

ACT Aspire Interim Reporting Updates, January 2018

Contents

(Click on the topic below to jump to the desired section)

General Information

Using Interim Reports

Scale Scores and Benchmarks

ACT Aspire Interim Content and Growth

Predicted Path

Support Materials

General Information

Q] Why were changes made to the ACT Aspire Interim Reports?

A] Responding to requests from educators and users of the ACT Aspire Interim Reports, ACT Aspire wanted to make sure that the reports served the purpose for which they were intended—to help track progress toward college-and-career readiness. This was done by adding scale scores to the ACT Aspire Interim reports. The new reports also provide more data to better inform instruction, enabling educators to help remediate students in real time.

Q] What has changed in Interim Reports?

A] Changes in the Interim Reports have been made at each level of reporting. Although this is not an exhaustive list of all changes to the Interim Reports, some of the most notable changes include:

- Ability to view longitudinal growth over the academic year
- New scores being reported:
 - Scale scores that are comparable within the same subject and grade regardless of which form was taken (Note that the points earned and percentage out of total possible points are still reported for each reporting category)
 - ACT Interim Readiness Range for each reporting category indicating typical performance of students who have met the Interim benchmark
 - National percentile rank for subject tests
 - Progress with Text Complexity indicator (if students take the reading test)
- Newly developed ACT Interim Readiness Benchmarks for each subject test
- The most recent student performance for each Interim administration/form
 - Student performance viewable by the month the Interim test was taken, listing the students with their scale scores for each subject area tested, as well as an indication if the score places the student below the readiness benchmark
- Skill Proficiency by Student lists individual students by “Meets Benchmark” or “Below Benchmark” by reporting category, with scale score ranges provided. An interesting benefit of this report is that all reporting categories are listed for each student with performance summarized as Meets Benchmark or Below Benchmark.

Interim reports, whether at the state, district, school, educator, or individual student level, provide actionable data that is immediately of value in discussions about strengths and areas of concern.

Using Interim Reports

Q] How can data from the new Interim reports be used to impact instruction?

A] The data available through the use of the Interim assessments allow for analysis of performance by district, school, teacher, student groups/demographics, and individual student. Depending on the structure of the institution, data to inform decisions at each level can be accessed. Reporting is done at the subject level (English, mathematics, reading, and science), as well as for reporting categories under each subject.

District level reports of subject proficiency can be used to compare schools, grades, and demographic subgroups to help identify strengths and concerns. This information can help inspire discussions about structure and supports needed across a district in areas such as staffing, curriculum, content material selection, and professional development.

At the school level, the Interim reports can help identify best teaching practices and inform the implementation of intervention strategies for all levels of performance. With the introduction of OpenEd as a resource into our mathematics Response and Content Analysis reports, teachers can support and expand instruction and remediation in identified areas. OpenEd resources will be incorporated into the other subject areas later in 2018.

Q] How do I access/generate new Interim reports?

A] In order to access and generate the new Interim reports, the user will need to access the Portal at www.actaspire.org and sign in. Once in the Portal, the user will select the appropriate level (state, district, school). The user will then select "Interim Tests" tab in the toolbar. Then, the user should select the report to be generated, including the appropriate selection criteria. Once the selection criteria has been defined, the user should click on the blue "Find Students" button. This will generate the report and the user can click on the blue text "Download".

Q] Will the educator/school/district/state be able to access previous Interim Reports that were generated prior to the update?

A] The most recent Interim reports will be retained in the Portal at the school, district, and state levels. However, since Educator reports are dynamically produced on demand, the older reports will not be retained in the Portal.

Q] What are the changes to the Interim Student Performance File (SPF)? When will these take effect?

