

Rhode Island College
Elementary Education Undergraduate Program Review

Section IV Evidence for Meeting Standards

Assessment 2 – Assessment of content knowledge in elementary education

Program Requirements

1. Praxis II: Elementary Education Content Area Exercises
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Program Requirement – Praxis II: Elementary Education Content Area Exercises – Required for student teaching.

Brief Description of the Assessment

The Praxis II Content Area Exercises test (0012) is designed to measure teacher candidates' competence in applying pedagogical knowledge. It is one of the two licensure exams (the other is content knowledge) required by the Rhode Island State Department of Education for elementary teacher certification. The test consists of four questions that prompt teacher candidates to respond (extended written responses) to classroom situations they may encounter as teachers. The classroom situations are imbedded in the context of teaching Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science or Social Studies and integrating disciplines.

The Elementary Education Teacher Candidates must take and pass the Praxis II Elementary Education Content Area Exercises test (0012) as part of their "Preparing to Teach" student-teaching requirement. The passing score is set by the Rhode Island State Department of Education at 148.

Alignment with ACEI Standards

Teacher candidates demonstrate competence in a number of ACEI Standards as they are prompted to respond to classroom situations. Each question prompts the teacher candidate to "discuss an instructional approach or to develop an instructional goal or solve an instructional problem and outline the steps necessary to achieve the goal or solve the problem. The examinee must justify the steps or decisions based on his or her understanding of issues in curriculum, instruction, or assessment." One question may prompt teacher candidates to describe the steps they would use to help a small group of third-grade students, confused with identifying equivalent fractions, while instructing the rest of the class as they begin the process of adding like-denominator fractions. Another question may prompt them to explain instructional approaches for using trade books in a lesson plan for teaching reading in a first-grade classroom (ACEI 2.1, 2.3, 2.3, and 2.4). <http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS/taag/0012/about.htm>

Analysis of the Data Findings

The Praxis II Content Area Exercises test places teacher candidates in the middle of classroom situations and forces them, on the spot, to combine critical thinking skills and pedagogical knowledge to explain their strategies and approaches to meet their proposed outcomes. There is no substitute for this requirement; teacher candidates must demonstrate their level of pedagogical knowledge if they are to continue to the final phase of student teaching.

ETS provides data collected from over 26,000 examinees and cites a mean average score of 157 on the content area exercises test with an average score range of 151-163. In each of the three semesters of data collection, the Rhode Island College Teacher Candidates scored at or above the ETS mean average. After examining the teacher candidate median and range data it was found that 60% of the Spring 2010 teacher candidates scored at or above the ETS mean score of 157, 40% of the Fall 2009 teacher candidates scored at or above the 157 mean score and 55% of the Spring 2009 scored at or above the 157 mean score.

Interpretation of How the Data Provides Evidence for Meeting Standards

The comparison of test scores and closer examination of data provides solid evidence of the teacher candidates' abilities to explain their knowledge of using "...major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to development of children and young adolescents to construct learning opportunities (ACEI 1.0)." Without prior knowledge of the specific essay question scenarios, teacher candidates must place themselves in classroom settings, think critically and set goals then respond in writing, their ideas, plans and approaches within the context of teaching Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science or Social Studies and integrating disciplines (ACEI 2.1, 2.3, 2.3, and 2.4).

This data provides one piece of evidence to the Elementary Education Department that the teacher candidates are ready to begin their student teaching experience.

Assessment Documentation

Praxis II: Elementary Education Content Area Exercises

Passing score of 148 is required for student teaching.

Content Area Exercises		mean scores	range	median
Spring 2010	n = 83*	157	148-191	158
Fall 2009	n = 54	159	148-174	159
Spring 2009	n = 95**	159	147-184	159

* Scores unavailable for one candidate

** Scores unavailable for one candidate

http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS/pdf/uyps_web.pdf

<http://www.ets.org/praxis/institutions/scores/how>

<http://www.ets.org/praxis/about/praxisii/>