EDUCATION MAJORS: Basic Skills Test Requirements, Preparation and Financial Help

In Pennsylvania, undergraduate students who want to be teachers are required to demonstrate basic skills in Reading, Writing, and Math prior to full admittance as a candidate in an Education program leading to teacher certification.

On October 22, 2014, Governor Corbett signed an amendment to the Public School Code (referenced as “Act 168”) that is effective August 1, 2015, requiring students to pass the basic skills assessment by the time they attain 48 credits, or they will not be allowed to schedule any Education classes until they do pass.

The good news is, Pennsylvania allows for multiple ways that to happen.

1) Students who have SAT scores that total at least 1550, with each sub-section (Critical Reading, Writing and Mathematics) score no less than 500. If you attain these scores on your SAT, your basic skills assessment requirement is WAIVED. Students who meet this score should alert the Education Department secretary, Monica Nagle, and should be prepared to provide a copy of their scores at the time they apply for their teaching certification after graduation.
   • Note: The 3 SAT subtests can be taken at all on one test administration date or taken separately, and may be done prior to acceptance to Alvernia or after.

2) Students who have ACT composite scores of 23 or higher, the English/Writing score of at least 22 and Math score of at least 21. If you attain these scores on your ACT, your basic skills assessment requirement is WAIVED. Students who meet this score should alert the Education Department secretary, Monica Nagle, and should be prepared to provide a copy of their scores at the time they apply for their teaching certification after graduation.
   • Note: The 2 ACT subtests can be taken both at one test administration date or taken separately, and may be done prior to acceptance to Alvernia or after.

3) Take and pass the Core Academic Skills for Educators Tests (CORE) published by ETS. These tests can be taken all at one sitting, or separately, and re-taken as often as necessary to reach passing scores. Here is the weblink for full information about the CORE: http://www.ets.org/praxis/about/core/
   • Passing scores must be at least 156 in Reading/Test Number 5712, 162 in Writing/Test 5722, AND 150 in Mathematics/Test 5732, OR
   • Reach the composite score option for CORE which enables a candidate who excels in one area but is not as strong in another area to receive a passing score. In order to qualify, the student must meet or exceed scores of 148 on the CORE Reading, 158 on the CORE Writing, and 142 on the CORE Mathematics, and together have all three scores total 475 or higher.
4) Take and pass the Pre-service Academic Performance Assessment (PAPA) published by Pearson. These tests can be taken all at one sitting, or separately, and re-taken as often as necessary to reach passing scores. These tests can be taken all at one sitting, or separately, and re-taken as often as necessary to reach passing scores. Here is the weblink for full information about the PAPA:


- Passing scores must be 220 or better on Module 1/Test #8001: Reading, Module 2/Test #8002: Mathematics, and Module 3/Test #8003: Writing, OR
- Reach the composite score option for PAPA which enables a candidate who excels in one area but is not as strong in another area, to receive a passing score. In order to qualify, the student must meet or exceed a score of 193 on the PAPA Reading, 197 on the PAPA Math AND a 192 on the PAPA Writing, and together have all three scores total 686 or higher.

Students may not mix-and-match SAT, ACT, PAPA and CORE. They must pass all of one choice assessment as offered above. Students who have not passed one of the basic skills options but are declaring themselves as Education majors can expect to receive correspondence from the Education Department Chair about their progression at the end of each semester. Students are encouraged to work at any time with either their academic advisor in Education or the staff of the Learning Center in Bernardine Hall to prepare and discuss their efforts in these important tests!
Resources to Prepare for Basic Skills Testing

FREE BASIC SKILLS TEST PREP MATERIALS – Available to all Students

1) Here are the links for free materials for the CORE test published by ETS.
   For Writing – [http://www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5722](http://www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5722)

2) Here is the link for a free full-length PAPA practice test published by Pearson you can print out and score yourself

3) You may want to contact Kayla Middleton, Graduate Assistant at the Learning Center in Bernadine Hall to have an individual appointment or learn about upcoming Saturday morning group preparation meetings. She has a variety of additional resources, test taking strategies, and tutors she can help you find, for students who wish to secure a stronger preparation in a specific area or through a different resource than those identified above. You can contact Kayla Middleton at PH.610-568-1494 or [kayla.middleton@alvernia.edu](mailto:kayla.middleton@alvernia.edu)

   One of the online resources that may be useful, especially for review of specific areas where you may need support is the Khan Academy ([http://www.khanacademy.org/library](http://www.khanacademy.org/library))
   Use of this resource will require you to work with Kayla as the online instructor of record who will provide you with login information and an orientation to the service.
FEE-BASED BASIC SKILLS TEST PREP MATERIALS – Students may want to purchase for their own use one or more of the following:

1) For CORE practice materials published by ETS:
   For Mathematics - http://www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5732
   For Reading – http://www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5712
   For Writing – http://www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5722
   The ETS preparation materials are priced individually at $17.95 each, and its fee-based materials allow for a 90 day access subscription.

2) For PAPA practice materials published by Pearson:
   Individual practice tests for purchase cost $17.50 each, or one can purchase all 3 for $29.50. These are “subscription” type practice materials that allow online access once opened for 30 days only, so students should make sure they can dedicate the time before the subscriptions they’ve purchased expire.

3) Another resource for online PAPA preparation, which allows for a full year of access for $39.95 is through the Longsdale Publishing company at http://www.longsdalepub.com/papa-test.html
Available Financial Assistance for Certification Tests

Taking (and at times re-taking) the required teacher certification tests can be an endeavor that stresses the budget as well as the mind. If you or a student you know in the Education Department would benefit from some financial help for any of these tests, assistance is available!

1) For the first time you take the CORE tests, fee waivers are also available, as spelled out on this website: [http://www.ets.org/praxis/about/fees/fee_waivers/](http://www.ets.org/praxis/about/fees/fee_waivers/)

For the first time you take the PAPA tests, fee waivers are available for college students who meet the eligibility criteria, as spelled out on the website: [http://www.pa.nesinc.com/TestView.aspx?f=PACBT_TestFeesAndPaymentInformation.html&t=PA001](http://www.pa.nesinc.com/TestView.aspx?f=PACBT_TestFeesAndPaymentInformation.html&t=PA001)

2) If you should need to take either the CORE or PAPA test a second time because you didn’t pass on your first attempt, some financial assistance is available to you. This assistance may come through either of two sources:
   a) Endowments provided to our department by two former department faculty members, Nan Hamberger and James Sutton. To apply, you will need to type out and print the specific re-test registration form and bring it to Dr. Mary Schreiner, Department Chair in Office 112D in the Upland building.
   
   b) Pearson if you met certain scoring criteria on your first attempt. Guidelines for obtaining a voucher from Pearson to re-take tests are found at this link: [http://www.alvernia.edu/academics/professional-programs/education/certification/papa.html](http://www.alvernia.edu/academics/professional-programs/education/certification/papa.html)

   You must have a GPA of 3.0 or higher, you have a score from 209-219 on the test module you wish to retake, and you have attempted to pass that module at least once but no more than twice.

If for any reason you fail to take the test as you told us you were planning to do, you will be responsible for any penalty fees Pearson or ETS assigns for the cancellation, and for the full cost the next time you want to re-schedule.

Our Education Department, past and present, is committed to helping you achieve successful teacher certification test results!