



Education Department

Teacher Certification Testing Requirements

Basic Skills and Content-Area Certification Tests Required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Early Childhood (PreK-4) Certification

Special Education (PreK-8 and 7-12) Certifications

Middle Level (4-8) Certifications

Secondary (7-12) Certifications:

Biology

Communication

English

Mathematics

Social Studies

**Elementary and Secondary (K-12) Certification:
*Business, Computer and Information Technology***

Reading Specialist (K-12)

Principal Certification

Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) web page that explains the testing requirements for those seeking initial teacher certification (or seeking another education-related certification), as granted by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania: http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/testing_requirements/8638 .

For additional information, please contact Nancy McGregor, Certification Assistant, 412-397-6025 or mcgregor@rmu.edu.

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1. Why must I take tests for teacher certification?

Basic skills tests (PAPA, CORE, SAT or ACT scores), along with content-specific Praxis® II Series & PECT tests developed and administered by Educational Testing Service (ETS) or Pearson, are used by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to help ensure that teacher candidates have appropriate basic skills and content knowledge mastery. The Basic Skills tests must be passed for entry into the Teacher Certification Course Sequence for undergraduates. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) requires passing Praxis/PECT test scores before granting an Instructional I certificate.

2. What tests do I need to take, and when?

All undergraduate RMU teacher candidates must satisfy the Basic Skills requirements. The Basic Skills tests will be the means of assessing your basic knowledge – reading, mathematics, and writing skills.

- ✓ Undergraduate candidates seeking initial certification are required to pass all three Basic Skills – reading, mathematics, and writing.
- ✓ Post-baccalaureate candidates seeking initial certification are *not* required to take the Basic Skills tests.
- ✓ Undergraduate RMU teacher candidates *must* submit passing Basic Skills results as part of the *Application for Candidacy*.
- ✓ Students entering college with SAT scores of at least 500 in each area or ACT scores of Reading 22, Writing 21 and Math 21 may use those scores to satisfy the Basic Skills requirement.

Note: Please see the *Suggested Program of Study* document, or contact your academic advisor, to determine when you should prepare for and take the Basic Skills exams.

All RMU teacher candidates must also take specific content area tests, including post-baccalaureate teacher candidates. The nature and number of content-related tests varies by certification area. Some content-related tests, such as those for early childhood and special education, are developed and administered by Pearson Education; while others, such as those required for middle level and secondary teaching certifications, are developed and administered by Educational Testing Service (ETS). Note that if you are already Pennsylvania certified and adding another certificate, you only have to take the test(s) corresponding to the new certification area.

- ✓ No RMU student will be permitted into the Teacher Certification Course Sequence (Post Candidacy courses) without having obtained passing scores on the Basic Skills tests.
- ✓ All teacher candidates *must* submit proof of having taken the required content area tests (Praxis II or equivalent) the semester prior to student teaching, and include the results as part of the *Application for Student Teaching*.
- ✓ No RMU teacher candidate will be permitted to student teach without having attempted the required content-area tests and have results on file in the RMU Teacher Education Office.
- ✓ The PDE will *not* grant teacher certification without passing all required tests.

Note: Please refer to your *Suggested Program of Study* document, or contact your academic advisor, to determine when you should prepare for and take content-related tests for your certification area.

3. How do I find out more about required tests, and how do I register to take the tests?

Undergraduate... Early Childhood PreK-4, Special Education PreK-8, or Special Education 7-12:

Test

PAPA: Reading, Mathematics, Writing
Early Childhood and Special Ed certification area test(s)
CORE Academic Skills for Educators

To register, go to:

www.pa.nesinc.com
www.pa.nesinc.com
www.ets.org/praxis/pa

Post-Baccalaureate/Graduate... Early Childhood PreK-4, Spec Education PreK-8, or Spec Education 7-12:

Test

Early Childhood and Special Ed certification area test(s)

To register, go to:

www.pa.nesinc.com

Undergraduate... Middle Level Grades 4-8:

Test

PAPA: Reading, Writing, Mathematics
Grades 4-8 Core Assessment Tests (3 modules)
Grades 4-8 Concentration Tests (per subject area)

To register, go to:

www.pa.nesinc.com
<http://www.ets.org/praxis/pa>
<http://www.ets.org/praxis/pa>

Undergraduate... Secondary Grades (7-12):

Test

PAPA: Reading, Writing, Mathematics
Appropriate content area test for secondary subject(s)

To register, go to:

www.pa.nesinc.com
<http://www.ets.org/praxis/pa>

Post-Baccalaureate... Initial certification for Secondary Grades (7-12):

Test

Appropriate content area test for secondary subject(s)

To register, go to:

<http://www.ets.org/praxis/pa>

Undergraduate... Business, Computer and Information Technology (K-12):

Test

PAPA: Reading, Writing, Mathematics
Fundamental Subjects: Content Knowledge
Appropriate content area test (Praxis II)

