Purpose of This Manual

The Principal’s Manual for MCAS-Alt is intended to support administrators who oversee the administration of the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt) in their school or educational program. The MCAS-Alt is a component of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) that assesses the academic achievement of a relatively small number of students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take the standard MCAS tests, even with test accommodations, but are nevertheless required to participate in statewide assessments. The process of compiling an MCAS-Alt portfolio is an important opportunity for educators to identify educational goals for students who are designated by their IEP teams and in their 504 plans to participate in alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards and to share information about students’ progress in meeting those challenging goals.

This manual highlights the critical dates, activities, and oversight procedures that must be accomplished each year, and the steps needed to ensure that complete and accurate portfolios are submitted each spring. It identifies areas in which resources and attention will be needed to support the instruction and assessment of students with significant cognitive disabilities.

The cooperation of administrators will be essential in assisting the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to report effectively on the progress and performance of all students to parents, schools, and the public; and to assist schools in developing challenging programs of instruction for students with the most significant disabilities.

Thank you for participating in this vital component of the statewide assessment system.
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Summary of Important Dates Regarding the 2021 MCAS-Alt

(Also see the Timeline on next page)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before Submission</th>
<th>Order MCAS-Alt submission materials</th>
<th>January 4–15, 2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Receive submission materials (binders, etc.)</td>
<td>Week of February 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Order additional submission materials, as needed</td>
<td>February 22 through March 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission</td>
<td>Schedule UPS pickup at <a href="http://www.mcasservicecenter.com">www.mcasservicecenter.com</a></td>
<td>March 25 through 3 p.m., March 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deadline for UPS pickup</td>
<td>5:00 p.m., April 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results Reported</td>
<td>Results posted electronically in Dropbox Central</td>
<td>Week of June 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score Appeals</td>
<td>File an appeal if a scoring discrepancy is noted (Note: school must have retained a photocopy of portfolio)</td>
<td>5:00 p.m., June 25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contact Information

MCAS Service Center

**Hours:** 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday–Friday  
**Phone:** 800-737-5103  
**Email:** mcas@cognia.org  
**Web:** [www.cognia.org](http://www.cognia.org)  
**MCAS Service Center** [www.mcasservicecenter.com](http://www.mcasservicecenter.com)

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

**Hours:** 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday–Friday  
**Phone:** 781-338-3625  
**Fax:** 781-338-3630  
**Email:** mcas@doe.mass.edu  
**Web:** [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/)
Suggested Timeline for Principals

2020

September/October
- Encourage teachers who are compiling MCAS-Alt portfolios to register for a DESE-sponsored fall educator training session (announcements will be sent by email to administrators and teachers, and included in the MCAS-Alt News).
- Assist educators in getting started on the MCAS-Alt process for their students.
- Register for a Department-sponsored fall virtual Administrator’s Overview session on MCAS and MCAS-Alt for students with disabilities.

November/December
- Ensure that teachers conduct the MCAS-Alt Skills Survey prior to identifying measurable outcomes for their student’s portfolios.

2021

January
- Order MCAS-Alt submission materials between January 4−15.
- Encourage teachers to register for a DESE-sponsored virtual portfolio review session.

February
- Three-ring binders and submission materials shipped to schools; after receiving and checking the shipment of, complete online Principal’s Certification of Proper MCAS-Alt Administration (PCPA)−Part 1.
- Ensure that the school has received a sufficient number of binders and submission materials, especially for newly enrolled students taking the MCAS-Alt.
- Order additional MCAS-Alt submission materials through the MCAS Service Center, if needed.
- Encourage teachers to register for a DESE-sponsored virtual portfolio review session.
- Monitor teachers’ progress on compiling their students’ portfolios (see Supporting Teachers Who Conduct the MCAS-Alt on page 8 of this manual).

March/April
- Verify that teachers are completing their students’ portfolios.
- Order additional submission materials, if needed.
- Schedule your school or program’s UPS pickup through the MCAS Service Center by 3:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 31.
- Deadline for portfolio pick-up from schools: 5:00 p.m., Thursday, April 1.

