

Telepractice and the GRADE and GMADE

The telepractice information in this document is intended to support professionals in making informed, well-reasoned decisions around remote assessment. This information is not intended to be comprehensive regarding all considerations for assessment via telepractice. It should not be interpreted as a requirement or recommendation to conduct assessment via telepractice.

Professionals should remain mindful to:

- Follow professional best practice recommendations and respective ethical codes
- Follow telepractice regulations and legal requirements from federal, state and local authorities, licensing boards, professional liability insurance providers, and payors
- Develop competence with assessment via telepractice through activities such as practicing, studying, consulting with other professionals, and engaging in professional development.

Professionals should use their judgment to determine if assessment via telepractice is appropriate for a particular examinee, referral question, and situation. There are circumstances where assessment via telepractice is not feasible and/or is contraindicated. Documentation of all considerations, procedures, and conclusions remains a professional responsibility.

Several professional organizations and experts have provided guidance on telepractice assessment (American Psychological Association Services [APA Services], 2020; Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards [ASPPB], 2013; Grosch et al., 2011; Inter Organizational Practice Committee [IOPC], 2020; Stolwyk et al., 2020) to assist professionals in decision making and ethical and legal practice issues.

The Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation Online (GRADE™; Pearson, 2014) is a diagnostic reading test that determines what developmental skills 2–12 grade students have mastered. GRADE Online identifies where students need instruction or intervention in reading.

Group Mathematics Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation Online (GMADE™;) is a diagnostic mathematics test that measures individual student skills in the main areas of math. GMADE Online identifies where students need instruction or intervention in mathematics.

Professionals engaging in telepractice assessment may train facilitators to work with them on a regular basis. A facilitator is an adult at the remote location with the examinee taking the test who will assist the examiner with the testing process. The examiner will train the facilitator how to assist.

The purpose of testing is for the examinee to show what they can do on their own. Facilitators are not allowed to help the examinee answer the questions. For example, a facilitator might think that the examinee could answer better if the question were asked differently, or if they were given a hint. Facilitators should NOT try to help in this way. Part of what makes testing valuable is that it is done in the *same way for all examinees*.

An initial virtual meeting should occur in advance of the testing session to address numerous issues specific to testing via telepractice. This initial virtual meeting is described in the administrative and technological tasks portion of the Examiner Considerations section and referred to in various sections of this document. The examiner should consider best practice guidelines, the referral question, and the examinee's condition, as well as telepractice equivalence study conditions to determine if this is possible and appropriate.

Conducting Telepractice Assessment

Conducting a valid assessment in a telepractice service delivery model requires an understanding of the interplay of a number of complex issues. In addition to the general information on Pearson's telepractice page, examiners should address five factors (Eichstadt et al., 2013) when planning to administer and score assessments via telepractice:

1. [Telepractice Environment & Equipment](#)
2. [Assessment Materials & Procedures](#)
3. [Examinee Considerations](#)
4. [Examiner Considerations](#)
5. [Other Considerations](#)

1. Telepractice Environment & Equipment

Computers and Connectivity

Two computers with audio and video capability and stable internet connectivity—one for the examiner and one for the examinee—are required. A desktop computer, tablet, Chromebook or iPad will work. Make sure the TestNav application has been downloaded onto the computer the examinee will be using to test. When ready to begin testing, the examinee will open TestNav and log in using the unique Username and Password provided by the examiner.

A web camera, microphone, and speakers or headphones are required for both the examiner and the examinee if using teleconferencing software.

Audio Considerations

If using teleconferencing software, high-quality audio capabilities are required during the administration. An over the head, two-ear, stereo headset with attached boom microphone is recommended for both the examiner and examinee. Headphones with a microphone may be used if a headset is not available.

The examiner should test the audio for both the examiner and examinee in the initial virtual meeting and at the beginning of the testing session to ensure a high-quality audio environment is present. Testing the audio should include an informal conversation before the administration where the examiner is listening for any clicks, pops, or breaks in the audio signal that distort or interrupt the voice of the examinee. The examiner should also ask if there are any interruptions or distortions in the audio signal on the examinee's end. Any connectivity lapses, distractions, or intrusions that occurred during testing should be reported.

