**California Alternate Assessment** 

California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress

# Science Administration Planning Guide

*This guide is intended for use by test site coordinators and test examiners to guide, plan, and schedule California Alternate Assessment (CAA) for Science testing between September 16, 2025, and the end of each school district’s 2025–26 instructional calendar.*

*This guide does not contain test content.*

**2025–26**

**High School, Form 1** 

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## Introduction

### What is the California Alternate Assessment for Science?

The California Alternate Assessment (CAA) for Science is a computer-based assessment and a component of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). It is intended for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who have been designated by an individualized education program (IEP) team to use an alternate assessment on statewide summative assessments.

The CAA for Science design philosophy supports the diverse needs of students by ensuring standardization while still allowing flexibility, enabling the greatest range of students to demonstrate their science content knowledge.

### Form Assignments

*Administration Planning Guides* and *Directions for Administration* (*DFAs*) are form-specific.

Each local educational agency (LEA) is assigned **one** of two forms per performance task (PT) for all CAA for Science administration materials. The exception is for the largest LEAs, which receive form assignments at the school level. All grade levels within an LEA will have the same form assignment. For example, if an LEA is assigned to Form 1, the LEA will use Form 1 of the *Administration Planning Guides* and *DFAs* for each grade level tested. Form assignments can be found on the [CAA for Science Form Assignments web page](https://www.caaspp-elpac.org/resources/administration/form-assignments-second-scoring-rsvp/form-assignments--caa-science).

### Purpose and Use of This *Administration Planning Guide*

This guide provides the following:

* Basic information about the CAA for Science administration and test security
* Information about factors to consider when deciding the best time to administer a CAA for Science embedded PT
* The science content being assessed this year
* A blank testing planner to assist in determining when to administer each embedded PT

***Administration Planning Guides* are not intended to guide instruction or to limit what science content is taught in the classroom.**

*Administration Planning Guides* are made available in advance to give teachers and test examiners as much time as possible to plan how best to integrate each of the three embedded PTs into the 2025–26 instructional calendar.

The test examiner tutorial necessary to administer the 2025–26 CAA for Science will be available in August 2025. The CAA for Science embedded PTs will be available for administration beginning September 16, 2025.

### Test Security

This guide contains no test content and is not secure but is intended for use only by site CAASPP coordinators and test examiners for the purposes of planning and scheduling testing. Follow these guidelines to ensure the security of the CAA for Science embedded PTs:

**The downloadable *DFA* and the online embedded PTs, as referenced in this document, contain test content and must be kept secure at all times. *DFAs* should be downloaded only before administering an embedded PT.**

* Access to *DFAs* in the Test Operations Management System is available only to users with the following roles: test examiner, site coordinator, and LEA coordinator.
* *DFAs* will be available beginning September 16, 2025.
* Online content in the Test Delivery System (TDS), the downloadable *DFA*, and the orienting activities outlined in the *DFA* must be kept secure. *DFAs* that were printed for test examiners must be kept in a securely locked room or locked cabinet when not in use.
* After an embedded PT has been administered, its *DFA* must be immediately and securely destroyed.
* Any electronic files on the test examiner’s or site coordinator’s device need to be securely deleted in such a way that the files do not remain in a temporary storage location, such as the Windows Recycle Bin, where they can be restored.
* Once a test examiner starts an embedded PT with a student, it must be completed and submitted in the TDS within **45 calendar days**.
* All PTs must be completed and submitted before the end of the school’s instructional calendar or June 30, 2026, whichever comes first.

### Administering the 2025–26 CAA for Science

The [*Preparing for Administration* (*PFA*)](https://www.caaspp-elpac.org/s/docs/PFA.CAA.Science.Operational.2025-26.pdf) document is located on the CAASPP & ELPAC Website and is available for the 2025–26 test administration. This document should be used to prepare to administer the CAA for Science. There is one *PFA* used for all grade levels and forms. The *PFA* is a nonsecure document that is available for all LEAs on the Moodle Training Site and on the CAASPP & ELPAC Website, where you can review or print it, if desired.

The 2025–26 CAA for Science is composed of three embedded PTs that are administered online to students.

* Each embedded PT is intended to be **administered shortly after the student has received related science instruction**.
* All three embedded PTs must be attempted by the student to complete the administration.
* The embedded PTs can be administered in any order between September 16, 2025, and the end of the instructional calendar or June 30, 2026, whichever comes first.

