in all testing procedures.

5. Operate under the guidelines of equal opportunity, affirmative action, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and other local, state, and federal regulations.

6. Protect the integrity of the test.

7. Protect the confidentiality and rights of privacy of examinees and staff.

8. Adhere to program requirements of testing companies in the administration of specific tests.

9. Adhere to requirements and policies of their institutions in the administration of classroom exams and other assessments.

10. Treat examinees in a fair, courteous, professional, and nondiscriminatory manner.

11. Address examinee concerns with empathy while maintaining the integrity of the administration.

12. Make referrals to other campus offices and testing resources, as needed, to provide students and clients with the most appropriate services of the institution and community.

13. Develop and implement appropriate guidelines for test center operations and staff training.
14. Evaluate the testing program in an on-going, systematic, and comprehensive manner.

B. CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENTS: Testing companies will send contracts to test centers to establish agreements for test delivery services. Specifics must be disclosed to test centers in advance to allow for any exceptions or special agreements to be negotiated. Contracts may be signed by the test center manager or another designee of the institution. Honorarium payments, reservations systems, and other aspects of business between the test center and test company will be covered by individual contract for computerized testing. For paper-based testing, some items will be covered in program manuals.

1. Payment for the delivery of testing services may be to the test center/institution, to individuals, or to both, as agreed to by the test center and test company.

2. Billing units, i.e., per testing hour, per test, per test session, are determined by agreement between the test center and the test company.

3. A mandatory token payment system will be in place, the specifics to be agreed upon in advance by test center and test company:
   a. For paper-based testing, all staff hired for testing will be paid a token honorarium if no examinees appear for testing.
   b. For computer-based testing, centers will be paid full honorarium for all no-show appointments and for late cancellations, i.e., those made past the cancellation deadline.

4. For computer-based testing, reservations may be handled locally or by a central reservation system, as specified by contract.

5. The testing company will cover any potential liability issues that arise from the implementation of their procedures and regulations, assuming test center staff carry out these procedures according to program requirements.

C. STAFFING: A number of people may be involved in the setup and administration of tests. These may include regular staff of the institution and/or staff hired only for particular testing situations. In all cases, regardless of how specific tasks are divided, one person must be accountable.

1. The Testing Operations Manager is the primary institutional contact with the testing company and is ultimately responsible for the appropriate administration of testing programs. S/he coordinates all test administrations and may serve as test administrator or may hire others for test day administration. The Testing Operations Manager:
   a. Is an employee of the institution.
   b. Serves as administrator of record with test companies.
   c. Actively manages the overall testing program and procedures, though not necessarily acting as on-site supervisor.
   d. Is knowledgeable about test policies and processes.
e. Is informed about all incidents occurring during testing, e.g. irregularities, facilities problems, examinee or staff concerns.

f. Maintains direct contact with test company personnel.

g. Fulfills test company requirements for each program.

h. Maintains adequate staff to cover testing program demands.

i. Has ultimate responsibility for the test administration, including adherence to all standards in this document.

j. Participates in professional development activities to stay current with trends in testing.

k. Conducts training for testing personnel, both part-time and full-time, to include all aspects of test administration, including management of emergency situations such as fire or illness.

l. Evaluates the program and all testing staff at predetermined, regular intervals.

2. The Testing Operations Manager is responsible for appropriate contact and coordination with faculty and departments at the institution that use test center services, although daily contact with institutional personnel may be performed by other test center staff. The Testing Operations Manager:

a. Is an employee of the institution.

b. Actively manages the overall testing program and procedures, though others in the test center may have more regular contact with institutional faculty and department personnel.

c. Is knowledgeable about test policies and processes.

d. Is informed about all incidents occurring during testing, e.g. irregularities, facilities problems, examinee or staff concerns.

e. Fulfills requirements for departmental or institutional testing, or informs faculty or department of limitations of service.

f. Maintains adequate staff to cover testing demands.

g. Has ultimate responsibility for the test administration, including adherence to all standards in this document.

h. Conducts training for testing personnel, both part-time and full-time, to include all aspects of test administration, including management of emergency situations such as fire or illness.

i. Evaluates the program and all testing staff at predetermined, regular intervals.

3. Test day administrators, room supervisors, and proctors may be regular staff of the institution, student employees, or on-call workers hired just for testing. Testing Operations Managers must avoid the reality or perception of conflicts of interest in the selection of staff. Particular attention must be paid to test company or institutional requirements for specific programs with regard to teaching in the content area of the test, test preparation activities, or inappropriate staff exposure to the test material. Efforts should also be made to hire staff reflective of the ethnicity and gender of the population being tested. It is imperative that test day staff:

a. Attend general proctor or supervisor training.

b. Proctor tests before becoming a room supervisor for national exams.
c. Understand the concepts of institutional or standardized testing, the importance of test security, and the implications of testing irregularities.
d. Read the manual for national exams prior to the test date, thoroughly reviewing specific program policies and procedures. For institutional testing programs, staff must be thoroughly informed about testing procedures.
e. Be reliable, punctual, detail-oriented, and able to deal effectively with people in difficult situations.
f. Undergo performance evaluation at regular intervals.

