



Teacher Certification and Licensure/Testing Requirements

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By Angela Baber
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State Testing and Assessment Requirements for Initial and Continuing General Education Teachers

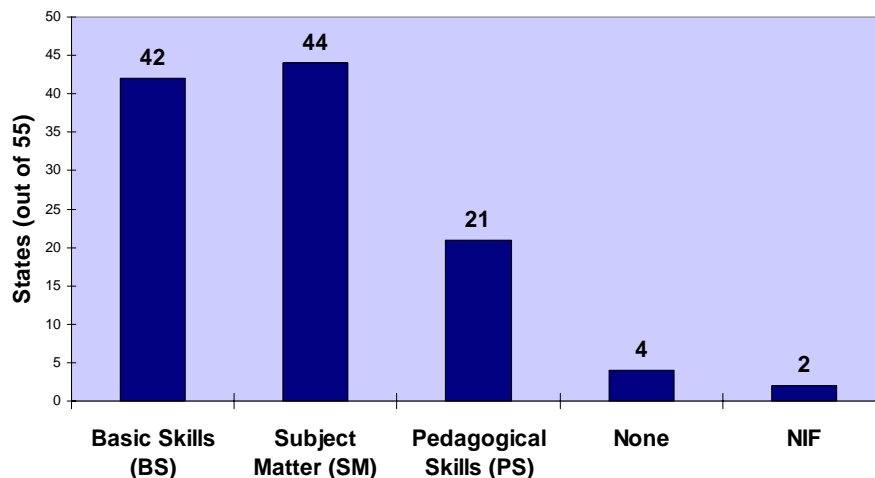
There are multiple requirements for teachers to become and remain certified and/or licensed to teach, including different types of tests and assessments. Passing one or more exams is a common requirement for initial teacher licensure. Assessment requirements vary across states from the type of tests administered to the required passing score(s). This StateNote reports on the types of assessments each state requires for initial and continuing teacher certification and licensure only, and is not intended to advocate for the use of teacher assessments in determining teacher quality. State passing scores for applicable exams are reported across states when available. The data collected cover in-state traditional certification and licensure testing requirements for general education teachers. Requirements for all 50 states, the District of Columbia and four U.S. Territories are represented.

For more information on state policy regarding teacher certification and licensure visit the ECS [Teacher Certification and Licensure 50-State Database](http://mb2.ecs.org/reports/reportTQ.aspx?id=1137) (<http://mb2.ecs.org/reports/reportTQ.aspx?id=1137>).

Initial Teacher Certification and Licensure Examination Requirements

The following table illustrates the number of states that require basic skills assessments, subject matter assessments and pedagogical assessments for initial teacher certification and licensure.

State Examination Requirements for Initial Teacher Certification/Licensure



Basic Skills

The timing of testing requirements varies by state. Basic skills assessments can be a requirement for entry into or graduation from teacher preparation programs in some states, while in other states it is simply a requirement for certification. Forty-two states require basic skills examinations for initial teacher licensure. Fourteen of those states require this type of assessment as a preparation program requirement and the remaining as a certification requirement.

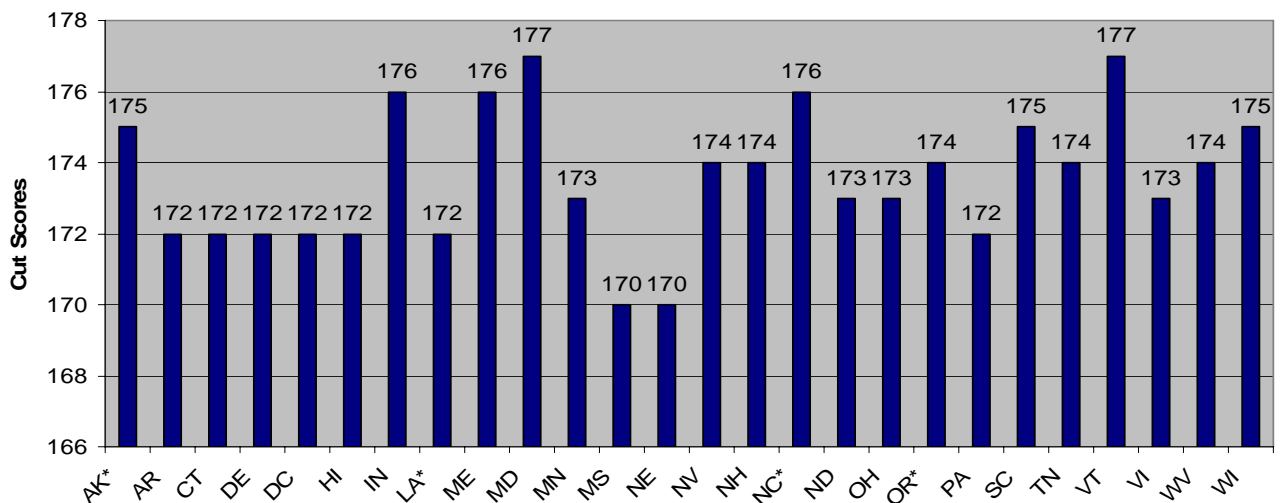
Teacher examinations may be designed and administered by organizations such as the Educational Testing Services (ETS) and National Evaluation System (NES), or by individual states. For their basic skills assessment 23 states (42%) use the Praxis I Basic Skills Assessment, nine states (16%) use the NES Basic Skills Assessment, four states (7%) use their own state designed assessments, two (4%) states use other types of assessments and five states (9%) use combinations of assessments. Of these states, three states offer Praxis I as one possibility for meeting basic skill assessment requirements. Eleven of the remaining states (20%) do not require any basic skills assessment for initial licensure (no information was found for American Samoa or Guam). The ETS Praxis I Basic Skills series includes reading, writing and math assessments¹.