June
- Retrieve preliminary results from the school’s DropBox in the Department’s Gateway Portal (mid-June).
- Download Portfolio Feedback Forms (PFFs) from your school’s DropBox.
- Share PFFs with teachers who created the portfolio(s).
- Review the MCAS-Alt score appeals process (see page 9, MCAS-Alt Score Appeals).
- If needed, submit score appeal(s) by 5:00 p.m., Friday, June 25 (Score Appeal results will be mailed to principals at the end of July.)
MCAS Participation Guidelines

As you are aware, students must participate in statewide assessments that correspond with the grade in which they are reported in the Department’s Student Information Management System (SIMS). The decision regarding how a student will participate in MCAS and whether he or she will require an alternate assessment is made annually in each subject scheduled for assessment by the student’s IEP team, or by the educators responsible for developing 504 plans, as appropriate, using the guidelines provided in the Decision-Making Tool for MCAS Participation by Students with Disabilities on page 5.

Assessment participation decisions should be reviewed at least annually and may be revised each time the team meets. The student’s IEP or 504 plan must include separate determinations in each subject scheduled for assessment in the coming year. A student may be designated by the team to take the computer- or paper-based MCAS test in one subject and the MCAS-Alt in another.

Teams should not base a decision to administer the MCAS-Alt solely on whether the student:

- has not been provided instruction in the general curriculum;
- is absent an excessive number of days;
- has a specific disability (e.g., all students with intellectual disabilities should not automatically be designated for the MCAS-Alt);
- is placed in a program or classroom where it is expected that all students will take the MCAS-Alt;
- has taken an alternate assessment previously (since this is an annual decision);
- has previously failed the MCAS test;
- is an English learner;
- is economically disadvantaged or is in foster care;
- requires the use of assistive technology or an alternative augmentative communication system; or
- attends a school in which the IEP team may have been influenced to designate the student for an alternate assessment so the school can receive disproportionate credit toward the school’s accountability rating.

One Percent Statewide “Cap” on MCAS-Alt Participation

As you are aware, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) places a statewide cap of 1 percent of the total number of assessed students who may take alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards. This cap applies only to the basic MCAS-Alt, not to “grade-level” and “competency” portfolios which are discussed separately here. A memo from the Commissioner, as well as guidelines, a Decision-Making Tool, and data on the percentage of students in each district who took the MCAS-Alt, are provided to districts to assist in meeting this ESSA requirement. A presentation for the annual training of IEP teams is also available, as well as sample parent notification letters (with translations) which districts must give or send to parents and guardians of students taking the MCAS-Alt.

The Commissioner has requested that districts review this information, including guidance and criteria for IEP teams to consider in determining which students should take an alternate assessment,
and may be asked to submit a written justification and assurances if the district plans to exceed one percent of their assessed students who will take the MCAS-Alt.

The one-percent requirement represents an important opportunity for districts and IEP teams to revisit decisions to designate students for the MCAS-Alt if the student may be able to access instruction and assessments based on grade-level achievement standards. It is reasonable to assume that some students who were designated for the MCAS-Alt in the past may be more suited to take either computer- or paper-based MCAS tests with accommodations, especially since students who take the MCAS-Alt in high school are not eligible to meet the state’s requirements to earn a diploma. It is the Department’s goal to provide as many students as possible with an opportunity to learn (and be assessed on) grade-level curriculum; and to ensure that students with disabilities in high school are not deprived of the opportunity to earn a diploma.

Last year, the Department was granted a waiver of this provision by the U.S. Department of Education with the understanding that it would continue to train districts on these requirements. The Department is applying for an extension of this waiver for the 2020-2021 school year.
Decision-Making Tool for MCAS Participation by Students with Disabilities

The decision flowchart shown below may be useful to IEP teams and individuals responsible for developing 504 plans to make annual decisions regarding appropriate student participation in MCAS. Separate decisions must be made in each content area being assessed: ELA, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering.

1 See the 2021 Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt for additional details on and examples of “complex and significant disabilities.”
2 See the MCAS Grade-level and Competency Portfolio Manual for details on submission of “grade-level” and “competency” portfolios.
3 Students who take the MCAS-Alt in high school will not earn a Competency Determination in the assessed subject and therefore will not be eligible to earn a high school diploma.
Principal’s Responsibilities for the MCAS-Alt

Principals are responsible for conducting the following activities:

