**DESE logo
Participation Guidelines for the   
Spring 2025 Grade 10 ELA and Mathematics Tests**

The December 11, 2024 [FAQ document](https://www.doe.mass.edu/commissioner/spec-advisories/2024-1211student-cd-update.html) related to the Competency Determination states the following in the answer to question 10:

Participation in the MCAS is required by federal and state law and the ballot question did not change this requirement. DESE’s accountability system will continue to use assessment participation rates (and the resulting achievement and growth data) in its annual determinations made through the district and school accountability system.

Schools should also note that the FAQ document linked above provides the following guidance in the answer to question 4. Based on this guidance, in addition to the eligibility below, students may also participate for local uses or requirements, if applicable.

Q4: Are school districts allowed to use a student’s scores on high school MCAS tests as part of their local graduation requirements apart from the Competency Determination?

A4: Yes. The establishment of local graduation requirements is at the sole discretion of school districts.

Schools administering tests to students in grades 11 and 12 may wish to administer the grade 10 tests to students instead of the March retests (refer to the [March retest participation guidelines](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/highschool.html)).

Questions about these participation guidelines should be directed to [mcas@mass.gov](mailto:mcas@mass.gov).

| **Eligibility** | **Participation Guidelines** |
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| **Required to participate** | * All first-time grade 10 students (Results will be used for accountability purposes and determining [Adams Scholarship](https://www.doe.mass.edu/scholarships/adams/default.html) and [Koplik Award](http://www.doe.mass.edu/scholarships/mastery/) eligibility.) * Students in grade 11 or 12[[1]](#footnote-2) who were reported as grade 9 students the previous school year in SIMS and were not counted[[2]](#footnote-3) in a school’s participation results |
| **Eligible to participate** | * Students repeating grade 10 and students in grade 11 who have **not** **yet** **taken** the grade 10 ELA and/or Mathematics test(s) and are attempting to qualify for the [Adams Scholarship](https://www.doe.mass.edu/scholarships/adams/default.html) and/or the [Koplik Award](http://www.doe.mass.edu/scholarships/mastery/) (including students who transferred into a school after grade 10) * Students repeating grade 10 and students in grade 11 who **have previously taken** the grade 10 ELA and/or Mathematics test(s) and are attempting to raise their score(s) to qualify for the [Koplik Award](http://www.doe.mass.edu/scholarships/mastery/) (including students who transferred into a school after grade 10) * **Grade 10 ELA only:** Students who are repeating grade 10, and students in grade 11 or 12 who are attempting to qualify for the [Seal of Biliteracy](https://www.doe.mass.edu/scholarships/biliteracy/) |
| **Not eligible to participate** | * Grade 9 students[[3]](#footnote-4) * Grade 12 students |

1. Results for grade 12 students will be reported according to the regular grade 10 reporting schedule. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. For the purpose of these guidelines, a student is defined as having counted in a school’s participation results if they were reported on an MCAS Student Roster (All Subjects) (report “PE617” in Edwin Analytics) for the previous spring’s grade 10 ELA or Mathematics test with any of the following Test Status Codes: T (Tested), NTA (Not Tested Absent), NTL (Not Tested First-Year EL), NTM (Not Tested Medically Documented Absent), or the achievement level INV (test results were invalidated). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. For repeating grade 9 students to be eligible to participate, their status must be changed from grade 9 to grade 10 by the June SIMS submission. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)