

Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (P.E.R.T.)

Frequently Asked Questions

This *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)* addresses various questions regarding Florida's Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (P.E.R.T.) that have been posed by districts and schools. The first section provides a history of P.E.R.T. and answers questions regarding content and general testing. The second section focuses on logistical questions such as funding and computer requirements. This *FAQ* will be updated continuously as implementation decisions are finalized.

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History and Development of P.E.R.T.

What is the P.E.R.T.?

The Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (P.E.R.T.) is Florida's common placement test. This test is used by Florida colleges, school districts and some state universities to determine whether or not a student is ready for college credit courses in English language arts and mathematics. The P.E.R.T. is aligned with the Postsecondary Readiness Competencies that Florida faculty members identified as necessary for success in entry-level college credit coursework. The test vendor, McCann Associates, worked collaboratively with the Florida Department of Education's Division of Florida Colleges and Florida College System faculty to develop and tailor items to faculty specifications. P.E.R.T. is comprised of three 25-item computer adaptive subtests in reading, writing, and mathematics. Florida College System institutions began administering the P.E.R.T. in October 2010, and use it as the primary college placement tool.

What does the P.E.R.T. assess?

The P.E.R.T. assesses readiness for college-level coursework in English language arts and mathematics. There are three subject area tests – reading, writing, and mathematics. A student's scores indicate appropriate course placement upon entering college and in preparation for college and career as high school students.

Why did Florida decide to move from the College Board's Accuplacer or CPT to P.E.R.T.?

Florida had a preferred price contract with the College Board to offer the Accuplacer to Florida colleges for a fixed price. That contract expired and the Department of Education (department) entered into a competitive procurement process. A cross-sector team of experts selected McCann Associates as Florida's preferred college placement test vendor on the basis of content quality and alignment to the Postsecondary Readiness Competencies. Within their proposal, McCann Associates also indicated a willingness to customize the assessment to Florida's specifications.

How is the P.E.R.T. different from other college placement tests?

The P.E.R.T. is a fully customized placement test. This means it is based on Florida's Postsecondary Readiness Competencies and was developed according to the department's specifications. College placement tests such as the College Board's Accuplacer and ACT's COMPASS have been widely used in states and institutions across the nation for years. The distinction between these existing college placement tests is the fact that the P.E.R.T. was developed collaboratively between the test vendor, McCann Associates, the Florida Department of Education's Division of Florida Colleges, and Florida postsecondary faculty. Every item on the P.E.R.T. has been reviewed and approved by Florida faculty who volunteered their time and expertise.

How was the P.E.R.T. developed?

The P.E.R.T. is aligned to knowledge and skills Florida faculty have determined to be essential for students entering college-level courses in English language arts and mathematics. Faculty members from Florida colleges were asked to identify the competencies critical for success in entry-level college credit courses. The test blueprint was then based on those prioritized competencies. In addition, each item on the reading, writing, and mathematics subject area tests was reviewed and approved by Florida postsecondary faculty and aligned with a Postsecondary Readiness Competency.

What are the Postsecondary Readiness Competencies?

The Postsecondary Readiness Competencies (PRCs) are skills identified by high school, college and state university faculty as critical to college readiness in mathematics, reading, and writing. Entry-level college credit courses are Intermediate Algebra (MAT 1033) and Freshman Composition I (ENC 1101).

How were the Postsecondary Readiness Competencies (PRCs) created?

The PRCs were developed in 2008 as a result of Florida joining Achieves' American Diploma Project Network. Over 70 faculty members from high schools, Florida colleges, and public and private universities reviewed the American Diploma Project benchmarks and identified competencies they deemed critical to college readiness in mathematics, reading, and writing. Surveys were sent to key business and industry representatives to review faculty-identified benchmarks to ensure that the competencies were also aligned with the knowledge and skills necessary to be career-ready. This cross-sector endeavor resulted in the identification of Florida's Postsecondary Readiness Competencies (PRCs).

What is developmental education?

