

Introduction to the PPST

Pre-Professional Skills Test

The Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST) measures your proficiency in basic academic abilities consisting of reading, mathematics, and writing. The PPST is required by most university departments of education for admission to teacher preparation programs, and many state departments of education require the PPST before teacher licensure and certification are issued. The successful passing of the PPST varies from state to state. You should contact your local state department of teacher certification to learn more about required standards.

The format of the exam is multiple-choice along with one written essay, and you have the choice to take either a paper-based version or a computer-based version.

Pre-Professional Skills Test

The PPST is composed of three multiple-choice tests and one essay:

The Reading Test. This multiple-choice test requires your ability to read, comprehend, and evaluate passages or statements and answer questions based upon the content of these passages. The reading passages are taken from a wide range of subject areas, but no prior knowledge of the topic is necessary to answer the questions. All questions are based upon the content of the passage provided.

The Mathematics Test. This multiple-choice test requires a cumulative understanding of math basics from problem solving to quantitative reasoning. Knowledge should include basic math from elementary school to at least one year of high school and possibly one year of college.

The Writing Test. This test is divided into two sections. Part A is a multiple-choice section and contains questions related to English usage and sentence correction. This section requires your ability to detect and correct errors in standard written English. Part B requires your ability to plan and write a well-organized essay on an assigned topic.

Format of the Tests

		<i>Minutes</i>		<i>Approximate Number of Questions</i>	
	<i>Test</i>	Paper- Based	Computer- Based	Paper- Based	Computer- Based
Reading	I. Literal Comprehension	27	35	18	21
	II. Critical and Inferential Comprehension	33	40	22	25
	Totals	60 minutes	75 minutes	40 questions	46 questions
Mathematics	I. Number and Operations	20	24	13	15
	II. Algebra	12	15	8	9
	III. Geometry and Measurement	13	16	9	10
	IV. Data Analysis and Probability	15	20	10	12
	Totals	60 minutes	75 minutes	40 questions	46 questions
Writing	I. Grammatical Relationships	10	13	13	15
	II. Structural Relationships	11	14	14	16
	III. Word Choice and Mechanics	9	11	11	13
	IV. Essay	30	30	1	1
	Total: Multiple Choice	30 minutes	38 minutes	38 questions	44 questions
	Total: Essay	30 minutes	30 minutes	1 essay	1 essay
Paper-Based Test			Computer-Based Test		
Total Time: 180 minutes			Total Time*: 218 minutes		
Total Questions: 118 questions plus 1 essay			Total Questions: 136 questions plus 1 essay		

**Suggested time. The test may contain some experimental questions, which will not count toward your score. Note: Format and scoring are subject to change.*

Questions Commonly Asked about the PPST

Q: Who administers the PPST?

A: Educational Testing Service (ETS) prepares and scores the PPST, but unless otherwise specified, institutions and agencies that plan to use the tests arrange for the administration with ETS. For further information regarding test administration, contact PPST Program, Educational Testing Service, Box 6051, Princeton, NJ 08541-6051 or call (609) 771-7395, www.ets.org/praxis.

Q: Is the PPST part of the Praxis Series?

A: Yes. ETS has grouped a number of its beginning teacher tests under the title “The Praxis Series.” Praxis I includes the PPST tests of reading, writing, and mathematics skills that all teachers need. Praxis II includes exams on the specific subjects prospective teachers will actually teach. Praxis III includes tests that evaluate classroom teaching performance.

Q: How long is the PPST?

A: The computer-based PPST is approximately 3 hours and 45 minutes; however, you should allow at least 4.5 hours for this version of the test since there are computer tutorials and a verification process to collect your background information. The actual testing time for the paper-based PPST is approximately 3 hours if you take the entire test in one day.

Q: How is the PPST scored?

A: Both the PPST paper-based and computer-based tests are scored on a scale ranging from 150 to 190. Separate scores are reported for each test. The Reading Test and the Mathematics Test are scored solely on the number of items answered correctly. The Writing Test score is a composite score adjusted to give approximately equal weight to the number right on the multiple-choice section and the essay score. Since each state determines passing standards, it is important to check the passing score required for certification in your state.

Q: How is the PPST score used?

A: The PPST may be used for selection, admission, evaluation, and certification in conjunction with other relevant information. Because each institution or agency may set its own minimum standards and requirements, you should contact the appropriate institution, district, department, or agency to find out if you must take the test and to learn the required standards.

Q: How long does it take to receive my score?

A: It will take approximately four weeks for you to receive your score results if you take the paper-based test. Unofficial results for the computer-based test are available immediately on the day of your test for the multiple-choice results; but your official test report, including the written essay portion of the PPST, will be sent to you by mail approximately two weeks after your test date.

Q: Should I take the PPST by paper-and-pencil or by computer?

A: There are several factors to consider when deciding if you should take the PPST as the traditional paper-based version or as the computer-based version. Since both versions have the same level of difficulty, what matters most is that you are at ease with the method of test administration. For more information about the advantages of computer-based testing, read our section on “Taking the Computer-Based PPST” on page 9.

Q: When and where is the PPST *paper-based* test administered, and how do I register?

A: The paper-based version of the PPST is administered at locations throughout each state. You will need to list your first-choice and alternative-choice locations on your registration form. To register for the PPST, find a testing site, or obtain information about registration fees, check the PPST registration bulletin available from your local university department of education or contact ETS via www.ets.org/praxis to register online. Once you submit a registration form to ETS, you will receive an admission ticket to take with you the day of the test.

Q: When and where is the PPST *computer-based* test administered, and how do I register?

A: The computer-based administration of the PPST is made by appointment through Prometric Candidate Services at (800) 853-6773. Walk-in appointments are available on a “space-available basis only.” There are over 300 test locations in the United States. You cannot take a computer-based test more than six times within one calendar year, and you may not take the computer-based test more than one time per calendar month.

Q: Are there any special arrangements for taking the PPST?

A: There are some special arrangements available for people with disabilities. Call or write to ETS long before your test date to inquire about special arrangements at www.ets.org/disability.

Q: What materials should I bring to the PPST?

A: Bring positive photo-bearing identification and a watch. If taking the paper-based test, you should also bring three or four sharpened No. 2 pencils and a good eraser. You may *not* bring scratch paper, calculators (including watch calculators), books, compasses, rulers, papers of any kind, or recording or photographic devices.

Q: How should I prepare for the PPST?

A: Understanding and practicing test-taking strategies will help a great deal. Subject matter review in arithmetic, simple algebra, plane geometry, and measurement, as well as in English grammar, usage, and punctuation is also very valuable.

Q: Should I guess on the PPST?

A: Yes. Since there is no penalty for wrong answers, guess if you have to. If possible, first try to eliminate some of the choices to increase your chances of guessing the correct answer. But don't leave any questions unanswered.

Q: Where can I get more information?

A: For more information, write to Educational Testing Service, The Praxis Series, P. O. Box 6051, Princeton, NJ 08541-6051 or visit www.ets.org/praxis.