**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**

**Grade Eight, Form** **2** 

Table of Contents

[Introduction 1](#_Toc198740030)

[What is the California Alternate Assessment for Science? 1](#_Toc198740031)

[Form Assignments 1](#_Toc198740032)

[Purpose and Use of This *Administration Planning Guide* 1](#_Toc198740033)

[Test Security 2](#_Toc198740034)

[Administering the 2025–26 CAA for Science 2](#_Toc198740035)

[Assessed Standards 3](#_Toc198740036)

[Earth and Space Sciences Connectors 5](#_Toc198740037)

[MS-ESS2-5 5](#_Toc198740038)

[MS-ESS3-2 6](#_Toc198740039)

[MS-ESS3-4 6](#_Toc198740040)

[Life Sciences Connectors 7](#_Toc198740041)

[MS-LS1-8 7](#_Toc198740042)

[MS-LS2-2 8](#_Toc198740043)

[MS-LS2-3 8](#_Toc198740044)

[Physical Sciences Connectors 9](#_Toc198740045)

[MS-PS1-6 9](#_Toc198740046)

[MS-PS2-1 9](#_Toc198740047)

[MS-PS3-2 10](#_Toc198740048)

[Testing Planner for Form 2 11](#_Toc198740049)

List of Tables

[Table 1. MS-ESS2-5, FKSA and EU 5](#_Toc198740050)

[Table 2. MS-ESS3-2, FKSA and EU 6](#_Toc198740051)

[Table 3. MS-ESS3-4, FKSA and EU 6](#_Toc198740052)

[Table 4. MS-LS1-8, FKSA and EU 7](#_Toc198740053)

[Table 5. MS-LS2-2, FKSA and EU 8](#_Toc198740054)

[Table 6. MS-LS2-3, FKSA and EU 8](#_Toc198740055)

[Table 7. MS-PS1-6, FKSA and EU 9](#_Toc198740056)

[Table 8. MS-PS2-1, FKSA and EU 9](#_Toc198740057)

[Table 9. MS-PS3-2, FKSA and EU 10](#_Toc198740058)

[Table 10. 2025–26 CAA for Science Grade Eight Testing Planner 11](#_Toc198740059)

## 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 the focal knowledge, skills, and abilities (FKSAs), which describe what students should know and be able to do in science; at the simplest level, the essential understandings (EUs) 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

#### MS-ESS2-5

*Identify how air masses influence weather using data and/or simulated demonstrations.*

Table 1. MS-ESS2-5, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to identify how air masses influence local weather using temperature models. (FKSA 1)
* Ability to identify how air masses influence local weather using landform models. (FKSA 2)
* Ability to identify how proximity to an ocean influences local weather using models. (FKSA 3)
 | * Recognize the effect the movement of air masses has on the weather
* Recognize the effect the proximity to the ocean has on weather
* Recognize the influence of landforms on weather
* Recognize the effect that the temperature of air masses has on the weather
* Recognize how air masses will move based on temperatures
 |
| EU | * Identify weather information used to compare weather conditions in different locations on the same day.
 | Identify weather conditions on a mapCompare weather conditions in two different locations |

#### MS-ESS3-2

***Use resources (e.g., maps, charts, images of natural hazards) to identify patterns in past occurrences of catastrophic events in each of two regions to predict which location may receive a future similar catastrophic event.***

Table 2. MS-ESS3-2, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to use maps, charts, and images of natural hazards to look for patterns in past occurrences of catastrophic events in each of two regions to predict which location may receive a future similar catastrophic event.
 | * Use information in a map, chart, data table, or image of a natural hazard to identify a pattern in past occurrences of catastrophic events
* Use identified patterns in past occurrences of catastrophic events in each of two regions to predict which location will most likely have a similar catastrophic event
 |
| EU | * Recognize that some natural hazards (e.g., volcanic eruptions, severe weather) can be predicted while others are not predictable.
 | Recognize examples of natural hazards that can be predictedRecognize examples of natural hazards that cannot be predicted |

#### MS-ESS3-4

*Using a variety of resources (e.g., tables, graphs, maps), identify whether changes made by humans to Earth’s natural resources have impacted natural systems.*

Table 3. MS-ESS3-4, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to identify if changes that humans have made to Earth’s natural systems have positive impacts, negative impacts, or some combination of positive and negative impacts using a variety of resources.
 | * Identify a positive impact that is a result of a human-caused change to a natural system
* Identify a negative impact that is a result of a human-caused change to a natural system
 |
| EU | * Recognize the relationship between an increase in human population and an increase in the consumption of food and natural resources.
 | * Recognize the relationship between more people and the use of more resources
 |

