

ETS® Proficiency Profile Student Information

What is the ETS® Proficiency Profile?

The ETS® Proficiency Profile is a test of general academic knowledge and skills. It includes material usually covered in core curriculum or general education courses. This test is intended for use by colleges and universities in assessing the outcomes of their general education programs to improve the quality of instruction and learning.

How long is it?

The abbreviated test is a multiple-choice test with 36 questions that takes 40 minutes.

The standard test is a multiple-choice test with 108 questions that takes 120 minutes.

Your institution will advise you as to which version of the test you will be taking.

How is it scored?

Scores are based on the number of questions answered correctly. There is no penalty for guessing, so you should try to answer every question.

What skills does the test measure?

The ETS Proficiency Profile is designed to measure college students' skills in reading and critical thinking, writing, and mathematics. The reading and critical thinking questions test the ability to read carefully and think critically about issues and arguments from the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. The questions are not intended to test specific content knowledge in these fields. All the information needed to answer these questions is presented in the test.

- The reading questions tests the ability to interpret the meaning of key terms, recognize

the primary purpose of a passage, recognize explicitly presented information, make appropriate inferences, and recognize rhetorical devices.

- The critical thinking questions test the ability to recognize assumptions, recognize the best hypothesis to account for information presented, recognize flaws and inconsistencies in arguments, and draw valid conclusions from information presented.
- The writing questions test the ability to recognize the most grammatically correct revision of a sentence, organize a short piece of writing, and recognize errors in grammar and usage.
- The mathematics questions test the your ability to interpret mathematical terms, interpret tables and graphs, evaluate formulas, compare numbers expressed in different ways, interpret ratios, proportions, and percentages, and recognize equivalent mathematical formulas or expressions.

When and where is the test given?

Each college chooses when and where to give the test and decides which students will be tested. Students with disabilities or health-related needs are encouraged to discuss any special needs they have with the test coordinator at their institution.

Why should students try their best on this test?

By taking the ETS Proficiency Profile, you enable your institution to get the data it needs to prove the effectiveness of your general education program — ensuring that you and future students earn the highest

quality degree. Institutions use the ETS Proficiency Profile to assess critical thinking, reading, writing and mathematics skills, evaluate and inform teaching and learning, and gauge program effectiveness. A student's best effort will help faculty obtain more valid and reliable data for decision making.

What scores will be reported to students?

The score(s) reported will depend on whether or not your institution chooses to share the score report with you and which version of the test is administered. If the institution chooses to share the scores, a score report will be displayed at the completion of the test. In addition, an email with instructions for retrieving the score report online will be sent to the email address used during testing. If the institution chooses not to share the scores, the score report will not be displayed and the email will not be sent.

Abbreviated test scores

If you are taking the 40-minute abbreviated version of the test, you will receive a total score on a scale of 400-500. Because institutions using the abbreviated test are focused on the performance of the institution as a whole and not the individual student, your test scores will be averaged with other test takers at your institution, and this average will become the primary unit of analysis.

Standard test scores

If you are taking the 120-minute standard version of the test, you will receive a total score on a scale of 400-500 plus additional subscores and proficiency level information. The score report will also include four skill-dimension subscores, on a scale of 100-130, for Critical Thinking, Reading, Writing, and Mathematics and three context-based subscores, on a scale of 100-130, for Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences. In addition to the scaled scores listed above, you will receive proficiency-level scores for reading/critical thinking, writing, and mathematics. Three levels of performance have been defined for each of the three skill areas—level 1, level 2, and level 3. The skills necessary for reaching each level are defined and the

student score report will indicate whether the skills demonstrated were Proficient (P), Marginal (M), or Not Proficient (N). Full definitions of the proficiency levels are available on the [ETS Proficiency Profile website](#). Students taking the standard version of test can also earn a performance level certificate or digital badge. To learn more about the certificates of achievement, visit the [ETS Proficiency Profile website](#).

Scores from the standard version of the test can be used by institutions to evaluate the institution as a whole. The scores can also be used for counseling purposes and for the identification of students with problems in particular skill areas. These scores cannot be used as the basis for high-stakes decisions about individual students.

The ETS Proficiency Profile measures a specific collection of skills. It does not and cannot measure all the educational outcomes of interest to institutions of higher learning. When the ETS Proficiency Profile is used to evaluate an institution or any of its programs, it should be used in conjunction with other information. It should never be used as the sole means for evaluating the effectiveness of an institution or the educational progress of the students. Questions regarding how scores will be used at a particular institution, should be directed to the test coordinator at that institution.

Comments and suggestions

If you have concerns about a specific question, bring them to the attention of the test supervisor after you have completed the test so that the questions can be forwarded to ETS. ETS investigates and responds to all questions raised by students and supervisors.