- Ensuring that all students with disabilities participate in MCAS as listed in their IEP or 504 plan;
- Monitoring the alternate assessment process to ensure that student work is neither duplicated, altered, nor fabricated in a way that provides information that is false or portrays the student’s performance inaccurately;
- Identifying qualified school personnel to administer the MCAS-Alt and ensure that all staff responsible for compiling and submitting the portfolio receive training prior to each administration, regardless of past experience conducting similar assessments;
- Ensuring that adequate school resources are allocated, and staff coordinated to guarantee appropriate participation in, and timely submission of, MCAS-Alt portfolios. Resources should include the allocation of sufficient time to compile evidence and enter data by the submission deadline;
- Ordering MCAS-Alt materials (in January) and reviewing the Materials Summary and the contents of shipments (in February), which include:
  - three-ring binders (one for each student’s portfolio)
  - plastic envelopes (one for each portfolio)
  - an envelope addressed to the principal containing shipping labels, individual Student Information Booklets (SIB), Materials Summary form, and score appeal information;
- Scheduling a UPS pick-up through the MCAS Service Center by 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 31 for pick-up no later than 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 1, 2021.
- Completing the online PCPA−Part 1 after reviewing the Materials Summary;
- Ensuring that each student’s MCAS-Alt forms are accurately completed, including the MCAS-Alt Student Identification Booklets.
- Submitting MCAS-Alt portfolios by the deadline and completing Part 2 of the PCPA which provides assurances that all information is accurate, authentic, and complete for each student.
- Reporting MCAS-Alt irregularities in cases where it is alleged that an MCAS-Alt administration was compromised by contacting the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education at 781-338-3625 or by email at mcas@doe.mass.edu.
  - When this occurs, the Department will request a local fact-finding investigation into the alleged irregularity and a written report based on the results of the investigation within an established timeline.
Supporting Teachers Who Conduct the MCAS-Alt

Principals can support teachers who are conducting the MCAS-Alt by

- encouraging an early start to the portfolio process (i.e., identifying students taking the MCAS-Alt, setting up student folders, and identifying instructional goals and assessment activities);
- encouraging collaboration among general education, special education, and related services staff, including paraprofessionals, to collect data and evidence for the portfolios;
- providing teachers with opportunities to attend a DESE-sponsored fall virtual training session (October) and winter virtual portfolio review session(s) (January/February/March), including classroom coverage, a quiet space, and adequate equipment for viewing and participating in the sessions;
- providing flexible scheduling and planning time throughout the year to work on portfolios;
- appointing an MCAS-Alt lead educator to find answers, give advice, and be available to assist colleagues as needed; and
- reviewing portfolios periodically to ensure that portfolios are on schedule to be completed.

Principals should be aware that teachers compiling MCAS-Alt portfolios are responsible for the following:

- identifying challenging instructional goals and documenting the outcomes of activities related to each goal;
- collecting evidence in the form of work samples for the portfolio that reflect each instructional goal;
- collecting instructional data and calculating the percentages of accuracy and independence for each student on each activity, and recording this information using the Online Forms and Graphs program;
- repeating these steps for each “portfolio strand” required for the content area being assessed for a student in that grade; and
- completing all required forms, including the Portfolio Cover Sheet, Strand Cover Sheets, Student Identification Booklet, Parent Verification Form, student introduction, consent form to photograph the student (if needed), MCAS-Alt Skills Survey, work sample description forms, and data charts.
Scoring MCAS-Alt Portfolios

After portfolios are submitted each spring, they are reviewed and scored at a scoring center sponsored by the Department and Cognia, its test contractor. The Department’s publication entitled Guidelines for Scoring MCAS-Alt Portfolios provides detailed information on the scoring process used to review and rate each student’s portfolio. Scoring occurs each April and early May under the Department’s direct supervision, using trained and qualified scorers. Scorers are monitored continually for their accuracy and consistency.

Instructions for Viewing and Downloading MCAS-Alt Preliminary Results

To view the MCAS-Alt Portfolio Feedback Forms (PFFs) in mid-June from the previous spring:
- principals must log in to the Department’s Gateway Portal
- click on Application List
- choose DropBox Central
- choose school name

For assistance logging in, see your district or organization Directory Administrator.

Final results are posted in mid-September and reflect changes based upon discrepancies reported to the Department and the findings of MCAS-Alt score appeals (see section below on score appeals). Scored student portfolios are returned to schools in September and must be stored securely.

MCAS-Alt Score Appeals

Once preliminary results are reported on the Department’s Gateway Portal in mid-June, a principal or their designees may submit a score appeal if there is evidence that a portfolio was scored incorrectly. A photocopy of the portfolio must be kept at the school for a score appeal to be submitted. The deadline for submission of score appeals is 5:00 p.m. on Friday, June 25, 2021. Score appeals may not be submitted after this date.

Results of the MCAS-Alt score appeals will be mailed to schools by the end of July.

