

## Michigan Merit Examination testGEAR™ test preparation FAQ's

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1. *What is testGEAR for the Michigan Merit Examination (MME)?*

**Answer:** Michigan Virtual High School (MVHS) has licensed testGEAR as an online test preparation tool for the ACT®, Michigan Math, Michigan Science and Michigan Social Studies portion of the MME. The purpose of testGEAR is to help students prepare for these examinations.

2. *How does testGEAR for MME work?*

**Answer:** Students begin the testGEAR program by taking the BrainSCAN™ initial diagnostic, which asks a series of self-assessment and objective-assessment questions. Performance on the BrainScan determines the scope and sequence of their assigned Learning Modules.

Next, students are prescribed their SMART Curriculum™ study plan, which is customized to target weaknesses with a combination of skills, strategies and practice.

Through a series of practice tests, testGEAR helps students to mentally prepare themselves to tackle the real thing. Test results help students determine which topics they have mastered and which ones still need work.

3. *Who has access to testGEAR?*

**Answer:** Through a statewide license, MVHS is making testGEAR available to all Michigan public and private high schools and combined schools with juniors or seniors.

4. *How long will schools have to use the product?*

**Answer:** All schools eligible for this program will receive access to testGEAR for one year. However, MVHS plans to renew the license to extend the program until June 2009.

5. *Do Michigan schools have to pay for testGEAR?*

**Answer:** No, testGEAR is being provided at no cost to schools and students by Michigan Virtual High School (a division of Michigan Virtual University) through funding from the Michigan legislature and governor.

6. *Why is MVU providing free access to test prep materials?*

**Answer:** MVHS has made test prep tools available to Michigan schools since 2000 and continues to explore opportunities to provide access to high quality, online tools and resources at no fee or at a reduced rate.

7. *How do we begin using this program?*

**Answer:** Schools will be sent a welcome letter and resource kit that has all the information to begin using the program. On the welcome letter, educators will receive a confidential Professional Account Access Key (PAAK) that will allow them to create a professional account to view student reports.

In general, any student in Michigan can begin using testGEAR by going to [www.bridges.com/mvhs](http://www.bridges.com/mvhs) and following the instructions in the Quick Start Guide for Students available at [www.bridges.com/mvhs/resources](http://www.bridges.com/mvhs/resources).

8. *I created a testGEAR account last year using a “Unicode” and accessed the testGEAR site from [www.bridges.com/mvu](http://www.bridges.com/mvu). Can I still use my testGEAR account that I created?*

**Answer:** No, in the summer of 2006, testGEAR moved away from Unicode access, where students created a testGEAR account using a unique eight-digit number called a Unicode. This method of creating a testGEAR account has been replaced with the site selector method described in question 7.

Students who created a testGEAR account using a Unicode may continue using it until the completion of this school year as long as they access testGEAR by going to [www.bridges.com/mvu](http://www.bridges.com/mvu). At the end of the school year, Unicode access will no longer work and student data will be lost. Additionally, students who use Unicode access will not show up in the TestSCOPE educator reports.

MVHS strongly recommends that all students use the new site selector method to create a new testGEAR account.

9. *Do students have to create a student account in order to use testGEAR?*

**Answer:** Yes, students must create a student account (called a “Portfolio” in testGEAR) in order to access the test preparation tools. A student account is required so students can save their work in a secure environment. All work completed by a student will be saved in their student account and will be made available to teachers monitoring progress and academic remediation.

All student accounts require a unique student account username (Portfolio name) and a password to avoid unauthorized access by other students.

10. *Can I still use testGEAR to prepare for the MEAP?*

**Answer:** Yes, MVHS has provided online MEAP test preparation targeted at Michigan 11<sup>th</sup>-graders for the past five years and will continue to make testGEAR for MEAP available for the remainder of the 2006-07 school year.

When you create a student testGEAR account, MEAP courses will automatically be listed for selection. This includes Math, English Language Arts, Science and Social Studies.

11. *Are there reporting tools to monitor student progress?*

**Answer:** Yes, all sites using testGEAR have access to TestSCOPE™ reporting tools. TestSCOPE allows educators to monitor student progress, track usage and drill down into student activity.

TestSCOPE is only made available to educators who have access to their site’s Professional Account Access Key (PAAK), which is found in the welcome letter sent to their site. Using their PAAK, educators must create a professional account.

To create a professional account, please follow the instructions described in the Professional’s Quick Start Guide at [www.bridges.com/mvhs/resources](http://www.bridges.com/mvhs/resources).

12. *Is there training available for teachers to use this program?*

**Answer:** Yes, MVHS plans to schedule a series of regional training sessions designed to cover the basic use of testGEAR. More details will follow on the specific dates and locations for the training sessions.

13. *Will someone be supporting the use of these products?*

**Answer:** Yes, as part of the MVHS license agreement, Bridges Transitions (testGEAR licensee) provides technical support from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (EST) Monday to Friday. Technical support is available to educational professionals for computer issues, browser issues, software errors and availability. Bridges customer support can be contacted at 1.800.281.1168

For student user support, contact the MVHS Help Desk at 1.888.889.2840, from 7 a.m. to midnight, Monday to Friday, and 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Sundays, or e-mail the Help Desk at [mivuhelp@mivu.org](mailto:mivuhelp@mivu.org).

14. *What is Michigan Virtual High School?*

**Answer:** The [Michigan Virtual High School](#) is an online resource that enables Michigan high schools and middle schools to provide courses taught by certified teachers, and other learning tools that students wouldn't otherwise have access to. It was funded by the Michigan Legislature in July 2000 to be operated by the [Michigan Virtual University](#), a private, not-for-profit Michigan corporation. MVHS works in cooperation with individual school districts to grant course credit and diplomas.

15. *What is Bridges Transitions?*

**Answer:** Bridges Transitions, a Xap Corporation company, develops, markets, and delivers comprehensive products and services that address a wide range of education needs. Bridges college and career planning products, online test preparation courses, and professional development are used by elementary, middle and high schools, districts, post-secondary schools, and adult agencies to help individuals achieve academic and career success.

16. *How do I find out more about this program?*

**Answer:** If you are interested in learning more about testGEAR, please contact your representative at Michigan Virtual High School at 1.517.324.5370 or e-mail [tlewis@mivu.org](mailto:tlewis@mivu.org), or call Bridges customer support at 1.800.281.1168.

17. *Does testGEAR use meet Michigan's online learning requirement?*

**Answer:** testGEAR is not an online course, but it may be considered an "online experience" as defined by the Michigan Merit Curriculum Guidelines. For a complete definition of the guidelines and suggested ways to meet the online learning requirement, please visit the Department of Education website at [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Online10.06\\_final\\_175750\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Online10.06_final_175750_7.pdf).

18. *Is testGEAR aligned to the ACT and MME?*

**Answer:** Yes, testGEAR is "psychometrically calibrated" to the ACT and the Michigan items of the MME (mathematics, science and social studies).

19. *How long does it take for a student to complete the testGEAR program?*

**Answer:** The time it takes an individual student to complete testGEAR varies; however, testGEAR provides a maximum of 60 hours of instructional test prep materials.