

# OVERVIEW: TEXAS SUCCESS INITIATIVE



MARCH 2014

Students entering Texas public institutions of higher education must take the TSI Assessment, or be exempt, to enroll in credit-bearing college courses.

Effective fall 2013, a student must participate in a pre-assessment activity before taking the TSI Assessment. The activity helps familiarize students with the Assessment and provides a variety of information relating to student options and campus resources.

## BACKGROUND

Students must be in compliance with the Texas Success Initiative (TSI), (Texas Education Code §51.3062) to enroll in Texas public institutions of higher education. The law requires all entering college students to be assessed for college readiness in reading, writing and math unless the student qualifies for an exemption or demonstrates college readiness through successful completion of college-level coursework. Each non-exempt student who fails to meet the college-readiness standard of the TSI Assessment must be provided with a plan for academic success which may include developmental education coursework. Effective fall 2013, one statewide TSI Assessment will replace four assessments previously available.

## DETAILS

### Which students must take a TSI Assessment?

Unless exempt, students entering a Texas public college or university must take the TSI Assessment and meet or exceed the minimum college readiness score to enroll in credit bearing courses.

Students who qualify for a TSI exemption can enroll in any entry-level college course without restrictions (see list of exemptions on the right). Students may also demonstrate college readiness by transferring a successfully completed college-level course from another institution of higher education.

## Texas Success Initiative Exemptions

### ACT

Composite score of **23** or higher with at least a **19** on the English test and/or math sections

### SAT

Combined verbal and math score of **1070** with a minimum of **500** on the verbal test and/or math test

### TAKS

Minimum score of **2200** on the English and/or math sections with at least a **3** on the writing component of the 11th grade TAKS (for a period of 5 years from the date of testing)

### Military

Veterans, active duty personnel, and a student who is serving as and, for at least 3 years preceding enrollment, has served as a member of a reserve component of the U.S. armed services.

### Transfer

Transfer from another institution having satisfactorily completed college-level coursework.

### Certificate

Enroll in a certificate program of one year or less (Level One certificates, 42 or fewer credit hours or equivalent) at a public institution.

For a complete list of TSI exemptions, see Texas Education Code, [§51.3062\(r\)](#) and Coordinating Board rules, [§4.54](#).

## When do students take the TSI Assessment?

Students must take the TSI Assessment and have scores on file before they can enroll in college-level classes. Students are notified of their scores and eligibility to enroll in college-level courses immediately upon completing the TSI Assessment.

Effective fall 2013, a student must participate in a pre-assessment activity before taking the TSI Assessment. The activity includes the following:

- An explanation of the importance of the TSI Assessment;
- Practice test questions and feedback;
- An explanation of all developmental education options for students who do not meet the minimum passing standard; and
- Information on campus and academic resources.

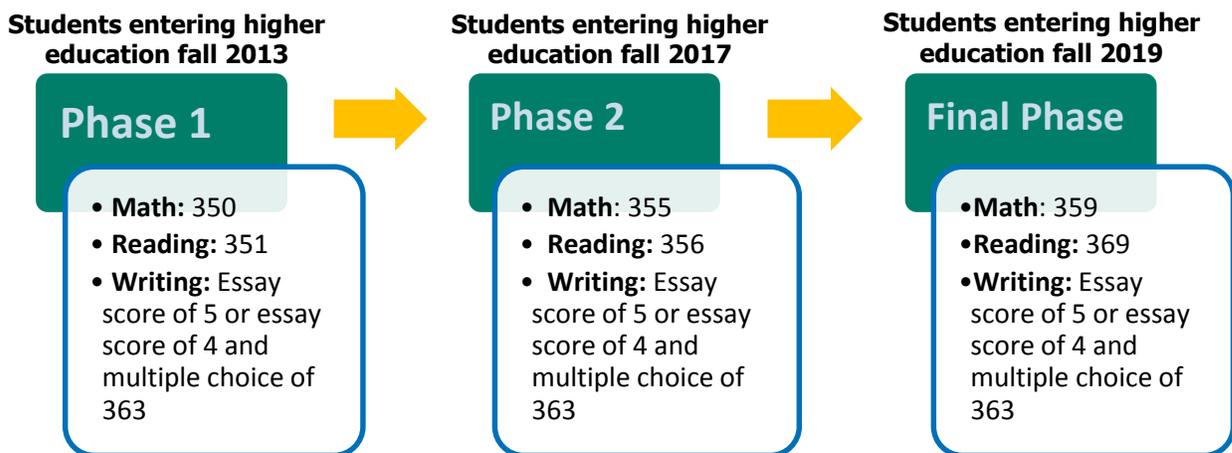
## What happens if a student does not pass one or all parts of the TSI Assessment?

