

Precision Exams New Hampshire (<http://www.precisionexams.com/newhampshire/>)

Frequently Asked Questions

August 27, 2015

Originally distributed via email to all CTE Directors

Good morning from the Career Development Bureau!

Thank you all for the great questions you've submitted regarding the implementation of the state's new CTE third party assessment system, Precision Exams. As questions come in we will compile them into a series of FAQ documents, which we will then disseminate to the whole field. This is to ensure that all centers are receiving the same answer to the same question, thus cutting down on confusion and accidental miscommunications. Questions that are very specific to a particular center will be answered individually, though they may be generalized for inclusion in a future FAQ document for the benefit of all centers.

To that end, allow me to present the premiere edition of the NHDOE Precision Exams FAQ!

Q: Are the assessments required?

A: Yes. It is required that programs at least administer these third party assessments as end-of-program assessments. Any additional uses (e.g., pre-testing, end-of-course assessment) are optional.

Q: What if we already use an assessment, such as ASE for our Automotive Mechanics students? Can we continue using it instead of using Precision?

A: We will continue to accept existing technical skill assessments in certain programs. These will be outlined in a later FAQ.

Q: What if there isn't a Precision Exams assessment for one or more of my programs, and we don't already use another TSA?

A: Where no assessment currently exists, either within Precision Exams or already established as an approved TSA, reporting of technical skill attainment will not be required. However, it is encouraged that such programs help the Bureau identify potential exams, assessments or certifications that would be of benefit to their students and programs for future reporting.

Q: Precision offers over 150 different exams, some of which cover the same program areas. How will we know which assessments to use with our programs? Will the State tell us?

A: The Bureau intends to narrow down the list of Precision assessments to include only those which are most applicable to New Hampshire programs. This list will be communicated to all centers, in addition to a list of existing third party assessments we will continue to accept. Furthermore, the Bureau will communicate individually with each center about which

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Precision assessments and other third party assessments are applicable to that particular center's programs.

Q: Is there any cost associated with these exams that the centers will have to pay?

A: No. The Precision Exams contract is paid entirely by the Bureau using federal Perkins funds. There is no cost to local centers to use Precision Exams.

Q: How long is Precision Exams contracted for this service?

A: The contract is good through June 30, 2019, with the option to be renewed for an additional five years, through June 30, 2024.

Q: Precision Exams also hosts the National Consortium of Health Science Education (NCHSE) assessment that we've used with our Health Professions students for the last two years. How does that differ from the assessments we can now access through Precision?

A: The NCHSE assessment is provided by the NCHSE thru a partnership with Precision Exams. The content, policies and scoring rubrics for the NCHSE assessment are created by NCHSE, while Precision provides the outlet for test-takers to take the exam. The NCHSE exam is not part of the Precision Exams contract with New Hampshire, and is provided separately.

Precision's other assessments, covered by the new contract, were designed and created by Precision Exams itself, in partnership with industry and subject matter experts, and the Utah State Office of Education. These assessments currently align with 15 of the 16 national Career Clusters[®].

Q: How many exam slots are available? Will we have to limit the number of students we assess?

A: The Precision Exams contract opens up 44,000 exam slots per year for New Hampshire CTE students to use. By a rough estimate this means that every CTE student in the state could take four exams every year and we would still have slots available. This provides ample opportunity for instructors to do not only the required end-of-program assessments, but also end-of-course assessments and pre-testing.

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Q: Each Precision assessment is associated with both knowledge and performance standards. Are we required to do a performance assessment in addition to the end-of-program knowledge assessment?

A: No. The performance standards associated with each Precision assessment are an optional module that states may use as an additional assessment tool. New Hampshire has not chosen to enable this module at this time, though it is an option if there are centers that wish to make use of the performance assessments in addition to their programs' knowledge assessments.

New Hampshire has no plans to require a performance assessment.

Q: How do the knowledge standards that are the basis for Precision's assessments align with the standards New Hampshire uses to create each program's competency framework?

A: When establishing their knowledge and performance standards, Precision Exams compiled multiple commonly-used national standard sets into a single omnibus set of standards for each program area; naturally there was a lot of overlap, but unique standards from specific sets were included as well. These programmatic standards were then narrowed down to the course level. This was done to ensure that different users could be assured that the standards they used as part of their instruction were included in Precision's overall standards. It would be prohibitively time-consuming and expensive for Precision to craft assessments for every different set of local standards, since every state, district, and school may be using its own specific set of standards adapted to the needs of that locality or institution. For example, a Heavy Equipment program in one district may be geared toward large farm equipment because it's an agricultural area, while another district in the same state may have a Heavy Equipment program geared more toward construction equipment because it's in a suburban region with growing housing developments.

A snapshot of the standards Precision Exams uses to create and update its assessments can be found on the Precision Exams New Hampshire portal site:

<http://www.precisionexams.com/newhampshire/exams.html>

Q: How does the implementation of Precision Exams affect the use of PerformancePLUS?

A: Student competency attainment will still be reported by instructors in PerformancePLUS, and will continue to be the basis for identifying program completers. This will continue for at least the next 2-3 years as we implement the Precision assessments. If the consensus at that time is

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that the Precision Exams assessments are a suitable replacement for instructor scores in PerformancePLUS for determining program completer status, we will revisit the question and issue further guidance.

That concludes this initial FAQ document. Please feel free to continue sending in questions! Some of the questions we receive are ones we hadn't considered previously, and those are especially helpful.

Thank you all for the work you do, and for your dedication to career and technical education in New Hampshire.