



The Institutional Test Administrator

A FACTA White Paper and Best Practice

by

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with contributions by

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What is an Institutional Test Administrator?

Definition:

The Institutional Test Administrator (ITA) is the person who provides state, college/university, and campus leadership in planning and implementing a comprehensive testing and assessment program at a postsecondary institution. The ITA is ultimately responsible for the delivery of assessment and certification testing to prospective and matriculated students as well as external examinees. This individual directs the coordination of campus testing and assessment center operations as they relate to Federal and State legislation and institutional procedures and policies. The ITA is also the principal contact for all matters relating to standardized assessment, non-classroom academic assessment, certification assessment, and any other assessments or administration of assessments undertaken by the institution's testing and assessment centers. The ITA is not intended to be a specific job title. It should be one of the essential duties and responsibilities in the employee's job description who is responsible for the institution's Testing and Assessment program.

History:

The ITA started in Florida as the primary contact for the [College Level Academic Skills Test \(CLAST\)](#) at public and private Florida postsecondary institutions from October 1982 to June 2009. The ITA was initially responsible for all CLAST administrations at their institution, as well as assuring that the institution adhered to the CLAST requirements. As time went on, the ITA took on a broader responsibility at many institutions as described in the Definition section above. In each Florida postsecondary institution, the administration of the CLAST was coordinated and directed by the ITA, who worked closely with the Technical Support Contractor (TSC) and the CLAST Office at the Florida Department of Education. The TSC was appointed by Florida's Commissioner of Education. Florida's TSC during this period of time was the Office of Instructional Resources (later called the Office of Technology) at the University of Florida.

Rationale:

It is key for all institutional testing and assessment related decisions to flow through a central position dedicated to maintaining compliance with institutional, local, State, and Federal policies and procedures. This role should only be assigned to a single individual in order to maintain an institutional perspective on these types of matters. While the participation of campus testing and assessment managers/directors is vital to a strong testing and assessment team at the institution, it is important for the ITA to focus decisions on the institution as a whole instead of campus based decision making when an institution has multiple campuses. Also, it is crucial that the ITA has a strong testing and assessment background and has worked in testing and assessment at the postsecondary level. Establishing this job duty enhances the effectiveness and potential of the testing and assessment area at the institution. However, the ITA role may differ from institution to institution based on size and/or organizational structure. The information outlined in this paper is the description of a best practice.

Benefits:

There are numerous benefits for appointing an ITA at an institution:

- Institutional communication on matters relating to testing and assessment is improved.
- Strategic initiatives relating to testing and assessment outcomes are moved forward in a systematic and expedited fashion.
- A subject matter expert (SME) in the testing and assessment area will prompt dynamic and innovative changes at the institution.
- An individual becomes responsible for the development and annual updating of a document that includes the institution's placement criteria. The document should include sections with placement criteria as listed below.
 - degree-seeking students who are not proficient in English
 - career and technical education
 - adult education
 - dual enrollment
 - a section for additional resources and supporting documentation

Exemplary Practices of an ITA:

- responsible for leading and directing an institution-wide committee consisting of faculty, administrators, academics, student services, testing and assessment managers/directors, institutional effectiveness personnel, and others. This group would meet regularly to
 - provide an ongoing review of the institution's testing and assessment programs and makes recommendations for change,
 - review, evaluates and revises testing and assessment policies and procedures to maintain effectiveness and consistency,
 - generate an annual placement criteria document that implements college/university, State, and Federal requirements,
 - assure accurate storage and retrieval of test scores, and
 - advise and help determine the institution's testing and assessment priorities for the year.
- leads a group consisting of all testing and assessment managers/directors to focus on testing and assessment issues.
- facilitates the review of all institution-wide testing and assessment contracts and agreements while working with the Office of Legal Affairs and the testing and assessment managers/directors prior to their execution.
- responsible for ensuring that the institution's testing and assessment communications are accurate, up-to-date, comprehensive, and available to all constituents.

Call to action

As a reminder, this document is to be used as a best practice to promote the varied functions of the ITA, described herein. The reader is charged with ensuring that the ITA duties and responsibilities become part of an existing position at a postsecondary institution, where the employee responsible for the institution's Testing and Assessment program is employed.

