

Guidelines for Using Assistive Technology (AT) Online Forms

Updated 3/19/25: With the transition to the new Science MCA and Science Alt MCA assessments aligned to revised academic standards, MDE seeks to improve the supports, tools, and accommodations available to students. Therefore, assistive technology (AT) online test forms are now available for the Science MCA and Science Alt MCA. These guidelines assist district and school staff in determining how assistive technology (AT) devices and applications may be used by students to take specific online forms for Science MCA and Science Alt MCA testing. These separate TestNav forms allow assistive technology (AT) devices to interact directly with the online test in order to maintain, increase, or improve the functional capabilities of a student with disabilities.

There are two versions of the AT online forms: one for screen-readers and one for non-screen reader devices. Prior to testing, educators should ensure AT devices will work with the online test. Because AT online test forms require a secure environment, educators can practice device setup using sample test forms in the [PearsonAccess Next Training Center](#). These AT forms consist of online Science MCA and Alt MCA Student Readiness Tool (SRT) sample items that allow students to practice interacting with items online using an AT device.

Note: For students who are using other AT devices or applications that are not able to interact with TestNav (such as the use of a device for scratch paper, calculator, or an electronic notetaker for braille), regular online forms are used. DACs should refer to Chapter 4 of the [Procedures Manual](#) for more information on the other AT devices (AT-O) accommodation.

Overview of Assistive Technology Online Forms for Science MCA and Science Alt MCA

The use of assistive technology when testing online is most beneficial for students who use assistive technology during classroom instruction. Examples of assistive technology include applications or third-party programs such as text-to-speech, word prediction, speech-to-text, screen readers, screen magnification, and devices such as adaptive keyboards, mouse, monitors, and switch interfaces. Some examples of ways students might engage with the assistive technology online forms include:

- Using screen readers to access information
- Giving responses with a head mouse
- Using switches
- Using magnification
- Using refreshable braille devices

The assistive technology online form for screen readers is for students using a screen reader or braille device. The non-screen reader assistive technology form is used for any other assistive technology device or third-party program that interacts with the online test form. For both the Science MCA and Science Alt MCA, students may use the braille test materials with either assistive technology form, as both forms contain the same content. Many students need the extra support of braille materials or tactile graphics, when applicable, for more complicated test content such as graphs, images, and charts.

Text-to-speech is not provided in these forms because of the content needed for screen readers to read the alternate text embedded in the online test. For the Science MCA, the script can be used with the online AT non-screen reader form if the student requires human reader support. The script is not applicable with the screen reader form as the screen reader is intended to provide the read aloud support.

The AT online forms also limit item types and online tools to those that are keyboard operable and, for the AT screen reader form, supported with screen readers.

Assistive Technology Online Forms Set Up

If a student needs an assistive technology online form, the District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) will need to indicate the applicable code in advance in MDE's Test WES system to ensure the form is available in TestNav when the student is ready to test. DACs should refer to Chapter 4 of the [Procedures Manual](#) for detailed guidance on indicating codes for online AT forms, including additional codes that may be required if students are using other test materials or supports. DACs may also refer to the [Pretest Editing User Guide](#) for instructions on adding codes within Test WES.

Any questions on the use of assistive technology for a student, including a specific device or software, should be sent to MDE at mde.testing@state.mn.us. In the rare situation where a student may need to use a student-owned device, the district must also contact MDE to request approval. MDE will include guidance, as applicable, that must be followed for maintaining test security on a student-owned device. If MDE approves the use of a student-owned device, DACs must indicate the approved accommodation (AA) code in addition to the AT online form code (AT-N or AT-S) in Test WES.

Administering an Assistive Technology Form for Science MCA and Science Alt MCA

In order for TestNav to allow other programs or applications to run at the same time as the test, the AT forms are published at a different security level. As a result, the test must be administered in an individual setting to ensure that the student is accessing only the assistive technology to complete testing. No other features or programs may be used. Failure to comply may result in the invalidation of the student's test.

If the device includes Bluetooth capabilities, the Test Monitor must confirm that the audio is connected only to the testing device.

If the device has memory-storing functionality, it must be treated the same as memory-enabled calculators. Test Monitors are required to check memory-enabled devices before the test and disable any stored programs and applications by either clearing the memory both before and after the test session or by using the temporary disabling feature. Test Monitors must invoke the temporary disabling feature, if available, at the beginning of each test session, including monitoring to ensure it remains disabled, and can return it to normal functionality at the end of each test session. Note: Clearing the memory will delete stored programs or applications. Students should be told prior to test day to save all data and stored programs on another device that is not being used for the test.

