Guide to the Virginia Placement Test (VPT)

Virginia Highlands Community College
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VHCC
An EEO/AA Institution

VIRGINIA PLACEMENT TESTING (VPT)

Commonly Asked Questions about Placement Testing

- **Why is Placement Testing important?**
  Placement testing determines if a student has the reading, writing and mathematical skills needed to be successful in college. When necessary, developmental courses are used to prepare for college-level courses.

- **Do any other tests take the place of the Placement Test?**
  Yes, **official** SAT or ACT scores can be accepted if certain benchmarks are met (see below). Test scores are valid for two years.

  ENGLISH COMPOSITION:
  - A **minimum SAT score of 500** on both the critical reading and writing sections, or a minimum **ACT combined score of 21** on English and writing exempts a student from the VPT-English test and all development English courses. (Section 6.4.0.2.2 – English Placement)

  MATHEMATICS:
  - An SAT math score of **520 or higher** <u>or</u> an ACT math score of **22 or higher** exempts a student from the VPT-Math test and all developmental math courses, and allows a student to enroll in MTH 158, MTH 163, or MTH 241. Placement testing is required prior to enrolling in all other math courses. (Section 6.4.0.2.1 – Math Placement)

  Students must submit official copies of their ACT or SAT scores to the VHCC Learning Lab prior to enrollment. Test scores are valid for two years.

- **What if I have completed college level English and/or Math at another college or university?**
  Students who provide transcripts indicating completion of Math and/or English at another college or university may be exempt from placement testing. Inquire with the division counselor.

- **What can I expect?**
  - Placement testing is completed on the computer
  - Placement tests are not timed. Students are encouraged to allow approximately 4-5 hours to complete all parts of the tests.
  - The entire test can be completed at one time, but it is recommended that the English and math tests be taken on different days.
  - Results are available immediately upon completion. Please contact the Student Success Center (739-2438) to schedule a meeting with your division counselor for help interpreting the results.

- **How long does the test take?**
  The test is a self-directed and untimed test. Students may take as long as they need to complete the test. It is recommended that students spend as much time on each question as needed.

- **What if I am not very familiar with computers?**
  The majority of questions on the placement test are multiple choice, so very little computer experience is necessary. A typed essay is required but, since the test is not timed, it is not necessary to be a fast typist. Detailed instructions are provided, and a proctor will be available to provide assistance during testing.

- **What will the placement test cover?**

  - **The Math Placement Test** is a diagnostic assessment of nine (9) content areas. (Please see the Math Modules section on Page 5 for information on the diagnostic areas.) The computer draws from a pool of test questions and adjusts the level of difficulty based on the skills and expertise of each test taker. Performance on this assessment will determine if a student is required to complete developmental mathematics modules prior to enrolling in college-level Mathematics, Chemistry, or Physics courses.

  - **The English Placement Test** is a two-part test designed to assess reading comprehension and writing skills. The assessment is comprised of a written essay and a series of reading selections with multiple-choice questions. The essay score is based on paragraph structure, sentence organization and structure, quality of content, overall unity, coherence of ideas, thesis statement, topic sentences, spelling, and grammar. Students may be required to complete developmental English courses prior to enrolling in college-level Composition, Biology, or Chemistry courses. (Please see the Development English Placement section on Page 7 for information on the development English courses.)

- **Should I review for the test?**
  Yes! Reviewing is an excellent way to refresh basic reading, writing, and math skills. Sample questions are available for review online at http://www.vhcc.edu/placement. The review questions are very similar to the types of questions included on the placement test.

Other sites that might be beneficial in brushing up on math skills are:

Math

- www.math.com
- http://www.visualmathlearning.com/pre_algebra/lessons.html
- http://www.purplemath.com/

English

- http://owl.english.purdue.edu/ - This site is helpful for reviewing writing skills
- http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/
- http://www.chemeketa.edu/services/counseling/testing/tips.html

- **What do I do after I complete the placement test?**
  Contact t the Student Success Center (SSC) at 276-739-2438 to schedule an appointment for a transition session with your division counselor. Placement scores will be interpreted during this meeting, and you will be advised regarding appropriate course selections. Please bring printed test scores to the transition session. Students cannot enroll in mathematics, English and science courses until all placement requirements are met.

