

Texas Success Initiative (TSI)

All students must have reached a resolution with regard to their TSI status prior to registering for classes.

Why do students have to take the Texas Success Initiative exams?

State law (a provision of Senate Bill 286) requires all public institutions of higher education to assess the academic skills of each entering undergraduate to determine the student's readiness to enroll in college level academic coursework. The law requires students to be assessed in the area of reading, writing and mathematics.

How is College Readiness Assessed?

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) has approved the following assessment instruments to be used in determining a student's college readiness:

- ◆ THEA (formerly TASP)
- ◆ Accuplacer (offered by UTSA)
- ◆ Asset
- ◆ Compass

Who must take a TSI exam?

Any full or part-time student in a public Texas community college or university who is not exempt (exemptions discussed below).

When must student take one of the TSI exams if not exempt?

Students will be unable to register for classes until a resolution has been reached with regard to their TSI status. Students who are required to attend orientation should take one of the TSI approved exams prior to attending.

What are passing scores for the approved TSI exams (at UTSA)?

Test	Math	Reading	Writing
THEA	230	230	220
Accuplacer	63 (Elem. Alg.)	78	85 (sent. Skills) & 6 (essay)
Compass	39 (Alg.)	81	59 (objective) & 5 (essay)
Asset	38 (Elem. Alg.)	41	40 (objective) & 5 (essay)

What if a student doesn't pass one of the approved TSI exams?

A student who does not pass one or more of the sections of an approved TSI exam will be placed in a developmental course. A student who is deficient in an area of the TSI must address at least one area of the TSI each semester they are taking courses until they have passed the highest level of developmental coursework for each deficient area. A student will be unable to drop a developmental level course if they are taking it as part of a TSI deficiency, and all schedule changes, including semester registration, must be made with an advisor until a student has completed all TSI required developmental coursework. All developmental courses have attendance requirements, and it is imperative that students attend and participate in their developmental courses so they can move into their degree coursework in a timely fashion. A student with a TSI deficiency will be declared college ready after completing the highest level of developmental course work in each area of deficiency. Once a student has begun a developmental class at any public institution of higher education in Texas, they must complete the developmental coursework sequence, regardless of scores earned upon retesting.

Can I take a TSI test more than once?

A student can take a TSI test as many times as they want, although most require a 30 day waiting period before retaking the same test. All test scores must be reported to UTSA before the first class day of the semester. Once classes have begun, a student will be required to complete and receive credit for any developmental courses, regardless of scores earned upon retesting. It is not required to take all portions of the test when retaking to improve scores. For example, if a student is passing in reading and writing, but not math, they can retake the math portion without retaking the reading and writing portions. The student should notify the testing site of the areas they wish to take. UTSA requires that a score be reported for all areas, and the writing area must have both a sentence skills or objective score and an essay score reported (except for THEA – only one score will be reported).

What exemptions exist for the TSI exams?

Students shall be exempt from the requirements of the Texas Success Initiative who meet or exceed the following criteria: (note: some of the exemptions apply to all areas of the TSI, while others apply only to one or more parts. Under most circumstances, a student can not be exempt from reading without being exempt from writing and vice versa.)

- ◆ ACT – composite score of 23 with a minimum of 19 on both English and Math content areas. If a student has a combined score of 23 with a minimum of 19 in only one and not both content areas, the student will be exempt in only one area and will be required to take a TSI exam in the other area(s). The English portion of the ACT covers the TSI reading and writing areas of the TSI, and the Math portion of the ACT covers the math area of the TSI. ACT score exemptions are valid for five years from the date of the test.
- ◆ SAT – combined verbal (critical reading) and math score of 1070 with a minimum score of 500 on both the Verbal and Math areas (this does not include any scores earned for the writing area of the SAT). If a student has a combined score of 1070 with a minimum of 500 in only one and not both content areas, the student will be exempt in only one area and will be required to take a TSI exam in the other area(s). The Verbal portion of the SAT covers the reading and writing areas of the TSI, and the Math portion of the SAT covers the math area of the TSI. SAT score exemptions are valid for five years from the date of the test.
- ◆ TAKS (exit-level – usually 11th grade) – 2200 in mathematics for an exemption in the math area of the TSI. 2200 in English/Language Arts with an essay score of 3 or better for an exemption in the reading and writing area of the TSI. If a student meets one exemption but not both, they will be required to take a TSI exam in the other area(s). A student can not be exempt from reading without writing and vice versa using TAKS scores. TAKS score exemptions are valid for three years from the date of the test. (Please note: a TAKS exemption in math will eliminate the need for a TSI test in the math area, however a UTSA math placement test will be required to take a college level math).
- ◆ A student who has graduated from a Texas public institution of higher education with an associate's or bachelor's degree.
- ◆ A student who transfers at least three hours of transferable credit to UTSA from a private or independent institution of higher education or an accredited out-of-state institution of higher education and who has satisfactorily completed college-level coursework as determined by UTSA.
- ◆ A student who has previously attended any Texas public institution of higher education and has been determined to have met readiness standards at that institution.
- ◆ A student who is serving on active duty as a member of the armed forces of the United States, the Texas National Guard, or as a member of a reserve component for at least a three-year period preceding enrollment.
- ◆ A student who on or after August 1, 1990 was honorably discharged, retired or released from active duty as a member of the armed forces of the United States, the Texas National Guard, or service of a reserve component of the armed forces of the United States.
- ◆ A student who is non-degree seeking and has earned fewer than 12 hours at UTSA.

How can I register for a TSI approved exam?

Statewide THEA registration can be completed online at <http://www.thea.nesinc.com/>. Students can also find a sample THEA test on the NES website. The statewide THEA test is given on the UTSA campus five times a year.

UTSA offers the Accuplacer test through the Testing Services office at both the 1604 and downtown campuses. More information can be found on the administration of this test at <http://www.utsa.edu/testing/>. Students must register for this test in advance through ASAP.

All Texas public institutions of higher education offer at least one of the TSI approved exams. You can contact your local community college or university for information on the tests they offer.