

The ACT Calculator Policy (effective November 7, 2016)

The ACT calculator policy is designed to ensure fairness for all examinees, avoid disturbances in the testing room, and protect the security of the test materials.

- A permitted calculator may be used on the ACT mathematics test only.
- **It is the examinee's responsibility** to know whether their calculator is permitted.
- Accessible calculators (such as audio/"talking," or Braille calculators) may be allowed under the [accessibility policies](#) for the ACT® test.

The following types of calculators are prohibited:

- Calculators with built-in or downloaded [computer algebra system functionality](#)
Prohibited calculators in this category include:
 - Texas Instruments:
 - All model numbers that begin with **TI-89** or **TI-92**
 - **TI-Nspire CAS**—Note: The TI-Nspire (non-CAS) is permitted.
 - Hewlett-Packard:
 - HP Prime
 - HP 48GII
 - All model numbers that begin with HP 40G, HP 49G, or HP 50G
 - Casio:
 - fx-CP400 (ClassPad 400)
 - ClassPad 300
 - ClassPad 330
 - Algebra fx 2.0
 - All model numbers that begin with CFX-9970G
- Handheld, tablet, or laptop computers, including PDAs
- Electronic writing pads or pen-input devices—Note: The Sharp EL 9600 is permitted.
- Calculators built into cell phones or any other electronic communication devices
- Calculators with a typewriter keypad (letter keys in QWERTY format)—Note: Letter keys *not* in QWERTY format are permitted.

The following types of calculators are **permitted, but only after they are modified as noted:**

- Calculators that can hold programs or documents—[remove all documents and remove all programs that have computer algebra system functionality](#).
- Calculators with paper tape—Remove the tape.
- Calculators that make noise—Turn off the sound.
- Calculators with an infrared data port—Completely cover the infrared data port with heavy opaque material such as duct tape or electrician's tape (includes Hewlett-Packard HP 38G series, HP 39G series, and HP 48G).
- Calculators that have power cords—Remove all power/electrical cords.

NOTE:

- Examinees may bring any **4-function**, scientific, or graphing calculator as long as it is a permitted calculator modified if needed as described above.
- In a computer based testing environment, an on-screen calculator may be provided. Hand-held calculators may not be connected in any way to the computer or device being used for testing.
- Sharing calculators during the test is not permitted, and the test proctor will not provide a calculator.
- Examinees are responsible for ensuring that their calculator works properly. If their calculator uses batteries, the batteries should be strong enough to last throughout the testing session.
- Examinees may bring a spare calculator and extra batteries.

NOTE:

Jones County District Policy prohibits students from bringing their own calculator for the MS State ACT Testing only. The school will provide allowable calculators that have been cleared according to ACT guidance. Calculators will be cleared before and after each day of testing.

Frequently Asked Questions - Computer Algebra System (CAS) Functionality

Note: These FAQs may be updated from time to time.

Q1: How does the policy apply to calculators that cannot hold programs and documents?

A: Not all calculators have the capability to hold programs and documents. If the calculator you bring to take the ACT Mathematics Test cannot hold programs and documents, then these clarifications do not affect you.

Q2: What is computer algebra system (CAS) functionality?

A: A computer algebra system typically solves equations algebraically, simplifies expressions, performs algebraic manipulations, and performs exact arithmetic (for example, does not round or truncate decimal places). A computer algebra system is also a system, potentially doing many levels of analysis at the same time. Examples include, but are not limited to, Zoom-Math, APP4MATH, F2K, etc.

Q3: Why can't I use a computer algebra system on the ACT Mathematics test?

A: A computer algebra system has a valid place in mathematics, and learning how to use the tool effectively is valuable. The ACT Mathematics Test does not assess this skill. Being college and career ready in mathematics requires that a student be able to analyze algebraic expressions and equations, knowing what to do in order to solve problems.

Q4: My calculator holds apps as well as programs. Are apps allowed?

A: Apps that have CAS functionality must be removed as well. Even though your calculator may have separate buttons or places to store apps versus programs, an app is a kind of program. For the purposes of this policy, the definition of “program” includes apps. Any time the word “program” is used, it should be interpreted to include apps as well.

Q5: Do ALL programs have to be removed? What about documents?

A: Only programs that have CAS functionality must be removed. All documents, however, must be removed regardless of their purpose or function.

Q6: Can you tell me if a specific program or app is allowed?

A: Given the proliferation of math resources/tools, ACT is not fully familiar with all mathematics programs and apps that are available for use on a calculator. If you are unsure whether a program or app is prohibited, our recommendation is to not install it or remove it before test day.

Q7: Is it OK to disable programs instead of removing them?

A: ACT's calculator policy calls for the programs to be removed. Disabling programs – for example, putting the calculator in *Press to Test* mode – is not enough.

Q8: If I have to remove programs from my calculator, how do I get them back on it after I test?

A: Many calculators have a way of restoring programs if they have been saved outside the calculator. If you have programs that you need to remove and you do not know how to save and restore, we recommend you check with your calculator company for details well in advance of test day.

Q9: What kinds of mathematics-related programs ARE allowed?

A: The kinds of mathematics-related programs permitted for the ACT allow students to use the calculator capabilities to do the routine calculations yet require students to show their analysis skills by choosing the right operations and process. Mathematics-related programs are allowed if they are single-purpose – for example, finding numeric solutions to a quadratic equation. A student must choose the right program for the right purpose. This is much the same as choosing the right formula for the right purpose.

Q10: Are there any rules that allowed mathematics-related programs must follow?

A: Programs must be written in the language of the calculator. Programs written in a different language, compiled, and loaded onto the calculator are not allowed. In this way, the programs can be examined on the calculator and will use calculator functions. Programs must not be lengthy. The limit is 25 logical lines of code. Programs cannot call another program. Techniques such as compressing code into a data statement are not allowed as a way of getting around this limit. Programs are allowed to change the value of system variables so that results may, for example, be graphed through the normal calculator graphing interface.