- **Who should I contact if I have a disability or need accommodations for the test?**
  Students with disabilities who require special test accommodations should contact Project EXCEL at least three weeks prior to testing at 739-2404 or by email at kcopenhaver@vhcc.edu.

- **If I don't do well, can I take the test over?**
  Approval from the division counselor is needed to take the test again. Permission will be granted only if a student can prove he/she has reviewed the material and is better prepared for testing the second time.

- **When should I test?**
  It is recommended that students plan ahead and take the placement test well in advance of enrollment deadlines. Begin by making an appointment to test at (276) 739-2476. Testing is completed in the VHCC Testing Center located in the Library (LRC Building).

PLACEMENT TESTING HOURS

Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. The Testing Center closes at 8 p.m.
Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. The Testing Center closes at 5 p.m.

Remember, these are self-paced tests. It takes 4 to 5 hours to complete the entire test, and it is recommended that the English and math portions be taken on two different days.

- **Can this test prevent me from attending VHCC?**
  No, these tests are not college entrance exams. Virginia Highlands Community College is an open-door institution, which means that all students who meet eligibility requirements are accepted. Placement tests are used to determine the appropriate college English, mathematics, and Science courses and may impact which courses are required.

- **What if I do not have a high school diploma or GED?**
  Students 18 or older who have not completed a recognized home school program or obtained a high school diploma or the recognized equivalent (i.e. General Educational Development or GED certificate) will be required to pass an ability-to-benefit test (COMPASS) before being admitted to a curriculum program. The recommended minimum scores were established by the U.S. Secretary of Education. Passing scores are:

  - Math - 25
  - Reading - 62
  - Writing - 32

Practice Tests for VPT-MATH

It is recommended that each student takea practice test prior to taking the placement test. To take the practice test a student must:

1. Go to https://college.measuredsuccess.com.

2. Select Student Registration

3. Select VCCS Practice Test Institution from the drop down box.

4. Select VCCS Practice Test

5. Enter VCCS as the password.

6. Complete each required field. Note: If you do not have a student ID, enter any five-digit number. An email confirming your username and password will be sent to the email address listed on the student registration form.

7. Click Submit after you have completed the form. You will be directed to the practice test. Registrants may take one or both practice tests, which contain the following:

Practice Test 1

- Whole Numbers
- Operations with Positive Fractions
- Operations with Positive Decimals and Percents
- Algebra Basics
- First Degree Equations and Inequalities in One Variable
- Linear Equations, Inequalities, and Systems of Linear Equations in Two Variables

Practice Test 2

- Exponents, Factoring, and Polynomial Equations
- Rational Expressions and Equations
- Rational Exponents and Radicals
- Functions, Quadratic Equations and Parabolas

Practice Tests for English VPT

1. Login to https://college.measuredsuccess.com

2. Click on Student Registration

3. Select VCCS Practice Test Institution from the drop down box

4. Site: VCCS Practice Test

5. Password: Virginiapt

6. Fill in all required fields on the registration screen

7. Note: Use VHCC plus your ID Number (i.e., VHCC1234567) for Student ID

8. When asked for your email address, **do not** use your VHCC email. Another email, such as a hotmail, gmail or yahoo email address should be used instead.

