

USAD® Calculator Policy 2011-2012

This policy applies for all Wisconsin competitions and the USAD® National Competition.

The United States Academic Decathlon® has always endeavored to reflect current high school curriculum and instruction in our competitions. Recent surveys of calculator use in high schools nationwide indicate that calculators are now used in the vast majority of high school mathematics courses across the country, and our decision to allow calculators is consistent with this practice in math instruction.

After reviewing the policies of the major testing institutions and consulting state directors, USAD® has adapted MOST of the American College Testing (ACT) and College Board (SAT program) guidelines for calculator use as stated below:

I. Competitors May Use Calculators for the Mathematics Test

If competitors wish to use calculators on the USAD® Mathematics Test, they are responsible for bringing them to the test. Calculators will not be provided for students who do not bring their own. Calculator use is permitted only for Mathematics; **competitors will not be allowed to use calculators on any other test.**

II. Permissible Calculators

If a competitor wishes to use a calculator, it can be a **basic, four-function, scientific, or graphing calculator** — provided it has none of the features listed in Section III below.

Competitors are expected to honor the fact that they are not to refer to information stored in the graphing calculator memory during the mathematics test.

III. Prohibited Calculators

Calculators with any of the following features are NOT allowed in USAD® competitions:

- pocket organizers
- hand-held or laptop computers
- electronic writing pads or pen-input devices
- models with an alphabetic (QWERTY) keypad, **e.g. TI-92 or HP-95**
- models with paper tape
- models that make noise
- models that can engage in wireless communication
(transfer data or information with other calculators)
- models that require a power cord
- models with CAS (computer algebra systems), **e.g. TI-89**



Because companies are continuously introducing new products, it would be impossible for USAD® to maintain an up-to-date list of specific model numbers that possess these features. If a competitor is uncertain whether a particular calculator will be allowed, the student should bring a backup that does not possess any of the features in question. No backup calculator will be provided for any competitor whose calculator is disallowed.

IV. Competing without a Calculator

Competitors may opt to take the Mathematics Test without a calculator; however, USAD® is suggesting competitors use a basic, scientific, or graphing calculator for solving the trigonometry test items.

V. Calculator Failure During a Test

If a competitor's calculator stops working during a test, the student should continue taking the test without a calculator. No additional calculator will be provided, and the competitor will not be allowed to take the test again later. However, as noted in Section III above, a competitor may bring a backup calculator and/or spare batteries to the test.