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CONNECTICUT
Education

2024-2025

Content Area Mastery and Teacher Certification

January 13, 2025

Connecticut State
Department of Education



Current Assessment Requirements for Educator Certification in Connecticut

- Unless an individual is already certified in another state that is recognized by Connecticut under enhanced reciprocity, all other individuals seeking to become a certified educator in Connecticut must complete an approved Educator Preparation Program (EPP) and meet a minimum passing score in the appropriate content area standardized assessment(s) as required in [section 10-145f of the Connecticut General Statutes](#).
- The most widely used content area assessment is the **Praxis II** which is developed by ETS.

“All 50 states require prospective teachers to pass one or more subject-matter tests to obtain teaching certification”

WEPC Report, June 2023



Primary Purpose of Praxis II

To ensure that
individuals entering the teaching
profession
have **minimum content knowledge**
in the subject area.



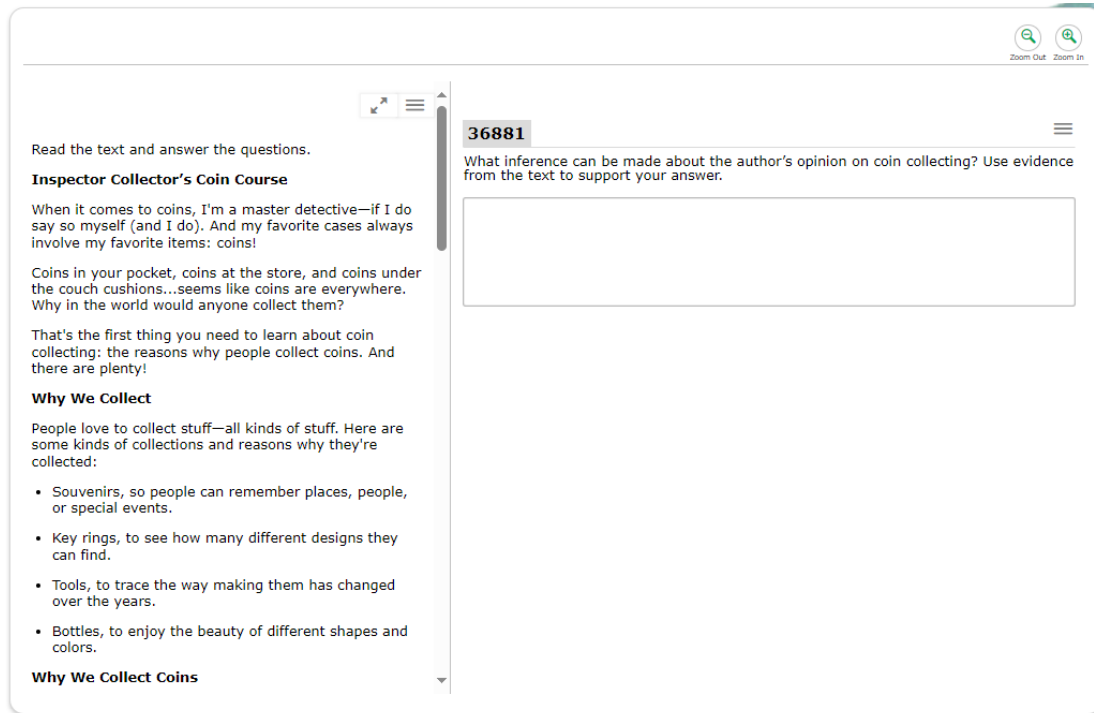
Praxis II Tests and Passing Standards

- Praxis II is not a single test but a wide range of assessments. Each unique subject area license requires different tests, some requiring one, and others, like elementary, requiring multiple. See [What assessments are required for CT educators](#)
- To determine the recommended cut/passing scores for all Praxis II exams, ETS conducts multi-state standard-setting activities using psychometrically recognized procedures.
- **The recommended cut scores differentiate the “just-qualified” candidate from the “not-quite qualified” candidate in each subject area.**
- Connecticut’s passing scores align with the ETS recommended cut-scores for the “just qualified” candidate.

Why Assess Candidate Content Knowledge?

Rigor of Standards Illustrated by Two Smarter Balanced Items

ELA Grade 6 and Math Grade 5



Read the text and answer the questions.

Inspector Collector's Coin Course

When it comes to coins, I'm a master detective—if I do say so myself (and I do). And my favorite cases always involve my favorite items: coins!

Coins in your pocket, coins at the store, and coins under the couch cushions...seems like coins are everywhere. Why in the world would anyone collect them?

That's the first thing you need to learn about coin collecting: the reasons why people collect coins. And there are plenty!

