2025-2026 Schedule Guidance for NSCAS General and NSCAS Alternate

The 2025-2026 NSCAS Assessment Windows

Test Administration/Important Dates	Dates
Acacia Manage Available	March 2, 2026
Test Tickets Available	March 3, 2026
NSCAS General Test Window	March 23, 2026–May 1, 2026
NSCAS Alternate Test Window	March 23, 2026–May 1, 2026

These guidelines are intended to assist districts and schools in effectively scheduling the online administration of the NSCAS General and NSCAS Alternate assessments.

NSCAS online assessments are untimed, allowing students to take as much time as needed to complete each content area. This flexibility ensures that all students have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge without the pressure of time constraints.

Testing Times

The table below outlines the number of test questions and the recommended testing time for each content area. These time estimates are based on average completion times from previous test administrations and are intended to support scheduling decisions.

While most students complete the assessments within the recommended timeframes, individual needs may vary. Schools should account for these differences when planning test sessions to ensure all students have adequate time to finish.

NSCAS General

Grade Level	Content Area	Recommended Testing Time for Connected Model	Approx. Number of Questions for Connected	Recommended Testing Time: Independent Model	Approx. Number of Questions for Independent
Grades 3–8	Mathematics	60 minutes	45	40 minutes	35
Grades 3–8	English Language Arts	70 minutes	45	45 minutes	35
Grade 5	Science	60 minutes	35-38	60 minutes	35-38
Grade 8	Science	60 minutes	37-39	60 minutes	37-39

NSCAS Alternate

Grade Level	Content Area	Approx. Number of Questions	Recommended Testing Time
Grades 3–8, 11	Mathematics	Grade 3: 34 Grades 4-8, 11: 36	60 minutes
Grades 3–8, 11	English Language Arts	36	60 minutes
Grades 5 & 8	Science	33	60 minutes
Grade 11	Science	36	60 minutes

Test Session Recommendations for the NSCAS General Assessment

Because NSCAS General assessments are adaptive, students must respond to each question before the next one appears. At any point during a session, proctors may end the test, which pauses the assessment. Students can resume later or on another day by starting a new session. This functionality provides schools with flexibility in scheduling.

Analysis of previous administrations indicates that students perform best when testing is divided into **two to three sessions within a five-day period**. For example, for an estimated 90-minute test, schools might schedule:

- Two sessions of 45 minutes each, or
- Three sessions of 30 minutes each.

While completing the test in a single session is allowed, it is **not recommended**.

NSCAS NEBRASKA STUDENT-CENTERED ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Tests Session Recommendations for the NSCAS Alternate Assessment

The NSCAS Alternate assessments are untimed, but each content area is designed to be completed in approximately 60 minutes. It is recommended to schedule one content area per day to minimize fatigue and allow students to work at their own pace. Morning sessions are preferable when students are most alert, and breaks should be provided as needed. Each assessment is proctored one-on-one, and the proctor reads every question aloud to the student. Students may pause and resume testing within the test window, and accommodations outlined in their IEP should be implemented. Testing should occur in a quiet, distraction-free environment with familiar staff available.

Guidelines for Scheduling Test Sessions:

- Estimated test-taking time does not include activities such as distributing test tickets, starting the session, launching secure browsers, or student log-in.
- Younger students may require multiple sessions to complete testing.
- Tests can be paused at any time for individual students within a session.
- Additional sessions can be created for students who need extra time.
- After 14.5 minutes of inactivity, students receive a warning and are automatically logged out.
- Sessions can be scheduled at any time during the school day but avoid starting late in the afternoon.
- Schedules should prioritize student needs rather than adult convenience; proctors should not pace students.
- Plans must account for students who may need additional time to finish.
- For NSCAS General ELA, the number of passages varies from 4 to 7. Proctors may give time warnings to prevent students from starting a new passage near the end of the session. Suggested warnings:
    - “Students, there are ten minutes left. Do not start another passage.”
    - “Students, there are five minutes left. Do not start a new passage.”
- For NSCAS General Science, proctors may give similar warnings to avoid starting a new task near the end of the session. Suggested warnings:
    - “Students, there are ten minutes left. Do not start another task.”
    - “Students, there are five minutes left. Do not start a new task.”
- Scheduled downtime for maintenance and updates will be communicated in advance.
- Most students should not need more than three hours to complete one subject. Districts may stop a student at three hours unless:
    - The student is actively engaged in testing.
    - The student has a documented need for extended time.
    - The student requests additional time.