

Suggestions for Preparing for and Passing The PPST Exams

The Pre-Professional Skills Tests (PPSTS) are mandated by the Wisconsin Department of Instruction for licensure, with passing scores set by the state.* They were mandated in response to public concern that teachers weren't strong in reading, writing and mathematics and the public's refusal to accept college grades as a measure. At UW-Superior they must be passed before you will be admitted into the Teacher Education elementary education and secondary certification programs (no exceptions).

1. Take the tests (reading, writing, mathematics) as soon in your academic career as possible, but only when you feel that you will be able to pass them successfully. This would usually be after you complete the mathematics and English requirements and a few general education courses.
2. Determine if you wish to take the paper-pencil (PPST) or computerized (CPPST) versions of the test. Make sure you understand how each test is given. Arrange for taking the tests on more than one day and at a time when you would be most rested. Provided on the TED homepage <http://www.uwsuper.edu/acaddept/ted> is a link to the schedule of PPST tests administered at UW-Superior and contact information for a local CPPST provider. Other testing sites are provided on the ETS website identified in item 4 below.
3. It is strongly suggested that you take each test on a different day. On the day of the test bring a watch with you. Make sure you are feeling well and have had plenty of rest. Take the tests as a game ... one you intend to win.
4. Educational Testing Service, the producer of the PPST (Praxis I) tests, provides on-line sample questions on their website <http://www.ets.org/praxis>. The following *Tests at a Glance* can be downloaded as pdf files with Adobe Acrobat software and include content outlines, sample questions in each content area with rationale for the best answers, and test-taking strategies.
 - **PPST Reading Test:** <http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS/pdf/0710.pdf>
CPPST Reading Test: <http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS/pdf/5710.pdf>
For the reading test, accept that you can't get all the questions right. Read the questions first, and time yourself so that you get half way through the test when half the test time is up. Go with your gut feeling ... first impulses are usually right if you know the material. The test tends to emphasize main ideas.
 - **PPST Writing Test:** <http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS/pdf/0720.pdf>
CPPST Writing Test: <http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS/pdf/5720.pdf>

The writing test has two parts: general grammar and an essay. To prepare, review grammar books from ENGL 101 and 102. The composition asks you to take a position ...make sure you allow enough time for a well developed answer.

- **PPST Math Test:** <http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS/pdf/0730.pdf>
 CPPST Math Test: <http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS/pdf/5730.pdf>
 The mathematics test requires no higher level math. Many students report that taking it after taking Math 230 and 231 is a good idea.

- **Guide to Reducing Test Anxiety:**
<http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS/pdf/01361anxiety.pdf>
 ETS also has Study Guides for each of the PPST Tests available for purchase. UW-Superior maintains a 2004 copy of the guide which is available for reference in the Jim Dan Hill Library but cannot be checked out. Earlier versions are also available for review in the Office of Student Support Services in Old Main.

5. If you do not pass one or more of the tests, by no more than one point, decide if you know why you might have failed. Perhaps you were tired, etc. If you can explain why you might have failed, arrange to take the test again. It is suggested that you study a breakdown of your scores to see possible patterns; this is possible with the paper-based forms of the test.
6. If you do not pass one or more of the tests by two or more points, **do not** take the test again until you have talked to your advisor about why you were unsuccessful. It has been the experience of the TED faculty that just taking the tests again and again does not lead to passing the tests, but only creates test anxiety and a loss of a lot of money.

Your advisor may be able to offer specific ideas for help, such as:

- referral to campus services for test anxiety
- referral to tutoring help in math
- referral off campus to individualized study programs
- test taking suggestions
- specific college courses that may be of help
- sources on the campus for work in math, reading, and writing

7. Once you have passed all three tests, you will receive an official Score Report from ETS detailing your passing scores. Be sure to keep this document in a safe location from which you can retrieve it when you complete the TED program and apply for licensure.

* NOTE: Transfer students must pass at the levels required by the Wisconsin DPI: Reading - 175; Writing - 174; Math - 173.