Developmental education is the postsecondary preparatory instruction offered in the Florida College System institutions. Florida College System faculty developed common developmental education competencies that were then divided into two separate levels of instruction: lower and upper. Since 2011, all Florida College System institutions deliver developmental education based on the common competencies and common courses. The Higher Level Developmental Education courses in reading, writing, and mathematics are the basis for the postsecondary preparatory instruction in high schools – Reading for College Success (course # 1008350), Writing for College Success (course # 1009370), and Mathematics for College Success (course # 1200410). In addition to these three .5 credit courses, Mathematics for College Readiness (course # 1200700) and English 4: Florida College Prep (course # 1001405) are aligned to the Postsecondary Readiness Competencies and count as a full credit towards high school graduation requirements in the subject area. The purpose of aligning high school and college preparation is to reduce the number of high school graduates needing additional preparatory instruction before enrolling in college credit courses.

What is the P.E.R.T. Diagnostic?

The P.E.R.T. Diagnostic is another component of the P.E.R.T. assessment system. While the P.E.R.T. Placement determines appropriate course placement, the P.E.R.T. Diagnostic identifies, by competency, where skill deficiencies exist. The goal of the P.E.R.T. Diagnostic is to allow faculty to target instruction to specific competencies not yet mastered by the student. Upper and lower level P.E.R.T. diagnostic tests have been developed to align with the Postsecondary Readiness Competencies which are the basis for developmental education courses offered at all Florida College System institutions. For students who do not meet college-ready cut scores, a P.E.R.T. Diagnostic might be administered as an optional, additional exam so that results could guide targeted instruction and tutoring.

P.E.R.T. Technical Information

How many questions are on the P.E.R.T.?

There are a total of 30 questions per placement subtest. There are 25 operational items that will be the basis of the student's placement score and five field test items which are designed to enhance continuously the operational test bank. Students will not know which items are operational, so it is imperative that they try their best on all 30 items.

How long will it take to administer the assessment?

The P.E.R.T. assessment is a computer adaptive test (C.A.T.) and is untimed. The average time to complete the mathematics and writing subtests is approximately 30 minutes. The reading test average is one hour. Once a testing session is initiated, it must be completed and submitted for scoring the same day.

What is a computer adaptive test?

The goal of a computer adaptive test (C.A.T.) is to increase the accuracy of measuring a student's ability while at the same time minimizing the number of items presented to the student. In more traditional testing situations, all students respond to the same questions. Questions may be too easy or too difficult for a particular student, yet the student must work through all of the items on the test to get a score. C.A.T. eliminates this issue by starting with an average ability item and then, based on the student's response, subsequent items are selected to be near the student's ability level. The P.E.R.T. is a competency-based C.A.T., meaning the adaptive nature of the test is at the competency level and item difficulty adjusts on the basis of the prior response.

How can districts and schools access technical support for P.E.R.T.?

McCann Associates provides technical support through a toll-free phone number and email. The College Success Help Desk number is 1-877-614-6105. The hours of operation for the help desk are listed below. Email: collegesuccess@mccanntesting.com

Monday	7:30 AM – 8:00 PM (EST)
Tuesday	7:30 AM – 11:00 PM (EST)
Wednesday	7:30 AM – 11:00 PM (EST)
Thursday	7:30 AM – 11:00 PM (EST)
Friday	7:30 AM – 5:30 PM (EST)
Saturday	9:00 AM – 5:00 PM (EST)
Sunday	No coverage (closed)

P.E.R.T. Cut Scores

Can a student fail P.E.R.T.?

No, a student cannot fail the P.E.R.T. The purpose of the P.E.R.T. is to guide accurate course placement based on the student's skills and abilities. Test scores are used to determine whether a student is ready for college-level coursework. For those who do not meet the state established cut score, the score is an indicator that additional preparation is necessary before entering college-level courses. For high school students who do not meet the college-ready cut score on the P.E.R.T., the high school must offer those student postsecondary preparatory instruction.

What is the P.E.R.T. scaled score range?

The scaled scores range from 50-150.

