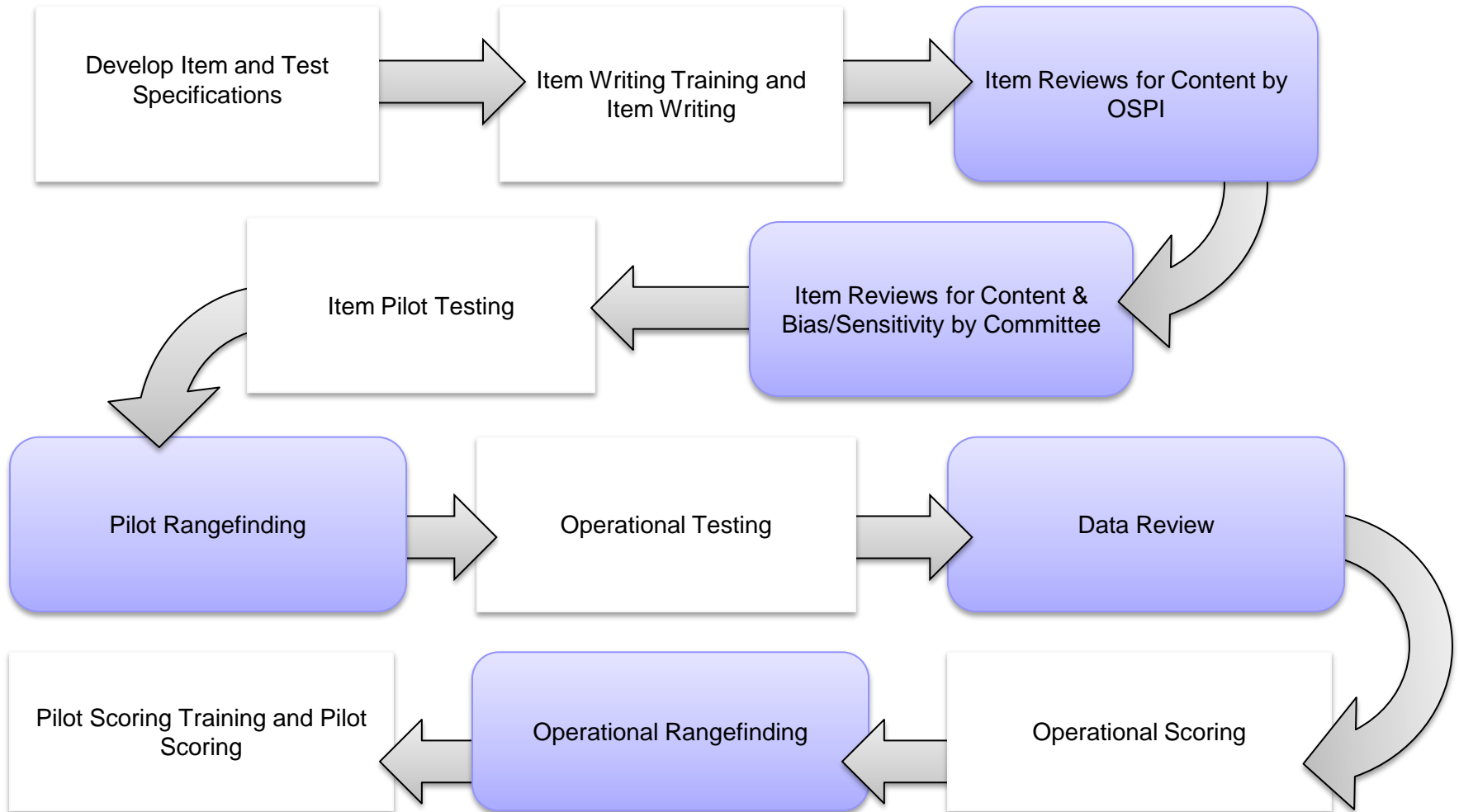


Bias and Sensitivity Review for the Washington Comprehensive Assessment System

General WCAP Development Cycle





Principles of Universal Design

- Assessments should be designed to be valid and accessible for use by the widest possible range of students, including students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency.
- Results should not be influenced by disability, ethnicity, gender, or English language ability.

What is Item Bias?

- Language or content in the item that prevents members of a group from demonstrating their knowledge and skills in a content area; and

Potential Sources of Bias and Stereotyping

- Regional and geographic differences in language usage and topic familiarity
- Linguistic issues (e.g., idiomatic expressions or figurative language)
- Gender and age stereotypes
- Ethnic, cultural, and religious stereotypes
- Socio-economic and occupational stereotypes

Sensitivity Issues

Any reference or language in an item or passage that might cause a student to have an emotional reaction during the test administration and prevent the student from being able to accurately demonstrate knowledge and skills.

Examples:

- Passage about abuse or struggles of an individual or group because of minority status
- Change of meaning or structure in a culture's legend or folk tale
- Competitive context in passages or items
- Controversial issue unrelated to the content standards
- Use of patronizing language to describe an individual or group

How Might Potential Item Bias be Detected?

- Judgmental Procedure: Review of item for issues related to context, language, or stereotyping prior to field-testing



Purpose of Bias and Sensitivity Review

- Review test items for potential sources of bias, sensitive issues, and gender or cultural stereotypes.
- Apply professional test development standards to ensure items are fair and not insensitive or offensive.

Guiding Questions

- Is there anything controversial, inflammatory, or insensitive in an item?
- Is the language likely to be familiar to most examinees regardless of socioeconomic status, region, language proficiency, cultural background, or gender
- Is there any apparent patronizing language, stereotypical descriptions, or stereotypical actions/beliefs present?
- Would an item context or content give students of a particular group, background, or region a distinct advantage or disadvantage?

How To Proceed

- Read the items, keeping in mind the guiding questions.
- Make your own judgment. Write your judgment on the review form:
 - Accept as is (no apparent bias/sensitivity issue)
 - Edit
 - Reject due to potential bias or sensitivity issue
- As a group, discuss each item flagged for revision or rejection.
- Recorder will take detailed notes.
- Make a group decision about each item.
- Record dissenting position, if appropriate