The South Dakota Board of Regents has mandated that all students attending a state university in South Dakota and seeking their first undergraduate degree take and pass the Board of Regents Proficiency Examination (BOR Policy 2:28). Satisfactory performance on the exam is required for graduation. Baccalaureate degree-seeking students will sit for the exam on completion of 48 passed credits at the 100 level or above, and associate degree-seeking will sit for the exam on completion of 32 passed credits at the 100 level or above.

Testing will be offered during the fall and spring semesters. Students who fail to sit for the exam when required to do so will not be allowed to register for courses at any of the state universities for two academic terms.

Students failing to achieve the minimum proficiency level on one or more components of the exam will be allowed to retest. Retesting must occur one year after initial testing. During that year, a student may continue to enroll in courses. As preparation for retesting, students are required to develop, in collaboration with an academic advisor, a developmental plan for remediation to be completed within one year. Students will be able to retest twice during that year and a fee may be charged to cover the cost of testing.

Students will be informed by the testing office when they are eligible to test. Approximately 4-6 weeks after a student has tested they will receive the results and an explanation of how to interpret their achievement. Students who fail to achieve an acceptable score within one year of initial testing will not be permitted to continue their registration. An appeal process for certification of proficiency using alternate methods is available to those students.

EVALUATING THE QUALITY OF YOUR EDUCATION

Student Guide to the South Dakota Board of Regents Proficiency Exam Using ACT’s CAAP Tests

Academic Affairs Office
Woodburn Room 218
605-642-6262
OVERVIEW

The South Dakota Board of Regents Proficiency Exam is designed to test foundational college skills at or near the end of the first two years of college. There are four Proficiency Exam tests that students must take: Writing Skills, Mathematics, Reading, and Science Reasoning. The South Dakota Board of Regents, in conjunction with faculty and administrators from the state universities, has selected these tests to assess your achievement in selected core skills.

In accordance with the Board of Regents General Education policy, prior to taking the exam you should have completed a minimum of three credits in each of the following areas: composition, mathematics, at or above the level of college algebra, natural science (6 credits recommended), social science, and humanities/fine arts. However, not having completed these courses does not exempt you from testing.

The South Dakota Proficiency Exam will help your faculty determine how well your education compares to the education provided at other institutions across the country. Be sure to treat the exam seriously, and try to do your best on each of the tests. The faculty will study the results for students as a group to confirm program strengths and identify areas that need to be strengthened.

Your individual report will be treated as confidential and will be accessible only to designated university personnel. Your report will allow you to compare your performance to groups of other students at your school and around the country, and it offers you a unique opportunity to discover how much you have learned in selected foundational skill areas. This information should give you important insights about your education thus far. The foundational skills measured by the Proficiency Exam are important for functioning in today’s society and for successfully completing upper-level college work.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS PROFICIENCY EXAM

The Proficiency Exam is administered in a one-time block in the following order: Writing Skills, Mathematics, Reading, and Science Reasoning. Each test is multiple-choice and requires 40 minutes to complete. The questions are numbered and the answer choices for each question are lettered.

WRITING SKILLS TEST

This 72-item test measures your understanding of conventions of standard written English in punctuation, grammar, sentence structure, strategy, organization, and style. Spelling, vocabulary, and rote recall of rules of grammar are not tested. The test consists of six prose passages, each of which is accompanied by a set of 12 multiple-choice test items. A range of passage types is used to provide a variety of rhetorical situations.

MATHEMATICS TEST

The 35-item test is designed to measure your proficiency in mathematical reasoning. It assesses your ability to solve mathematical problems encountered in many post-secondary curricula. It emphasizes quantitative reasoning rather than the memorization of formulas. The content areas tested include pre-elementary, intermediate, and advanced algebra, coordinate geometry, trigonometry.

READING TEST

This 36-item test measures reading comprehension as a combination of skills in two broad categories: Referring Skills and Reasoning Skills. This test consists of four prose passages of about 900 words each that are representative of the level and kinds of writing commonly found in college curricula. Passages come from prose fiction, the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. Each passage is accompanied by a set of nine multiple choice test items.

SCIENCE REASONING

This 45-item test measures your skills in scientific reasoning. Its contents are drawn from biological sciences, chemistry, physics, and the physical sciences. The test emphasizes scientific reasoning skills rather than recall of scientific content or a high level of skill in mathematics or reading. It consists of eight passages and uses three different formats: Data Representation, which consists of graphic and tabular material similar to that found in science journals and texts; Research Summaries, which provide descriptions of one experiment or of several related experiments; and Conflicting Viewpoints, which measures skills in understanding, analyzing and comparing alternative viewpoints or hypotheses.