Group of National Experts on the AHELO Feasibility Study

TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL

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Test Administration Manual

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Introduction

Overview

1. The Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO) Feasibility Study is a major OECD project. Its objective is to determine a robust approach to measuring learning outcomes in ways that are valid across cultures and languages, and across the diversity of institutional settings and missions.

2. Following the conclusion of a pre-implementation phase, AHELO is moving into full implementation in 2012. The information in this document is relevant to test administration in all three testing strands: Generic skills, Economics and Engineering.

3. AHELO involves testing tens of thousands of students at hundreds of institutions in many different countries. It is important that testing conditions are as similar as possible in all testing sessions. This ensures that student performance is measured in a comparable way across institutions and countries, and is not influenced by external factors.

4. This Test Administration Manual sets out the rules under which AHELO test administrations are conducted, specifies the preparation and setup of the testing environment, provides instructions on the administration of testing sessions and provides a script for Test Administrators (TAs) to follow while administering the test. This manual is designed to guide and support the activities of TAs before, during and after testing sessions.

5. TAs play a very important role in making sure that the assessment is carried out smoothly and in a standardised way. In so doing, they contribute significantly to the success of the AHELO Feasibility Study, nationally and internationally.

6. The Test Administrator Manual is a non-secure document, intended for distribution to people coordinating testing sessions in participating institutions and countries. However the AHELO test instruments are secure materials and their confidentiality must be assured. Similarly, all data collected in AHELO is kept strictly confidential.

7. It is important that TAs follow procedures closely. TAs should review all directions in advance so that they are familiar with the procedures. All AHELO National Project Managers (NPMs), Institutional Coordinators (ICs) and TAs must read this manual thoroughly before the test and ensure that TAs are briefed on their duties and on the test procedures and rules.

8. Any anticipated or desired variations must be discussed and approved by your NPM in advance.

9. If you have any questions about any of the activities outlined in this document, or require support, please contact your IC or NPM.
Key national roles and resources

10. This section provides an overview of the main national human and organisational resources required for administration of the AHELO tests and surveys. Depending on national contexts and progress it may be necessary to draw on additional resources.

11. The AHELO Feasibility Study is a large international project involving many different organisations and roles. The AHELO National Centre (NC) and roles of NPM, IC and TA are of most direct relevance to test administration.

12. The NC is the organisational group that manages AHELO in each country.

13. The NPM is responsible for the implementation of AHELO at the national level. The NPM has overall responsibility for ensuring that all required tasks are carried out on schedule and in accordance with the prescribed technical standards and operations guidelines, and for documenting processes implemented at national level.

14. An IC represents each institution participating in AHELO. Each IC’s role involves close liaison with the NPM, assisting the NPM draw samples of students and faculty, providing institutional information, and working with TAs to organise administration of test and context instruments.

15. Test Administrators work closely with ICs to administer tests to students within institutions. TAs should have experience in the management and supervision of testing and examination in university settings. They should be familiar with the use of computer-based deployment systems. Where possible, TAs should not have a direct personal or professional relationship with any of the students in the testing sessions they administer.

16. One TA is required per test room. If the test room is very large and seats more than 40 students, it is advisable to have a minimum ratio of approximately one TA to every 40 students. The TA will be fully trained in the use of the test system. Nevertheless, the TA should be supported by a technical support person at the beginning of the testing session to ensure that the test system is functioning correctly.

Preparing for testing

National TA training

16. All TAs must attend an NPM-organised training session. This national training defines the role of the TAs and procedures to follow throughout the testing session. During the training session TAs will learn to use the test system to deploy the test.

17. The role of the IC overlaps somewhat with that of NPMs and TAs. ICs should attend the NPM-organised training session along with TAs so that they are familiar with testing protocols and able to manage testing within their institution and ensure it meets international protocols.

18. It is important that TAs read this Test Administration Manual in advance of the training session so that they are familiar with the procedures and have had the opportunity to prepare questions to ask during the training session. TAs should ensure that they:
• have a thorough familiarity with and understanding of this Test Administration Manual;
• receive, check and secure any test-related materials before the test;
• meet with the IC on testing day(s) to collect any test materials;
• check the test room is set-up correctly;
• direct students to their computers;
• make the prescribed announcements and conduct the test; and
• close the test session.

19. TAs should contact their IC one week before the testing session to confirm all arrangements. The IC is responsible for contacting sampled students to inform them of the details of their test session.

