

Online Panel Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Smarter Balanced is seeking K–12 educators, post-secondary educators, parents, and business/community leaders to participate in a panel for setting achievement levels for the Smarter Balanced assessments. This is a critical opportunity for educators and other interested members of your community to provide input and ensure that the results from these Common Core-aligned assessments are based on rigorous, yet fair expectations for students. This FAQ will answer many of the questions that panelists involved in the process may have about their participation.

The panel to inform achievement level 3 will occur online. Panelists will choose a 2-day window between October 6 and 17, 2014, to participate in the process. Each session is estimated to take up to 3 hours. Panelists will only participate in the two-day session at one grade level in either English language arts/literacy or mathematics for which they registered.

Q: What is the Online Panel?

A: Smarter Balanced is seeking input in recommending one achievement level that will measure whether students are ready for the next grade and for college and a career after high school. Input on achievement levels will be collected from a broader array of educators and the general public through an Online Panel. Participants in this panel will log in to a secure website and spend up to three hours reviewing actual test items ordered by difficulty.

By participating in the online session, panelists will recommend an achievement level score that demonstrates how much students should know or be able to do in order to be considered proficient at the grade-level standards and to be on track for eventual college and career readiness. Participants can complete the activity from a personal or office computer or tablet.

Smarter Balanced wants to capture the expertise and views of as many educators, parents, and other concerned stakeholders as possible.

Q: How will input from the online panel affect the final scoring on these assessments?

A: Recommendations from the Online Panel will be shared with a group of educators and others who will review the tests over several days prior to recommending achievement levels to the Governing States. The achievement levels endorsed by Governing States also will be subject to existing approval processes within individual states.

Q: Where will the sessions be held?

A: The sessions will be held online through a website hosted by a Smarter Balanced contractor managing the achievement setting process. Virtually any computing device that connects to the Internet, including tablets, will provide participants with access. However, Smarter Balanced does not recommend using 'smart phones' for taking the test because of screen size limitations.

Q: When will the online session occur?

A: The online session will require up to three hours of a participant's time during a 2-day window of their choice between October 6 and 17, 2014.

Q: How will participants register for the panel?

A: For more information and to register, interested participants will visit a link which will direct them to an application page. Applicants will be asked to choose the grade and content area (English language arts/literacy or mathematics) in which they want to participate. Applicants will provide an email address, role, and demographic information. Applicants will then be asked to verify their email address and select the 2-day window.

Q: Will participants' information be shared publicly?

A: No. Personally identifiable information of individual participants will not be released to the general public and will only be used for the purposes of reminding participants as their selected session time approaches. Smarter Balanced encourages participants in the online session to invite interested peers to participate.

Q: Are there any qualifications or requirements for participating in the Online Panel?

A: The Online Panel is open to the public. Smarter Balanced is particularly interested in the participation of teachers, higher education faculty, parents, and members of the community.

Q: How will panelists know if they are registered to participate in a session?

A: Panelists will receive an email confirming their participation time slot upon completing registration. Participants will be reminded before their 2-day window.

Q: Is there a cost for participation?

A: No. Participation is free.

Q: How much time can participants expect to spend on this project in total?

A: The total time commitment will be up to three hours over a two-day period. Participants will have the ability to save their work and log out, and then log back in to complete their session within the two-day window.