Each embedded PT assesses three Science Connectors from the same science domain with three corresponding sets of 5 test questions, for a total of 15 test questions on the PT. Each set of questions is prefaced by an orienting activity. An orienting activity is a nonscorable activity that is designed to engage and familiarize a student with a science concept that the student was previously taught. In some cases, the test examiner completes hands-on exercises with the student during testing, and it may be required, beforehand, to prepare some commonly available materials found in the classroom or prepare graphics provided in the *DFA*. **There should not be a need to purchase materials just for testing.**

**The *DFA* will provide test examiners with guidelines on how to individualize the orienting activities and designated items. Please note that all items may be individualized based upon the student’s IEP.**

A blank testing planner is provided at the end of this document (refer to table 10) to aid in scheduling administration of each of the embedded PTs for your student(s) based on when the related content will be taught.

## Assessed Standards

The CAA for Science, which is based on the Science Connectors, measures knowledge, skills, and abilities that are appropriate for this student population. The Science Connectors are derived from the California Next Generation Science Standards performance expectations (PEs). They provide alternate standards and alternate science learning goals to guide science instruction and assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The PEs that the assessed Science Connectors are derived from can be found in the [*CAA for Science Blueprint* web document](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/documents/caascienceblueprint.docx).

These Science Connectors are further broken down into assessment targets. The assessment targets are comprised of focal knowledge, skills, and abilities (FKSAs) describe what students should know and be able to do in science; at the simplest level, the essential understandings (EUs), which are the basic concepts students should know and be able to do in science. This is presented as a continuum in figure 1.



Figure 1. CAA for Science Standards Continuum

Keep this structure in mind as you review the content being assessed this year. Test questions are written to assess the FKSAs and EUs. Each Science Connector has between one and six FKSAs and one EU. The EU will always be assessed, but not all of the FKSAs will be assessed in a single embedded PT; therefore, not all of the FKSAs are provided in this guide. Assessment of Science Connectors with more than one FKSA may occur over multiple years.

The following pages provide the Science Connectors and associated FKSAs and EUs being assessed this year, organized by science domain. The third column of each Connector table contains descriptions of ways in which a student may demonstrate mastery of the FKSA or EU being assessed. These mastery statements describe specific actions the student will take, such as identifying, recognizing, or comparing information in the Science Connector being assessed, and are found in the column labeled *Students Will Be Able To …*. These statements describe ***only those Science Connectors assessed this year****.*

### Earth and Space Sciences Connectors

#### HS-ESS2-3

*Use a model of Earth to identify the motion of the mantle and its plates occurs primarily through thermal convection, which is primarily driven by radioactive decay within Earth’s interior.*

Table 1. HS-ESS2-3, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to use a model to identify that the motions of the mantle and its plates occur primarily through thermal convection. (FKSA 1) * Ability to identify Earth’s core as the primary source of the heat that drives mantle convection by using a model. (FKSA 2) | * Identify thermal convection as the cause of the movement of tectonic plates * Recognize Earth’s core is the primary source of heat that drives mantle convection |
| EU | * Use a model of Earth to identify the inner core, the outer core, the mantle, and the crust. | * Identify the inner core of Earth   Identify the outer core of Earth  Identify the mantle of Earth  Identify the crust of Earth |

#### HS-ESS2-5

***Observe and identify the effect of water on the Earth’s materials and surface processes (e.g., stream transportation and deposition, erosion, frost wedging).***

Table 2. HS-ESS2-5, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Identify the effects of water on the Earth's materials and surface processes. | * Identify that when fast-moving water slows, it drops rocks and soil on the bottom of the waterway * Identify that when water repeatedly freezes in cracks, it can eventually cause the cracks to become bigger * Identify that layers of soil and rock can build up where fast-moving water slows and drops rock and soil |
| EU | * Recognize that water can erode rocks and soil. | Identify that water can move rocks and soil  Identify the effects of fast-moving water on hillsides |

#### HS-ESS3-3

*Compare models to determine the effects of a conservation strategy to manage natural resources and to sustain human society and plant and animal life.*