20. The IC provides TAs with a list of participating students in each testing session. For each participating student, the list includes their name as well as the username and password they will require to log in to the test. The IC also confirms the location of the testing session.

An example list of usernames and passwords for students is shown below (Please note – these usernames and passwords are not active):

![NEW DIAGRAM]

In this example, you can see that each student receives a unique numerical username and a unique numerical password.

21. The TA should arrive at least 30 minutes before the testing session is due to commence to ensure that testing spaces are set up correctly.
Set up the test room

22. The AHELO tests are conducted online and each test needs to be conducted in a testing space. Typically, testing spaces are computer labs or rooms with a number of computer terminals. Students may not complete the test on laptop computers.

23. The way in which the test room is set up will affect how students perform on the test. It is very important to ensure that:

- test rooms have adequate temperature;
- test rooms have adequate lighting and ventilation, are away from noise distractions, and have nearby toilets sign-posted;
- there is one working computer (with keyboard, monitor, mouse and internet access) per student;
- space (ideally 60cm) between working stations is left for TAs to pass between students;
- microphones and loudspeakers are available for announcements, if necessary; and
- one computer is provided for each TA.

24. As specified in the AHELO Sampling Manual, NPMs and IC may decide to exclude people from the sample if the person is unable to complete the test without special arrangements. Alternatively if a person with special needs is included in the sample then NPMs and ICs can elect to include people and provide them with appropriate means and assistance to complete the test. If a person with special needs is included in the sample but NPMs and ICs are unable to provide appropriate assistance then they should be exempted from the testing session.

25. Students should bring a pencil to the test. TAs should keep spare pencils and erasers on hand.

PARAGRAPH 26 HAS BEEN CHANGED TO REFLECT A CHANGE IN THE ECONOMICS TEST

26. TAs should supply students with blank sheets of paper. It is preferable that this paper is coloured so that TAs can easily detect any paper that students have brought into the room. For Generic Skills and Engineering the test is completed on a computer and does not require students to write anything on paper. For Economics, students may need to provide a response on a piece of paper for one item and this paper then needs to be collected and marked. This paper should be printed on paper of a different colour to the scrap paper. Nevertheless, all students should be provided with some blank paper and a pencil so they can make notes if they wish during the test.

26. TAs should supply students with blank sheets of paper. It is preferable that this paper is coloured so that TAs can easily detect any paper that students have brought into the room. This paper is available so that students can make notes if they wish during the test.

27. With the optional exception of calculators in the Engineering test, students may not use devices other than the computer provided for them. They may not bring any personal belongings or bags into the test room. It is particularly important that students do not
have any devices which could enable them to photograph or record the test, such as mobile phones or other multimedia technology.

28. Calculators are permitted for certain AHELO tests, but not for others, specifically:
   - calculators are **not required or permitted** for the Generic Skills Assessment;
   - calculators are **not required or permitted** for the Economics Assessment; and
   - calculators are **not required but are permitted** for the Engineering Assessment, for while this test does not focus on students’ ability to perform calculations and no items require the use of a calculator students are allowed to use any hand-held calculators they routinely use in their regular learning environments.

29. Students are not permitted to use dictionaries for any AHELO test.

30. All paper should be collected by the Test Administrator after the testing session. Students **may not remove any paper from the test room**.

31. Students should **not** have following items at their desks:
   - coats, bags, briefcases, crash-helmets;
   - any item of stationery other than a pencil and eraser;
   - electronic equipment of any kind (other than an optional calculator for the Engineering test);
   - books and papers (dictionaries are not permitted);
   - scrap paper that has not been distributed by the TA;
   - mobile phones, pagers, Blackberries, iPhones or other communication/computing devices; or
   - food or drink (except for a clear plastic water bottle).

32. The Economics and Engineering testing sessions last for two hours, which includes:
   - 10 minutes to welcome students and provide instructions;
   - 90 minutes of testing time;
   - 10 minutes for students to complete the Student Context Instrument; and
   - 10 minutes to finalise the session.

33. The Generic Skills testing session lasts for two hours and 30 minutes, which includes:
   - 10 minutes to welcome students and provide instructions;
   - 120 minutes of testing time;
   - 10 minutes for students to complete the Student Context Instrument; and
   - 10 minutes to finalise the session.

34. It is important to note that the time required to complete the test will vary from student to student. Individual test questions are not timed and students can complete the test at their own speed. Students who complete the test in less than 90 minutes can move on to the Student Context Instrument.
35. When students move to the Student Context Instrument they will not be able to return to the test. If students attempt to move to the Student Context instrument in less than 90 minutes without first responding to all items, they will receive a warning which indicates the items which still require responses.