The use of a device to record test content, including the name of the person deleting the test content, must be communicated to the District or School Assessment Coordinator, who will document it on the *Test Administration Report (TAR)*.

Supported and Unsupported Assistive Technology Devices in TestNav

Prior to administration, it is important to verify that assistive technology devices will work with TestNav. All online MCA and Alt MCA testing is completed using the TestNav app, which may or may not work as expected with the student's AT device. Therefore, all external AT devices should be tested by the school using the same device that will be used by the student during testing. For the purpose of online MCA and Alt MCA testing, assistive technology can be sorted into three categories:

- 1) AT that is external to TestNav but is compatible with the test platform and can be used on the same device used for online testing.
- 2) AT that may be compatible with TestNav but must be tested by the school prior to online MCA/Alt MCA testing to confirm that the technology is compatible.
- 3) AT that is known to be incompatible with TestNav and therefore must be used on a separate device during testing.

Note: Testing the student’s AT device with TestNav before online MCA/Alt MCA testing is strongly encouraged and is described in Appendix A.

Category One: Assistive technology compatible with TestNav

This category includes assistive technology used by the student that is known to be compatible with TestNav and can run on the same testing device while taking the online MCA/Alt MCA. If the assistive technology appears on the list below, its compatibility has been confirmed for online MCA/Alt MCA testing with TestNav. However, new AT versions are released regularly and updates need to be confirmed as compatible with TestNav. Even if a student is using an AT device with known TestNav compatibility, the device should still be tested, and the student should have the opportunity to practice using their device on the practice form.

Note: If any of the assistive technologies listed below will be used by the student during testing, the appropriate assistive technology program(s) must be installed on the student’s testing device (for example, laptop, desktop) by the district prior to testing.

Assistive Technology	Expected User Experience
Jaws 2022, 2023, 2024 (screen reader)	Students able to use as expected.
NVDA 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024 (screen reader)	Students are unable to change user settings in NVDA once form is loaded but user experience is expected to be positive.
Dragon Professional 14 and 15 (Windows 10) and 16 (Windows 11) (speech-to-text)	Students able to use as expected.
ZoomText 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 (screen magnification)	Student can use pre-set features during testing. Students cannot make adjustments during testing with the exception of magnification levels that can be increased using keyboard commands.
Fusion (Combination JAWS & ZoomText) 2020, 2022, 2024, 2025	Screen reader (JAWS) is able to be used as expected. ZoomText 2020 pre-set features can be used during testing. Students cannot make adjustments during testing with the exception of magnification levels that can be increased using keyboard commands.
Hardware-based technology (special equipment used with the testing device, such as alternate keyboards or mouse)	Assistive devices that are hardware-based should work with the TestNav app.

Category Two: Assistive technology that may be compatible with TestNav, but must be tested by the school to determine its compatibility

This category includes assistive technology used by the student that is not listed in the table above but may be compatible with TestNav for online MCA/Alt MCA testing. Districts and schools must verify that the student's assistive technology works as expected with TestNav prior to actual testing.

The process for determining whether a specific AT program is compatible must be performed prior to testing in the Training Center using the step-by-step directions shown in Appendix A. School staff should conduct this check using the same device the student will use for testing. Once the device or application is tested and found to be compatible, the student will be able to access and use their AT software and/or hardware using the same testing device for online testing. If the technology is tested and found to be incompatible, see Category Three below for instructions on using the technology on a separate device.

Category Three: Assistive technology confirmed as requiring a separate device for testing

This category includes assistive technologies that cannot be used on the same testing device as the one used by the student to take the test (or cannot interact directly with TestNav) and therefore must be accessed by the student using a separate external testing device. If the student will use approved “stand-alone” external assistive technology, an AT online form is not necessary. The other assistive technology (AT-O) code should then be indicated in Test WES and the student will be assigned a Main test form and will access any “stand-alone” external AT on a separate device.

In this case, the Test Monitor or Test Administrator must assist the student in transitioning between the external AT device used by the student and the testing device used for the online, or, if applicable, paper test. All responses generated using an external assistive technology device must be entered onto the student’s testing device or into the student’s test book.

Stand-alone AT devices or programs are prohibited for online MCA/Alt MCA testing if they provide coaching or assistance to the student or allow a student to access the internet. Any questions on the use of “stand-alone” assistive technology for a student, including a specific device or software, should be sent to MDE at mde.testing@state.mn.us.

