



Professional skills test for prospective teachers

Numeracy test format and content

This document provides candidates with an overview of the structure of the numeracy test, along with details of the content areas which the test assesses. This guidance will be helpful when you are preparing to take the test. You should use it alongside other guidance on the Department for Education's dedicated skills test webpages: <http://sta.education.gov.uk/>

Introduction

This document specifies the format and content of the numeracy test. The test is a pass/fail minimum competence test, based on a range of mathematical skills which are deemed important for a teacher's general professional practice.

The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) maintains a bank of equivalent test forms. Candidates are assigned a test form at random (excluding forms which they have previously taken) when entered for a test. Various modifications are available as special arrangements to ensure the assessment is accessible to candidates. The test bank is maintained with a proportion of questions being replaced each year.

All new questions are trialled prior to use to ensure that new and amended test forms are comparable in demand to the existing test forms. Candidates take the tests in a secure test centre, on computer, unless special arrangements have been granted for an alternative format.

A set of practice tests and support information is available on the Department for Education's website: <http://sta.education.gov.uk/>

Format of the test

Candidates will have approximately 48 minutes to complete the numeracy test; the actual time available varies by several minutes between different forms according to the amount of time needed for the mental arithmetic questions to be read. It comprises a practice question, which is not scored, followed by 28 questions worth 1 mark each. To pass the test, candidates are required to achieve a minimum number of marks across the whole test.

The test has 2 sections: mental arithmetic questions and written questions. Questions in each section will assess 1 or more content areas. As such, some questions will require you to draw together your understanding of different content areas.

Mental arithmetic

The mental arithmetic section starts with an unscored practice question and is followed by 12 questions, worth 1 mark each. Candidates will hear each question twice, through headphones, and then the question must be answered within a fixed time limit of 18 seconds. Candidates will have some paper on which to record jottings. The use of a calculator is not permitted. Candidates are not allowed to return to any mental arithmetic question after the time limit for each question is reached.

For each question there are 1 or more answer boxes in which candidates will need to click and then type their answer.

Written questions

The written section comprises a mixture of questions on both interpreting and using data, and solving arithmetic problems. There are 16 questions in the written section; 7 assess data and 9 assess arithmetic. There is an overall time limit of 36 minutes for the written section of the test, but there is no time limit for the individual questions within this section. Several consecutive questions may use the same table, chart or graph. An onscreen, four-function calculator is available to help candidates answer questions in this section.

Candidates can have some paper for working during the test. This will not be considered as part of your answers. For reasons of security, it will be collected before you leave the room.

Questions in this section will use the following question types:

- Multiple choice – answer options are presented in a list. One or more answer options are correct; candidates will need to click to select the correct options.
- Fill in the blank – there are 1 or more answer boxes in which candidates will need to click and then type their answer. Numbers can't be entered in written form.
- Drag and drop – candidates are presented with a set of cards. They will need to select the correct card(s) to drag and drop to complete a sentence, table, chart or graph.
- Hot spot – a table, chart or graph is presented with severable selectable areas. Candidates will need to click on the correct area(s) to show their answer.

Test content

Questions in the test will draw from the following topics:

Mental arithmetic

- Addition, subtraction, multiplication and division
- Time
- Amounts of money
- Fractions
- Decimals
- Percentages
- Proportions involving fractions, decimals, and percentages
- Measurement, including topics such as distance, area and volume

- Conversions, including:
 - from 1 currency to another
 - between fractions, decimals and percentages

Interpreting and using written data

- Identify trends over time
- Make comparisons in order to draw conclusions
- Interpret and use information

Ways of presenting data include:

- Tables, including two-way tables
- Bar charts, including composite bar charts
- Box-and-whisker diagrams
- Cumulative frequency graphs
- Line graphs
- Pie charts
- Scatter graphs

Solving written arithmetic problems

- Time
- Amounts of money
- Fractions
- Decimals
- Percentages
- Proportions involving fractions, decimals, and percentages
- Ratios
- Measurement, including topics such as: distance and area
- Conversions, including:
 - from one currency to another
 - between fractions and decimals
 - between measures
- Averages: mean, median and mode
- Range
- Use of simple formulae