To register, go to:

www.pa.nesinc.com
<http://www.ets.org/praxis/pa>
<http://www.ets.org/praxis/pa>

Post-Baccalaureate... Business, Computer and Information Technology (K-12):

Test

Fundamental Subjects: Content Knowledge
Appropriate content area test (Praxis II)

To register, go to:

<http://www.ets.org/praxis/pa>
<http://www.ets.org/praxis/pa>

Post-Baccalaureate... Reading Specialist (K-12):

Test

Reading Specialist

To register, go to:

<http://www.ets.org/praxis/pa>

Post-Baccalaureate... Principal Certification:

Test

School Leaders Licensure Assessment

To register, go to:

<http://www.ets.org/sls>

4. What are the specific basic skills test modules required of all teacher candidates, and the related test codes?

Pearson Education's PAPA includes three modules: Reading, Mathematics, and Writing. You may take one or all three modules at one test appointment.

PAPA (Pre-service Academic Performance Assessment)

- ✓ Module 1 – Reading – Test Code 8001
- ✓ Module 2 – Math – Test Code 8002
- ✓ Module 3 – Writing – Test Code 8003

The following education students must take the PAPA:

PreK-4, PreK-4/Special Education, Middle Level, and all Secondary teacher certification candidates

The following education students DO NOT take the PAPA:

Post-Baccalaureate teacher certification candidates and Master's Degree candidates

PAPA Composite Score Option

Effective September 1, 2012, the Pennsylvania Department of Education implemented the "Composite Score Option" for the Pre-service Academic Performance Assessments (PAPA). This option provides an alternative means by which candidates may pass the PAPA. Candidates who took a PAPA test on or after September 1, 2012, may be able to pass the PAPA series using this option.

The Composite Score Option for PAPA was initiated to enable a candidate who may excel in one area such as mathematics, but who is not strong in another PAPA area, to receive a passing score on the PAPA series. In order to qualify, a candidate must meet or exceed a minimum score in each test area (Reading, Mathematics, and Writing) and meet or exceed the PAPA Qualifying Score in at least one area. The candidate's test scores are added together, and if the scores total 657, the candidate has passed the PAPA series. The Minimum Scores required for the Composite Score Option are shown below.

Test Name	Test #	PAPA Qualifying Score	Minimum Composite Score
PAPA Reading	8001	220	193
PAPA Mathematics	8002	193	176
PAPA Writing	8003	220	192

Minimum Composite Score Total: 657

The sum of the three PAPA test scores must total or exceed 657. This total does not represent the sum of the three minimum scores. Candidates must achieve the PAPA Qualifying Score in at least one area and also reach the Minimum Composite Score Total of 657 when all three test scores are added together.

Candidates can also pass the PAPA by the standard method of achieving the qualifying score or higher on all three tests.

5. What are the CORE Academic Skills tests that can be used in place of the PAPA tests to satisfy the Basic Skills?

Alternate Basic Skills Assessments – Core Academic Skills for Educators Tests (Core)
Effective 6/1/2014

Test Name	Test #	Passing Score	Minimum Composite Score
Core Academic Skills for Educators: Reading	5712	156	148
Core Academic Skills for Educators: Writing	5722	162	158
Core Academic Skills for Educators: Mathematics	5732	142	132
<p>Minimum Composite Score Total: 467</p> <p>The sum of the three CORE tests must total or exceed 467. This total does not represent the sum of the three minimum scores. Candidates must achieve a Qualifying Score in at least one CORE area and also reach the Minimum Composite Score Total of 467 when all three test scores are added together.</p>			

The CORE tests can be taken individually or as a set. The Test Number for the combined test is 5751.

Preparation materials can be found at:

www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5712

www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5722

www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5732

The cost is \$17.95 per module and \$43.08 for the series. It is a 90 day subscription to a practice test and its answers and explanations.

SAT Scores and ACT Scores to satisfy the Basic Skills requirements:

Students entering college with SAT scores of at least 500 in each area or ACT scores of Reading 22, Writing 21 and a Math score of 21 may use those scores to satisfy the Basic Skills requirement.

Exam	Reading Passing Score	Math Passing Score	Writing Passing Score	
ACT	22	21	21	No composite
SAT	500	500	500	No composite

6. What are the content-area tests provided by Pearson Education required for early childhood and special education certification areas, and the related test codes?

PreK-4 (Early Childhood)

- ✓ Module 1 – Test Code 8006
- ✓ Module 2 – Test Code 8007
- ✓ Module 3 – Test Code 8008

Special Education PreK-8

- ✓ Module 1 – Test Code 8011
- ✓ Module 2 – Test Code 8012

Special Education 7-12

- ✓ Module 1 – Test Code 8015
- ✓ Module 2 – Test Code 8016

How can I obtain Pearson Education test preparation materials?