The following information should be used as deemed appropriate by each postsecondary institution in the job description for the position that represents the institution as its ITA.

Job Title:

Varies by institution

Summary:

The ITA supervises assigned district and/or campus testing and assessment staff. He or she provides leadership and direction for the institution's testing and assessment programs, development of institutional testing and assessment policies and procedures, and internal testing and assessment department related research. The ITA educates and provides training, coaching, leadership, and work assignments for campus testing and assessment managers/directors. The ITA also serves as the primary testing and assessment resource for faculty and all levels of institutional staff and administrators.

Job Description:

Duties and responsibilities of a testing and assessment manager/director who serves as an ITA vary by institution due to size, organization, and philosophy; however, key duties and responsibilities should exist at all postsecondary institutions. Depending on the institution, the ITA may be a campus/non-campus based manager or director who is a resource and SME on matters relating to the daily administration of the institution's testing and assessment program.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

- **Policies**
 - Directs and manages review, revisions, and design of new institutional testing and assessment policies and procedures including evaluation of the effectiveness of the institution's testing and assessment programs, placement test criteria policies and procedures, institutional testing and assessment fees and agreements
 - Stays current on all state and federal testing and assessment regulations, policies, procedures, and changes and disseminates this information to key stake holders at institution
 - Keeps abreast of state and federal legislation changes regarding placement testing and higher education policies and procedures to ensure institutional compliance
 - Works closely with state, regional, and national testing and assessment councils (e.g., ACT, College Board, McCann Associates, DRC | CTB)
 - Attends required governmental and professional meetings and conferences as the assigned institutional representative at the local, state, and national levels regarding testing and assessment policies, procedures and implications
 - Provides leadership for entry, competency, and exit testing
 - Articulates cut-scores, policies, and procedures to key institutional stakeholders at various locations
 - Provides leadership for the interpretation of student individual and group test results in order to improve continuous student learning
 - Works closely with institutional ADA and 504 office regarding testing accommodations and modifications for students
 - Provides leadership and serves as a resource to the developmental education, mathematics, EAP/ESOL, and English disciplines as well as the career technical education/workforce and adult education areas in all issues related to institutional placement, diagnostic, and exit testing as well as high school testing of college readiness
- **Testing and Assessment Center Operations**
 - Prepares and maintains budgets
 - Manages the institutional testing and assessment budget

- Manages state or federal testing and assessment related grants
 - Coordinates the purchase of all institution approved test materials for all campuses
 - Promotes a marketing strategy for standardized and certification testing and assessment at the institution
 - Supervises the day to day operations of testing and assessment
 - Hires, supervises, and evaluates personnel
 - Schedules examination administrations
 - Resolves student issues and problems
 - Adheres to national testing and assessment guidelines and best practices
 - Ensures the security of all test materials including paper and virtual materials
 - Provides for virtual site setup and maintenance
 - Distributes platform access to authorized employees in testing and assessment as appropriate
 - Maintains all testing and assessment accounts using institutional administrator access
 - Provides for the administration of secure, standardized examinations, both group and computerized, for the institution
 - Mandates an approved photo ID standard for institution
 - Promotes vigilance during the check-in process
 - Maintains an institutional [Testing Dishonesty and Behavioral Guidelines](#) policy, including an institutional list of [prohibited items](#) while testing
 - Maintains a process for managing remote testing
 - Promotes and facilitates the evaluation of an examinees' testing experience and utilizes the information to promote change
 - Maintains and coordinates the institutional testing and assessment website
- **Institutional Testing**
 - Coordinates/directs all activities related to the administration of all institution-wide tests
 - Researches and adds testing and assessment programs that benefit the students and the institution
 - Evaluates and approves all requests across the institution to administer or accept exams or tests
 - Informs students of testing and assessment requirements, alternatives, and waivers
- **Non-institutional Testing**
 - Leads and directs the review and approval of all testing and assessment contracts and agreements
 - Ensures the institution maintains single umbrella testing and assessment agreements and accounts
 - Provides for the administration of secure, standardized examinations, both group and computerized, for the institution
 - Ensures the certifications required to administer national and standardized tests are completed
- **Professional Development**
 - Provides staff development for testing and assessment administrators to ensure proper examinee identification, standardization of test administration, and test security
 - Ensures that all testing and assessment staff are properly trained on FERPA and confidentiality
 - Maintains institutional membership in the state testing association [e.g., the Florida Association of College Testing Administrators (FACTA)]

