



Act 168 Frequently Asked Questions

Introduction

In October 2014, the Pennsylvania General Assembly enacted Act 168 (24 P.S. §1-111.1). Specifically, Act 168 requires an assessment of basic skills to be completed by preparation candidates prior to entry into a Pennsylvania baccalaureate teacher preparation program. It also states that the basic skills assessment is not required for entry into a post-baccalaureate preparation program for someone who holds a post-baccalaureate degree. Finally, Act 168 mandates that no baccalaureate certification program shall admit a student who has not met these requirements by August 1, 2015.

In consideration of the requirements of Act 168 and its impact on entry into baccalaureate teacher preparation programs and post-baccalaureate teacher preparation programs, the Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE) Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality is releasing the following Frequently Asked Question to help interpret the legislation and counsel your students.

Formal Entry into a Teacher Preparation Program

Question: When is formal entry into an undergraduate program?

Answer: Formal entry into a teacher preparation program can take place anywhere between 48-60 credits. Candidates can be admitted any time during their freshman and sophomore years if they have accumulated the afore mentioned credits.

Question: When should students take the basic skills assessment?

Answer: PDE strongly encourages program providers to counsel students to take the basic skills assessment as early as the freshman year. This affords the student plenty of time to seek remediation in order to be successful on the test.

Question: Will students that are enrolled in a baccalaureate program before August 1, 2015 be required to take the basic skills test?

Answer: Candidates that are enrolled in a baccalaureate program prior to August 1, 2015, do not need to take and pass the basic skills assessment for program entry. However, the basic skills will be required prior to certification.

Question: How do we handle transfer students from outside or from inside of our college/university that are seeking entry into a certification program and have over 60 credits at the time of transfer?

Answer: Transfer students that have earned 60 credits or more must take and pass the basic skills assessment before they are officially entered into the program and take professional core courses.

Question: Is a candidate seeking a second baccalaureate degree required to take the basic skills test?

Answer: No, any candidate who holds at least a baccalaureate degree is not required to take the basic skills test prior to program entry.

Professional Core Courses

Question: Are method courses considered professional core courses?

Answer: Yes, method courses are considered professional core courses and must be taken after formal entry into a preparation program.

Question: Are candidates that have not been officially admitted to our preparation program allowed to complete or partially complete Stage 3 field experience (pre-student teaching)?

Answer: No. Stage 3 field experiences are part of the professional core courses and cannot be taken until the candidate is formally enrolled in a preparation program.

Post-baccalaureate Candidates

Question: Will students that are enrolled in a post-baccalaureate program be required to take the basic skills test?

Answer: Candidates that are enrolled in a post-baccalaureate program do not need to take the basic skills assessment for program entry certification.

Question: Are both Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts degrees acceptable to enter a post-baccalaureate program?

Answer: Yes, regulations require a bachelor's degree but do not restrict it to a Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts degree.

Question: When do post-baccalaureate candidates need to submit their transcripts?

Answer: Candidates will submit transcripts when applying for certification.