Audiovisual Distractions

As with any testing session, the examiner should do everything possible to make sure the examinee's environment is free from audio and visual distractions. If the examiner is unfamiliar with the examinee's planned physical location, a visual tour of the intended testing room should be given during the initial virtual meeting. The examiner can then provide a list of issues to address to transform the environment into one suitable for testing. For example, remove distracting items, silence all electronics, and close doors. The examiner should confirm that these issues have been addressed at the time of testing. If possible, the examinee should be positioned facing away from the door to ensure the examiner can verify through the examinee's camera that the door remains shut and can monitor any interruptions. The examiner should confirm that all other applications on the computer, laptop, or peripheral device are closed, and alerts and notifications are silenced on the peripheral device. Radios, televisions, other cellular phones, fax machines, smart speakers, printers, and equipment that emit noise must be silenced and/or removed from the room.

Lighting

Make sure the examinee can clearly see the computer screen and that there is no glare on the screen or items blocking the view. If using teleconferencing software, good overhead and facial lighting should be established for both the examiner and examinee. Blinds or shades should be closed to reduce sun glare on faces and the computer screens.

Teleconferencing Software

Teleconferencing software is not required but may be used.

Video

If using teleconferencing software, high-quality video (HD preferred) is required during the administration. Make sure the full faces of the examiner and the examinee are seen using each respective web camera.

2. Assessment Materials & Procedures

Test Item Security

The examiner is responsible for ensuring test item security is maintained, as outlined in the Terms and Conditions for test use. The examiner should address test security requirements with the examinee (and facilitator, if applicable) during the informed consent process. The examiner should make it clear to the examinee/caregivers that the video should not be captured, photos should not be taken, and stimuli should not be copied or recorded, as this is a copyright violation. The examinee must agree that they will not record (audio or visual) or take photos or screenshots of any portion of the test materials or testing session, and not permit anyone to observe the testing session or be in the testing room (except for a facilitator, when necessary). Also, the examiner should ensure that the examinee does not have access to study or other materials at the location during the test.

Disruptions

The examiner should record any and all atypical events that occur during the testing session. This may include delayed audio or video, disruptions to connectivity, the examinee being distracted by external stimuli, and any other anomalies.

Facilitator Considerations

Review [Table 1](#) for the specific telepractice considerations for onsite facilitators.

Table 1. Specific Telepractice Considerations

	Considerations
DO:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sit near the examinee, but do not obstruct the examinee's view of the screen.• Help manage the examinee's behavior with gentle prompts.• Make sure the examinee continues to look at the screen throughout the test.• After a test is over, tell the examiner about any interruptions during testing.
DO NOT:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restate directions to the examinee. Only the examiner should give directions, and they will repeat if needed• Provide answers or clues to the answers. Clues can include pointing to an answer, covering up wrong answers, giving reminders, or looking directly at the item.• Give indications to the examinee whether a response is correct or incorrect (e.g., nods, sounds, smiles).• Provide feedback or questions to the examiner during a test as this can interfere with the examinee's score. Wait until the test is over.

Evaluating Equivalence Evidence

The calibration and norming of the GRADE and GMADE was not done within a telepractice context. As such, the examiner administering the GRADE and GMADE should use their professional judgement to determine if the telepractice assessment experience for a given examinee was comparable to a typical assessment experience at school

Pearson is tracking and aggregating the relevant equivalence evidence for our assessments, including the age range, population, direct evidence, and indirect evidence (see [Evidence for Remote Assessment](#)).

3. Examinee Considerations

Appropriateness

The examiner should first ensure that a telepractice administration is appropriate for the examinee and for the purpose of the assessment. Professional judgment, best practice guidance for telepractice (e.g., APA Services, 2020; ASPPB, 2013; IOPC, 2020), information from professional organizations and other professional entities (e.g., legal resources), consultation with other knowledgeable professionals, existing research, and any available federal or state regulations should be considered in the decision-making process. Consideration should be given to whether the necessary administrative and technological tasks involved in a telepractice session can be accomplished without influencing results.

Preparedness

Before initiating test administration, the examiner should ensure that the examinee is well-rested, able, prepared, and ready to appropriately and fully participate in the testing session.