A] New Interim Student Performance Files (SPFs) take effect in January 2018 upon completion of Interim reporting enhancements. Before the enhancements, there was one SPF file per Interim administration that contained all demographic and score information. Each row in the SPF represented one student record. After the enhancement, there will be two SPFs, one with subject scale score information (i.e., SPF - Scores) and the other with reporting category score information (i.e., SPF - Reporting Categories). In addition, records in the SPFs are at the student-test and administration/form level, instead of at the student level. For example, if a student takes two Interim I tests (e.g., English and reading), there will be two rows related to this student in the SPF - Scores file, one for each test. The same student taking Interim II of English and reading will have an additional two rows. Users interested in obtaining the student demographics may access them by generating a Student Profile Extract from the system.

Scale Scores and Benchmarks

Q] What is a scale score?

A] Scale scores are numeric points on a scale which is typically unique to a testing program. A scale score reflects an examinee's performance on a test. Scale scores are comparable across students regardless of which test form is taken.

Q] How were the ACT Aspire Interim scale scores determined?

A] The scale was developed to satisfy desired psychometric properties and to serve the purposes of the testing program. Students' scale scores are the assigned numeric values associated with their test performance. There are different ways to make such an association. For the ACT Aspire Interim assessments, scale scores are transformed based on the number of points earned by students on the test form they have taken, after adjusting for slight differences in form difficulty through a statistical method.

Q] How can a scale score be used?

A] The number of points earned by students across different forms is not readily comparable due to slight differences in form difficulty. With the scale scores, the performance of student(s) can be compared at an individual level or at an aggregated level (e.g., class, school, district, and state). For example, students who take an easier test form will likely earn more points than students who take a more difficult test form. However, scale scores are adjusted statistically to be comparable across different forms.

Q] Can scale scores be compared across Interim forms in the same subject within a grade level?

A] Yes. ACT Aspire Interim scale scores are comparable within the same grade and subject, regardless of which forms are taken. However, ACT Aspire Interim scale scores are not comparable across subjects or across grade levels.

Q] Why are the Interim scales different than the Summative scales?

A] Score scales are test specific. Different tests typically have different scales to distinguish them from one another and to serve their unique reporting purposes. While the ACT Aspire Interim and Summative Assessments measure similar constructs, they were built on different test specifications and focus on different reporting needs. An aim of the ACT Aspire Summative Assessments is measuring students' performance to monitor growth from grade 3 to early high school. To serve this purpose, vertical scales were developed (i.e., scores are comparable across grade levels). An aim of the ACT Aspire Interim assessments is monitoring students' performance within the same academic year, so horizontal scales were created (i.e., scores are only comparable within the same grade level).

Q: How do Interim scale scores differ from Summative scale scores?

A] For all subject tests, the Interim scale score starts from 150 and the Summative scale score starts from 400; however, the maximum scale score for both assessments varies across grades and subjects. Vertical scales were designed for the Summative assessments, which means that scale scores can be compared across different grade levels. However, horizontal scales for the Interim assessments were created independently within each grade and thus are NOT comparable across grade levels.

Q] How do horizontally-scaled scores differ from vertically-scaled scores?

A] Based on the scope of content and grade level(s) that an assessment is designed to measure, scale scores can be classified into horizontal scale scores or vertical scale scores. Horizontal scale scores are developed for an assessment system (e.g., ACT Aspire Interim Assessments) that intends to measure similar content with similar difficulty within the same grade level. Horizontal scale scores allow one to monitor students' progress within the same grade level. Vertical scale scores are developed for an assessment system (e.g., ACT Aspire Summative Assessments) that intends to measure a similar construct across different grade levels with progressing difficulties. Vertical scale scores allow one to monitor students' progress across different grade levels.

Q] Are Interim and Summative Benchmarks related? If so, how?

A] To ensure consistency, the ACT Aspire Interim benchmarks (i.e., ACT Interim Readiness Benchmarks) are statistically linked to the ACT Readiness Benchmarks on the Summative assessments. The linking study was based on a group of students who took the Interim assessments within a two-month window before they took the Summative assessments at the end of an academic year. If students score at or above the Interim Benchmark, they are likely to score at or above the corresponding ACT Readiness Benchmark if they take the Summative assessments at around the same time.

