

## SECTION THREE

### RATING EXAMINATION PAPERS, RECORDING SCORES, AND PROVIDING ACADEMIC INTERVENTION SERVICES

#### Rating Examination Papers

##### General Information

The principal is responsible for establishing rating procedures that will ensure reasonable confidence in the accuracy of the scores assigned to the answer papers by individual teachers or by committees of teachers. The principal is responsible for the rating of all answer papers written in the school, including papers written by persons admitted to examinations in subjects not regularly taught in the school, papers written by persons not enrolled in the school, papers written by students taking the alternative language editions of examinations, and papers written in braille.

At least two teachers must rate the answer papers for the Regents Comprehensive Examination in English and for the Regents Examinations in Global History and Geography, United States History and Government, Living Environment, Physical Setting/Chemistry, Physical Setting/Earth Science, and Physical Setting/Physics. For the Regents Examinations in English and Social Studies, a third teacher must score all essays when the scores of the first and second raters differ by more than one credit. Raters must follow the procedures described in the appropriate Information Booklet provided in the school's shipment of nonsecure materials.

At least three teachers must rate the answer papers for the Regents Examinations in mathematics and the RCT in Writing. Only student answer papers for Regents Examinations in mathematics and the sciences that initially receive a scale score of 60-64 may be scored a second time.

If possible, each answer paper for all State examinations in foreign languages and all RCTs except Writing should be rated by two teachers to ensure the accuracy of the scores. All answer papers for those examinations with scores from 60 through 64 must be re-rated to ensure the accuracy of the scores. Before answer sheets are machine scored, several samples must be both machine scored and hand scored to ensure the accuracy of the machine-scoring process. All discrepancies must be rectified before student answer sheets are machine scored. When the machine scoring is completed, a sample of the answer sheets must be rescored manually to verify the accuracy of the machine-scoring process. Instances of students receiving incorrect scores because of inaccuracies in machine scoring are found during the Department review of answer papers.

To maintain uniform rating standards, all teachers involved in rating State examinations must be thoroughly familiar with the rating instructions provided by the Department. Accompanying each examination is a scoring key with directions for rating the multiple-choice and short-answer questions and, if applicable, guidelines for rating the essay parts of the examination. Except when recording scores on a scannable answer sheet, teachers must use red pen or red pencil when rating State examination papers.

Teachers must rate strictly according to the scoring key provided by the Department. Credit may be allowed for other answers only if they are clearly equivalent to the key answer. Permission must be obtained from the Office of State Assessment before students can be given credit for any answer that is not clearly equivalent to the key answer. Credit may *not* be given for answers that the teacher considers merely plausible, possible, or reasonable.

Once students hand in their test materials, the answer papers must not pass from the custody of the teachers. Except when answer papers are being scored in cooperation with another school, answer papers must not be removed from the school building until the rating has been completed and the test scores have been recorded on each student's permanent record. When the papers are being scored in cooperation with another school, it remains the principal's responsibility to ensure the security of the answer papers while they are out of the building.

### **Rating Regents Examinations**

Except when recording scores on a scannable answer sheet, teachers must use red pen or red pencil when rating Regents Examination answer papers. When scoring student responses to multiple-choice questions, teachers must distinctly mark all incorrect and omitted answers. For all RCTs and Second Language Proficiency Examinations, the number of credits allowed for each open-ended response must be clearly marked on the answer sheet. For Regents Examinations, raters must follow the procedures specified in the appropriate rating guide for recording the credits awarded for responses to open-ended questions. Whenever any State examination provides for fractional credit and the total score involves a fraction of  $\frac{1}{2}$  or more, the total score must be raised to the next highest integer; if the total score involves a fraction less than  $\frac{1}{2}$ , the fraction must be dropped. The initials of the raters must be clearly written on the answer paper.

Instructions for administering and rating the modern language speaking tests and the Latin oral reading test will be sent to schools approximately two months before each applicable Regents Examination period.