Praxis I Passing Scores

States set state-specific passing scores, or cut scores, for basic skills examinations. NES state-designed assessments are unique and cut scores cannot be compared across states. ETS Praxis Series exams do not vary, however, and passing scores for Praxis exams can be compared across states. As mentioned above, 23 states require the Praxis I series and three states – Alaska, Louisiana and Oregon – offer Praxis I as one possibility for meeting basic skill assessment requirements.²

There are discrepancies between state passing score requirements. For the reading portion of the Praxis I Basic Skills Assessment, the passing scores range from a low of 170 to a high of 177 – a span of seven points with a mean passing score of 174. In writing, scores range from 171-175 with 172 as the mean. Math passing scores show the greatest contrast across states ranging from passing scores of 169-177 – a span of eight points and a mean of 172 points. The following charts represent state passing scores for all three portions of the Praxis I Basic Skills Assessment series.

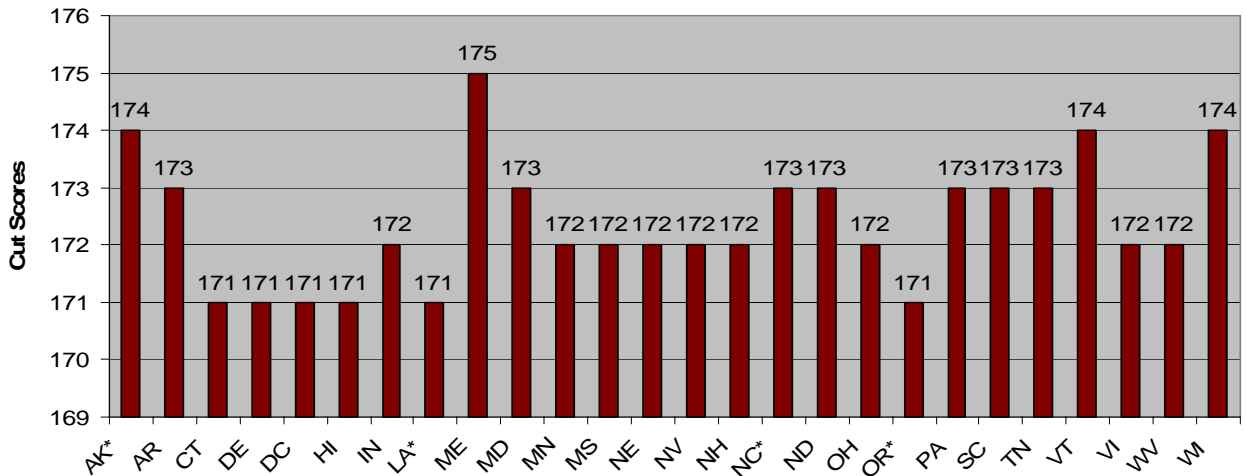
State Cut Scores for Praxis I Basic Skills Assessment in Reading