4. Office staff, secretaries, and student personnel of the testing center often assist with various aspects of the test administration process. It is essential that these staff members:

   a. Understand the requirement for security of test materials and examinee information.
   b. Assist Manager with assigned responsibilities.
   c. Review test procedures related to their assigned duties.
   d. Undergo performance evaluation at regular intervals.

D. **INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATION AND COORDINATION:** The Test Operations Manager is responsible for advocating for the needs of the testing program with the administration of the institution. In addition, test center personnel are encouraged to make formal and informal connections across the campus for the purposes of informing others about testing services, to promote appropriate interaction between the test center and other institutional departments, and to assure effective facilitation of test administration. Institutional representation and coordination are intended to establish and maintain administrative support for testing functions and increase the level of visibility on campus and in the community.

1. The testing program will be represented at various levels within the organizational structure. As needs are identified, the program will make these needs, and the resources required, known to the appropriate personnel and offices in the institution.

2. To develop an effective communication network with departments that provide campus services, test centers must:

   a. Develop working relationships with campus resource personnel who authorize access to appropriate facilities.
   b. Coordinate with other significant institutional departments to assure all relevant services are provided. Call and/or meet with department contacts, e.g., Facilities Management, Public Safety, Energy Management, Buildings and Grounds, Plant Operations, Mail Center, to assure that buildings and rooms are unlocked, temperature systems are in place, special equipment is available and functioning, setup is appropriate, etc.
   c. Communicate assessment goals and objectives across the campus and in the community.
3. To implement appropriate public relations activities on behalf of the test center, it is important to:
   a. Heighten awareness of the test center and its services by providing accurate, up-to-date information via flyers, brochures, newsletters, web pages, correspondence, etc.
   b. Encourage appropriate use of testing services.

4. To achieve efficient, reliable, and timely test administration of current or prospective students of the institution (placement exams, institutional national exams, credit by exam, and classroom testing), test centers must:
   a. Develop effective working relationships with faculty and institutional departments.
   b. Collaborate and communicate with faculty and academic departments about policies and procedures for the administration of classroom exams and other assessments.
   c. Maintain appropriate records (e.g. test tracking logs, program statistics, and exam scores).

E. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT: The location, space, and layout of the testing center are vital to the accomplishment of its mission. In addition, the conditions under which tests are handled, stored, and administered are extremely important. The standardization of these conditions is essential to the integrity of every test administration.

1. To assure security of materials, the area where test materials are stored must:
   a. Be locked with no insecure points of access, e.g., windows, transoms, false ceilings, etc.
   b. Have access limited to key testing personnel.

2. At the test site, the Testing Operations Manager and/or staff must:
   a. Maintain a distraction-free testing environment; anticipate outside factors that may divert the attention of examinees, and take action to avoid these.
   b. Consider room temperature; attempt to correct as needed.
   c. Assure adequate lighting (using established guidelines).
   d. Provide adequate test room(s)/space for given volume.
   e. Provide seating and writing surfaces appropriate for test volume, test materials, candidate characteristics, ADA, and other special requirements.
   f. Seat examinees according to company specification, to limit their view of others' work.
   g. Check facility to assure readiness for testing.
   h. Have backup plans in case of emergency or problem, if possible. Contact company about shift to any backup plan.

3. Access to the test site requires that:
a. Adequate parking is available.
b. ADA requirements are met.

4. Special Accommodations:
   a. Test centers will provide testing to persons with disabilities, with
      accommodations approved by test companies, if possible.
   b. If the accommodation requires only a modification that will not
      disturb others, such as a pillow or an oversized table, the person
      may be tested in a room with other examinees.
   c. If the accommodation requires extra time and/or any
      accommodation(s) that may distract other examinees, such as
      reading aloud, a separate room will be provided, if available.
   d. For computerized testing: If a separate room is required but not
      available, the test center will attempt to schedule the test outside of
      regular testing hours, so the entire center does not need to be shut
      down. If this is not possible, then the room will be used only for the
      accommodated testing, and the test company will pay for a minimum
      number of test stations, as specified by contract between the test
      center and test company.

5. Computer-Based Testing: Equipment and Space
   a. Hardware and software requirements for computerized testing will
      be set at a basic level that allows usage by multiple testing company
      programs. Test companies wanting to utilize CBT centers are
      responsible for coordinating efforts among themselves to assure
      compliance with established base level requirements and adhere to
      accepted testing standards and practices.
   b. Specific equipment may be dedicated for use by one company's
      programs or, if agreed to by test center and companies, some
      equipment may be designated for use by multiple companies.
   c. Testing space may be utilized by multiple test companies, either
      simultaneously or at different times, as desired by test centers,
      provided that companies' requirements meet basic standards for its
      use and test centers comply with test program requirements.

II GUIDELINES FOR TEST CENTERS

The procedural guidelines listed here are intended to be standards of achievement; they
are listed as objectives rather than instructions for specific tasks, e.g., "time test
accurately" rather than "keep timing using [specific] method." Although they parallel much
of the procedural content from many test manuals, they are not totally reflective of these.
They are generic enough to conform to requirements of all test companies, referring to the
manual ("according to program requirements") where compliance with the standard is
defined by adherence to the company's stated procedure.