36. There is no need for students to remain in the test room for the entire period. As soon as they have completed the Student Context Instrument they may leave.

37. In case of emergency, TAs should be familiar with the fire alarm and evacuation procedures for the test room before the test starts. If an alarm sounds, TAs should halt the test by a clear announcement, noting the time. Students should stop work and leave all materials on their desk if an evacuation is required.

38. If the procedures include a precautionary ‘pre-evacuation’ signal, ascertain whether an evacuation is required by sending an assistant to find the person in charge of the venue. If the test room is to be evacuated, ensure that TAs are placed to ensure that students do not leave the room with any test materials. In an emergency, although test security is very important, naturally the safety of students and staff is paramount.
Set up student computers

39. When the TAs arrive in the test room they need to switch on and set up computers for students and for themselves. This is a very simple process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Switch on all student computers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>On each computer,</strong> open an Internet browser (for example Internet Explorer or Firefox)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the address bar, type <strong>http:// ahelo.org</strong> and press <strong>Enter</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make full use of the screen and hide any toolbars, set the view to full screen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Internet Explorer, from the <strong>View</strong> menu, select <strong>Full Screen</strong> or press <strong>F11</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For other browsers, please contact your technical support personnel.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

40. When this is complete you will see the following screen on each student computer. If you do not see this screen, check that the computer has an internet connection and refresh the page. If you continue to have problems, contact your institution’s technical support personnel.

![REVISED DIAGRAM]
Set up the TA computer

41. When the TAs have set up the student computers, they should set up another computer for themselves.

Switch on the TA computer

Open an Internet browser (for example Internet Explorer or Firefox)

In the address bar, type http://ahelo.org/admin and press Enter

You will see this screen:

At ‘Username’ enter the AHELO username you have been provided with
At ‘Password’ enter the AHELO password you have been provided with

Select Login

42. When this is complete you will see the following screen on the TA computer. If you do not see this screen, check that the computer has an internet connection and refresh the page. If you continue to have problems, contact your institution’s technical support personnel.
Open the testing session

43. Students can only access the test when the session is open. To open a testing session:

Select your institution **number**

Click on the **Details** tab

Select ‘**Open Session**’ (if session is already open, do not close it)

[Revised diagram]

To view student information

44. To view student information, click on the **Learners** tab. Student information is displayed, including their test status.

   **In this example, you can see that the first four students are at different stages of activity.**

   [REVISED DIAGRAM]
Managing testing sessions

Receive students to the test room

45. As each student arrives in the test room, they need to be provided with their user name and password. TAs should check students’ identification to ensure each student is who she/he says she/he is. TAs should check against the list of intended students.

46. They should be asked to sit at a computer but not commence work until they are instructed. For AHELO students are permitted to sit at any computer in the room.

47. As students arrive the TA should check that students are not bringing any personal belongings into the room.

48. If drinks are allowed in the test room, students may only bring water in a clear plastic bottle.
Introduce the test

49. When all students have arrived and are seated at their computers, you should say:

Thank you for participating in the test today. The test is part of an international study of learning outcomes that is taking place in several countries around the world. I would like to assure you that the results from the test you do today will not have an impact on your grades or your standing in this university. The purpose of the test today is for us to understand whether the tasks are reliable internationally.

[For Economics and Engineering test participants only]
The total time required from you today is two hours. We have 10 minutes to get set up. The actual test lasts for 90 minutes and you will complete it on the computer in front of you. You will be able to see how much time you have left throughout the test. After 90 minutes the test will stop automatically. At the end of the test you will be asked to respond to some questions about yourself and your studies. This will take a further 10 minutes. We then have 10 minutes at the end to take care of any administration and answer any questions.

or

[For Generic Skills test participants only]
The total time required from you today is two hours and 30 minutes. We have 10 minutes to get set up. The actual test lasts for two hours and you will complete it on the computer in front of you. You will be able to see how much time you have left throughout the test. After two hours the test will stop automatically. At the end of the test you will be asked to respond to some questions about yourself and your studies. This will take a further 10 minutes. We then have 10 minutes at the end to take care of any administration and answer any questions.

[All modules]
Before you can start the test you need to agree to keep the test contents secret. In a moment I will ask you to review the confidentiality statement on the screen. It states that you are not to reproduce any part of the test that you are about to see and that you cannot discuss information from the test with anyone. Please accept these conditions, and let me know if you have any questions. Different students do different versions of the test.