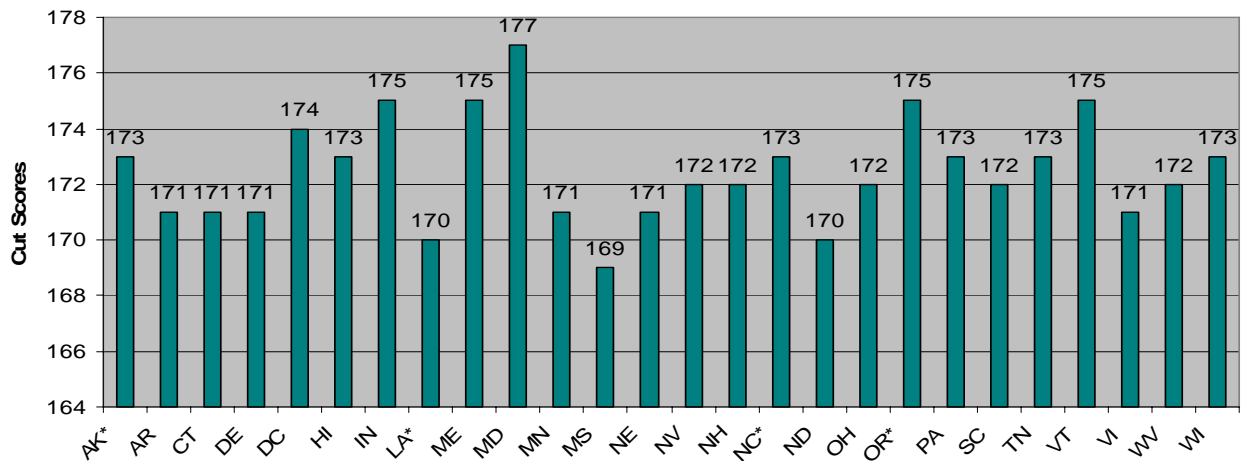
¹ Paper- and computer-based versions exist. Few differences were found between the passing scores for paper vs. computer-based exams, thus the following data is based on the paper version of the exam, but is a good representation of both versions.

² These three states are indicated by an asterisk (*) in the following charts.

State Cut Scores for Praxis I Basic Skills Assessment in Writing



State Cut Scores for Praxis I Basic Skills Assessment in Math



Subject Matter

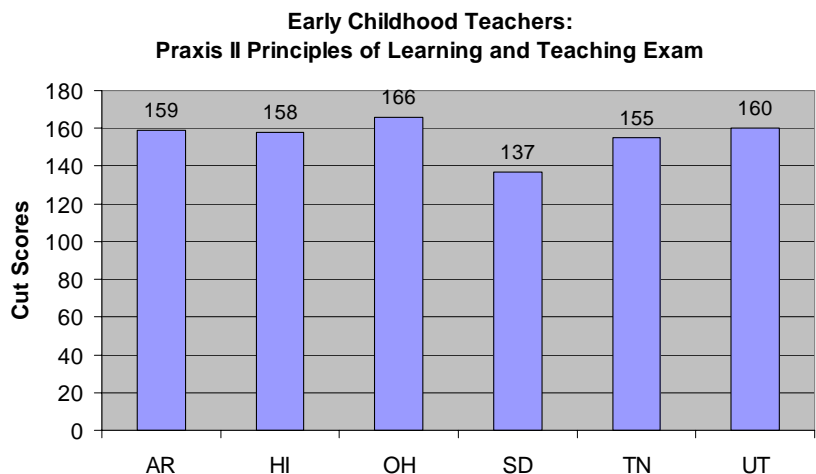
In order to meet content proficiency requirements, 31 states (56%) require the Praxis II Subject Matter Assessment, nine states (16%) require a NES assessment, two states (4%) have state designed assessments, one state requires another state's assessment, one state offers multiple assessment options and nine states (15%) do not require any type of subject matter assessment for initial licensure (no information was found for Guam or American Samoa). Praxis II exam content is consistent across the states; however, the vast number of subject- and grade-level requirements complicates multiple-state comparisons and therefore no comparison of cut scores for Praxis II Subject Matter Assessments is included within this State Note.

Pedagogical Skills

Thirty-one states (58%) do not require a pedagogical assessment for initial teacher licensure. Fifteen states (27%) require the Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) pedagogical assessment at one or more levels (Pre-K, Elementary, Middle, Secondary), four states (7%) require a state NES pedagogical assessment, one state requires a state designed assessment and a single state requires some other type of assessment (no information was found for American Samoa, Guam or Puerto Rico).

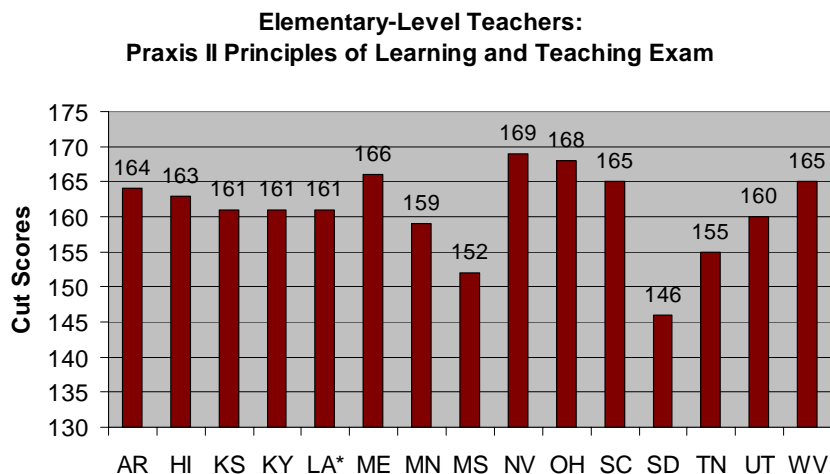
Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching Passing Scores

Of the 21 states that require some sort of pedagogical exam for initial teacher licensure, 15 states require the Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching exam. That means that of the 38% of states that require this type of assessment, the vast majority – 71% – use the Praxis II exam(s). The Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) exam is geared toward one of the four following levels: Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle and Secondary. The following tables illustrate which states use which level(s) of the Praxis II pedagogical exam. State designated cut scores for these exams have also been recorded.



