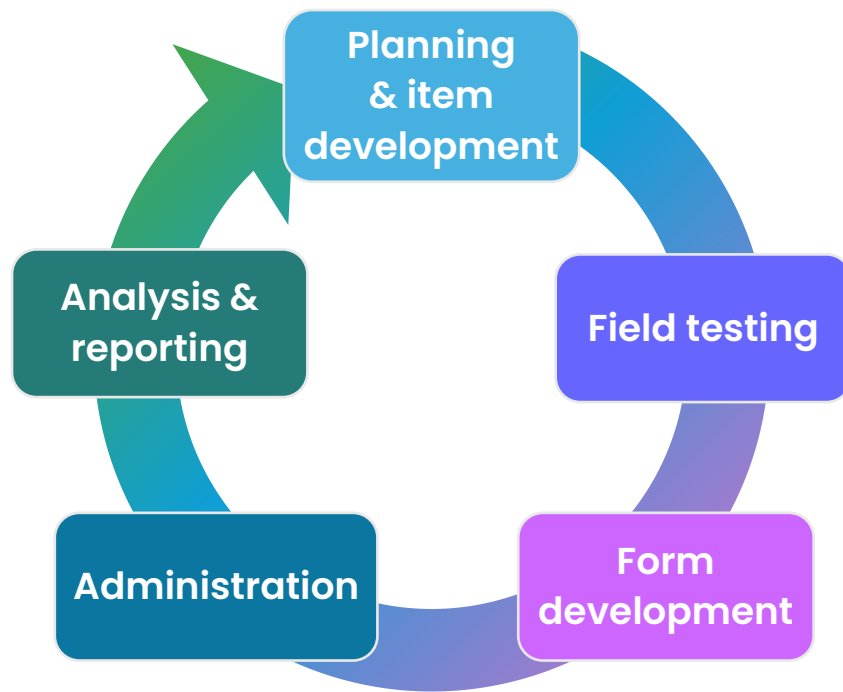


Provincial Assessment Development Cycle

Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Provincial assessments and examinations are developed in Nova Scotia, based on the Nova Scotia curriculum.



Planning and item development

Determine the scope

The department decides which grades and subjects will be assessed.

Form an advisory group

The group is comprised of teachers at the relevant grade level and subject area. They work with department staff to help guide the development of the assessment.

Create a table of specifications

The advisory group defines the curriculum areas to be assessed, and how much of the assessment each area should represent, to ensure alignment with the curriculum.

Develop assessment items

Teachers work with department staff to create assessment items. These are reviewed for fairness, accuracy, and bias.

Field testing

Administer field test

A sample of students from across the province participates in field tests to trial new assessment items. The field tests are administered and scored according to department guidelines.

Review and refine items

Items undergo statistical analysis and are reviewed for quality, then refined as needed.

Finalize items

Items that are statistically sound and pass quality checks, including bias review, are ready for use in the assessment.

Form development

Assemble assessment form

Department staff select final assessment items based on the table of specifications and input from the advisory group. After the first year of administration, some assessment items are reused from year to year. These anchor items allow for year-over-year comparisons using test equating processes.

Create support documents

Detailed instructions and scripts help administrators and teachers in schools plan for and administer the assessment in a consistent way across the province.

Administration

Prepare students, families and teachers

Resources are provided to help students, families, and teachers understand the process and format of the assessments. No special preparation is required, other than ensuring students are familiar with the assessment format.

Administer the assessment

Teachers administer the assessment following standard procedures.

Score the assessment

Constructed response items are scored by Nova Scotia teachers during a session led by department staff. Multiple-choice items are scored by computer.

Analysis and reporting

Set standards and review item quality

In the first year of the assessment, Nova Scotia teachers help set the standard, which is what students at the grade level are expected to know and be able to do. Items are examined again for quality and fairness, then student scores are produced and compared against the standard.

Individual student reports

A report is created for each participating student that is shared with the family and the school.

Additional reports

Other reports are sent to the Regional Centres for Education, Conseil scolaire acadien provincial, and schools to support teaching and learning.

Public results

The Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development releases public results which are then posted on the assessment website (plans.ednet.ns.ca/results).

Use of results

Schools, Regional Centres for Education, Conseil scolaire acadien provincial and the province use the results to inform decisions and provide support where needed.

Teachers are integral to the development, administration, scoring, and response to the results of each assessment and examination:

- Advisory groups – guide the direction of the assessment
- Item writing groups – develop new assessment materials
- Field testing – test new items with students
- Administration– supervise and ensure protocols are followed
- Scoring – score constructed response items
- Standard setting – participate in standard-setting sessions
- Response to results – use results along with classroom assessment information to support teaching and learning

