

Glossary

Adjacent Score Points	Two scores within one score point of each other (e.g. 3 and 4 are adjacent score points).
Analytic Scoring	Scoring based on multiple dimensions of a student's performance.
Anchor item	A previously-scored example of student work used to train and calibrate readers during scoring. Anchor items are chosen to represent each level of performance described in the scoring guides.
Authentic Assessment	An assessment of student achievement that both mirrors and measures a student's performance in the classroom, "real-life" tasks, and everyday situations.
Bias	A lack of objectivity, fairness, or impartiality on the part of the assessor or evaluator, the assessment instrument or procedures, or in the interpretation and evaluation process, that leads to misinterpretation of student performance or knowledge.
Benchmark	<p>Student work that illustrates levels of achievement at defined points on an assessment scale. These examples result from applied measurement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An actual measurement of group performance against an established standard at some defined points along the path toward the standard. Subsequent use of the benchmark(s) may be to set interim targets progressing "normally" toward the final standard.• Samples of student work that serve as exemplars for each level of achievement on an assessment scale. Benchmark pieces should be shared with students and interested parents. In selecting benchmarks, it is important to find work that demonstrates each point on the scale.• Examples of student work which illustrate each of the points on a performance scale.

Calibration	The process of training readers of students' papers to learn previously established scoring standards to accurately score performance-based assessments using holistic scoring guides.
Constructed Response	A type of performance assessment. Constructed response tests are composed of open-ended written questions, to which students must produce the answers or solve problems, rather than select them from an array of choices (i.e., multiple choice). Examples include essays, diagrams, charts, and graphs.
Criteria	The features of a particular science parameter that are considered in evaluating student performance. These features, associated with particular portfolio parameters, explicitly describe those features and characterize levels of performance. Prior to the assessment of a parameter, criteria can be used to tell teachers and students what is expected; during the scoring of an entry, they can help ensure reliable scoring of student responses; and following assessment, these criteria can help communicate the results by illustrating how the results were derived.
Criterion Referenced Test	A form of assessment that is designed to measure performance against a set of clearly defined criteria. Such tests measure the degree to which students have mastered the objectives of instruction. Scores have meaning in terms of what the student knows or can do, rather than how the student compares to some reference or norm group.
Curriculum-Embedded Tests	Tasks or tests developed from or within the curriculum or instructional materials.
Discussion Sets	Sets of student papers included as part of the Assessment Pool Scoring Guide which have been scored in order to provide exemplars or anchors for use by teachers and raters for scoring student work. (See anchor item .)
Entry	A piece of student work included in a portfolio. It is a representative sample demonstrating a student's achievement in some or all of the portfolio parameters, submitted as evidence of attainment of learning and for purposes of assessment. The SCASS science portfolio consists of 4 entries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation • Research • Applications of Science • Open Choice

Event	(see Performance Event)
Extended Response Item	Any prompt that requires the student to produce a lengthy written response, such as an essay or a laboratory report. In the SCASS Science project this is typically a constructed response of up to a page in length or approximately a 5 minute time commitment on a timed 50 minute test.
Group Collaboration	Working with one or more students, teachers, parents, research scientists, or community members to develop or perform science investigations, creative projects, or research papers. The collaboration should be meaningful, i.e., enhance the individual student's understanding of the relevant processes or conceptual content of science. Students working collaboratively should clearly document how they personally contributed to the completion of the work, independently complete reflective pieces describing the work, and describe how the process of working collaboratively enhanced their understanding.
Holistic Scoring	Scoring based on an overall impression of a student's work. With holistic scoring, an educator matches an overall impression of a student's performance with a point scale to determine scoring. Educators pay attention to particular aspects of a performance when assigning the overall score.
Interpretive Summary or Explanatory Commentary	A concise statement that explains and illustrates why a score was assigned to a student entry. Strengths and weaknesses are illustrated using examples drawn from the student work. Explanations are provided of the relationship between the examples and the applications of scoring criteria.
Inter-Rater Reliability	The degree or rate of agreement between or among readers (scorers) in making independent judgements regarding student performance on an assessment item.
Item Description	In the Assessment Pool, a summary of the assessment item, including a summary of what is expected of the student.
MEC	Measures of the Enacted Curriculum : statistical indicators designed to examine how a subject is being taught and learned

from both the student and the teacher perspective. (See also Surveys of the Enacted Curriculum: SEC)

