



One System... One Mission

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 new common placement test. This test is used by all 28 Florida colleges to determine whether or not a student is ready for college credit courses in math and English. The P.E.R.T. has been aligned with the Postsecondary Readiness Competencies that Florida's faculty have identified as necessary for success in entry-level college credit coursework. The test vendor, McCann Associates, has 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.

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

The P.E.R.T. assesses readiness for college-level coursework in English and mathematics. There are three subject area tests – reading, writing, and mathematics. A student's scores determine appropriate course placement upon entering college.

Why did Florida decide to move from the College Board's Accuplacer or CPT to the 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 entered into a competitive procurement process. A cross-sector team of experts unanimously selected McCann Associates as Florida's next preferred college placement test vendor on the basis of their 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 like 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 have volunteered their time and expertise.

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

The P.E.R.T. is aligned with knowledge and skills Florida faculty have determined to be essential for students entering college-level courses in English and mathematics. Faculty at 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 were 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). The PRCs for reading, writing and mathematics may be accessed on the Division of Florida Colleges College and Career Readiness website at <http://www.fldoe.org/cc/collegecareerreadiness.asp>. The PRCs are comprised of a subset of the Common Core College and Career Readiness Standards, Basic Skills Exit competencies, and American Diploma Project Benchmarks.

How were the Postsecondary Readiness Competencies created?

The PRCs were developed in 2008 as a result of Florida joining Achieve's American Diploma Project Network. Over 70 faculty 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 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). The PRCs have been revised recently to better align with the Common Core State Standards.

What is developmental education?

Developmental education is the postsecondary preparatory instruction offered in the Florida College System institutions, also referred to as remediation or college prep. Recently, Florida College System faculty developed common developmental education competencies that were



then divided into two separate levels of instruction, lower and upper. Starting this fall, all Florida College System institutions will 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 the .5 elective 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 toward graduation requirements in the subject area. The purpose of aligning the high school and college “remediation” is to reduce the number of high school graduates needing additional preparatory instruction before enrolling in college-level 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. An upper and lower level P.E.R.T. diagnostic test has been developed to align with the Developmental Education Competencies which are the basis for developmental education courses offered at all Florida College System institutions. For students who do not meet the college-ready cut score, a P.E.R.T. Diagnostic may be administered and results used to guide instruction.

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 5 field test items which are designed to continuously enhance the operational test bank. The student 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.



What is a computer adaptive test?

The goal of a computer adaptive test (C.A.T.) is to increase the accuracy of the estimate of 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 wade 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 responses to items aligned with particular competencies.

What are the technical requirements to administer the P.E.R.T.?

The following tables show the computer requirements for the P.E.R.T.

Hardware requirements	
Computer Type	Pentium 500 or greater; Macintosh equivalent
Input Devices	Keyboard and Mouse
Memory	64 MB or greater
Display	15" SVGA monitor with 1024x768 resolution

Software Requirements	
Browser type and version	Internet Explorer 7.0+ Firefox 3.0+ Google Chrome 3.0+ Safari 3.0+
Platform (Operating System)	Windows XP, Vista, or 7 Mac OS 10.2+
Macromedia Flash	Macromedia Flash 9.0+
Adobe Acrobat	Adobe Acrobat 6.0+
Popups	Popups are not blocked
Screen Resolution	1024 X 768

Districts and schools can test their computers by going to college.measuredsuccess.com and clicking “Check My Computer.”



What type of internet service and/or capacity will each school need in order to administer P.E.R.T.?

Schools will need 128K per user when connecting to McCann's servers. This only occurs when answers are submitted. Students who are reading a question do not require any bandwidth until they submit an answer. So, if 100 students are testing, perhaps 20 may submit answers at a given time. This number of students submitting answers multiplied by 128K gives 2.5 megabytes of capacity for 20 concurrent users or 100 testers testing.

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

McCann and Associates provides technical support through a toll-free phone number and email.

Phone: 877-614-6105

Email: collegesuccess@mccanntesting.com

The hours of operation for the help desk are listed below.