- Advocates for the institution's testing and assessment employees to obtain FACTA's Testing and Assessment Personnel Certifications (TAP-C)
 - Maintains institutional membership in a national testing association [e.g., the National College Testing Association (NCTA)]
 - Advocates for the institution's test center(s) to become [NCTA Test Center Certified](#)
- **Institutional Collaboration**
 - Works extensively with IT programmers and management to help accurately capture data and flag placement levels to meet state reporting requirements and makes necessary changes in the test tables of the student information system
 - Submits programming requests and manages all programming changes required to implement new tests, policies and procedures, cut scores, and placement enhancements
 - Ensures that test records and placement levels reported to the state and federal reporting systems are captured on institutional data files and are accurate and complete by providing testing and assessment expertise and direction
 - Assists with internal educational research with respect to entry-level test curriculum
 - Chairs meetings of campus testing and assessment managers/directors, makes decisions on recommendations for institutional change in testing and assessment procedures and policies, and presents to institutional leadership at all levels.
 - Other duties as assigned

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

- Ability to work well and strategically plan effectively in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural environment with students, faculty, and staff
- Ability to manage and direct large groups of employees
- Ability to define problems, collect data, establish facts, and draw valid conclusions
- Ability to track progress towards identified outcomes through quantitative and qualitative methods and use data to monitor and improve college testing and assessment programs and placement decisions while understanding and balancing a wide range of internal and external interests
- Ability to interpret a variety of instructions furnished in written, oral, diagram, or schedule form
- Ability to read, analyze, and interpret common scientific and technical journals, financial reports and legal documents
- Ability to effectively present information to groups of managers, clients, customers and the general public
- Demonstrates excellent organizational and interpersonal skills
- Demonstrates leadership, creative accomplishments, skills in planning, analysis, human relations, and consultation
- Possess excellent oral and written communication skills
- Proficient in budget maintenance
- High proficiency level in computer applications and computer networks
- Knowledge of test administration and test security policies and procedures
- Knowledge of student record keeping system and data storage and retrieval process
- Knowledge and understanding of college/university organization, goals and objectives, and policies and procedures
- Availability to work a flexible schedule including day, evening, and weekend assignments

Minimum Requirements:

- To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily.
- Master's degree in Business, Educational Research, Educational Psychology, Educational Leadership, Statistics, or related discipline and four (4) years in test administration as a manager/director demonstrating leadership and creative accomplishment; or Bachelor's degree and eight (8) years in test administration as a manager/director demonstrating leadership and creative accomplishment

Authors and Contributors

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Silvio is the Director of Assessment, Evaluation, and Testing at Miami Dade College. He is the College's Institutional Test Administrator since 2000, co-chairs the College's Academic and Student Support Council – Research and Testing Committee, has more than 27 years of standardized testing experience including Miami Dade College – Medical Campus Director of Testing, is Past President (2009-2010) of the Florida Association of College Test Administrators (FACTA) as well as a FACTA Council member since 2009, and currently chairs the NCTA's State and Regional Organizations Committee.

- **Marc Webb**, *Director of Testing and Assessment, Miami Dade College – Wolfson Campus*

Marc has been in testing and assessment leadership for over 9 years. He has served in director, manager, and coordinator campus testing and assessment departments at both Miami Dade College and Palm Beach State College. He is currently the Testing and Assessment Director at the Wolfson Campus of Miami Dade College. In June of 2017, he will join Broward College as their District Director of Testing. He has served in various other roles in higher education including as an Academic Advisor and adjunct professor or developmental education at Palm Beach State College. Marc is one of the founding members of FACTA, the Florida Association of College Test Administrators. He served in many roles with FACTA since its inception in 2008 including the role of president in 2011. He has been a FACTA council member since 2013 which he will serve until the end of his term in 2018. Marc has also served in several roles with the NCTA (National College Testing Association).

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