The following materials must be reviewed by the principal, director, or superintendent before submitting a score appeal:
- the Portfolio Feedback Form (PFF) from the scored portfolio, available in schools’ Drop Box the week of June 14, 2021;
- the photocopy of the portfolio kept by the school to demonstrate that the score on the PFF does not represent the portfolio accurately;
- the MCAS-Alt score appeal application (available here in mid-June); and
- frequently-asked questions about MCAS-Alt score appeals.
Reporting Results of the MCAS-Alt

Achievement Levels

For each student who takes the MCAS-Alt, one of the following achievement levels will be reported in each content area of the portfolio:

**Grades 3 through High School (Alternate Achievement Standards for MCAS-Alt)**

- **Incomplete**—Insufficient evidence and information was included in the portfolio to allow an achievement level to be determined in the content area.
- **Awareness**—Students demonstrate very little understanding of standards and core knowledge topics contained in the Massachusetts curriculum framework for the content area. Students require extensive prompting and assistance, and their performance is mostly inaccurate.
- **Emerging**—Students demonstrate a simple understanding that is below grade-level expectations of a limited number of standards and core knowledge topics contained in the Massachusetts curriculum framework for the content area. Students require frequent prompting and assistance, and their performance is limited and inconsistent.
- **Progressing**—Students demonstrate a partial understanding that is below grade-level expectations of selected standards and core knowledge topics contained in the Massachusetts curriculum framework for the content area. Students are steadily learning new knowledge, skills, and concepts. Students require minimal prompting and assistance, and their performance is basically accurate.

**Grades 3–10 (Grade-Level Achievement Standards for “next-generation” MCAS):**

- **Partially Meets Expectations**—Students performing at this level on this test partially meet grade-level expectations for knowledge, skills, and understanding. These students may need coordinated assistance and/or additional instruction to succeed at the next grade level.
- **Meeting Expectations**—Students performing at this level on this test meet grade-level expectations for knowledge, skills, and understanding, and are academically prepared to succeed at the next grade level.
- **Exceeding Expectations**—Students performing at this level on this test exceed grade-level expectations for knowledge, skills, and understanding, and are academically well prepared to succeed at the next grade level.

**High School “legacy” MCAS Retests, and “legacy” High School STE Chemistry and Technology/Engineering (Grade-Level Achievement Standards for “legacy” MCAS):**

- **Needs Improvement**—Students demonstrate a partial understanding of grade-level subject matter and solve some simple problems.
- **Proficient**—Students demonstrate a solid understanding of challenging grade-level subject matter and solve a wide variety of problems.
- **Advanced**—Students demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of challenging grade-level subject matter and provide sophisticated solutions to complex problems.
School and District Results

District level results include achievement-level results for students attending each school in a district, as well as for those students who reside in the district and attend publicly funded out-of-district placements, such as educational collaboratives or approved and unapproved private special education schools.

To meet federal requirements for reporting, both aggregated and disaggregated results of statewide assessments must be reported for students taking the MCAS and MCAS-Alt. The results of MCAS-Alt are included in school, district, and statewide reports of MCAS results as achievement levels only. The alternate achievement levels of Incomplete, Awareness, Emerging, and Progressing will be included in the lowest achievement level for school and district reporting.

Parent/Guardian Reports

The MCAS-Alt Parent/Guardian Reports were updated in 2018 to conform to the new Parent/Guardian Reports for the “next-generation” MCAS. In early fall, districts receive shipments of MCAS-Alt Parent/Guardian Reports, which provide a detailed description of a child’s score in each area of the MCAS-Alt scoring rubric and an overall achievement level in each subject.

Districts are responsible for sending a parent/guardian report to the home of each student who took the MCAS-Alt. If the student is also reported as an English learner, a copy in the student’s home language must also be sent. Print copies of the translations of the report “shell” in the state’s ten most frequently spoken languages are provided in the shipment of MCAS-Alt Parent/Guardian Reports. Translated report “shells” are also available online in ten languages.

School and District Accountability

MCAS-Alt results are included in school and district accountability, together with the results of students who took standard MCAS tests (excluding the 2019-2020 school year for which no assessments were administered, and no results reported). Details on the state’s accountability system are available here. Accountability determinations for schools that administer “next-generation” MCAS tests in grades 3–8 and 10 will be based on a combination of indicators, including:

- average scaled MCAS scores in ELA, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering (this replaces Composite Performance Index points used previously);
- average student growth percentile (SGP) in ELA and mathematics;
- progress toward attaining English language proficiency for students reported as English learners; and
- percentage of chronically absent students.