What are the P.E.R.T. college-ready cut scores?

The current course placement score ranges for the P.E.R.T. are:

Mathematics:

Lower Level Developmental Education	Scores of 50-95
Higher Level Developmental Education	Scores of 96-112
Intermediate Algebra (MAT 1033)	Scores of 114*-122
College Algebra or higher (MAC 1105)	Scores of 123-150

**114 is the college-ready cut score for mathematics.*

Reading:

Lower Level Developmental Education	Scores of 50-83
Higher Level Developmental Education	Scores of 84-103
Freshman Composition Skills I (ENC 1101)	Scores of 106*-150

**106 is the college-ready cut score for reading*

Writing:

Lower Level Developmental Education	Scores of 50-89
Higher Level Developmental Education	Scores of 90-98
Freshman Composition Skills I (ENC 1101)	Scores of 103*-150

**103 is the college-ready cut score for writing.*

Students scoring at or above the college-ready cut score are eligible to enroll in college-level courses. Students must meet college-ready cut scores in both reading and writing to be eligible to enroll in the entry-level English course, ENC 1101.

Can students use P.E.R.T. cut scores for earning Bright Futures Scholarships?

Only for Gold Seal Vocational Scholarships

College Readiness Testing in the High Schools

Why are high school students taking a college placement test?

During the 2011 legislative session, Section 1008.30, Florida Statutes, was revised as a result of the passing of House Bill 1255 to expand college placement testing by **requiring** administration to high school students scoring within specified ranges on the 10th grade Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Reading 2.0 (Level 2 or 3) and Algebra 1 End of Course (EOC) exam (Level 2, 3 or 4). The legislation also requires high schools to provide postsecondary preparatory instruction for students who do not meet or exceed the approved college-ready cut scores.

If an 11th grader does not have FCAT Math or Algebra 1 End of Course scores, is he/she required to take the P.E.R.T. Math?

No

Our district has an articulation agreement with our local college; doesn't this mean they are responsible for testing our students?

The passing of House Bill 1255 in 2011 increased the number of high school students that are required to take the college placement test. Your local college will not be able to meet that demand nor will the colleges be able to receive reimbursement for high school testing. Thus, the testing responsibilities have shifted to high schools to better serve K-12 students and expedite testing.

Will colleges continue to administer the P.E.R.T. for dual enrollment eligibility?

High schools are responsible for P.E.R.T. administrations to high school students; however, your annual district articulation agreement should indicate P.E.R.T. protocols for perspective dual enrollment students.

How will Florida Virtual School students take the P.E.R.T?

Florida Virtual School students must take required state assessments in their district of residence. Florida Virtual School will communicate with students' respective home districts regarding the number of students requiring P.E.R.T. testing and the type of test(s) needed.

P.E.R.T. Administration in the High Schools

Is there guidance for districts and schools on P.E.R.T. administration?

P.E.R.T. resources and training materials are posted and updated on the McCann College Success website at <https://college.measuredsuccess.com>.

Postsecondary Readiness Competencies and a P.E.R.T. Study Guide can be found at <http://fldoe.org/academics/college-career-planning/postsecondary/common-placement-testing-prep-instruct.stml>

Which students will need to take P.E.R.T.?

High school students who score a Level 2 or 3 on Grade 10 FCAT Reading 2.0 or score a Level 2, 3, or 4 on Algebra 1 EOC as 10th grade students and have not otherwise demonstrated college readiness will be required to take the P.E.R.T. in the 11th grade.

Are Dual Enrollment students considered to be college-ready?

Yes, in those specific subject areas they are taking at a state college.

Where are Department of Juvenile (DJJ) students tested?

At their DJJ program site unless the serving district decides to test at a different location. The serving district is also responsible for registering DJJ test takers.

Do Hospital/Homebound students take P.E.R.T.?

Yes, if they also take annual state assessments. Accommodation versions are available.

If a junior is required to be tested for college readiness but misses the scheduled test, is he/she to be enrolled in a postsecondary preparatory instruction course in their senior year?