Before you can start the test you also need to check that the system is working. Please answer the two practice questions. These are not part of the test. You will also be able to see the key features of the test – please note the forward and backward arrows, the time bar and the home page. To move on to the test you will need to enter a test session ID. I will give this to you in a moment.

Please input your username and password and then click ‘login’ to begin.
**Student introduction to test**

50. When they have logged in, students will work through three windows. They must provide a response in the location indicated

**Test confidentiality**

51. When students have completed the confidentiality agreement and the two practice questions they will be able to see the following screen:
Wait until all students have this screen. Then you should say:

**I will explain the procedures before you start the test:**

You must try to answer all questions in the time allowed. You should attempt all questions and try your best. Try to provide a response for each question, even if only your best guess. Do not spend too much time on any one question. Marks are not deducted for incorrect answers.

You must work alone while you complete the test. You may not speak to any other students or look at anyone else’s computer screen. You cannot ask for help to answer questions.

**[For Generic Skills and Economics test participants only]**

You must not use any electronic devices during the test. Calculators are not permitted. You must turn off your mobile phone.

**[For Engineering test participants only]**

You may use a hand-held calculator if you like. Keep in mind that the test does not focus on your ability to perform calculations. No question is dependent solely on whether a calculator is used or not. You must turn off your mobile phone.

**[For Generic Skills and Engineering test participants only]**

For **all students**

You may use the paper and pencil provided if you would like to write anything during the test, but all your responses must be entered into the computer. Any paper you write on will be collected to be discarded after the test.

**[For Economics test participants only]**

You may use the paper and pencil provided if you would like to write anything during the test. Some of you may be required to respond to a question on the test on a piece of paper. You may be required to respond use a piece of paper to answer one question. If this is necessary, remember to write your username on the paper. The paper you write on will be collected at the end of the test.

Please raise your hand if you have any problems or questions with the computer system during the test. You will be accompanied by a member of staff if you wish to leave the room during the test.

You can see the icons on the screen in front of you. The time bar indicates how much time is left to complete the test. Use the forward and backward arrows for navigation. You can move around the test as much as you like and you can answer questions in any order you wish.

If you would like to see which sections you have completed, select the ‘homepage’ icon. This will show completed tasks in blue and the current task in green. You can move to a different task by selecting the box or use the red cross to return to the current task.

At the end of the test you will be asked to respond to some questions about yourself and your studies. The test system will move automatically to these questions when the testing time is finished. If you complete the test early, you may use the forward arrow to move to these questions. It is important to note that you cannot return to the test if you have moved to these
questions. You will receive a warning if you have not completed all test items before you move to the questions.

If you have completed the test and the questions about yourself, you may leave the test room. Please be quiet so that you do not disturb other students. You must leave all papers in the test room.

Finally, you should be as silent as possible. Please ensure that if you have an alarm or beep function on your watch it is turned off. I remind you that mobile phones are not permitted at your desk, and these should have been turned off.

Before we continue, do you have any questions?

53. If the students do not have any questions, please say:

**The test session ID is 123456. Please enter this number to start the test.**

54. Students enter the test session ID and then use the forward arrow (which will illuminate) to begin the test.

55. Once the testing session commences, the door to the test room should be closed. Students who arrive late may be admitted at the discretion of the TA, provided this does not cause a disturbance to other students. Latecomers should not be given any time allowance to make up for their late arrival.
Monitoring the testing session

Observe and support students

56. TAs should sit quietly at the front of the room and monitor students while they are completing the test. They should walk around every 20-30 minutes and be as unobtrusive as possible. TAs should not talk among themselves, apart from essential matters concerning the test, and should not read, eat or drink in the test room. During the test, TAs’ entire attention should be directed to observing students’ compliance with test rules or request for assistance. TAs must not leave the room or engage in any activity which would disturb the students.

57. If a student indicates that he or she needs to go to the toilet, the student should be advised that they will not be allowed any extra time to compensate for this, and should be accompanied to the wash basin area by a TA, who will return with the student to the test room. TAs should ensure that students do not take any materials with them.

58. If a student raises a query about the test, this should normally be referred to the IC, unless it is a simple request to repeat part of an announcement already made. TAs must not attempt to answer queries about the content or scoring of the test.

59. If a student becomes ill during the test, note the fact in the test session report. Where a student has to leave the test temporarily he/she should be accompanied and should not take any test materials out of the room. If a student cannot complete the test because of illness, ensure the time and student’s details are recorded in the test session report.