### **Rating RCTs**

*Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.* The procedures to be followed when either hand scoring or machine scoring the answer papers for the RCTs are included in the directions for administering and scoring provided with each of the tests. For the RCT in Mathematics, Part A must be hand scored before the answer sheets can be machine scored; for the RCT in Science, the last question must be hand scored before the answer sheets can be machine scored.

*Writing.* Before beginning the rating process for the RCT in Writing, the principal of each school should set up a procedure for collecting and processing the answer papers. The rating should be completed as soon as possible after the administration of the test, but only after teachers have had sufficient time to become familiar with the method of rating the answer papers. Detailed directions for rating the answer papers are included in the rating guide and in the publication *Regents Competency Test in Writing: Directions for Administering and Scoring*, which may be accessed at: <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/hsgen.html>.

### **Rating Second Language Proficiency Examinations**

Instructions for administering and rating the modern language speaking tests and the Latin oral skills test will be sent to schools approximately two months before the June Regents Examination period. The scoring key for each examination also provides information about the rating of the examinations. The number of credits allowed for each part must be recorded in the spaces provided on the student answer sheet. Except when recording scores on a scannable answer sheet, teachers must use red pen or red pencil when rating answer papers. The initials of the rater must be clearly written on the answer paper.

## **The Finality of Examination Scores**

When the teacher scoring committee completes the scoring process, test scores must be considered final and must be entered onto students' permanent records.

Principals and other administrative staff in a school or district do not have the authority to set aside the scores arrived at by the teacher scoring committee and rescore student examination papers or to change any scores assigned through the procedures described in this manual and in the scoring materials provided by the Department. Any principal or administrator found to have done so, except in the circumstances described below, will be in violation of Department policy regarding the scoring of State examinations. Teachers and administrators who violate Department policy with respect to scoring State examinations may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Sections 3020 and 3020-a of Education Law or to action against their certification pursuant to Part 83 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

On rare occasions, an administrator may learn that an isolated error occurred in the calculation of a final score for a student or in recording students' scores in their permanent records. For example, the final score may have been based on an incorrect summing of the student's raw scores for parts of the test or from a misreading of the conversion chart. When errors such as these involve no more than five students' final scores on any State examination and when they are detected within four months of the test date, the principal may arrange for the corrected score to be recorded in the student's permanent record. However, in all such instances, the principal must advise the Office of State Assessment in writing that the student's score has been corrected. The written notification to the Department must be signed by the principal or superintendent and must include the names of the students whose scores have been corrected, the name of the examination, the students' original and corrected scores, and a brief explanation of the nature of the scoring error that was corrected.

If an administrator has substantial reason to believe that the teacher scoring committee has failed to accurately score more than five student answer papers on any examination, the administrator must first obtain permission in writing from the Office of State Assessment before arranging for or permitting a rescoring of student papers. The written request to the Office of State Assessment must come from the superintendent of a public school district or the chief administrative officer of a nonpublic or charter school and must include the examination title, date of administration, and number of students whose papers would be subject to such rescoring. This request must also include a statement explaining why the administrator believes that the teacher scoring committee failed to score appropriately and, thus, why he or she believes rescoring the examination papers is necessary. As part of this submission, the school administrator must make clear his or her understanding that this extraordinary re-rating may be carried out only by a full committee of teachers constituted in accordance with the scoring guidelines provided in this section and fully utilizing the scoring materials for this test furnished by the Department.

The Department sometimes finds it necessary to notify schools of a revision to the scoring key and rating guide for an examination. Should this occur after the scoring committee has completed its work, the principal is authorized to have appropriate members of the scoring committee review students' responses only to the specific question(s) referenced in the notification and to adjust students' final examination scores when appropriate. Only in such circumstances is the school not required to notify or obtain approval from the Department to correct students' final examination scores.

## **Rating Examination Papers for Students with Disabilities**

For students with disabilities, the only permissible testing accommodations that have any bearing on the scoring of answer papers are the IEP or 504 Plan exemption(s) from spelling, paragraphing, and/or punctuation requirements. Otherwise, the answer papers written by students with disabilities must be scored according to the same standards used to score answer papers for all students.

