

Proposed Cross Reference of the *Links for Academic Learning* Alignment Criteria (UNCC model) and the Standards and Assessments
Peer Review Guidance -- October 3, 2006

Critical Element Related to Alignment	Examples of Acceptable Evidence	Alignment Criteria
<p>1.1</p> <p>(a) Has the State formally approved/adopted, by May 2003, challenging academic content standards in reading/language arts and mathematics that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cover each of grades 3-8 and the 10-12 grade range, <i>or</i> • if the academic content standards relate to grade ranges, include specific content expectations for each grade level? <p>AND</p> <p>(b) Are these academic content standards applied to <i>all</i> public schools and students in the State?</p>	<p>Documents that include or are based on the academic content standards explicitly address the needs of students with disabilities and limited English proficient students.</p>	<p>Criteria 2, 3, & 6: If state extend and/or prioritize grade-level content standards, evidence of the alignment of these extended standards to the students assigned grade (criterion 2) and a description of how the extended standards differ in content and depth should be provided (criterion 3). States should provide a rationale for the extended standard and prioritization of the extended standards & acceptable degrees of alignment should be consistent with states' rationale.</p>

<p>2.5 How has the State ensured alignment between challenging academic content standards and the academic achievement standards?</p> <p>If the State has adopted alternate achievement standards, how has the State ensured alignment between its academic content standards and the alternate academic achievement standards?</p>	<p>Written documentation designed to accompany or explain the standards that delineate the content-based relationships between the academic achievement standards, alternate achievement standards, if any, and the academic content standards.</p>	<p>Criteria 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, & 7 all may have implications for making the argument that the AAS align with the academic content standards. Criteria 1, 2, 3, & 6 provides a description of that agreement between academic content, grade level standards, extended standards (if applicable), & AA-AAS. Criterion 4 provides a description of vertical alignment across the grades. Criterion 5 examines the age appropriates, context, generalization and other domains that are typically found in alternate achievement standards. Criterion 7 focuses on the accessibility of the assessment and standards, so both are challenging for all students yet also fair to students at all achievement levels. If submitted for review, the alternate achievement standards can also be considered with these criteria.</p>
<p>3.4 How has the State ensured that its assessment system will provide coherent information for students across grades and subjects?</p> <p>(a) Has it indicated the relative contribution of each assessment to ensure alignment to the content standards and determining adequate yearly progress?</p> <p>(b) Has the State provided a rational and coherent design that identifies the assessments to be used?</p>	<p>Documentation of the studies used to establish vertical scales that span grade levels within a given content area.</p> <p>Documentation that indicates how each of the assessments contributes to the alignment to the content standards.</p>	<p>Criterion 4: There should be some differentiation in achievement across grade levels or grand bands. Vertical alignment examines how levels of cognitive demand, content, skills, processes change as students move from lowest grade level to highest grade level.</p>

