

**On the recent Accreditation and Equivalency Test:
Announcing the change in passing score from 75% to 60%**

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When I received the initial results of low passing rate of the November 2017 Alternative Learning System (ALS) Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) Test compared to the previous year (from 38% to 16.5% for elementary and 57% to 15.6% for Junior High School), and feedback from ALS examinees and implementers, I immediately directed our Curriculum and Instruction bureaus to submit all pertinent data and information about the current and the previous tests. My intent was to ascertain the reasons for the drop in performance, and to evaluate whether there were factors that affected the fairness of the tests to learners.

Based on my evaluation, in consultation with all our relevant officers and personnel, the following are the contributory factors that made the current test more difficult than the previous ones, and impaired the fairness of the test:

1. The language used in test questions for Math and Science were changed from Filipino in the previous tests to English in the current test. The negative impact of this was very pronounced in the elementary level examination.
2. The time gap between the time of completion of ALS interventions and the current test was prolonged because of a number of postponements in test administration.
3. There was a change in the technical reference of, as well as significant increase in, the passing score for the test.
4. An initial comparison of the test questions show a higher degree of difficulty in the present test than the previous one.
5. There were shortcomings in adequately communicating the assessment changes to ALS implementers.

Given the above, I am announcing the change in the passing score from 75% correct answers (relative to total test questions) to 60% correct answers in the November 2017 A&E Test. This is to align the present test with previous standards, as well as to mitigate the unfairness to the examinees brought about by the circumstances mentioned. This same passing score shall be applied to the March 4 and 11, 2018 A&E Test.

A 60% passing score in examinations is generally acceptable.

The November 2017 A&E examinees who still did not make the new passing score shall be allowed to take the March 4 and 11, 2018 A&E Test as walk-in examinees, provided they accomplish the required registration documents at the site immediately prior to taking the exam.

I wish to emphasize that these measures are applicable only to the said tests. I am directing our officers and personnel concerned to undertake a thorough review of our A&E examination standards, including their alignment to existing learning resources and instruction delivery, and to consult external experts. In the meantime, the provision in DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2016 setting the passing score at 75% is suspended pending this review.

I reiterate my, and the present administration's commitment to intensify and expand the Alternative Learning System (ALS) programs in order to reach our out-of-school youth and adults who have failed to finish basic education and provide better opportunities for them. We will closely work with stakeholders, consult them, and strengthen partnerships to achieve this goal.

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