Table 1 shows the score scale for next-generation MCAS tests. The use of average scaled MCAS scores as an accountability indicator necessitates assigning an average scaled score to the results of students who took the MCAS-Alt in each subject, as well as students who submitted “grade-level” and “competency” portfolios, as shown in Table 2.
### Table 1

**“Next-Generation” MCAS Tests**  
**Scaled Score Ranges**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard MCAS Achievement level</th>
<th>Scaled Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Meeting Expectations (NM)</td>
<td>440-469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Meeting Expectations (PM)</td>
<td>470-499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Expectations (M)</td>
<td>500-529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceeding Expectations (E)</td>
<td>530-560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2

**“Next-Generation” MCAS Scaled Score Equivalents for MCAS-Alt**  
(ELA and mathematics (grades 3–10) and STE (grades 5 and 8 only))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MCAS-Alt Achievement Level, based on alternate achievement standards</th>
<th>Assigned MCAS Scaled Score Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete (INP)</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness (AWR)</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging (EMG)</td>
<td>485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressing (PRG)</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Storage and Destruction of Returned MCAS-Alt Portfolios

In September of each year, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) returns scored MCAS-Alt portfolios to the school that submitted them in the spring.

Once returned, an MCAS-Alt portfolio becomes part of a student’s temporary record and must be kept by the school in a secure location. Under the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations, a temporary record contains everything that is not in the transcript and that is “clearly of importance to the educational process.”

Principals or their designees are required to periodically review temporary student records, and to destroy portions that are “misleading, dated, or irrelevant.” Prior to destroying these records, schools must give parents and eligible students written notice of the intent to destroy records, and of the parents’ right to receive copies of these records before they are destroyed. (603 CMR 23.06(2)).

Regardless of the obligation to review and periodically purge temporary records of “misleading, dated, or irrelevant” documents, schools must destroy students’ temporary records no later than seven years after the student transfers, graduates, or withdraws from public school (i.e., a student’s temporary records must be destroyed within seven years after the student exits). However, schools may destroy “misleading, dated, or irrelevant” documents prior to this time by providing written notice to the student and his/her parent of the approximate date of destruction of the record and of their right to receive these materials in whole or in part prior to their destruction.

The Department recommends the following time periods for schools to retain MCAS-Alt portfolios after the Department has returned them to the schools, based on the general view that, over time, the importance of the portfolios to the educational process diminishes and ultimately becomes dated and irrelevant.

- grades 3–8 ELA and Mathematics portfolios: retain two years after return of portfolios to school
- grades 5 and 8 Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) portfolios:
  - retain three years after grade 5 STE portfolios are returned to school
  - retain two years after grade 8 STE portfolios are returned to school
- high school ELA, Mathematics, and STE portfolios: retain two years after the student exits public education

Despite these recommendations, schools and districts should be aware of circumstances in which it may be prudent to retain MCAS-Alt portfolios longer than the above recommended time periods and treat the destruction of MCAS-Alt portfolios for specific students on a case-by-case basis. However, in all cases, records must be destroyed within the seven-year period described above.

Please Note:

Districts are reminded that they must furnish a copy of the portfolio to the eligible student or parent upon request, per (603 CMR 23.07(2)).

Additionally, when a student is transferring from one Massachusetts district to another, the Department recommends that the previous district send the student’s current and/or most recent MCAS-Alt portfolio to the new district.
Preparing Portfolios for Submission

MCAS-Alt Materials Shipment to Schools

In February, materials, and instructions for the submission of MCAS-Alt portfolios will be delivered to schools. Principals should check the shipment immediately upon receipt and verify that the number of students that was entered on the MCAS-Alt Enrollment Verification Form in January has not changed.

The shipment will include the following MCAS-Alt materials:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity Provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Materials Summary</td>
<td>1 per school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three-ring portfolio binder</td>
<td>1 per student for whom MCAS-Alt materials were ordered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Identification Booklet (SIB)</td>
<td>1 per student for whom MCAS-Alt materials were ordered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIB Instruction Sheet</td>
<td>1 per school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labeled MCAS-Alt student portfolio envelope</td>
<td>1 per student for whom MCAS-Alt materials were ordered; the information on the label must be completed before submitting the portfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPS Shipping Instructions and pre-printed UPS Shipping Label(s)</td>
<td>1 label per 10 portfolios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-printed Student ID Label</td>
<td>1 per student in grades 4–8 who participated in MCAS-Alt in your school the previous year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCAS-Alt Score Appeal FAQ</td>
<td>1 per school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Completing the Materials Summary

Upon receipt of your shipment, principals or their designee should immediately inventory the materials and complete the Materials Summary to indicate the quantity of materials received. If there are discrepancies between the totals listed on the Materials Summary and the count from the inventory of materials, the discrepancies must be reported to the MCAS Service Center within two business days of receipt of the order.

