Frequently Asked Questions about MCAS-Alt Portfolios

ELA-Writing:

Q. For the ELA-Writing, I can only find one entry point in Forms and Graphs Online. Can I select another skill?

A. For each text type there is only one entry point. This will allow the teacher to focus on the criteria of the ELA-Writing rubric and work on the student’s expressive communication.

Q. What does the requirement to submit “three distinct writing samples” mean?

A. “Three distinct writing samples” means that each sample must be based on a different topic. The student may not submit several versions or drafts of the same writing sample nor use the same picture or prompt three times. A student could submit, for example, one writing sample could be a newsletter, one could be based on a News-2-You article, and one could be based on the student’s activities over the weekend.

MCAS-Alt Skill Survey:

Q. Do I need to include any evidence with the completed skills survey?

A. You do not need to include evidence with the skills survey. You only need to include a printed version of the completed skills survey with each portfolio strand (or in the case of science and technology/engineering, one completed survey for the entire subject).

Q. Is a skill survey required for a science strand that was started last school year?

A. Even in cases where a science strand was started last school year, the science skills survey must be completed and included in the portfolio this school year.

Q. Are skill surveys required for all science practice areas or only the practices submitted for the portfolio?

A. All the science practices must be completed, but only once for the entire science and tech/eng portfolio. Although you only need to include at least three different practices for each core idea, the skills survey will help you know in which grade span to begin selecting entry points for each science practice.

“Next-Generation” High School Science and Technology/Engineering:

Q. What is required for the “next-generation” high school Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) portfolio?

A. For students in grades 9 or 10, the “next-gen” high school science and tech/eng requirements apply only to Biology and Introductory Physics (not Technology or Chemistry). For the “next-gen” disciplines, the teacher will need to select one discipline. Then:

- Select three core ideas in that discipline
- Within each core idea, select six entry points or access skills and document each entry point on an STE Summary Sheet.
- In addressing the six entry points in the core idea, at least three different science practices must be included
- Attach a piece of evidence (e.g., a work sample) to at least three of the summary sheets for each core idea
Q. Will additional evidence for science be scored if it is submitted?

A. All evidence related to the strand will be reviewed and scored according to the Guidelines for Scoring Student Portfolios. The first six summary sheets will be scored. However, if additional evidence is needed to complete the portfolio strand, and more summary sheets were submitted (either with/without evidence), those will also be scored.

Q. If I complete the STE Skills Survey once for the entire STE content area, as required, where do I place the completed STE skill survey in the portfolio?

A. The “next-gen” STE skills survey should be placed directly after the first Strand Cover Sheet for this content area.

Q. Can STE entry points be selected from different grade spans?

A. Yes. After completing the STE skills survey, you may find that your student works at different grade-spans depending on the task. It is fine to use entry points from different grade spans. We only request that you first try out the entry point(s) at the grade span indicated in the skills survey results.

Q. Can evidence from multiple practices be collected on the same day?

A. Yes, evidence from multiple practices can be collected on the same day.

“Legacy” High School Science and Technology/Engineering:

Q. Which high school STE disciplines are considered the “legacy” disciplines?

A. The term “legacy” refers to the high school STE disciplines of Chemistry and Technology/Engineering, which are still assessed based on the 2001/2006 STE curriculum framework. Portfolios that assess those disciplines will use the previous (i.e., “legacy”) STE portfolio requirements which include:

- documenting three standards, (one entry points or access skills for each standard) in one discipline
- including one data chart and two pieces of evidence for each entry point

Q. How do I access Forms and Graphs Online to submit a “legacy” high school STE portfolio?

A. Educators can access the Forms and Graphs Online program this link. Click on “Add a new strand,” then select either Chemistry or Technology/Engineering, complete the skills survey, then add to the strand as you would for Mathematics, ELA–Reading, or ELA–Language.

Q. Can a photograph be submitted as evidence in the STE portfolio?

A. A photograph or video is acceptable as evidence providing it documents the student’s performance of the entry point or access skill based on the core idea described on the STE Summary Sheet.