60. If you notice any student using an electronic device, you remove it from them immediately and record this incidence in the Test Report.

61. If you suspect that a student is trying to look at another student’s computer screen, or attempting to talk to another student, you should ask them to stop. You should note the username of students who you suspect of engaging in unwanted behaviour in the Test Report.

62. The test system will automatically record student responses as they complete each item. If any problem arises during the test – for example the student accidentally logs out of the test or the computer jams – the student can log in again and will automatically begin at the same place. The time clock will also pause until the student logs in again.
Check student progress

63. To check student progress you can view the students’ status on the TA computer screen. Use arrows to move between pages.

64. If students try to finish one section of the test before the time available has elapsed, they see a warning message. If they continue to move forwards they are not able to return.

65. If students try to move from one section of the test before they have answered all questions, those questions are highlighted as a reminder.

66. Students who have worked on the test for 90 minutes (or 120 minutes for Generic Skills) will then have time to complete the AHELO Student Context Instrument. It is very important that all students complete this questionnaire, which takes no longer than 10 minutes.

67. When the 90 minute testing session has finished you should say:

If you have not already completed the brief questionnaire you have about 10 minutes to complete this now.
Finish the test session

68. The testing session is complete when students finish the questionnaire. You should then say:

\begin{verbatim}
That is the end of the test. Please leave any paper you have used next to the computer.

Thank you very much for participating in this test.

Your responses are very valuable.

Please remain seated until we collect all test materials.
\end{verbatim}

69. When students have finished the test session, they will see the final screen. When they click on the icon they will exit the test, and it will return to the login screen.

70. You should then walk around the room and collect any papers which students have written on. In the Economics test, you should make sure that students have written their username on the paper which forms part of their response.

71. Do not allow students to leave their seats until all test materials are collected and counted in. Any paper which has been written on should be reviewed (for Economics tests only) or securely discarded (preferably in a shredder).

72. When students have left the test session, check that all computers are logged off and then shut down and turn off each computer.
Close the test session

73. When the testing session is complete, the session must be closed to lock access to the test. To close a test session:

Select your institution name
Click on the Details tab
Select ‘Close Session’

[REVISED DIAGRAM]

Record session comments

74. At the end of the testing session, TAs are required to submit comments about the testing session. This may include problems with the computers or system, late or absent students, or other issues experienced during the session.

75. **Important:** Before completing a session comments, make sure all the student computers are logged out. If your computer has been used by a student to complete the test, make sure it is logged off. To complete a session comments:

Click on the Details tab
In the Comments box, enter your comments about the session.
Select *Test session was conducted to protocols.*
Select Update.
Otherwise, to clear what you entered, select Reset.
*Note:* You can return to these comments and make changes at any time.
76. After you have closed the test session and recorded your comments, select the ‘Assessment Master’ tab and then select **logout**.

➔ **Thank you for help. Your work on AHELO is very important to its success. Your National Centre staff and NPM along with OECD and the international project team really appreciate your time and effort.**
Problem solving

**What do I do if I get an error when I go to [http://www.ahelo.org](http://www.ahelo.org)?**
Check that you have an active Internet connection and that the computer meets the minimum requirements. For further assistance, please contact your Institutional Coordinator (IC) or your institutional technical support personnel.

**What do I do if a student is not on the list?**
If a student is not on the list provided by the IC, they are not able to sit the test. In this event, TAs should write down the student’s name and then record this in the session comments.

**Can a student that is not on the list take an absent student’s place?**
No, this is not possible. If a student is not on the list provided by the IC, they are not able to sit the test. In this event, TAs should write down the student’s names and then record this in the session comments.

**What do I do if a student’s computer is not working?**
Turn the computer off and begin again. If problems persist, please contact your organisation technical support personnel.

**What do I do if a student cannot see the login screen?**
Close the browser window and begin the login process again.

**What do I do if the student’s login details are not accepted?**
Refer to the list provided by the IC, and check that the student is entering the correct login details. If login fails for all students, check that the session is open. If the session is open and login continues to fail, the student is not able to sit the test. In this event, TAs should write down the student’s name and then record this in the session comments.

**What do I do if a student will not agree to the confidentiality provisions?**
The TA should establish why a student will not confirm that they will keep the test materials confidential. The TA should explain the purpose of the confidentiality assurance, and seek to address any student concerns or uncertainties. Ultimately, if a student will not complete the agreement then they need to be asked to leave the test session.