Q] What are the scale score ranges and ACT Interim Readiness Benchmarks for each subject area?

A]

Grade	English			Math			Reading			Science		
	LOSS	Benchmark	HOSS	LOSS	Benchmark	HOSS	LOSS	Benchmark	HOSS	LOSS	Benchmark	HOSS
3	150	158	168	150	160	175	150	160	164	150	164	171
4	150	157	168	150	160	175	150	160	164	150	164	171
5	150	159	168	150	157	175	150	162	164	150	167	171
6	150	160	174	150	158	175	150	159	164	150	163	171
7	150	160	174	150	160	180	150	161	164	150	166	171
8	150	159	174	150	162	180	150	159	165	150	161	171
9	150	169	186	150	159	180	150	159	165	150	164	171
10	150	171	186	150	162	180	150	160	165	150	164	171

Note. LOSS = Lowest Obtainable Scale Score; HOSS=Highest Obtainable Scale Score.

Q] How do the Interim assessments relate to the Summative assessments?

A] The Interim assessments were modeled after the Summative assessment's blueprint for each grade. Within the reporting categories for each subject, specific knowledge and skill topics are domain-sampled. This means that the content overlap between Interim and Summative is considerable but may differ across Interim test forms. While the domain of knowledge and skills may be same for Interim and Summative assessments, the item types differ. Summative assessments contain selected-response, constructed-response, and technology-enhanced item types while Interim assessments only includes selected-response item types. The ACT Interim Readiness Benchmarks are set to be consistent with the ACT Readiness Benchmarks, which indicate that students are on target for meeting the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by grade 11.

Q] ACT Interim Readiness Benchmarks indicate whether students are performing at a level consistent with being “on target” for meeting the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks in 11th grade. How accurate is this benchmark for students at the lower grades?

A] While early grade ACT Aspire test scores are predictive of ACT test scores, the prediction is not as strong as it is for later grade ACT Aspire test scores. The ACT Interim Readiness Benchmarks are set to be consistent with the ACT Readiness Benchmarks, which indicate that students are on target for meeting the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. For example: If a 3rd grader meets the ACT Interim Readiness Benchmark in the middle of the school year, this means that they are already performing at the level needed to be considered “Ready” in the spring. And, a student who is at the “Ready” level is on target, for that current grade level, to meet the corresponding ACT Benchmark when the student reaches 11th grade.

Q] How does the benchmark differ from the scale score?

A] The benchmark is a specific scale score. If a student's score is at or above the benchmark, they are classified as “Meets Benchmark”.

Q] What does it mean if my student does not meet the ACT Interim Readiness Benchmark?

A] When a student does not meet the ACT Interim Readiness Benchmark, this indicates that they have not yet performed at the level needed to be considered “on target for college readiness” in the spring. Students who do not meet the ACT Interim Readiness Benchmark may have enough time during the remainder of the school year to progress to the "Meets Benchmark" level. Students who are performing below the "Meets Benchmark" level in the spring are generally not on target, at the current grade level, for meeting the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks when they are in 11th grade, and may need extra academic support to catch up. Like other test scores, ACT Aspire Interim scores are estimates of a student's true achievement. Therefore, ACT Aspire Interim scores should not be the only measure used to determine whether a student needs extra academic support.

ACT Aspire Interim Content and Growth

Q] Does the content differ across Interim forms within the same grade?

A] All Interim forms were constructed using the same test blueprint for each grade. Within the reporting categories for each subject, specific knowledge and skill topics are domain-sampled. This means that within a grade, the content covered on an individual Interim form will likely overlap with the content covered on other Interim forms, but may also contain unique knowledge and skills.

Q] Can the same Interim form be administered multiple times?

A] Yes, the same Interim form can be administered multiple times. However, it is not recommended if the goal is to monitor student growth within the academic year, because only the most recent administration results will be shown on the Interim reports if the same form is administered repeatedly.

