

COMPASS Testing

What is a COMPASS test?

Who takes COMPASS?

What do the results mean?

Where can I take a COMPASS test?

COMPASS

COMPASS is a multiple-choice, untimed, computerized placement test published by ACT; Pierpont C&TC administers the Algebra test; the Writing Skills test; and the Reading placement test. Many students are required to take all three tests; others just one or two.

COMPASS testing is FREE for all incoming students.

Students' test scores determine what math and English courses they are eligible to enroll in—either college-credit or developmental skills.

More about COMPASS Testing

- Even though the test is taken on a computer, students **CANNOT** take the COMPASS from their home or office computer. All testing **MUST** be monitored by a college testing staff.
- If you live outside WV, “remote” testing at other colleges is possible, but there is often a fee of up to \$50 at those locations.
- Students without a high school diploma or GED must take a special “Ability to Benefit” COMPASS test in order to be eligible for financial aid; that test is offered at limited locations. (Refer to Slide 7 for additional details.)

Who is Required to Test

- Students with no ACT or SAT scores on file
- Students with ACT or SAT scores below state-required minimums in Reading/English/Math
- Students whose scores are more than 5 years old—regardless of how high the scores were

What are the ACT and SAT “minimums”?

- ACT

- 17 in Reading
- 18 in English
- 19 in Math

Scores must be less than 5 years old

- SAT

- 450 in SAT Writing
- 460 in Math

Scores must be less than 5 years old

Using Placement Tests from Other Colleges

- Students may submit OFFICIAL scores from other colleges IF the student took COMPASS, ASSET, or ACCUPLACER tests—but those scores must be no more than two years old AND meet the minimum requirements for college-credit entry; otherwise, students will need to re-test on COMPASS

Students without High School diplomas or GEDs...

- MUST complete a special COMPASS testing package in order to be eligible for financial aid; this is referred to as an “Ability to Benefit” test (ATB);
- MUST earn satisfactory scores* on all parts of the COMPASS test in the same testing session;
- MUST take their COMPASS test at the Fairmont, Clarksburg, or Weston location & inform the staff that they require the “ATB” test.

*25 Pre-Algebra; 32 Writing Skills; 62 Reading

Student must also complete Algebra test for course placement, but no minimum score is required

COMPASS Math test

- Algebra-based (the very first question is an algebra-based question, but “adapts” to your level after that)
- As students answer questions correctly, the questions get more difficult; as students answer questions incorrectly, questions get less difficult.
- The testing stops after student tests across one score level consistently
- Minimum of 5 questions; maximum of 25

COMPASS Math, continued

- ACT-approved calculators are permitted, but not provided; the COMPASS test has a calculator built in
- Scrap paper and pencils are provided and must be turned in
- A COMPASS Algebra placement score may place a student anywhere from General Math, Math 0093, to Calculus, Math 1190.

COMPASS Writing Skills test

- Students edit one or more essays, identifying and correcting errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.
- Students also answer questions related to the “rhetoric” of the essay, in addition to the “mechanics” of the essay. These include questions of “style,” “audience,” “purpose,” etc.

COMPASS Reading Placement test

- Students read one to five essays and answer questions designed to measure reading comprehension
- Students may refer to the essays as they answer the questions
- Reading selections come from typical college reading materials

COMPASS Algebra scores and course placement

- Any Algebra score below 36 will place a student into a developmental skills math course:
- Math 0093, General Math (0-16),
- Math 0094, Pre-Algebra (17-25),
- or Math 0095, Elementary Algebra (26-35)
- Only successful completion of Math 0095 or a 36 on the COMPASS will permit students to enter a college-credit math class.

COMPASS Writing Skills scores and course placement

- Students who earn a 71 or higher may enter Written English I, ENGL 1104
- Students who score 60-70 may enroll in English 0098 and a one-credit lab; upon successful completion of both, students may earn a grade for ENGL 1104
- Students who score below a 60 must enroll in Composition Skills, ENGL 0097

COMPASS Writing Skills scores, con't.

- English 0098 is offered on main campus and requires the permission of the instructor . Students are encouraged to enroll in this course when eligible!
- Students eligible for English 0098 but who do not enroll in English 0098 **MUST** enroll in English 0097 only.

COMPASS Reading scores and course placement

- Students with scores below 75 are reminded to take advantage of the free Tutorial Services Office on campus (second floor of Library on main campus)
- Students with scores below 75 are also encouraged to enroll in Reading & Study Skills, ENGL 0092; this course is NOT required

How to Prepare for a COMPASS test

- Review sample test questions at www.act.org/compass. (See “For Students”.)
- Student favorite: www.mycompasstest.com for free study guides, practice tests, and test taking strategies.
- For additional math review, visit www.mymathtest.com to work through the learning outcomes for each review math course.

A one-time \$10 fee provides sample tests and study plans for
Math 0093, Math 0094, AND Math 0095

“Buy access” to get a code, and use this Program ID: **XL0M-L1DI-001Y-3EV2**

To Schedule a COMPASS Test

- Locust Ave. Campus, Fairmont: 304-367-4990
- Caperton Center, Clarksburg: 304-367-4030
- Lewis Co. site, Weston, WV: 304-269-6389
- Braxton Co. site, Flatwoods, WV: 304-269-7235
- MTEC, Morgantown, WV: 304-291-9226
- Randolph Co. Vo-Tech, Elkins, WV: 304-636-9195
- For “remote” testing at out-of-state sites, call 304-367-4990 for registration.

Please call ahead for appointment or general hours!

At Testing Session...

- Students must provide photo ID (driver's license, high school ID, state-issued ID)
- Students must turn off/turn in cell phones
- Use only scrap paper provided, and turn it in
- Leave food, drink, listening devices outside the testing room
- Make arrangements for friends, family, and children who may be waiting—only students who are testing are permitted in the testing room

How Long Will a COMPASS Score Be Valid?

- At Fairmont State University and Pierpont C&TC, a COMPASS score is good for course placement purposes for up to two years.
- A student **MUST** re-test if a score has not successfully completed the initial required course within those two years.
- For example, if a student tests in to Math 0095 on Aug. 1, 2011, but does not successfully complete Math 0095 by Aug. 1, 2013, the student **MUST** re-test with no guarantee of the same course placement.

Re-Test Policy

- Students are permitted ONE re-test in each academic area; there is no charge
- Students are strongly encouraged to participate in a meaningful review before re-testing
- The higher of the two scores will be used for course placement
- Students enrolled in a Developmental Skills course may not re-test after the “add/drop” period has ended
- Students who earn a NO CREDIT in a developmental skills class may re-test at the start of the next semester OR with instructor approval before leaving for the semester

QUESTIONS?

- Contact Mrs. Nancy Parks, Director of Assessment

207 Jaynes Hall
Pierpont Community & Technical College
1201 Locust Ave.
Fairmont, WV 26554

Nancy.Parks@pierpont.edu

304-367-4990