A. PAPER-BASED TESTING

1. Before the test, the Testing Operations Manager and/or staff:
a. Schedule adequate number of trained staff, per program requirements; have backup available, if possible.
b. Perform check of testing facilities and equipment for operating condition and security. Check rest rooms for security.
c. Receive/count materials; reconcile discrepancies.
d. Divide materials per room assignments.
e. Store materials securely.
f. Prepare staff for administrations with thorough review of manual.
g. Assure that all necessary equipment is in proper working order.
h. Make appropriate campus contacts.
i. Communicate necessary information to examinees.
j. Assure proper reporting address on roster; reconcile errors.
k. Display directional signs and room assignments on test day.

2. To facilitate the admitting process, test day staff:
   a. Admit examinees according to program requirements.
   b. Assign seats randomly according to program specifications.
   c. Call test company to resolve discrepancies.

3. To assure the best possible testing conditions during the administration and to assure standardization of the exam, test day supervisor and staff:
   a. Make general housekeeping announcements (location of rest rooms, etc.).
   b. Actively proctor test; take short breaks to assure alertness, but never leave a room unsupervised.
   c. Maintain security of materials; watch exits, especially near break times.
   d. Observe examinees without being obtrusive.
   e. Report and handle irregularities according to program requirements.
   f. Complete paperwork/seating chart.
   g. Distribute and collect materials individually, and reconcile counts at all times.
   h. Assist with questions and completion of answer sheet information.
   i. Read instructions clearly and verbatim. Answer examinee questions accurately.
   j. Assure accurate timing.
   k. Call company immediately, if necessary, to resolve questionable situations.

4. Following the test, the Testing Operations Manager and/or test day staff:
   a. Count and secure materials before dismissing examinees.
   b. Prepare reports/paperwork (vouchers, forms, etc.).
   c. Arrange pickup/shipping, as necessary (according to company specifications and local system).
   d. Retain test administration documents (i.e. rosters, seating charts, vouchers, reports) for at least one year.
   e. Follow up on payments from test company, if necessary.
   f. Handle staff questions and problems.
B. COMPUTERIZED TESTING

1. Before the test, the Testing Operations Manager and/or staff:
   a. Schedule adequate number of trained staff, per program requirements; have backup available.
   b. Unlock facilities; perform check of testing facilities and equipment for operating condition and security. Check rest rooms for security.
   c. Start administration computer and examinee work stations.
   d. Procure needed materials from secure storage based on daily roster.
   e. Complete necessary forms, prepare scratch paper packets, and assure that special equipment is in working order.
   f. Prepare and test video, audio, and imaging systems.
   g. Call technical support, if needed, to resolve system problems.

2. To facilitate the admitting process, test day staff:
   a. Start video and/or audio recording, if required.
   b. Direct examinees to location for storing non-testing items.
   c. Admit and sign in examinees according to program specifics.
   d. Collect required authorizations, vouchers, and forms.
   e. Obtain fingerprints, if required.
   f. Perform computer check-in functions based on program requirements.
   g. Capture examinee's image on computer when required. If this procedure fails, follow program guidelines.
   h. Read general and specific program instructions to each examinee.
   i. Distribute ancillary materials, e.g., scratch paper.
   j. Activate computer routines, as required by program.
   k. Escort examinees to work stations, and obtain verification of examinee and exam information.

3. To assure the best possible testing conditions during the administration and to assure standardization of the exam, test day supervisor and staff:
   a. Maintain security of exam questions, software, and equipment by monitoring examinees through glass viewing window, on video monitors, and/or by proctoring, according to program requirements. Restrict testing room access to examinees and testing staff.
   b. Perform required computer system functions, as needed.
   c. Handle questions and problems regarding procedures and directions only.
   d. Assure accurate timing when indicated by specific program requirements, e.g., handwritten essays or special administrations.
   e. Monitor scheduled and unscheduled examinee breaks.
   f. Manage and report irregularities when they occur.
   g. Provide breaks for testing staff.

4. At the end of an exam, test day staff:
a. Collect and verify materials and supplies.
b. Perform examinee-related procedures specific to program, e.g., have examinees sign out, score test, if required.
c. Ensure confidentiality of exam results, if discussed with examinee.
d. Perform required system functions at individual workstation to end exam.

5. Following the test, the Testing Operations Manager and/or staff:

   a. Reconcile materials based on exam/examinee counts.
   b. Sort, label, and store materials.
   c. Complete forms and send materials according to program specifics.
   d. Retain and store copies of completed test session forms.
   e. Inventory and order forms, as needed.
   f. Perform end of day procedures.
   g. Lock facilities.
   h. Complete and send materials and forms on weekly or monthly basis, depending on program specifics.
APPENDIX B: AAHE GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT

1. The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.

2. Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.

3. Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.

4. Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.

5. Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.

6. Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.

7. Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions people really care about.

8. Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.

9. Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.