Facilitator Role

If using a facilitator, the role of the facilitator must be explained to the examinee so participation and actions are understood.

Headset

If using teleconferencing software, it may not be appropriate or feasible for some examinees to use a headset due to behavior, positioning, physical needs, or tactile sensitivities, or if a headset is not available. Professional judgment on the appropriate use of a headset in these situations should be used. If a headset is not utilized, the examiner's and examinee's microphones and speakers should be turned up to a comfortable volume.

4. Examiner Considerations

Practice

During the telepractice setup, and before administering to any actual examinee, the examiner should rehearse the mechanics and workflow of every item in the entire test using TestNav or the selected teleconferencing software so that the examiner is familiar with the administration procedures. For example, a colleague could be used as a practice examinee.

Standardized Procedures

The examiner and facilitator must follow the administration procedures as much as possible.

Real-Time Troubleshooting

If using teleconferencing software, audiovisual needs and materials must be managed appropriately in order to conduct a smooth telepractice session. The initial virtual meeting involves the examiner, examinee, and/or the facilitator (if used), and is the opportunity for the examiner to provide information about the audiovisual needs and materials. During the initial virtual meeting, the examiner should provide training in troubleshooting audiovisual needs that arise during the testing session, including camera angle, lighting, and audio checks. The examiner should provide verbal feedback to guide camera adjustment, checking the on-screen video shown by the peripheral camera/device to provide information about how to reposition it until the proper view is shown. The examiner should emphasize that no materials should be opened until the examiner provides instructions to do so, if applicable. The examiner should also expect to provide verbal guidance about these issues during the testing session. Refer to the [Telepractice Environment & Equipment](#) for specific subtest telepractice considerations.

Collaborating With Facilitators

If used, the facilitator is to assist with administrative and technological tasks and not to manage rapport, engagement, or attention during the testing session. The examiner should direct them not to interfere with the examinee's performance or responses. Any other roles and responsibilities for which an examiner needs support, such as behavior management, should be outlined and trained before the beginning of the testing session. The examiner is responsible for documenting all behaviors of the facilitator during test administration and taking these into consideration when reporting scores and performance. Refer to [Table 1](#) for specific subtest considerations.

5. Other Considerations

There are special considerations for written reports describing testing that takes place via telepractice. The professional completing the written report should state in the report that the test was administered via telepractice, and briefly describe the method of telepractice used. The professional should also make a judgment, similar to an in-person session, about whether or not the examiner was able to obtain the examinee's best performance. Decisions should be explained in the report, including comments on the factors that led to the decision to conduct testing via telepractice

and to report all (or not to report suspect) scores. In addition, it is recommended that the report include a record of any and all atypical events during the testing session (e.g., delayed video or audio, disruptions to connectivity, extraneous noises such as phone ringing or loud dog barking, person or animal unexpectedly walking into room, the examinee responding to other external stimuli). List and describe these anomalies, as well as any observed or perceived impact on the testing sessions and/or results, and consider these in the interpretation of results.

An example of a written report might include:

"The GRADE was administered via remote telepractice using TestNav, and a facilitator monitored the administration on-site during the live video connection using the [name of telepractice system, e.g., Zoom] platform. The remote testing environment appeared free of distractions, adequate rapport was established with the examinee via video/audio, and the examinee appeared appropriately engaged in the test throughout the session. No significant technological problems or distractions were noted during administration. Modifications to the standardization procedure included: [list]. The GRADE, or similar tests, have received initial validation in several samples for remote telepractice and digital format administration, and the results are considered a valid description of the examinee's skills and abilities."

Conclusion

This test was not standardized in a telepractice mode, and this should be taken into consideration when utilizing this test via telepractice and interpreting results. For example, the examiner should consider relying on convergence of multiple data sources and/or being tentative about conclusions. Provided that the examiner has thoroughly considered and addressed the factors and the specific considerations as listed above, the examiner should be prepared to observe and comment about the reliable and valid delivery of the test via telepractice. Materials may be used via telepractice without additional permission from Pearson in the following published contexts:

- GRADE and GMADE via TestNav

Any other use of this test via telepractice is not currently recommended.

References

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