Proficiency Exams

What are the proficiency exams?
The Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) is a set of standardized multiple-choice tests developed to measure your achievement level in four areas: writing, math, reading and science.

Who has to take the proficiency exams?
If you are seeking an associate or baccalaureate degree from South Dakota’s public university system and you do not meet one of the competencies below, you will be required to sit for the proficiency exams. Prior to sitting for the exams, you should have completed at least three credit hours in each of the following areas: composition, speech, mathematics (at or above the level of college algebra), natural sciences (six credit hours recommended), social sciences and humanities/fine arts. DSU students also complete an online information systems and computer technology exam during one of their general education courses.

Are there other methods to demonstrate competency?
If you have demonstrated competency on the ACT or SAT, you may be waived from the proficiency exam requirements. Requirements to receive the waiver are:

1. An ACT composite score of 24 or higher or SAT verbal-mathematics score of 1090 or higher OR
2. ACT College Readiness Benchmark scores – must meet or exceed all 4 of the ACT sub-scores:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Reasoning</td>
<td>23</td>
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3. Earned an Associates* or Bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited postsecondary institution in the US. (*Associates of Applied Science, Associates of General Studies, undergraduate certificates and undergraduate diplomas do not meet this requirement)

Note: You must achieve the necessary scores on the ACT or SAT prior to entry into a regionally accredited postsecondary institution and the scores must be recorded at a postsecondary institution within five years of taking the exam. Residual ACT scores cannot be used to establish a waiver.

When do I have to take the exams?
• Bachelor’s degree-seeking students will take the exams once they have earned at least 48 credit hours at or above the 100 level.
• Associate’s degree-seeking students will take the exams once they have earned at least 32 credit hours at or above the 100 level.

Note: If you qualify for testing, you will be notified by e-mail approximately three weeks prior to the test date.

How often is it offered?
The proficiency exams are offered twice per year, once in fall semester and once in spring semester (usually November and March)

Classes Missed During Test Administration
Participation in the proficiency exams as scheduled constitutes a University excused absence. You are required to participate in the exams and will be allowed to make up any class events, including quizzes and exams. If you will miss classes to sit for the exams, you should inform your instructors prior to test day.
What if I can’t take it this semester?

You must take the exams or receive a deferment. If you do not take the exams and do not receive a deferment, you will have a registration hold and will not be able to register at any of the SD public institutions of higher education for two terms.

What is a deferment?

A deferment allows you to delay the exams for one semester. You can request a deferment online during the exam registration period.

What are appropriate reasons to request a deferral?

- Medical/Family Emergency
- Call to Military Duty
- Participation in an educational experience that prevents testing at any one of the Regental institutions
- Returning to college after an extended absence
- Recently transferred to DSU from outside the Regental system

What can I do to prepare for the exams?

Faculty-led review sessions are held on DSU’s Madison Campus and at the University Center in Sioux Falls. Additional review materials including practice exams and a proficiency review session video may be found on DSU’s Portal and at this link: http://public-info.dsu.edu/testing-services/proficiency-testing/

Can I use a calculator?

ACT permits use of a calculator on the CAAP Mathematics Test, but not on any of the other tests. However, all problems on the test can be solved without using a calculator. You may use any four-function, scientific, or graphing calculator, unless it has features described in the prohibited calculators list which can be found at http://act.org/caap/sample/calc.html.

What happens if I am not successful on the exams?

If you do not meet the minimum required score(s) on the exams, you will develop a remediation plan with help from DSU’s Remediation Plan Advisor. Remediation involves the use of training materials or resources specific to the exam that wasn't passed in an effort to help you learn the material. If you have remediated, you will be allowed to retest in the specific area(s) of deficiency twice within the allowed time frame (2 semesters). The retests must be completed on the specified testing dates.

Testing Accommodations

DSU’s Disability Services Office works with students to coordinate accommodations (http://dsu.edu/academics/ada-accommodations) based on individual needs. Please contact this office at 605.256.5121 to schedule an appointment to discuss possible test accommodations.

Questions?

Please contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment with any questions. The Board of Regents Proficiency Policy is available at this link: http://sdbor.edu/policy/2-academic_Affairs/documents/2-28.pdf

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment
Heston Hall Rm 309
605.256.5101
assessoffice@dsu.edu

More information about the Proficiency Exams may be found online at http://public-info.dsu.edu/testing-services/ and on the DSU Portal under Testing Services.