The following FAQ has been developed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) to assist school systems in the administration of the ACT Explore. This information should be used in conjunction with other testing materials in the administration of the test, including all information from the test publisher. Additional information about the ACT Explore may be found at http://www.act.org/aap/northcarolina/explore.html.

Eligibility:

1. Who is required to take the ACT Explore?
   All public school students, including traditional, charter, and regional school students, in grade 8 according to PowerSchool will participate in the ACT Explore. The only exceptions are as follows:
   - Students who have a significant cognitive disability, receive instruction in the Extended Content Standards, and whose current Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) document participation in the NCEXTEND1 grade 8 alternate assessment.
   - Students deemed medically fragile because of a significant medical emergency and/or condition and unable to participate in testing. All medical exceptions must be approved by the Division of Accountability Services/North Carolina Testing Program.
   - Students who have been retained in the 8th grade for the 2014-15 school year and previously took the ACT Explore assessment during the 2013-14 school year.

Non-public and Home Schools:

2. May non-public schools and home schools participate in the statewide administration of the ACT Explore?
   No. The statewide administration of the ACT Explore is for North Carolina public schools. As with any vendor assessment, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) does not function as a third-party for non-public or home schools.

Administration Dates and Times:

3. What are the administration dates and administration times for the ACT Explore?
   The testing window for the ACT Explore is October 1-31, 2014. Schools may schedule testing anytime within the window. ACT recommends that all four ACT Explore tests be administered in one session, consistent with the administration model used in the national norming study. The total administration time for the ACT Explore should be approximately 3 hours: approximately 40–50 minutes for the non-test sections and 2 hours and 20 minutes for the four tests (English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science).

4. What time of day does the ACT Explore begin?
   The start time for the administration is a local decision.
5. **Do the special status codes outlined in the ACT Explore Test Supervisor’s Manual need to be completed by the school?**  
No. This information is not mandatory to complete. School systems can decide if they would like to collect this information.

6. **Are calculators supplied by the school or by the student for the ACT Explore test?**  
Calculators may be supplied either by the school or by the student. There is no strict policy stating that the school must supply the student calculators. However, all calculators must be cleared before and after testing. The school must ensure that any calculator used meets the requirements stated in the ACT Explore Test Supervisor’s Manual.

7. **Can students be tested in groups on different days since the testing window is from October 1 through October 31?**  
ACT Explore offers a number of administration options to best match the needs of your school. However, in a standard time administration session, all students should be tested at the same time with one makeup day following the administration. ACT Explore recommends that all four academic tests (English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science) are administered in one session.

The district or school should determine if the standard time administration will be a 1-day or a 2-day administration. If the entire ACT Explore program is administered in one day, the student information sections of the test should be administered first, followed by the academic tests.

Because of the time required to complete the student information sections of ACT Explore, some schools prefer to administer the test over a 2-day period. In this case, the student information sections must be administered on Day 1, and the academic tests on Day 2.

Students who utilize testing accommodations may be tested in groups as staffing allows. ACT strongly suggests accommodated testing occur at the same time but realizes there are scheduling challenges when one-on-one readers are used.

**Accommodations:**

8. **How are accommodated testing materials acquired for the ACT Explore students?**  
There is not an ACT-approved process for the ACT Explore accommodations. However, the ACT Explore accommodation requests should be supported by the students’ IEPs, Section 504 Plans, or limited English proficiency plans/documentation. Schools or districts use the online ordering website [https://www.act.org/aap/northcarolina/explore.html](https://www.act.org/aap/northcarolina/explore.html) to enter the total number of accommodated testing materials needed at each school. Accommodated materials include audio DVDs, reader's scripts, large print test books, and Braille test books.

9. **Should students’ IEPs and/or Section 504 Plans, or limited English proficiency plans/documentation include accommodations for the 2014–15 administration of the ACT Explore?**  
IEPs: Yes, accommodations for these assessments should be added to the students’ IEPs as annual reviews occur. The ACT Explore has specific accommodations policies that may differ from those of the North Carolina state-developed assessments, and IEP Teams must take these policies into consideration when making accommodations decisions.
Until accommodations are documented for these assessments at annual reviews, accommodations decisions for the ACT Explore should be supported by classroom and testing accommodations documentation in the students’ current IEPs.