Yes, unless a retake session is administered prior to class enrollment and the cut score is met.

Is there a State P.E.R.T. testing window?

No. Each district determines its own testing window. However, the department does not want P.E.R.T. testing to interfere with other assessment dates, and all testing must be complete in time to place students into the appropriate courses for their 12th grade year.

What is the time lapse between the first attempts and retakes?

There is no required time lapse, but our recommendation would be after additional instruction has occurred or completion of a required postsecondary preparatory course.

Can FCAT or Algebra 1 EOC retake scores be used to exempt a student otherwise required from taking a college readiness or success course?

Yes

Who will be authorized to administer or proctor the test?

District assessment coordinators must ensure that all school administrators, school assessment coordinators, technology coordinators, test administrators, and proctors receive adequate training prior to test administration and that all personnel involved in test administration annually sign and return to DOE Test Administration and Security agreements which are provided with grant applications and test administration training materials.

Does every Testing Site Manager need to sign a test security form each year?

Yes

Could P.E.R.T. be administered at times other than regular school hours (weekends, for example)?

Yes, provided that the tests are administered by authorized test administrators and during operating hours of the College Success Help Desk.

Are teachers allowed to administer the test to individual students in their classroom using classroom computers?

The P.E.R.T. has to be administered in a location that is secure and monitored throughout the entire assessment by an authorized test administrator.

How will districts and schools access P.E.R.T. scores?

Scores are available immediately to district and college test administrators for C.A.T. administrations through their McCann accounts. Paper-based P.E.R.T. administrations, available for students requiring testing accommodations based on Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) or 504 plans, are mailed to McCann for scoring and reporting. Results are sent back to districts and reported in the database.

Who will have access to student scores (students, teachers, guidance counselors, administrations, parents, and colleges)?

College students and authorized test administrators will have access to their own C.A.T. scores. Each district determines who is authorized for online access to test scores. For paper-based P.E.R.T. administrations, the scores will be uploaded to the institution's testing account after the answer sheets have been mailed to and scored by McCann. Parents need to request reports.

How will districts and colleges share P.E.R.T. score results?

The sharing of scores between districts and colleges should be determined locally, and the process should be included in the annual articulation agreement. Through the state score repository, P.E.R.T. scores are available for an institution's own students.

Does it matter whether a high school student takes the P.E.R.T. at a high school or at a college campus?

No. P.E.R.T. scores earned at either location must be accepted regardless of the location of the test administration, in accordance with State Board Rule 6A.-10.0315, FAC.

How many times can a student who is seeking Dual Enrollment eligibility status take P.E.R.T.?

It is a local decision.

Are students allowed to take the P.E.R.T. multiple times?

State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.0315, F.A.C., was amended on October 22, 2013, to allow retesting. Check on your local school board policy regarding retakes.

Are students allowed to use calculators?

Students taking the online math test are not allowed to use handheld calculators. An on-screen calculator appears within the testing window of the mathematics subtest for specific questions. All students are allowed to use this pop-up calculator that has been built in to the testing platform. If specified in their IEP or 504 plans, students with disabilities may use four-function handheld calculators on specific, designated questions.

What is required for students who do not meet the college-ready cut score?

Students who are required to be tested on P.E.R.T. and do not meet the state-established college-ready cut score must complete postsecondary preparatory instruction in their senior year of high school. This is a high school requirement for students whose P.E.R.T. scores indicate a need for additional preparation before being ready for college-level coursework. A set of courses for Mathematics/Reading/Writing for College Success have been developed to align with the highest level of developmental education courses offered by Florida College System institutions and the Postsecondary Readiness Competencies. The purpose of aligning high school and college instruction is to reduce the number of high school graduates who are not academically ready to enroll and succeed in college-level courses or a career path.

Must these five courses meet class size compliance?

Yes.

If a Reading Level 1 or 2 student takes English 4: College Prep, does it meet both reading intervention and college success remediation requirements?

Yes

Is the Math for College Readiness course open to multiple grade levels and performance levels?

