**DESE logo
June 2025 High School Science   
Participation Guidelines**

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 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.

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

| **Eligibility** | **Participation Guidelines** |
| --- | --- |
| **Required to participate** | * Grade 10 students who have **not yet** taken a high school science test (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.) |
| **Eligible to participate** | * Students in grade 9 who have completed or are expected to complete a high school course in biology or introductory physics and have **not** **yet** taken a high school science test (Results will be used for accountability purposes and to determine [Adams Scholarship](https://www.doe.mass.edu/scholarships/adams/default.html) and the [Koplik Award](http://www.doe.mass.edu/scholarships/mastery/) eligibility.) * Students repeating grade 10 and students in grade 11 who have **not** **yet** taken a high school science test 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** a high school science test and are attempting to raise their score to qualify for the [Koplik Award](http://www.doe.mass.edu/scholarships/mastery/) (including students who transferred into a school after grade 10) |
| **Not eligible to participate** | * Grade 9 students who have not yet completed a biology or introductory physics course * Grade 12 students (except as noted below) |

**Note:** A small number of students in grade 11 or 12 who skipped grade 10 must participate in the June science administration for accountability purposes. Results for these grade 11 students may be used to determine [Adams Scholarship](https://www.doe.mass.edu/scholarships/adams/default.html) and [Koplik Award](http://www.doe.mass.edu/scholarships/mastery/) eligibility; grade 12 results cannot be used to determine scholarship eligibility.

**Additional Student Participation Guidelines for the 2025 MCAS High School Science Tests**

Guidance on Participation in Biology or Introductory Physics

A student may not test in more than one subject in the June administration.

Guidance on Participation in Grade 9 or 10

Because eligibility for the Adams Scholarship is based on students’ first-time MCAS test scores, DESE recommends that schools notify all students and their parents/guardians about this criterion, regardless of whether students participate in grade 9 or 10.

Accountability Determinations for Science

School and district accountability determinations are made when students complete grade 10, using the tests they took in grade 9 or 10. Note that determinations also include students in grade 11 or 12 who were in grade 9 the previous school year.