Programs that have been tested and confirmed as unable to interact directly with TestNav and require a “stand-alone” external testing device are listed in the following table.

Assistive Technology	Expected User Experience
Chrome and other web extensions	No web extensions other than Co:Writer Universal and Read&Write will work with the TestNav application.
Other proprietary software not previously mentioned (for example, AAC or eye gaze technology)	It is unlikely that any other proprietary software programs, applications, or extensions will work with TestNav.

APPENDIX A

Guide for Checking the Compatibility and Proper Operation of Assistive Technology Prior to Online MCA/Alt MCA Testing

Prior to testing, confirm the student's AT device is compatible with TestNav. The District or School Assessment Coordinator will need access to the PearsonAccess Next Training Center. The Training Center is set up to mirror PearsonAccess Next, but it contains only sample student information. In the Training Center, DACs can create and add sample students to test sessions and provide a testing ticket to the teacher and student, who can then log in to TestNav and confirm the AT device(s) the student will use during testing are compatible with TestNav.

The following steps outline the process for DACs to create sample student testing tickets. Note: For teachers and students, skip to step 7 for information on logging in to TestNav.

Step 1: Contact Pearson at (888) 817-8659 or [submit a Pearson help desk request](#) to have Pearson create a sample student(s) with the applicable AT accommodation in the Training Center. Provide the following information in the help desk request:

- Organization: School name
- Grade: 05, 08, 09, 10, 11, or 12
- Test
 - For MCA, Grade 05 Science MCA, Grade 08 Science MCA, or High School Science MCA
 - For Alt MCA, Grade 05 Science Alt MCA, Grade 08 Science Alt MCA, or High School Science Alt MCA
- Number of Students
- AT Accommodation: AT-S or AT-N

Pearson will create the sample student(s) within 1–2 business days. Once created, Pearson will follow-up with the DAC through the help desk.

Step 2: Sign in to the [PearsonAccess Next Training Center](#).

- Log in to the Training Center using the same username and password used to sign in to PearsonAccess Next.

Note: Pearson creates all DAC accounts for the Training Center. If additional user accounts are needed for the Training Center, DACs can refer to the [PearsonAccess Next User Accounts Guide](#) (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > User Guides) for instructions on creating and updating user accounts.

- Once signed in, select either **MCA 2025** or **MTAS/Alt MCA 2025** in the brown menu bar at the top of the page.
- Confirm the correct organization is displayed in the brown menu bar along the top. To change the organization, select the dropdown menu and select the correct organization.

Step 3: Confirm students have the correct Assistive Technology (AT) Accommodation indicated.

- From the Home page, under **Setup**, select **Students**.
- Search for students created:
 - To view all students created, select the dropdown next to **Search** and select the checkbox next to **Show all results**.
- Select the checkbox next to the student's name.
- Select the dropdown menu to the right of the **Start** button and select **Student Eligibility Data**.
- Select **View Student Tests** in the gray bar along the top. The student(s) and assigned test(s) are displayed on the panel on the left.
 - Under **Universal Supports and Accommodations**, confirm the correct AT accommodations are indicated:
 - For the Assistive Technology online form screen reader (AT-S), confirm **Yes** is indicated.
 - For the Assistive Technology online form non-screen reader (AT-N), confirm the checkbox next to the accommodation is selected.

Tip: Keep track of student MARSS numbers assigned the AT-S and AT-N accommodations. This information is needed when creating test sessions.
 Note: If the AT accommodation is not correct, contact Pearson at (888) 817-8659 or [submit a Pearson help desk request](#).
- Select **Exit Tasks** at the top right to return to the Students screen.

Step 4: Create a test session and add students.

- From the Home page, under **Testing**, select **Sessions**.
- Select the dropdown menu to the right of the **Start** button and select **Create/Edit Sessions**.
- On the New Session screen, enter the required information as indicated by the asterisks (*).
 - Session Name*
 - Organization*
 - Test Assigned*
 - For MCA, select Grade 05 Science MCA, Grade 08 Science MCA, or High School Science MCA.