Table 3. HS-ESS3-3, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to identify effects of a conservation strategy to manage natural resources and to sustain human society and plant and animal life. | * Recognize the effects of conservation strategies * Identify appropriate conservation strategies for environmental challenges |
| EU | * Identify human activities that result in positive or negative impacts on land, ocean, atmosphere, or biosphere resources. | Identify positive environmental impacts due to human activities  Identify negative environmental impacts due to human activities |

### Life Sciences Connectors

#### HS-LS2-4

*Using a graphical representation, identify the changes in the amount of matter or energy as it travels through an energy pyramid or food web.*

Table 4. HS-LS2-4, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to identify using a graphical representation the changes in the amount of matter as it travels through an energy pyramid or food web. (FKSA 1) * Ability to identify using a graphical representation the changes in the amount of energy as it travels through an energy pyramid or food web. (FKSA 1) | * Recognize that energy or matter decreases when moving to higher levels in an energy pyramid or food web |
| EU | * Recognize that there are generally fewer organisms at higher levels of an energy pyramid or food web (e.g., a graphical representation) than at lower levels. | * Recognize that there are fewer organisms at higher levels in an energy pyramid, food chain, or food web |

#### HS-LS2-8

*Identify evidence supporting the outcome of group behavior (e.g., predation, life expectancy) on species’ chances to survive and reproduce.*

Table 5. HS-LS2-8, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to identify evidence supporting an outcome of group behavior. | * Recognize different types of group behavior * Identify an outcome of group behavior * Recognize that group behavior helps animals survive |
| EU | * Identify an example of group behavior (e.g., flocking, schooling, herding, and cooperative behaviors such as hunting, migrating, and swarming). | * Identify animals acting as a group |

#### HS-LS3-2

*Identify a model showing evidence that parents and offspring may have different traits.*

Table 6. HS-LS3-2, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Identify examples of offspring who have different combinations of traits inherited from their parents. | * Identify offspring with combinations of traits different from those of their parents |
| EU | * Identify traits in offspring that are different from those of the parents. | * Identify offspring with traits different from those of their parents |

### Physical Sciences Connectors

#### HS-PS1-1

*Organize different materials based on properties of elements.*

Table 7. HS-PS1-1, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Recognize that types of materials (e.g., elements) can be grouped together. | Identify basic properties of materials  Group objects together based on shared properties |
| EU | * Recognize that materials have different properties. | * Recognize that materials have different properties |

#### HS-PS1-4

***Using a model, determine whether energy is released or absorbed in a chemical reaction system.***

Table 8. HS-PS1-4, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to use a model containing data in a graph or table to determine whether energy is released or absorbed in a chemical reaction system. | Recognize a temperature increase or decrease when two substances are combined  Identify that a chemical reaction occurred based on a change in temperature |
| EU | * Determine whether energy is released or absorbed in a chemical reaction system. | * Recognize a chemical reaction that releases energy * Recognize a chemical reaction that absorbs energy * Identify that a chemical reaction occurred based on the release of light |

#### HS-PS3-4

*Identify that the temperature of two different components, when combined, show uniform energy distribution.*

Table 9. HS-PS3-4, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Recognize that the mixture of two different components shows uniform energy distribution. | Recognize the combination of two substances with different temperatures will result in a final temperature between that of the two substances  Recognize the combination of two substances with different energy levels will result in a uniform final energy distribution because one substance loses heat energy and the other gains heat energy |
| EU | * Recognize components change their temperature when combined. | * Recognize the temperature of a warmer substance will decrease when a cooler substance is added * Recognize the temperature of a cooler substance will increase when a warmer substance is added |

## Testing Planner for Form 1

Use the planner in table 10 to aid in scheduling testing for your student(s) based on when the related content will be taught.

Test Examiner:

School:

Grade:

Table 10. 2025–26 CAA for Science High School Testing Planner

| **Associated Science Connectors** | **Date(s) Related Instructional Content Will Be Taught** | **Scheduled Testing Date(s)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Earth and Space Sciences:  HS-ESS2-3  HS-ESS2-5  HS-ESS3-3 | Add date(s) here: | Add date(s) here: |
| Life Sciences:  HS-LS2-4  HS-LS2-8  HS-LS3-2 | Add date(s) here: | Add date(s) here: |
| Physical Sciences:  HS-PS1-1  HS-PS1-4  HS-PS3-4 | Add date(s) here: | Add date(s) here: |