



DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT



COMPASS

Computer Adaptive Placement and Support System

ABBOUUTT CCOOMMPPAASSSS

Studies have shown that students who experience success during their first semester in college are more likely to graduate. The diagnostic assessments in reading comprehension, writing skills, and mathematics identify your current skill levels so that you can begin with appropriate English and mathematics courses.

Assessment Format

A computer adaptive program called COMPASS (Computer Adaptive Placement Assessment and Support System) is used to assess your current skills. All questions are untimed and are written in a multiple-choice format. In each area, the computer program selects the questions you receive based on your answers to previous questions. This procedure continues until your skill level is accurately assessed.

You will use the computer mouse to enter your answers to test questions. You may change an answer while you are still on a screen, but you may not return to a previous screen. Before each assessment, you will complete practice items on the computer so that you can become comfortable with the types of questions you will be asked. When your testing is completed, you will receive a printout of your scores and placements. A laboratory instructor will be available to review results with you.

Placement Options

Your scores determine the first courses you will take in math and in English. If any score is below the established cut-offs, you will be placed in a developmental course designed to strengthen or refresh your skills. You may take developmental courses concurrently with other courses required for your major unless you have to begin with the reading course ENG 084 and/or the writing course ENG 086. If these courses are required, you will be asked to complete them during your first semester. All developmental courses are for internal college credit only and cannot be used toward a degree or certificate program.

Retest Policy



You must wait at least 24 hours to retest one time only on all or any part of the assessments. If you choose to retest, your placement will be based on the retest score. A Testing Center instructor, an advisor, or a Student Services staff member can provide you with the necessary retesting form.

Reading Assessment

You will read several passages and answer comprehension questions about them. Passages are taken from the following areas: practical reading, prose fiction, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.



Writing Skills Assessment

This test asks you to identify and correct errors in essays. Test items may be taken from the following categories: punctuation, basic grammar and usage, sentence structure, strategy, organization, and style.

You may choose to revise any section of the essay. When you believe you have located an error, you should click the mouse pointer on the appropriate part. Five options will then appear on the right side of the screen. The first option, which is always identical to the original wording, represents a NO CHANGE option. After you have revised an essay, you will be directed to two questions about the writer's methods.

Mathematics Assessment

You will answer questions involving numerical and algebraic skills. Those questions may require you to complete a sequence of operations or show an understanding of some mathematical concept. You will have access to calculator. Scrap paper will be provided.



PPRROOCCEEDDUURREE FFOORR TTESSTTIINNGG

Submit a completed application to the Student Services office (AAB 109).

Discuss your eligibility for testing with a Student Services staff member.

Secure a referral form for testing from the Student Services office.

Arrive at the Testing Center (AAB 226) at least three hours before it closes on the day you plan to test.

Present photo identification to the laboratory instructor on duty.

Take the assessments.

Review your results with a laboratory instructor. Keep a copy of the printout for your records.

PPRREEPPAARRAATTIIOONN

Your best preparation is a good night's rest! You do not need to complete skills work to prepare. However, if you would like to attempt sample questions, you may log on to <http://www.act.org/compass/sample/index.html>, and then use the site search link to review sample COMPASS test items. There are also links to practices through the college's web page. After accessing the college's web page, click on "Quick Links" and then "Diagnostic Testing" to access the practices. Computers with Internet access are available in the Media Center (AAB 217).

EELLIIGGIIBBIIITTY FFOORR AASSSESSSMMEENTTSS

Assessment testing is mandatory for the following students:

New students who are currently in high school

New students who do not have a high school diploma or the equivalent

New students who have declared a major or those who are undecided about a major

Special students who want to register beyond nine cumulative credit hours

Students who want to register for an English or mathematics course or any college-level course that has an English or mathematics prerequisite

Exemptions may be granted for these students:

Transfer students who have completed ENG 101, ENG 151, or MTH 101 with a grade of “C” or better

Students who have earned at least a 550 on an SAT subset or a 21 on an ACT subset within the last two years

Students who have earned a bachelor’s or a graduate degree from an accredited institution

Official documentation must be presented to determine eligibility for an exemption.

Diagnostic Assessment Dates

Any student may take the diagnostic assessments at the Salisbury Campus during the regular operating hours of the Reading, Study Skills, and Testing Center (AAB 225).

Any student taking the complete battery of tests must arrive at the Center at least three hours before the Center closes on that day. Those who are taking a re-test must arrive at least one hour before closing time. Those completing retests should arrive at least one hour before closing. Regardless of the type of testing, the student will first need to visit the Student Services Office (AAB 109) to pick up a referral form for testing. At the time of testing, the student will be asked to produce the completed referral form and a photo identification card.

Please check the college's website for the current operating schedule of the Testing Center.