Six states require the Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching exam for initial teacher certification for early childhood teachers.

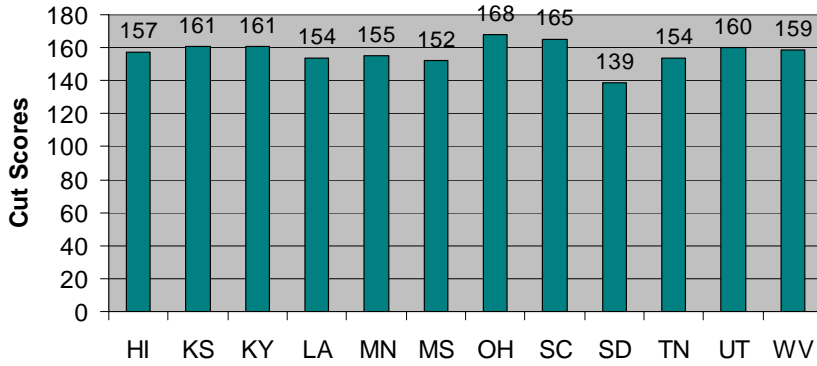
Passing scores range from 137-166 with a mean score of 156. The difference between the lowest and highest score requirements is 29 points.



Fifteen states require the Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching exam for initial teacher certification Elementary-Level teachers.

Passing scores range from 146-169 with a mean score of 161. The difference between the lowest and highest score requirements is 23 points.

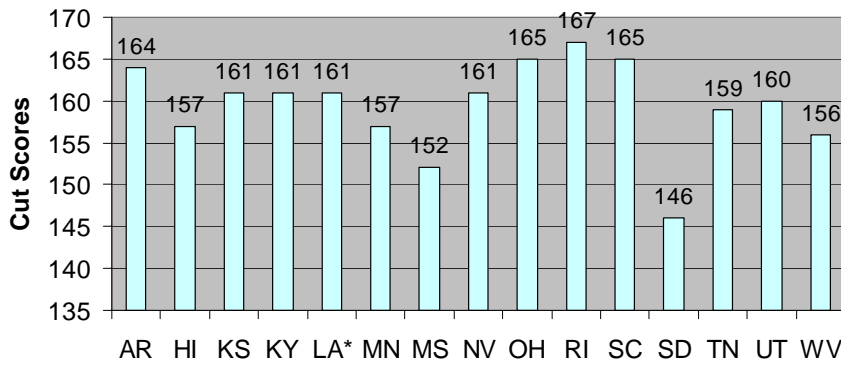
**Middle-Level Teachers:
Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching Exam**



Twelve states require the Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching exam for initial teacher certification Middle-Level teachers.

Passing scores range from 139-168 with a mean score of 157. The difference between the lowest and highest score requirements is 29 points.

**Secondary-Level Teachers:
Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching Exam**



Fifteen states require the Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching exam for initial teacher certification Secondary-Level teachers.

Passing scores range from 146 -167 with a mean score of 159. The difference between the lowest and highest score requirements is 21 points.

Continuing Teacher Certification and Licensure Requirements

State	Subject	Pedagogy	Performance
AK	Praxis II		
AZ			NES
AR			PraxisIII
CT		State	
FL		State	
GA		NES	
KY*	Praxis II (Elementary)	Praxis II (Secondary)	
LA			State
NY			NES
OH			PraxisIII
SC			State
UT		Praxis II (Secondary)	

At least twelve states require an assessment for continuing certification and licensure. In addition to the subject and pedagogy assessments, performance assessments are used by states as a way to determine a teacher's eligibility to progress to a more advanced licensure level. This table illustrates two states requiring subject matter assessments, five states requiring pedagogical assessments and six states requiring performance assessments as a condition to progress or continue as a teacher.

*Requirement(s) dependent on grade(s) taught.

State Testing and Assessment Requirements for Initial and Continuing General Education Teachers

State Testing Information and Resources

The following link provides access to a table including detailed state testing information, source information and links to relevant resources for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands collected in August 2007. No information was found for American Samoa or Guam.

<http://www.ecs.org/html/docs/StateCLAssessmentTable.pdf>

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