Q] Which score will be reported if an Interim assessment form is repeated?

A] When the same form is administered multiple times, only the most recent administration will be reported.

Q] Does it matter what order I administer the Interim assessments?

A] Because each form is created from the same test blueprint, it does not matter which order the forms are taken in. However, to monitor student growth within the academic year, it is important to administer different forms each administration, because only the most recent administration results will be shown on the report if the same form is administered repeatedly.

Q] What is through-year growth?

A] Through-year growth refers to student progress during a single academic year (within a grade level), as opposed to across grade levels. ACT Aspire Interim assessments can measure progress throughout the academic year because the scale scores (horizontal scale scores) are directly comparable from one test to another.

Q] What growth should be expected from one Interim to the next?

A] The average score gain varies considerably across subjects and grade levels, and [this document](#) provides average score gains for periods of one month and nine months. For example, the average score gain across 9 months is 5.5 for grade three Mathematics, and 1.2 for grade nine English. The average score gains provide a baseline for what growth should be expected from one Interim test to the next.

Q] How large of an increase or decrease in a scale score is significant from one Interim to the next?

A] ACT Aspire Interim scores are estimates of a student's true achievement that can exhibit variability over time. Score increases can be examined in relation to historical average gains. For each subject and grade level, the ACT Aspire Periodic Technical Manual provides average score gains for periods of one month and nine months. We encourage users to compare average gains for groups of students to the average score gains. Average score gains for groups of students do not have as much measurement variability as gain scores for individual students.

A more technical explanation uses the standard error of measurement (SEM) to assess the significance of a score gain. A general rule of thumb is that a score change should not be attributed to measurement variability if the absolute value of the change is larger than the SEM, multiplied by 1.4. For example, for a test with an SEM of 2, a score gain of 3 or larger is significant (3 is larger than the SEM of 2 multiplied by 1.4).

Predicted Path

Q] What is the predicted path?

A] The predicted path provides a prediction of a student's end-of-year achievement. Reported after each Interim test, the predicted path shows a range of predicted values for an end-of-year scale score on the Interim test. The prediction is represented by a cone-shaped predicted path that connects the latest Interim score to a predicted end-of-year (June) score range. The prediction assumes that student growth will be similar to that observed historically. The prediction can help users understand whether students are on target to perform at the "Meets Benchmark" level by the end of the school year. The more Interim tests are taken, the more accurate the prediction range is likely to be.

Q] Can the predicted path predict Summative performance?

A] The predicted path does not provide a direct prediction of performance on the ACT Aspire Summative test. However, if the predicted path is centered above the benchmark line, the student is expected to score at or above the "Ready" level on the Summative test.

Support Materials

Q] Do Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) involve Interim and Classroom assessments or just ACT Aspire Summative?

A] Performance Level Descriptors describe the knowledge and skills characteristic of students based on the performance on the Aspire assessments. The PLDs connect student performance on assessment tasks—the skills assessed on the Classroom, Interim, and the Summative tests—with their performance on common classroom and learning tasks. The PLDs are organized into four levels, which are reported on the Summative score reports.

Q] What norm tables will be used for Interim assessment reporting?

A] Spring-referenced norms are used for Interim reports. However, both fall and spring norms were created for each grade and subject. [This chart](#) contains both fall and spring norm tables.

Q] Is there an update on the document of "Linking ACT Aspire Interim I-III Assessment and Summative Assessments Using 2014-2015 data?"

A] No, there is not an update of "Linking ACT Aspire Interim I-III Assessment and Summative Assessments Using 2014-2015 data." This document is no longer needed after the reporting enhancements for ACT Aspire Interim assessments. The newly developed Interim benchmarks are included in the reports and used as a reference for interpreting students' performance. Please see the question "[Are Interim and Summative benchmarks related?](#)" for details.

To speak with an ACT Aspire expert or ask additional questions, please call 1.855.730.0400.