Section 504 Plans and LEP Plans/Documentation: Section 504 committees and LEP teams/committees may address accommodations for the ACT Explore on students’ Section 504/LEP plans, or may use existing classroom and testing accommodations documentation to support testing accommodation decisions for the test. The ACT Explore has specific accommodations policies that may differ from those of the North Carolina state-developed assessments, and Section 504 committees and LEP teams must take these policies into consideration when making accommodations decisions.

10. Does the IEP accommodations form reflect the ACT Explore?
Yes, page 6b of the IEP DEC4 form has been added to provide space for IEP Teams to address participation and accommodations for the ACT Explore. These accommodations must also be documented in CECAS. The ACT Explore has specific accommodations policies that may differ from those of the North Carolina state-developed assessments, and IEP Teams must take these policies into consideration when making accommodations decisions.

11. ACT requires a separate one-on-one setting for the read aloud accommodation, is the same true for the ACT Explore?
Yes. ACT Explore recommends a reader read for only one student in a separate room and be required to read from the script provided without change or comment.

12. Do we need to fill out the Review of Accommodations Used During Testing form for the ACT Explore?
A Review of Accommodations Used During Testing form does not need to be completed for the ACT Explore for the 2014–15 school year.

13. Does ACT allow for a read aloud accommodation on the ACT Explore reading test?
Yes. Unlike the reading tests administered through the North Carolina Testing Program, the ACT Explore reading tests may be read aloud.

14. If a student has the Test Administrator Reads Test Aloud – by Student Request accommodation, may a DVD or a human reader be used?
A human reader should be used in the provision of this accommodation.

15. May students who are scheduled to have the read aloud accommodation have the test read aloud to them in a small group?
ACT Explore recommends that if a read aloud accommodation is used, the teacher/proctor should use the ACT Explore Reader’s Script in a one-on-one setting. Using the read aloud accommodation with a group will extend the testing time and may be distracting to students.

16. Must a student have everything read aloud if he or she has this accommodation?
No. A student does not need to have the entire test read aloud if this is outlined in his or her IEP.
17. Whom may we contact with accommodation questions concerning the ACT Explore?
Call ACT Customer Service at 877-789-2925.

Medical Exceptions:

18. Does a request for a medical exception need to be submitted to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) for students required to take the ACT Explore?
Yes. All requests for medical exceptions for the ACT Explore must be approved by the Division of Accountability Services/North Carolina Testing Program.

Limited English Proficient Students:

19. Will limited English proficient students (LEP) in their first-year in a U. S. school be required to take the ACT Explore?
Yes. LEP students will be required to take the ACT Explore.

20. Are LEP only students eligible for testing accommodations on the ACT Explore?
Yes. LEP students are eligible to receive state testing accommodations on the ACT Explore.

21. Are foreign language dictionaries permitted for use by students taking the ACT Explore?
No. Foreign language dictionaries are not permitted for use on the ACT Explore.

Alternate Assessments:

22. Is an alternate assessment available for the ACT Explore?
The current grade 8 NCEXTEND1 alternate assessments of English Language Arts/Reading, Mathematics, and Science serves as the alternate assessment for the ACT Explore. Students who qualify for this alternate assessment must have a significant cognitive disability, receive instruction in the Extended Content Standards, and have current IEPs documenting participation in the NCEXTEND1 grade 8 alternate assessments. The grade 8 NCEXTEND1 administrations occur during the last ten days of the school year.

Other:

24. Where can I find more information on the web regarding the ACT Explore administration in North Carolina?
Information regarding the ACT Explore assessment can be found on the ACT State Services page at http://www.act.org/stateservices/northcarolina/. This page includes resources and information for parents, students, and educators regarding the assessment.