Why We Collect

People love to collect stuff—all kinds of stuff. Here are some kinds of collections and reasons why they're collected:

- Souvenirs, so people can remember places, people, or special events.
- Key rings, to see how many different designs they can find.
- Tools, to trace the way making them has changed over the years.
- Bottles, to enjoy the beauty of different shapes and colors.

Why We Collect Coins

36881

What inference can be made about the author's opinion on coin collecting? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

183613

A **regular polygon** is a polygon with:

- all sides the same length, and
- all angles the same size.

Decide if each shape is always, sometimes, or never a regular polygon. Click in the table to respond.

	Always a Regular Polygon	Sometimes a Regular Polygon	Never a Regular Polygon
Acute triangle	☐	☐	☐
Obtuse triangle	☐	☐	☐
Right triangle	☐	☐	☐
Rectangle	☐	☐	☐
Square	☐	☐	☐

*Teaching elementary and middle school requires teachers to have
deep content knowledge
so they can explain complex concepts in different ways
so all students will learn.*



Overall Test Pass Rates for Program Completers from Connecticut EPPs

	2018-19				2022-23			
Race / Ethnicity	# of Completers Attempting a Test	# Tests Attempted	Tests Passed in First Attempt	Tests Passed in Best Attempt	# of Completers Attempting a Test	# Tests Attempted	Tests Passed in First Attempt	Tests Passed in Best Attempt
Candidates of Color	218	630	66.0%	93.5%	218	642	64.0%	83.2%
White Candidates	1,102	3,082	77.7%	98.1%	811	2,058	80.7%	95.7%
Not Available	15	35	82.9%	94.3%	37	80	82.5%	90.0%
Total	1,335	3,747	75.8%	97.3%	1,066	2,780	76.9%	92.7%



2022-23 Pass Rates by Institution for Candidates of Color

- There is variability among EPPs in test pass rates for candidates of color, especially with respect to the first attempt.

- *2020-21 data are provided for Relay GSE and 2021-22 data are provided for Eastern CSU because those institutions reported fewer than 10 testers in the subsequent years.

	# of Completers (# of Tests Taken)	First Attempt Pass Rate	Best Attempt Pass Rate
Alternate Route to Cert	11 (15)	86.7%	100.0%
CREC	34 (166)	55.4%	82.5%
Central CSU	29 (88)	70.5%	92.0%
Eastern CSU (2021-22)*	14 (28)	67.9%	100.0%
Relay GSE (2020-21)*	70 (249)	34.1%	62.7%
Southern CSU	55 (146)	54.1%	67.8%
University of Bridgeport	13 (33)	72.7%	100%
University of Connecticut	26 (56)	85.7%	96.4%
University of Hartford	10 (24)	75.0%	79.2%



Content Area Assessment Pass Rate Observations

- Around 1200-1500 individuals complete CT EPPs annually and they take around 3,000 tests.
- Prior to the pandemic, 66% of all licensure tests taken by candidates of color and 75.8% of all licensure tests taken were passed on their First Attempt. When looking at the Best Attempt, these rates improved to 93.5% and 97.3% respectively.
- Best Attempt Pass rates declined for all groups after the pandemic. 83.2% of tests taken by candidates of color and 92.7% of all tests taken were passed after one or more subsequent attempt.
- Informal transcript reviews show that when compared to candidates scoring well below the passing score, those passing the test in one or two attempts or scoring close to the passing score evidence rigorous content courses in the subject being tested, and/or better grades in the content courses. Additionally, among those in graduate/alternate route programs, a more recent bachelor's degree in the discipline can be a relevant consideration.



Content Area Assessment Pass Rate Observations (continued)

- A candidate may make their first attempt well in advance of completing the EPP, and sometimes even prior to enrolling in an EPP. Nearly 37% of assessments taken by 2022-23 completers were taken by June 30, 2022, prior to the start of the final 2022-23 academic year. Therefore, the Best Pass Rate is a more accurate reflection of student performance on the licensure assessments after program completion.
- Over 50% of the assessments taken by 2022-23 completers are in the four elementary education subjects of Reading and Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Another approximately 20% of tests taken are the Connecticut Foundations of Reading Test.
- Best Pass rates among 2022-23 completers exceeded 90% for almost all assessments with the exception of Praxis II Elementary Math (89.8%), Praxis II Elementary Science (89.8%); Praxis II – Social Studies (89.6%); Praxis II Art (81.3); Praxis II: General Science (70%); and Praxis II Physical Education (82.4%)



Findings from Study Conducted by Boston University's Wheelock Institute

- Used a regression discontinuity design to estimate the causal effect of failing the licensure test on becoming a teacher,
- Approximately three quarters of the licensure tests taken are passed on their first attempt. Over 90 percent of tests taken are passed after one or more subsequent attempts.
- Among individuals who just pass a Praxis II test on their first attempt, 82% go on to obtain a teaching certification, compared to 75% of those who just fall short of receiving a passing score.
- If passing cut-scores are reduced slightly (by approximately 4 points or 0.5 standard deviations), the number of Praxis II takers obtaining certification would likely increase by about 25 individuals each year.