### Life Sciences Connectors

#### MS-LS1-8

*Identify examples of how sensory information sent to the brain is used immediately for behavior or stored as a memory.*

Table 4. MS-LS1-8, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to identify an example of how sensory information is used immediately for behavior. (FKSA 1)
* Ability to identify an example of how sensory information sent to the brain is stored as a memory. (FKSA 2)
 | * Identify a memory that will result from a sensory input
* Identify the pathway by which a sensory input results in a memory
 |
| EU | * Identify that the brain and behavioral responses are part of a system that allows animals to survive (e.g., how the appearance of food generates behavioral responses like salivation or hunger, how the smell of particular foods can bring up past memories associated with that smell).
 | * Identify examples in which the response of animals to sensory information helps the animals survive
* Identify a specific behavior in a human or animal that will result from a sensory input
 |

#### MS-LS2-2

*Describe examples of competitive, predatory, or symbiotic relationships by using models of interactions between organisms in an ecosystem.*

Table 5. MS-LS2-2, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to identify a competitive relationship by using a model of interactions between organisms in an ecosystem. (FKSA 1)
* Ability to identify a predatory relationship by using a model of interactions between organisms in an ecosystem. (FKSA 2)
 | * Recognize that organisms compete for resources in an ecosystem
* Recognize that organisms may have a predatory relationship in an ecosystem
* Identify the predator and prey in a predatory relationship
 |
| EU | * Identify that animals compete for food.
 | * Identify that animals compete for food
 |

#### MS-LS2-3

*Using a model, identify energy transfer between producers, consumers, and decomposers in an ecosystem.*

Table 6. MS-LS2-3, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to identify energy transfer between producers, consumers and decomposers in an ecosystem by using a model (e.g., producers get energy from sunlight, producers provide energy for consumers and decomposers recycle nutrients and matter in the ecosystem).
 | * Use food chain models to identify the transfer of energy from the Sun to producers to consumers
* Use an energy pyramid model to identify the transfer of energy from producers to consumers
* Use a model to identify the transfer of energy between living and nonliving parts of the ecosystem, including primary and secondary consumers
 |
| EU | * Recognize that when people or animals eat plants they are taking energy into their bodies.
 | * Recognize that when a person or animal eats a plant they are taking energy into their body.
 |

### Physical Sciences Connectors

#### MS-PS1-6

*Identify or modify a device in which a chemical process releases or absorbs thermal energy.*

Table 7. MS-PS1-6, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to identify or modify a device in which a chemical reaction releases thermal energy.
 | Identify a change in temperature as evidence that a device is releasing or absorbing thermal energy |
| EU | * Identify examples of chemical reactions that release energy (e.g., heat, light).
 | * Identify an example of a chemical reaction that releases heat or light
 |

#### MS-PS2-1

***Through observation and demonstration, identify that when objects collide, the contact forces transfer energy and change the objects’ motions.***

Table 8. MS-PS2-1, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Recognize a solution to a problem involving the motion of two colliding objects.
 | Identify clothing or gear that minimizes the effect of a collisionIdentify common packaging that minimizes the effect of a collisionIdentify features of modes of transportation that minimize the effect of a collisionRecognize how a solution to the problem of a collision was effective |
| EU | * Recognize the result of the implementation of a solution to the problem of two objects colliding.
 | * Identify how the movement of two objects will change when they collide
 |

#### MS-PS3-2

*Describe how a change in distance changes the amount of potential energy stored in the system (e.g., carts at varying positions on a hill) by using models.*

Table 9. MS-PS3-2, FKSA and EU

| **Connector Component** | **Definition** | **Students Will Be Able To …** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FKSA | * Ability to describe how changing distance changes the amount of potential energy stored in the system (e.g., carts at varying positions on a hill) by using models.
 | * Identify whether the energy of an object increases or decreases when its position relative to the ground changes
* Identify the reason that the energy of an object changes when the position of the object changes relative to the ground
 |
| EU | * Identify that the potential energy of an object changes when a force is changed (e.g., bringing an object up or down a hill).
 | * Identify which of two objects has more energy based on their position relative to the ground
 |

## Testing Planner for Form 2

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 Grade Eight Testing Planner

| **Associated Science Connectors** | **Date(s) Related Instructional Content Will Be Taught** | **Scheduled Testing Date(s)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Earth and Space Sciences:MS-ESS2-5MS-ESS3-2MS-ESS3-4 | Add date(s) here: | Add date(s) here: |
| Life Sciences:MS-LS1-8MS-LS2-2MS-LS2-3 | Add date(s) here: | Add date(s) here: |
| Physical Sciences:MS-PS1-6MS-PS2-1MS-PS3-2 | Add date(s) here: | Add date(s) here: |