Students who do not pass one or all parts (reading, writing and math) of the TSI Assessment must enroll in an appropriate developmental education course before the student may enroll in a credit bearing course for the subject in which he/she did not meet state standards. A student may retake the TSI Assessment at any time to determine the student's readiness to perform entry-level academic coursework.

## What are the minimum passing scores for the TSI Assessment?

As Texas transitions into the new TSI Assessment, the following phase-in thresholds for math and reading will determine a student's readiness to enroll in entry-level coursework. The Coordinating Board has adopted three phase-in periods beginning in fall 2013, with the final phase beginning fall 2019 as outlined below. The phase-in for the TSI Assessment aligns with the phase-in period of the state's STAAR end-of-course assessments required of high school students.

### Minimum Passing College Readiness Standards



The new TSI Assessment determines if a student is college ready, and if not, if the student is at the developmental or Adult Basic Education (ABE) level. The minimum developmental education standards are listed on the right. If a student scores between college ready and developmental education thresholds that student's knowledge and skills would be considered developmental education level. However, if the student scores below the developmental education thresholds that student's knowledge and skills would be considered ABE level. There is no phase-in period for the developmental education scores.

### Minimum Developmental Education Standards

- **Math:** 336
- **Reading:** 342
- **Writing:** Essay score of 4 or below and score of 363 on the multiple choice (Students scoring below a 350 do not write an essay)

## TSI Assessment Categories

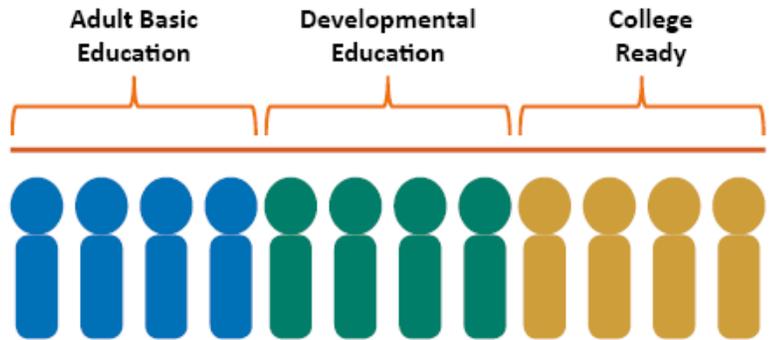
The new TSI Assessment is the first of its kind in the nation. The Assessment is computer adaptive, aligned to the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards and national ABE standards. The Assessment categorizes students as either one of the following:

**College Ready** – Knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in entry-level higher education courses.

**Developmental Education** – Secondary education (high school) knowledge and skill levels.

**Adult Basic Education** – Below secondary education knowledge and skill levels.

For those who are not college ready, further diagnostic information is provided so that instruction and support can be tailored to each student.



The Coordinating Board is working with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) during the 2013-2014 transition year to develop an operational plan for students testing into the ABE levels. No state funding is currently available for ABE students and federally funded ABE programs focus on students without a high school diploma. Many students with a high school diploma may test into ABE in one or more subject areas and the operational plan will help guide institutions on how best to serve these students starting fall 2014. During the transition year, institutions may continue to place students in developmental education courses.

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