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Recommendation from 2023-24 Study

Explore alternative (like in MA) for those who “just failed” the test to demonstrate mastery through a low-cost “flex-test” option



Praxis II Bridge - Overview

- What is it?
 - Individuals who score within one standard error of measurement (SEM) of the passing score on a Praxis II elementary test (either Reading, Math, Science, or Social Studies) can complete a **professional learning module** in lieu of retaking the entire Praxis II test
- When did this become available?
 - October 31, 2024
- Is there a cost?
 - No. Connecticut offers two free retests for eligible candidates that can be used for either a full test retake or Praxis II Bridge.



Praxis II Bridge - Overview

- Why was the 1 SEM threshold chosen?
 - In discussions with ETS assessment development, psychometric, and research staff, we determined that the 1 SEM threshold represented candidates who were very close to passing and, given differing circumstances or forms, could very well pass on another attempt. Candidates that are below this threshold likely need more test preparation or learning to ensure they understand the content.
- How does it work?
 - Eligible candidates are notified by ETS within 1-3 days of receiving their scores. Candidates fill out a simple form to receive a free retake voucher.
- What does Praxis II Bridge look like?
 - The professional learning module provides content overviews, practice items with annotations, and a knowledge check. All stages help test takers define key concepts and affirm their understanding of the material.



What Praxis II Bridge modules are available for 5001 Elementary Education?

- English Language Arts (5002):
 - Reading
 - Writing, Speaking, and Listening
- Mathematics (5003)
 - Numbers and Operations
 - Algebraic Thinking
 - Geometry and Measurement, Data, Statistics, and Probability
- Social Studies (5004)
 - United States History, Government, and Citizenship
 - Geography, Anthropology, and Sociology
 - World History and Economics
- Science (5005)
 - Earth Science
 - Life Science
 - Physical Science



Praxis II Bridge

- How long is the module?
 - The module will take approximately 45 minutes to complete, but it is untimed and asynchronous.
- How does ETS identify the module the candidate needs to take?
 - ETS will identify the content category on which the candidate scored the lowest and then make that specific module available to the candidate.



Initial Test Taker Feedback to the Praxis II Bridge Has Been Extremely Positive

- Almost all 23 test takers who completed the end of module survey *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* on the following regarding Praxis II Bridge
 - The structure of the learning activity helped me understand the key concepts. (96%)
 - The practice questions helped me prepare for the final knowledge check. (100%)
 - It was easy to access and navigate through the learning activity, practice questions, and knowledge check. (100%)
 - Overall, I prefer this experience to retaking a full Praxis exam. (100%)



Some Comments from Test Takers (*unedited*)

- I was very appreciated I was given this opportunity to receive an overall passing score on this Praxis Exam. There are many that are required for me to pass to receive my teaching certification so this definitely eases my stress. This module **gave me to opportunity to relearn those key concepts and really understand their significance.**
- This was super helpful and helped me **pin point exactly what I missed on the praxis exam and understand it!**
- Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity. This **program helped narrow down the things that I had struggled with previously on the exam.** I definitely prefer this over a retake because it helps with individual needs! :)



Some Comments from Test Takers (*unedited*)

- I was able to **practice what I needed additional support in**, well thorough and manageable.
- I appreciate being offered this as a way to complete the test. **Hours before the multiple-section test, I went through a traumatic experience**, and I missed a passing score by two points. I hope this gets me to a passing score that my school and state accept.
- I really appreciate this praxis bridge especially because I have **taken and failed the Social Studies praxis 4 times** now and was worried about being able to graduate in May with my student teaching starting.



Some Comments from Test Takers (*unedited*)

- This was a great experience. **I learned a lot and was able to learn at my own pace to grasp concepts better.**
- In my opinion, I preferred this a lot more than having to retake the praxis exam with the 60 questions. I was only two points off from passing my first time. When I found out this was an option, I jumped at the opportunity because this was **WAY** less stressful for me. I believe this was **WAY more effective than studying out of a textbook.** I am very much appreciative for you offering this alternative!!!!



Next Steps

- Increase awareness of Praxis II Bridge so more eligible elementary candidates avail of the opportunity
- Explore development of more Praxis II Bridge modules with ETS in other high-demand areas
- Conduct ongoing development and maintenance of the [Educator Preparation Provider \(EPP\) Dashboard](#) on EdSight in close partnership with EPPs