Module	Modules are groups or sets of items. Each set begins with a stimulus, scenario, or reading passage. The module questions consist of 4 multiple-choice items, 1 short-answer item , and 1 extended-response item .
Non-Adjacent Score Point	Two scores that are not within one score point of each other (e.g., 2 and 4 are non-adjacent score points).
Norm-Referenced Test	A test designed to provide information on how well a student performs in comparison to the original group that took the test. The scores on norm-referenced tests have meaning in terms of their relation to the scores of the original reference group (the norm group).
Open-ended Responses/ Questions	Open-ended questions require students to construct a response to a question (see Constructed Response), often requiring the interpretation of data or answers with alternative possibilities.
Parameter	Overall goals of the portfolio including depth of understanding, relevance, communication and evidence of inquiry. Each student work entry should clearly show evidence of some or all of the four parameters, the focus of the portfolio.
Performance Assessment	Performance assessment refers to testing methods that require students to develop answers or products that demonstrate their knowledge or skills. In a performance assessment students are more actively engaged in constructing their responses to the testing situation than they are when they choose from the choices provided in multiple-choice questions. Performance assessments can take many different forms, which may include writing an extended essay, conducting an experiment, presenting an oral argument, or assembling a collection of representative work.
Performance Event	Performance events are problems, activities, or experiments given to students which can be completed within a classroom time frame. For purposes of the SCASS Science project this is approximately 45-50 minutes. The SCASS Science

performance events usually require manipulation of laboratory equipment or materials and data collection or interpretation.

Performance Task

Performance tasks are problems, activities, or experiments given to students which can only be completed within an extended time frame such as a week, month, or year. For purposes of the SCASS Science project this is usually three weeks or longer.

Portfolio

A representative collection of a student's work, prepared in the normal course of classroom activities, that can be used to document a student's level of achievement in specified subjects or to evaluate work in progress or work over time. A portfolio can be used to expand on the information about a student's achievement gathered through annual assessments.

Products

Student work that may be submitted as portfolio entries or kept in a working folder that they may update and from which eventually select final portfolio submissions.

Prompt

An assignment or directions asking a student to undertake a task or series of tasks. A prompt presents the context of the situation, the problem or problems to be solved, and criteria or standards by which the student will be evaluated.

Reflection

A student's written interpretation and evaluation of work they have completed for their portfolios. Students may describe: what they have learned; how they have improved their work; where the SCASS portfolio parameters are exemplified in the work; what they could do to improve their work; or what the work was intended to convey – what it meant to them.

Reflective Cover Letter

An attachment to the final portfolio that requires a student to reflect on what he or she has learned through the process of completing the portfolio. The portfolio cover letter highlights the attributes of the student's work and is an important guide to the scoring process. It emphasizes the need for students to objectively evaluate their own work.

Reliability	The measure of consistency for assessment instruments. A reliable test will yield similar scores across different administrations of the test (assuming the test populations have similar knowledge and abilities), or across different raters of an individual test.
Revision	The revisiting of a piece of student work with the intent to correct and improve the demonstration of scientific understanding.
Rubric	A set of guidelines for giving scores to student work. A typical rubric states the assessment criteria and contains descriptive statements that help the educator rate student work. Also referred to as Score Level Descriptions in the Assessment Pool. (See also Anchor Item and Discussion Sets .)
SCASS	The acronym for the States Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards . SCASS was initiated as a collaborative among several states to work on development and emerging issues of assessment and student standards.
Scientific Concept	For the purposes of the Science Portfolio, a scientific concept is an integrated set of scientific ideas, observations, or principles that together explain phenomena or patterns in nature.
Scoring Guide	A scoring guide (also called rubric) is a set of guidelines for giving scores to student work. A typical scoring guide states the assessment criteria, contains a scale and helps the educator rate given work according to the scale.
Selected Response Item	An item type that asks students to select an answer from an array of possible answers (e.g., multiple choice items).
Short Answer Item	A constructed response item which typically requires a response of one paragraph in length or approximately 5 minutes of time to respond.
Standardized Test	An assessment instrument given to a large number of persons under similar conditions, designed to yield comparable scores. The term is most often applied to national norm-referenced tests developed by test publishers.
Standards	Standards refer to the goals, desirable behaviors or models to which students, teachers, and schools should aspire. Standards also denote the specific levels of proficiency students are expected to attain.

Tryout Statistics

Results of the field try-outs reported in the scoring guides. The analysis, interpretation and presentation of data from the field try-outs.

Validity

The measure of accuracy for assessment instruments. A valid test measures what we want it to measure, rather than extraneous variables.