- For Alternate MCA, select Grade 05 Science Alternate MCA, Grade 08 Science Alternate MCA, or High School Science Alternate MCA.
Note: AT-S and AT-N forms are only available for these tests.
- Proctor Reads Aloud: Not used
- Form Group Type*
 - **Main** is automatically selected after selecting the applicable test.
 - Select the dropdown menu under **Form Group Type** and select **AT Screen Reader** or **AT Non-Screen Reader**.
- Scheduled Start Date*: For planning purposes only; the test session will start only when the Start button is selected.
- Precaching Testing device*: Leave blank if no precaching testing device identified in TestNav Configuration.
- Scheduled Start Time and Lab Location: Optional
- Students: In the text box, enter the name or MARSS number of the sample student to add to the test session.
- Note: All students assigned to the test (for example, Grade 05 Science MCA) will appear, regardless of the student’s AT accommodation indicated. Ensure you select only students with the correct accommodation (for example, if the AT Screen Reader form group type is selected, only add students to the session with the AT Screen Reader accommodation). Select **Create**. Once you see the green “Success” message, select **Exit Tasks** at the top right.

Note: If creating multiple test sessions, repeat the steps above.

Step 5: Start the test session and access student testing tickets.

- From the Home page, under **Testing**, select **Students in Sessions**.
- Under Session List, select **Add a Session**. Enter the session name and select the checkbox to the left of the session name. Select **Add Selected**.

Tip: All students in the session are displayed in the table below. In the **MARSS/SSID** column, for students with an AT accommodation, AT-S or AT-N is displayed next to the student’s MARSS number. The **Form Group Type** column indicates the test session form group type. Confirm the student’s AT accommodation listed matches the form group type. If these do not match, the session will error when preparing. Select **Prepare Session**.

Note: If a student’s AT accommodation does not match the AT form group type (for example, the student has an AT-S accommodation, but the test session form group type is AT Non-Screen Reader), the session will not prepare, and an error message will display. If this occurs, return to Step 4 and either remove the student from the session or change the session form group type.

- Once prepared, select **Start Session**.
- Print student testing tickets.
 - To print testing tickets for all students in the test session, select **Testing Tickets and Session Resources**. From the dropdown menu, under Student Testing Tickets, select **Print all for this session**.
 - To print testing tickets for individual students in the test session, select the checkbox next to the student's name. Then, select **Testing Tickets and Session Resources**. From the dropdown menu, under Student Testing Tickets, select **Print selected for this session**.
- Provide the testing ticket to the teacher. The testing ticket contains the username and password needed to log into TestNav on the student's testing device.

The following steps outline the process for teachers and students to log into TestNav.

Step 6: Confirm the TestNav app is installed and updated on the student's testing device.

Contact your DAC or Technology Staff if the app is not installed or needs updating. Refer to the [Download TestNav page](#) on the TestNav Support website for more information (TestNav Online Support > Set up and use TestNav > Download TestNav).

Step 7: Log into TestNav on the student's testing device.

- Launch TestNav, depending on device:
 - On tablets: Select the TestNav icon on the Home screen.
 - On Chromebooks: Select the TestNav app from the Apps menu on the lower left side of the screen.
 - On desktops or laptops: Select the TestNav icon on the desktop screen of a desktop or laptop.
- Enter the username and password provided on the sample testing ticket and select **Sign In**.
 - If unable to sign into TestNav:
 - Confirm the username and password were entered correctly.
 - Confirm **Minnesota** is displayed on the TestNav sign-in screen. If not, select the user dropdown menu in the top right and select **Choose a different customer**. Select **Minnesota**.
 - Contact your DAC to confirm you have the correct testing ticket, the test session is started, the test is in Ready or Exited status, and the test is unlocked.
- Navigate through the test and enter answer responses using the student's AT device to determine whether the AT device(s) works as expected within the TestNav app.
 - If you experience issues during this process:

- Confirm the student is familiar with the AT device being used. The AT device used during testing should also be used by the student during regular classroom instruction.
- Refer to the information above under the *Supported and Unsupported Assistive Technology Devices in TestNav* section for more information about the types of AT devices that may or may not be compatible with TestNav.
- Contact the DAC and confirm the sample testing ticket has the correct AT accommodation indicated in the Training Center and that the test session is setup correctly. Refer to the *MCA Online Testing User Guide* or *MTAS/Alt MCA Data Entry and Online Testing User Guide* for more information (Note: While these guides are specific to PearsonAccess Next, the information is also applicable to the Training Center).
- Contact your Technology Staff with questions on TestNav system requirements or TestNav set up on an individual device.
- For all other questions, contact Pearson at (888) 817-8659 or [submit a Pearson help desk request](#).