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	9:30 AM – 5:00 PM (EST)
Sunday	No coverage

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 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 students 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	Math for College Success (1200410)	Scores of 50-95
Higher Level Developmental Education	Math for College Success (1200410)	Scores of 96-112
Intermediate Algebra (MAT 1033)	Math for College Readiness (1200700)	Scores of 113*-122
College Algebra or higher (MAC 1105)	Recommend Advanced or Accelerated Courses	Scores of 123-150

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

Reading:

Lower Level Developmental Education	Reading for College Success (1008350)	Scores of 50-83
Higher Level Developmental Education	Reading for College Success (1008350)	Scores of 84-103
Freshman Composition Skills I (ENC 1101)	English 4: College Prep (1001405)	Scores of 104*-150

**104 is the college-ready cut score for reading.*

Writing:

Lower Level Developmental Education	Writing for College Success (1009370)	Scores of 50-89
Higher Level Developmental Education	Writing for College Success (1009370)	Scores of 90-98
Freshman Composition Skills I (ENC 1101)	English 4: College Prep (1001405)	Scores of 99*-150

**99 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 reading and writing to be eligible to enroll in the entry-level English course, ENC 1101.

How were P.E.R.T. cut scores determined?

Since the P.E.R.T. is a new assessment, cut scores were determined by matching scores of the previous college placement test (College Board's Accuplacer, also referred to as CPT) and



student distribution in courses based on those scores. The interim scores are set to mirror the current distribution of students in developmental education and college-level courses until research and increased administrations of P.E.R.T. can deliver a more reliable way to place students based on their scores. It is intended that new cut scores will be identified and codified in State Board of Education rule once there is sufficient data available to study student performance in the courses in which they were placed based on P.E.R.T. scores.

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 FCAT. The legislation also requires high schools to provide postsecondary preparatory instruction for students who do not meet or exceed the approved test scores.

Who will administer the P.E.R.T. assessment to 11th grade students--local colleges or high schools?

As a result of the passing of House Bill 1255 and the requirement that all high school students within the specified FCAT levels be administered a college placement test, the responsibility for testing has shifted from the colleges to the high schools. Since funding for college placement tests administered to high school students flowed to the colleges in the past, it is necessary for the Department to establish a new funding process through a contract amendment with McCann Associates. Funds were appropriated in 2011 for the purpose of administering the college placement test to high school students pursuant to s. 1008.30, F.S.

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

The passing of House Bill 1255 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 this year. The testing responsibilities have been shifted to high schools to better serve students and expedite testing.



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

In the future, high schools will be responsible for all P.E.R.T. administrations to high school students; however, for the 2011-12 school year, your district interinstitutional articulation agreement should indicate P.E.R.T. protocols for prospective dual enrollment students. It is anticipated that Florida College System institutions will continue to administer P.E.R.T. to prospective dual enrollment students until high school testing procedures are finalized.

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

Will there be training for teachers and staff on P.E.R.T. content?

Yes, McCann Associates, in cooperation with the Florida Department of Education (Department), will coordinate and facilitate trainings this fall. It is anticipated that training will include a combination of face-to-face trainings and webinar/conference calls. The Department will also provide updates in writing via memoranda to superintendents and designated district P.E.R.T. contacts.

P.E.R.T. resources will be added to the Department's website soon. Currently, the Postsecondary Readiness Competencies can be found on the Division of Florida Colleges College and Career Readiness website at <http://www.fldoe.org/cc/collegecareerreadiness.asp>, and a P.E.R.T. Study Guide can be found at <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/pdf/PERT-StudentStudyGuide.pdf>.

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

High school students that score a Level 2 or 3 on FCAT Reading or score a Level 2, 3 or 4 on FCAT Mathematics and have not otherwise demonstrated college readiness will be required to take the P.E.R.T. in the 11th grade.

How else can a student demonstrate college readiness?

State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.0315, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), identifies college-ready cut-scores for three other tests – the ACT, the SAT, and Accuplacer. A student who has met the cut-score on any of these tests does not need to take the P.E.R.T. The scores for these tests are:

College-Ready Scores	
Accuplacer	
Elementary Algebra	72



Reading	83
Sentence Skills	83
SAT-I	
Verbal	440
Math	440
ACT	
Reading	18
English	17
Math	19

When will the P.E.R.T. be available to administer?