Principals Certification of Proper Administration (PCPA)

Principals will receive instructions to go online and certify that the quantity of materials received is accurate. You will be asked to complete Part 1 ONLY. You will be asked to complete Part 2 when you are ready to ship your materials.

Ordering Additional Materials (if necessary)

To order additional MCAS-Alt materials, locate the MP Ship Code on the Materials Summary and go to www.mcasservicecenter.com. Click on “MCAS Alternate Assessment,” then click on “Additional Materials” and place your order. The deadline to order additional materials is Friday, March 26, 2021.
Before submitting portfolios from the school or program:

1. **Prepare the three-ring portfolio binders.**
   Attach all required portfolio forms and evidence for each student’s portfolio in a single three-ring binder. Label all audio/visual and other unattached materials with the student’s name and SASID. The completed 2021 Portfolio Cover Sheet must be included in the front of each portfolio.

2. **Complete one MCAS-Alt Student Identification Booklet (SIB) for each portfolio** (see sample in Appendix A).
   The SIB will be used to document a student’s participation in the MCAS-Alt. Submit one SIB for each student who participates in the MCAS-Alt. Do not submit a standard MCAS answer booklet for a student participating in the MCAS-Alt.
   a. For each student scheduled to participate in the MCAS-Alt, complete pages 1 and 2 of the SIB according to the instructions enclosed in the materials shipment.
   b. Insert each completed SIB in the front inside cover flap of the student’s portfolio.

3. **Complete the Materials Summary.**
   Complete the Materials Summary according to the “After Testing” directions on the form. Make a copy of the completed form for your records.

4. **Pack materials for return.**
   Put each student’s portfolio in a large plastic bag. Do NOT seal the large plastic envelope for each portfolio. Label each large plastic envelope in designated areas. Return unused binders and SIBs.

5. **Schedule your school’s pick-up of MCAS-Alt materials.**
   Schedule a UPS pick-up of materials, through MCAS service center no later than 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 31. UPS must pick up all MCAS-Alt materials no later than 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 1. If your materials are ready to be submitted earlier than the deadline, you are encouraged to schedule a UPS pickup any time after March 24.

6. **Retain copies of documents** (i.e., packing slips, material summary, printout of PCPA, UPS tracking numbers and confirmations).
Frequently Asked Questions about the MCAS-Alt

1. If a student who was designated for the MCAS-Alt moves into my school late in the school year, what do we do?
   A. If a student moves in from another Massachusetts district and will take the MCAS-Alt, the receiving school is responsible for completing and submitting the portfolio to the best of their ability. The Department encourages the receiving school to contact the sending school and arrange for the student’s portfolio-in-progress to be sent to the receiving school. If a student has moved to a Massachusetts school from another state, the teacher should attempt to collect evidence in the time remaining before the submission deadline and submit what has been collected.

2. Is there a date beyond which a transfer student would be exempt from participating in the MCAS-Alt?
   A. No, there is no cut-off date beyond which a student is exempt from the assessment, unless the student moves in after the date of portfolio submission (i.e., April 1, 2021).

3. How does a transfer student’s score affect my school’s results?
   A. The transfer student will be counted either as a participant or non-participant in the new school, depending on whether a portfolio is submitted. The achievement level results will be reported to the new school, but if the student has not attended the school for an entire academic year, the student’s results are included only at the district level.

4. How should the school report a medically absent student?
   A. The Student Identification Booklet includes a box entitled “Not Tested Status” that must be completed if a student will not participate in the assessment for a medical reason. Documentation must be kept at the school for students who did not participate for medical reasons. An absent student will be reported as a non-participant in the assessment.

5. Must the district provide a copy of the portfolio to the parent, if requested?
   A. Parents are required to be invited to view their child’s MCAS-Alt portfolio before it is submitted each year and to sign the Verification Form. A copy of their child’s portfolio must be furnished by the district to the parent/guardian, if requested.

6. May a parent prohibit their child’s school from submitting an MCAS-Alt portfolio for the student?
   A. Schools are expected to submit an MCAS-Alt portfolio for each student designated for an alternate assessment in their last approved IEP. Parents may not impose a restriction on their child’s ability to participate in the MCAS-Alt, nor may parents restrict the school from submitting the student’s portfolio.
Appendix A: Completing the Student Information Booklet (SIB)