Yes. It is a local decision.

Are any of the Preparatory courses currently available on Florida Virtual?

Yes. Reading for College Success, Mathematics for College Readiness, and English 4: College Prep courses are available.

If students take P.E.R.T. at the end of one of the College Readiness or Success courses, can it be used as a final exam and part of the course grade?

It is a district option and local decision.

What happens when a student meets the cut score?

Students who meet the P.E.R.T. cut score have demonstrated college readiness. These students may enroll in college-level courses at a Florida College System institution.

What is a “perfect” P.E.R.T. score?

150 (for each of the three subtests).

Is there a time limit for younger students who score college-ready on ACT, SAT or Accuplacer to be exempt from taking P.E.R.T.?

No. Scores from these different tests can be used to demonstrate that a student is college ready.

If a 12th grade student gets the concordant score on ACT or SAT once the school year is underway, will the student be able to move out of the College Readiness course and take a higher level course?

Yes, depending on the timing of the district drop/add deadline date.

For Reading Level 1 or 2 students, can either Reading for College Success or English 4: College Prep serve as the statutory reading intervention course?

Yes

What are the certification requirements for the five courses?

Please consult the current Florida Course Code Directory.

<http://fldoe.org/academics/courses/course-descriptions.shtml>

Can students be enrolled in English 4: College Prep for their required college readiness course, even with P.E.R.T. scores below 104?

Yes, it is at the district's discretion.

Can districts decide whether to offer the half credit (semester) or full credit (yearlong) postsecondary preparatory courses for the required students?

Yes

Are there any waivers for taking P.E.R.T.?

No

What method will be used for the high schools to determine the number of students that are college-ready?

For college readiness, the denominator of the calculation comprises all on-time graduates (students who graduate in four years). We match these students to test results for the ACT, SAT, Accuplacer and PERT using data available for multiple years. The college readiness indicator is based on the number of on-time graduates who scored ready on at least one of the tests noted above at some point during their years in high school. A “percent-tested” measure is not calculated for high school grades outside the state assessments (e.g., FCAT 2.0, Algebra 1 EOC assessment, and other EOC assessments that will be implemented in the coming years).

P.E.R.T. Cost and Funding

How much does the P.E.R.T. cost?

The P.E.R.T costs \$0.94 per subject area test for a total of \$2.82 for all three subtests (reading, writing and mathematics), unless the test is in Braille (\$15.00), large print (\$5.00), or audio version (\$5.00).

What costs will State funding cover?

State funds will cover the cost of the test units for 11th grade students required to be tested. If state funding is sufficient, additional students can be tested, as determined by the district. Districts may choose to purchase additional test units that can be used to test other students or to provide P.E.R.T. retakes.

How will districts pay for the cost of P.E.R.T.?

The Department issues a district grant to cover the cost of the units for required students. Test units are ordered from McCann Associates directly by each district.

Accommodations for P.E.R.T.

Are there testing accommodations for students with disabilities?

Yes. Testing accommodations for students with disabilities include an accessibility wizard built into the computer-based test that allows students to adjust the font size on the screen and change the font color and background color. Standard pencil/paper versions are available. Braille, large print and audio versions are also available for purchase. English Language Learners are able to use native heritage language dictionaries.

Which students are eligible for accommodations?

Students who have an IEP, English Language Learner (ELL) or 504 plan that authorizes specific accommodations on standardized tests may use the appropriate P.E.R.T. accommodations.

Is there a paper version of P.E.R.T. available?

Yes, but schools are expected to administer primarily the C.A.T. version of P.E.R.T. except to those students whose IEP or 504 plans specify paper/pencil testing accommodations.

Communications Regarding P.E.R.T.

Where does the Department direct communications related to the P.E.R.T.?

The Department disseminates information primarily by email and conference calls to designated P.E.R.T. contacts. PERT websites post updated information.

Who should districts and schools contact with questions?

A dedicated email account for P.E.R.T. questions is available at pert@fldoe.org.