The P.E.R.T. went live in October of 2010 and is currently available at any authorized testing center. The Department is current in negotiations with McCann to establish each school district as an authorized user. Once that is complete, a school district can begin using the P.E.R.T. as soon as the district staff complete the training offered by McCann and the district meets the security certifications required by the Department. These certifications are currently under development.

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

Each district will need to determine its own testing window. However, all testing must be complete in time to place students into the appropriate courses for their 12th grade year.

Who will be authorized to administer 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 sign and return an Administration and Security agreement which will be provided with test administration training materials.

Are teacher aides allowed to monitor the computer testing or does it have to be a teacher or administrator?

Yes, provided they are authorized test administrators.

Could the 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.



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

No, the P.E.R.T. has to be administered in a location that is secure and monitored throughout the assessment.

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

Scores will be immediately available to students and high school test administrators for C.A.T. administrations. Paper-based P.E.R.T. administrations will be available to students with accommodations. For those students, the school will mail the student's answer sheet to McCann for scoring.

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

Students and authorized test administrators will have immediate access to C.A.T. scores. Each district will be able to determine who has authorized access to the test scores. For paper-based P.E.R.T. administrations, the scores will be uploaded to the school's testing account once the answer sheets are delivered to and scored by McCann.

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

State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.0315, F.A.C., will be updated to include retesting policies. It is anticipated that rule development will be initiated this fall with State Board approval targeted in November of 2011.

Are students allowed to use calculators?

Students are not allowed to use personal or school-provided calculators while taking P.E.R.T. An on-screen calculator will appear within the testing window of the mathematics subtest for specific questions. It is appropriate to allow students to use this pop-up calculator that has been built in to the P.E.R.T. system.

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

Students who do not meet the state established college-ready cut score must complete postsecondary preparatory instruction in their senior year. This is a high school graduation requirement for students whose P.E.R.T. scores indicate a need for additional preparation before being ready for college-level coursework. 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 the high school and college instruction is to reduce the number of high school graduates needing college remediation before enrolling in college-level courses.

What is expected when a student does meet 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 immediately following high school graduation.

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.

What costs will State funding cover?

State funds will cover the cost of the test units for eligible students. Districts may choose to purchase additional units that can be used to test other students or to provide retests.

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

The Department will cover the cost of the units for eligible students through grants to districts.

Accommodations for P.E.R.T.

Are there testing accommodations for students with disabilities?

Testing accommodations for students with disabilities include an accessibility wizard built into the assessment that allows selected students to adjust the font size on the screen. Within the same wizard, they can also change the font color and the background color, which provides different contrast for those that need it. Once the paper version of the P.E.R.T. is available, a Braille version will also be available at a higher cost per unit.

Which students are eligible for accommodations?

Students who have an IEP or 504 plan that authorizes accommodations on standardized tests may use the appropriate P.E.R.T. accommodations.

Will there be a paper version of P.E.R.T. available for high schools?

Currently, the paper version of the P.E.R.T. is under development. High schools are expected to primarily administer the C.A.T. version of P.E.R.T. except to those students whose IEP or 504 plans require accommodations.



Communications Regarding P.E.R.T.

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

The Department will disseminate information primarily by email to superintendents and the designated district P.E.R.T. contact. Each district should identify a primary P.E.R.T. contact. This can be done online through a survey at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZTKCPFT>.

Who are the designated district contacts for P.E.R.T.; when will contacts receive information on the assessment?

The Department is in the process of collecting a P.E.R.T. contact from each district. Dates for the regional meetings should be announced within the next few weeks, and all contacts will be notified.

How can a district designate or change their P.E.R.T. district contact?

Go to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZTKCPFT> and enter the new district contact information. The Department will assume the most recent contact entered is the district designee.

How do I find out the name of my P.E.R.T. district contact?

As soon as the Department has a designee for all 67 school districts, an email will be sent to the superintendents and district P.E.R.T. contacts to confirm our information is accurate and launch a District P.E.R.T. Contact listserv.

Who should districts and schools contact with questions?

A dedicated email account for P.E.R.T. questions has been established. The email address is pert@fldoe.org.