Free PAPA test preparation:

http://www.pa.nesinc.com/Content/docs/PECT_PT_01_02_03_PAPA.pdf

FREE practice materials and videos for the CORE exams:

<http://www.mometrix.com/academy/praxis-test/>

RMU Purchased Online Course and Practice Tests:

Stop by the Teacher Education Office for more information.

Other free test preparation:

PreK-4 PECT Exam:

http://www.pa.nesinc.com/Content/docs/PECT_PT_06_07_08_PreK_4.pdf

Special Education Prek-8

http://www.pa.nesinc.com/Content/docs/PECT_PT_11_12_SpEdPreK_8.pdf

Special Education 7-12

http://www.pa.nesinc.com/Content/docs/PECT_PT_15_16_SpEd7_12.pdf

7. What are the specific ETS Praxis II content-area tests required for middle level and secondary certifications, and the related test codes?

Middle Level (4-8):

Requirement 1: Grades 4-8 Core Assessment – Code 5152

The Core Assessment includes three 3 subtests. Note that if you do not pass a particular subtest, then you may re-take that subtest for a reduced fee. The three subtests are:

- ✓ Pedagogy – Code 5153
- ✓ English Language Arts and Social Studies – Code 5154
- ✓ Mathematics and Science – Code 5155

Requirement 2: In addition to the Core Assessment, you must also take the Subject Concentration test related to the area(s) for which you are seeking certification (you plan to teach) ... one or more of the following:

- ✓ Grades 4-8: Subject Concentration – English - Code 5156
- ✓ Grades 4-8: Subject Concentration - Mathematics – Code 5158
- ✓ Grades 4-8: Subject Concentration - Science - Code 5159
- ✓ Grades 4-8: Subject Concentration – Social Studies - Code 5157

Secondary (7-12):

- Biology – Code 5235/0235
- Communication – Code 5221
- English – Code 5038
- Mathematics – Code 5161
- Social Studies – Code 5081/0081

Elementary/Secondary (K-12):

- Business, Computer and Information Technology – Code 5101/0101 **AND**
- Fundamental Subjects Content Knowledge - Code 5511/0511

Reading Specialist (K-12):

- Reading Specialist – Code 5301/0301

Principal Certification:

- School Leaders Licensure Assessment – Code 6011

8. How can I obtain ETS Praxis II content-area test preparation materials?

Middle Level (4-8)

Core Assessment – Code 5152

www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5152

Middle Level Social Studies – Code: 5157

www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5157

Middle Level English – Code 5156

www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5156

Middle Level Math – Code 5158

www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5158

Middle Level Science – Code 5159

www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5159

Secondary (7-12)

Biology Code 5235

www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5235

Communication Code 5221

www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5221

English Code 5038

www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5038

Mathematics Code 5161

www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5161

Social Studies Code 5081

www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5081

Elementary/Secondary (K-12)

Business, Computer,
and Information Tech

Test Code 5101/0101 and Code 5511/0511

www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5101

www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5511

Reading Specialist (K-12)

Reading Specialist - Code 5301/0301

www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5301

Principal Certification

School Leaders Licensure Assessment – Code 6011

www.ets.org/sls/prepare/materials/slla_prep

Additional fee-based test preparation materials:

www.mo-media.com/praxisii

Praxis II Exam Secrets Study Guide for different subjects
Printed books and ebooks

www.teachingsolutions.org

Praxis II Study Guides for different subjects

<http://www.flashcardsecrets.com/praxisii/>

Praxis II Exam Flashcard Study System for different subjects

**RMU PECT/Praxis II Testing Policy
2015-2016**

According to RMU's current policy, students must attempt the appropriate content area exam(s) prior to being permitted to student teach. Students may not count a failing score as a pass using the PDE GPA process until the point of graduation.

This policy exists for several reasons:

- Passed PECT/Praxis II exams assure that all students are ready to be certified at graduation
 - PECT/Praxis II exam pass rates are an important part of our teacher education program outcomes measures
 - Principals and Superintendents often review PECT/Praxis scores when hiring and note that students who pass via the PDE GPA qualifier still have "failing" test scores according to Title II reporting
 - States outside of Pennsylvania do not use the GPA qualifier and therefore may not accept PECT/Praxis scores.
 - The PDE GPA qualifier is changeable and is only valid at the point of certification application.
 - Employers and the public often use program pass rates on the exams as a measure of program preparation quality.
1. All students must take all of the PECT or Praxis II exams appropriate to their content area(s) *prior* to either July 15 for fall student teaching or October 15 for spring student teaching.
 2. **All students who do not pass the exam prior to student teaching according to their ETS or Pearson report form must enroll in the appropriate PECT or Praxis II prep course the semester prior to student teaching and retake the exam prior to program completion.**
 3. Students are expected to pass the exam before graduation. However, students may apply the GPA qualifier at the point of graduation to obtain certification.

Students who do not pass the PECT or Praxis II prior to student teaching will be permitted to begin student teaching but must re-enroll in the appropriate prep course(s) and re-take the appropriate content test(s) during student teaching.