

Frequently Asked Questions

Ohio's Academic Content Standards - Extended (OACS-E)

Q: What are the Ohio Academic Content Standards – Extended (OACS-E)?

A: Ohio's Academic Content Standards help teachers ensure their students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful by providing clear goals for student learning. The Extended Standards, as they are commonly called, provide statements of what a student with a significant cognitive disability is expected to understand and be able to do to make progress in the grade-level academic content standards. The extended standards are intended to demonstrate practical and functional application of the state standards.

Q: Why were the Extended Standards developed?

A: In June 2010, Ohio adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English language arts and Mathematics, as well as revisions to the Ohio Science and Social Studies standards. Recognizing the need to make the academic content standards accessible for **all** students, Ohio has taken this opportunity to develop extensions to both the Common Core and Revised state standards.

The extended standards are designed to help teachers provide meaningful access to the state academic content standards for instruction of students with significant cognitive disabilities, while concurrently allowing the development of an adaptive on-demand performance-based alternate assessment. They help ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities receive access to multiple means of learning and opportunities to demonstrate knowledge, but retain the rigor and high expectations of the Common Core and Revised State Standards.

Q: How do the Extended Standards affect instruction for students with significant cognitive disabilities?

A: The Common Core and Ohio Revised Standards outline rigorous grade-level expectations for all students. These standards identify the knowledge and skills students need to be successful in college and careers. The Extended Standards provide a way for students with significant cognitive disabilities to have access to the Ohio academic content standards.

The extended standards serve as a companion to the academic content standards, not as a replacement for them. When planning academic activities for students with significant cognitive disabilities, teachers must consider what non-academic skills must be incorporated so that the student can succeed. This includes such skills as communication, self-determination, gross/fine motor and social skills, as well as individual accommodations or supports that may be necessary for students to access the curriculum. When designing lessons based on the extended standards, teachers should consider the unique learning needs of each student and employ the necessary accommodations.

Q: What are grade band extensions?

A: The extended standards were developed in grade bands so they could be more readily reduced in breadth and complexity. As shown in the extended standards documents, each grade bands follows *Strands* (or *Domains* for mathematics) within the standards. Each strand or domain is reduced to *essence statements* of specific expectations and basic principles for each grade band. These essence statements show specific expectations and basic principles of the strand (domain).

Because students with the most significant cognitive disabilities demonstrate a broad range of abilities, the essence statements from each standard were used to create extensions written across three levels of complexity – from highest to lowest. The extended standards are meant to provide entry points to the common core and revised standards. Please note that students should not be categorized according to a particular extension level. Instead, instruction should target extensions appropriate to individual strengths, which may vary across strands (domains).

Q: Who developed Ohio's standards extensions?

A: The first draft of the extended standards was developed through the collaboration of a committee of educators including content experts, intervention specialists, general education teachers, parents and administrators representing all regions and demographics in Ohio. After further review, they are now being offered for public comment and online feedback.

Q: What support and resources is ODE providing to districts to help them understand and implement the Extended Standards?

A: In the coming months, the ODE Center for Curriculum and Assessment will develop modules for educational, information and training purposes that will represent different content areas, as well as different student cognitive levels. These modules will contain information on how to not only use the extended standards for instruction, but also on how to administer the new alternate assessment.

Q: How will the Extended Standards impact state testing?

A: The extended standards are the foundation for the development of assessment tasks for the new alternate assessment. They allow the development of high-quality tasks that comply with IDEA and ESEA requirements that the alternate assessment link to the grade-level content standards, although at less complex skill levels.

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