9. Click SUBMIT when all boxes are filled in. You will be directed to the testing dashboard.

Math Modules

Modules	Module Name	Module Description
Module 1	Operations with Positive Fractions	The student will solve application problems using proper fractions, improper fractions, and mixed numbers. All student learning outcomes for this unit must be completed without the use of a calculator. Emphasis should be placed on applications throughout the unit. Applications will use U.S. customary units of measurement. All fractions in this unit should be expressed in simplest form, unless otherwise indicated.
Module 2	Operations with Positive Decimals and Percents	The student will solve problems using decimals and percents. Emphasis should be placed on applications throughout the unit. Applications will use U.S. customary and metric units of measurement.
Module 3	Algebra Basics	The student will perform basic operations with algebraic expressions and solve simple algebraic equations using signed numbers. Emphasis should be placed on applications throughout the unit.
Module 4	First Degree Equations and Inequalities in one variable	The student will solve first degree equations and inequalities containing one variable, and use them to solve application problems. Emphasis should be placed on learning the steps to solving the equations and inequalities, applications and problem solving.
Module 5	Linear Equations, Inequalities and Systems of Linear equations in Two Variables	The student will learn how to find the equation of a line, graph linear equations and inequalities in two variables and solve a system of two linear equations. Emphasis should be on writing and graphing equations using the slope of the line and points on the line, and applications.
Module 6	Exponents, Factoring and Polynomial Equations	The student will learn techniques to factor polynomials and use these techniques to solve polynomial equations. Emphasis should be on learning all the different factoring methods, and solving application problems using polynomial equations.
Module 7	Rational Expressions and Equations	The student will simplify rational algebraic expressions, solve rational algebraic equations and use them to solve application problems.

Module 8	Rational Exponents and Radicals	The student will simplify radical expressions, and use rational exponents. The student will solve radical equations and use them to solve application problems.
Module 9	Functions, Quadratic Equations and Parabolas	In this unit the student will have an introduction to functions in ordered pair, graph, and equation form. The student will engage in a thorough introduction to quadratic functions and their properties as they complete preparation for entering STEM or business-administration college-level mathematics courses.
*Module 0	Whole numbers	Referred to Mt. Rogers Regional Adult Education Program

DEVELOPMENT ENGLISH PLACEMENT

ENF 1: PREPARING FOR COLLEGE ENGLISH I (8 CREDITS)
This course provides integrated reading and writing instruction for students who require extensive preparation to succeed in college-level English courses. Students will place into this course based on VPT-English (Virginia Placement Test-English). Upon successful completion and faculty recommendation, students will move into ENF 3 (if additional preparation is required) or into college-level English (if no additional preparation is required.)

ENF 2: PREPARING FOR COLLEGE ENGLISH II (4 CREDITS)
This course provides integrated reading and writing instruction for students who require intermediate preparation to succeed in college-level English courses. Students will place into this course based on VPT-English (Virginia Placement Test-English). Upon successful completion and faculty recommendation, students will move into ENF 3 (if additional preparation is required) or into college-level English (if no additional preparation is required).

ENF 3: PREPARING FOR COLLEGE ENGLISH III (2 CREDITS)
This course provides integrated reading and writing instruction for students who require minimal preparation for college-level English but still need some preparation to succeed. Students in this course will be co-enrolled in college-level English. Students will place into this course based on VPT-English (Virginia Placement Test-English).

Other Tips for Taking the Placement Tests

1. Relax! The tests are designed to help you succeed in college. Your score will help your division counselor and your faculty advisor determine which courses are most appropriate for your current level of knowledge and skills.

2. Get plenty of rest the night before and eat properly the morning of your test.

3. Arrive on time for testing. If you allow yourself plenty of time, you will experience less stress and have ample time to find the Testing Center, choose a satisfactory seat, sharpen pencils, and gather your thoughts before the test begins.

4. Review the directions for each test carefully. Ask questions if necessary and use the tutorials available before each test.

5. Ask the test administrator if you need help using the mouse tutorial, particularly if you don't have much experience with computers. There are practice segments on the placement test that can help you become familiar with using the mouse and answer keys.

6. Read each question carefully to ensure you understand the question. Some items require several steps, so be sure to consider all information.

7. Take time to check your answers on each test before moving on to the next segment. Do not be afraid to change an answer if you believe that your first choice was wrong.

8. Raise your hand and ask the test administrator for help if you have a problem or question during the test. Although the test administrator cannot answer test questions for you, he/she can help you with other types of problems such as a computer problem, etc.

9. Take your time. There is no time limit.