## Passing Scores

*Regents Examinations.* The minimum passing score on a Regents Examination taken to satisfy the testing requirements for a Regents diploma is 65. Public school districts and nonpublic schools may establish a lower passing score at or above 55 for each Regents Examination to satisfy the testing requirements for a local diploma, subject to the limitations specified in Section 100.5(a) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. For students with disabilities who first enter Grade 9 in September 2005 and thereafter, the score required on Regents Examinations for a local diploma is 55. The regulations pertaining to passing scores on Regents Examinations may be found on the Department's web site at: <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/part100/pages/pt100index.html>.

Students taking Regents Examinations to earn course credit in accordance with Section 100.5(d)(1) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education (<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/part100/pages/1005c.html>) must earn a score of 85 or higher for credit to be awarded. All State examinations scores earned in each attempt to earn credit in this manner, including those below 85, must be entered into the student's permanent record.

*Second Language Proficiency Examinations.* The minimum passing score for Second Language Proficiency Examinations is 65. However, students who are attempting to earn course credit by examination under Section 100.5(d) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education must achieve a score of 85.

*RCTs.* The minimum passing score for the RCTs in Global Studies, United States History and Government, Mathematics, Science, and Writing is 65. Each of the specific *Directions for Administering and Scoring* the RCTs includes a chart to assist schools in converting the student's raw score to a final examination score.

The minimum passing score for the RCT in Reading may vary from one test to another because of differences in the readability levels of the passages used. The passing score is indicated on the scoring key provided for each test. Regardless of the specific raw score that is required to pass a particular RCT in Reading, the meaning of the passing score does not change. It represents a 70% likelihood of success in reading with comprehension the prose material typically used in required high school courses.

## Recording Examination Scores

The Department does not keep records of student scores for Regents Examinations, RCTs, or Second Language Proficiency Examinations. Schools must therefore maintain complete and accurate permanent records. Each time that a student takes a State examination at the scheduled time under proper supervision, the name of the examination, the date of administration, and the score must be entered on the student's permanent record, unless the score has been canceled because of fraud or misadministration.

No examination score may be entered as a Regents Examination score unless it has been obtained on a Regents Examination. Scores earned on Department-approved alternative examinations (Appendix I) must *not* be recorded on the permanent record as Regents Examination scores. If a student fails to take a Regents Examination, no score may be reported (including 0) on the student's permanent record.

The Regents Comprehensive Examination in English is administered in two three-hour sessions on separate days. To complete the examination and earn an official score, students must attend both sessions. No score should be entered in the student's permanent record if a student attends only one of the two sessions.

For the RCTs, the school should also indicate whether the raw scores obtained by students are passing or failing scores. For the RCTs in Mathematics, Science, and social studies, the raw score that is equivalent to 65 percent is indicated on the scoring key and in the specific *Directions for Administering and Scoring*.

If a student who has failed an examination retakes the examination and achieves a passing score, the school is required to record only the higher score on the student's transcript. All scores must be recorded on the permanent record. If a student re-takes a State examination, the student's option to have only the higher score reported on the transcript should be honored. These decisions should be made in consultation with the student, and the student's choice of score for official transcript purposes should be respected whenever possible.

## **Required Academic Intervention Services**

Section 100.2(ee) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education requires that students who fail any of the core State examinations required for high school graduation shall be provided with the appropriate academic intervention services to enable them to pass the test by the time they are otherwise qualified to graduate (<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/part100/pages/1002i.html>). Academic intervention services are intended to assist students who are at risk of not achieving the State learning standards in English language arts, mathematics, social studies and/or science, or who are at risk of not gaining the knowledge and skills needed to meet or exceed designated performance levels on State assessments. Academic intervention services shall be made available to students with disabilities on the same basis as non-disabled students, provided that these services are in accordance with the student's IEP. The regulations also require that the parent or guardian of each such student shall be notified in writing, by the principal, of the academic intervention services to be provided to the student, the reason the student needs such services and the consequences of not achieving expected performance levels. Such notification must be provided in the language best understood by the parent or guardian. (See *Sample Letter to Parents* in Appendix VI.)