



Quaker Digital Academy, Ohio, Improves Student Placement

Using Scantron Computer-Adaptive Assessments

Quaker Digital Academy (QDA) is Ohio's premier online school, offering a tuition-free K-12 education to all Ohio students under the age of 22. QDA depends on Scantron to meet students where they are and help them get to where they want to be.

The cyber-education approach taken by QDA delivers individualized instruction that is highly dependent on an accurate assessment of each incoming student's starting knowledge. QDA characteristics include:

- **Custom-tailored, online education experience, backed by courses from leading national curriculum providers**
- **Ohio-certified Instructional Supervisors assigned to each student**
- **41% of their students are identified as economically disadvantaged**
- **School of Distinction awarded to QDA by the Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools for:**
 - › Exceeding the Standard in 5 out of 6 Criteria
 - › Assessment Passage Rate
 - › 4-, 5-, 6-, and 7-Year Graduation Rate
 - › Annual Measureable Objective/Gap Closing
- **Graduation rate exceeds standards identified by the Ohio Department of Education for 4-year, 5-year, 6-year, and 7-year graduations (compared to other dropout recovery programs)**

For more than a decade, QDA has delivered high-quality online education that helps students reach their full potential.

Yesterday...

QDA primarily supports students who are dissatisfied with traditional public education or who have struggled to perform in classrooms that cannot provide closely individualized instruction. Knowing each incoming student's current capabilities is crucial to providing the support the program promises.

However, while some incoming students provide test scores and even individualized education plans (IEPs), much of that information is out of date or simply doesn't align with the student's academic reality.

"We need to assess their knowledge immediately," says Roni Leeper, an intervention specialist for QDA. "If we were face to face, we could see the issues, but we're a digital academy dedicated to providing high-quality distance education."

QDA needed an assessment that was tailored to each student's ability level and provided immediate results to support fast action and an effective plan. They were using their own custom assessments to try to determine placement and program design, but were dissatisfied with the results and the extensive manual effort needed.

Enter Scantron's computer-adaptive assessment.

"When you're properly placing students and not frustrating them, you see accelerated results. Scantron helps us do that."

Dr. Richard Varrati,
Superintendent and CEO, Quaker Digital Academy





Today...

In 2009, QDA began using Scantron's computer-adaptive assessment to assess incoming students. The results transformed their approach.

Tutors can now get detailed insight to adjust the curriculum to the student, rather than vice versa. This is a critical component in setting the student on a successful path.

According to Leeper, they can copy the student profile (one of the many reports Scantron provides) into an IEP. "I plug it in, I read it, and I'm done," she states. "It gives us everything we need."

The extensive norming and detailed research supporting Scantron's computer-adaptive test items and scores that is clearly provided in reports was a big factor in their choice. Leeper notes, "I get instant information—just zap! Grade level estimate? Zap! Comparison to national norm group? Zap!"

Even more important is the continuity of the scores: Since Scantron's computer-adaptive test uses a consistent, vertically scaled score for each subject, QDA can see student growth over multiple years. "I'm able to individualize more and more now that I can easily see the strengths the student has to build on," says Leeper.

Because the Scantron test is available over the Internet, it fits into QDA's cyber-approach to learning. And because it's computer-adaptive, adjusting to each student's actual knowledge, it provides educational insights that enable QDA to place students effectively.

Of additional help is the availability of Matemáticas en Español, since many local schools do not have English Language Learner (ELL) programs. "We're seeing an influx of Hispanic students," says Leeper. "This helps us ensure that their Math scores reflect their understanding of Math, not English."

The results speak for themselves. **86% of their students pass all five tests required by Ohio for graduation.**

Tomorrow...

QDA plans to continue using Scantron computer-adaptive assessment into the future. Although they are currently using the assessment primarily for incoming home-schooled students and direct transfers, they intend to expand its use to returning-education students, as well.

"Many of these students arrive with little or no formal records," says Dr. Richard Varrati, Superintendent and CEO of the academy. "Having a method like Scantron to acquire baseline data ensures we can match students to the right instructor and curriculum so they can succeed."



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TO IMPACT STUDENT
ACHIEVEMENT TODAY!**

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