<p>3.5 If its assessment system includes various instruments (e.g., the regular assessment in English and either a native-language version or simplified English version of the assessment), how does the State demonstrate comparable results and alignment with the academic content and achievement standards?</p>	<p>Documentation of alignment studies of the assessments with the academic content and achievement standards.</p>	<p>If there is more than one version of a states AA-AAS, the Links for Academic Learning (LAL) model with its criteria can be used to compare each formats alignment with state standards. For example, if a state uses a different format for the lowest (e.g., presymbolic) students, this alternative format should also be reviewed for alignment.</p>
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<p>4.1 For each assessment, including alternate assessment(s), has the State documented the issue of validity (in addition to the alignment of the assessment with the content standards), as described in the <i>Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing</i> (AERA/APA/NCME, 1999), with respect to <u>all</u> of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Has the State specified the purposes of the assessments, delineating the types of uses and decisions most appropriate to each? <u>and</u> (b) Has the State ascertained that the assessments, including alternate assessments, are measuring the knowledge and skills described in its academic content standards and not knowledge, skills, or other characteristics that are not specified in the academic content standards or grade level expectations? <u>and</u> (c) Has the State ascertained that its assessment items are tapping the intended cognitive processes and that the items and tasks are at the appropriate grade level? <u>and</u> (d) Has the State ascertained that the scoring and reporting structures are consistent with the sub-domain structures of its academic content standards (i.e., are item interrelationships consistent with the framework from which the test arises)? <u>and</u> (e) Has the State ascertained that test and item scores are related to outside variables as intended (e.g., scores are correlated strongly with relevant measures of academic achievement and are weakly correlated, if at all, with irrelevant characteristics, such as demographics)? <u>and</u> (f) Has the State ascertained that the decisions based on the results of its assessments are consistent with the purposes for which the assessments were designed? <u>and</u> <p>Has the State ascertained whether the assessment produces intended and unintended consequences?</p>		<p>Criteria 2, 3, 5 & 6 Criteria 2, 3, & 6 examine the academic content coverage & depth of knowledge. Criterion 5 examines the grade appropriateness of the tasks/items.</p>
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<p>5.1 Has the State outlined a coherent approach to ensuring alignment between each of its assessments, including alternate assessment(s), or combination of assessments, and the academic content standards and academic achievement standards the assessment is designed to measure?</p>	<p>Detailed assessment specifications and a description of the process used to ensure that full alignment is achieved initially and maintained over time through quality control reviews.</p> <p>Descriptions of the internal and external groups involved in the State's alignment process.</p> <p>Reports of independent alignment studies (i.e., conducted by an entity other than the State or its assessment contractor) and evidence of a systematic process for addressing any gaps or weaknesses identified in these studies.</p> <p>If the State has multiple assessments within one grade level in reading/language arts or mathematics, then the State has tapped all content sub-domains. The State is implementing a series of studies to ensure that this combination is aligned to the full scope of the domain.</p>	<p>Criteria 1-7 from the. Links to Academic Learning is an alignment methodology currently being evaluated by the National Alternate Assessment Center for use in independent alignment studies.</p>
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<p>5.2 Are the assessments and the standards aligned comprehensively, meaning that the assessments reflect the full range of the State’s academic content standards? Are the assessments as cognitively challenging as the standards? Are the assessments and standards aligned to measure the depth of the standards? Do the standards reflect the degree of cognitive complexity and level of difficulty of the concepts and processes described in the standards?</p>	<p>The State’s assessment plan, assessment blueprints, and/or item/task specifications describe how all content standards are assessed and how the domain is sampled to lead to valid inferences about student performance on the standards, individually and in the aggregate. The State has evidence that (a) the full scope of the standards and their differential emphases are reflected in the plan/blueprints/specifications and that (b) the assessments match the plan/blueprints/specifications. Impartial experts were involved in this process.</p> <p>Detailed assessment specifications and a description of the process that was used to ensure that its assessment system reflects the full range of content and level of challenge specified in its academic content standards, as well as the range of performance indicated in its academic achievement standards.</p> <p>Reports of independent alignment studies and evidence of a systematic process for addressing any gaps or weaknesses identified in these studies.</p>	<p>Criteria 3 & 6—these criteria are similar to those proposed by Webb and Achieve. We propose that the depth, breadth, and DOK will differ from expectations for grade level achievement in AA-AAS. How much they differ should be specified in the guidelines for the alternate assessment and in professional development materials.</p>
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<p>5.3 Are the assessments and the standards aligned in terms of both content (knowledge) and process (how to do it), as necessary, meaning that the assessments measure what the standards state students should both know and be able to do?</p>	<p>The State’s assessments reflect both the content and the process dimensions of the academic content standards. These assessments are designed in a way that will allow students to demonstrate content knowledge through activities described in the standards.</p> <p>Detailed assessment specifications and a description of the process used to ensure that its assessment system reflects both the content and the processes and skills specified in its academic content standards.</p> <p>Reports of independent alignment studies and evidence of a systematic process for addressing any gaps or weaknesses identified in these studies.</p>	<p>Criterion 6—content & performance centrality. We propose that content centrality should be expected for all AA items. Performance centrality should be expected for most, but may be more difficult to achieve in AA items intended for students who are at the presymbolic level.</p>
<p>5.5 Do the assessments yield scores that reflect the full range of achievement implied by the State’s academic achievement standards?</p>	<p>The State’s assessments have sufficient items at each level to permit students to demonstrate the full range of the State’s academic achievement standards.</p> <p>Detailed assessment specifications and a description of the process used to ensure that its assessment system reflects the full range of achievement described in its academic achievement standards</p> <p>Reports of independent alignment studies and evidence of a systematic process for addressing any gaps or weaknesses identified in these studies.</p>	<p>Criterion 3—Webb’s alignment method is applicable here. We also propose our Criteria 7- are there sufficient items for students at all symbolic levels to be able to demonstrate proficiency.</p>

<p>5.6 Assessment results must be expressed in terms of the achievement standards, not just scale scores or percentiles.</p>	<p>The State has designed reports and communicated assessment results in terms of its achievement standards.</p> <p>The State’s assessments yield scores that are clearly aligned with the State’s academic content standards at the domain and/or sub-domain levels.</p> <p>Examples of existing documents, such as web pages, brochures, guidelines, or media reports, designed to communicate the alignment between the standards and assessments to all members of the school community.</p> <p>“Extended” standards communicate the relationship between the State’s academic content standards and the content of the alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards.</p>	<p>All criteria apply but the focus is on the alignment between the grade-level content standards and the extended standards and then between the AA and the extended standards IF these extended standards align to the state content standards. If they do not align, we propose that consideration must then be given to alignment directly from AA to state content standards.</p>
<p>5.7 What ongoing procedures does the State use to maintain and improve alignment between the assessment(s) and standards over time?</p>	<p>The State has used the information gained through its series of alignment studies to eliminate gaps and weaknesses in alignment and is implementing a plan for continuous quality review to maintain alignment over time.</p> <p>Documentation of independent alignment studies.</p> <p>If any independent alignment studies reveal gaps or weaknesses in the alignment of the State’s assessments and standards, existing written documentation describing the State’s systematic process for addressing these deficiencies.</p>	<p>Criteria 1-7 from the Links to Academic Learning can be used for independent alignment studies. The LAL can be repeated for revised AA-AAS to compare changes in alignment criteria by criteria.</p>