Illinois Certification Testing System
Basic Skills Test
Important Information & Resources

Requirement:
The Basic Skills Test is a state-wide requirement for Admission to Teacher Education. At EIU, the test is required for selection to all teacher certification programs. It is strongly recommended that candidates take the test during their freshman year or early in their sophomore year in college. Furthermore, it’s strongly recommended that candidates take measures to prepare for the test in order to maximize their potential for success. Given the high stakes nature of this test and other required certification tests, we urge you to be prepared. Sitting repeatedly for a test will also require paying to take the tests multiple times, which will be costly.

Important Considerations
Effective January 2010, there is a limit on the number of times that an individual can take the Basic Skills Test. No individual will be allowed to take the Basic Skills Test more than five times. For this reason, individuals not passing the test should not repeat the test without taking measures to remediate their areas of weakness.

Effective September 2010, the State of Illinois is increasing the minimum passing scores required on the Basic Skills Test especially in the area of Mathematics. At the very least all candidates should take a look at the test framework and other resources to make sure they are prepared for success.

Registration:
Registration information and materials for all Illinois Teacher Certification Tests are available online at http://www.icts.nesinc.com. The test can be taken either in paper/pencil format or in a computer based testing format (at selected sites, on selected dates). Please watch test registration and score report deadlines carefully. When registering for all tests please be sure to report EIU as a score recipient.

Resources for Preparation
Test Framework – The Basic Skills Test Framework provides information on the content covered on the basic skills test in the areas of Reading Comprehension, Language Arts, Mathematics, and Writing. The framework is a great starting point to preparing for the test. The framework can be found at http://www.icts.nesinc.com/PDFs/IL_fld096R_FW.pdf

Basic Skills Diagnostic Practice Test – The Basic Skills Diagnostic Practice Test is an interactive computer program that contains a full-length practice test form for the Basic Skills test, including questions for the Reading Comprehension, Language Arts, and Mathematics subareas of the test. In addition, a constructed-response writing assignment, and sample responses to the practice test writing assignment is provided to assist in the preparation for the Writing subarea. The program also includes a tutorial providing instructions on how to use and navigate through the practice test, and scoring of and correct answer explanations for the multiple-choice questions. The test is available at http://www.icts.nesinc.com/IL_practest_opener.asp
Basic Skills Preparation Program (developed by Illinois Community College Board) – The Basic Skills Test Preparation program is a web-based tutorial that works through all areas covered on the Basic Skills Test. To utilize the site you will need to register. The website is www.basicskillsprep.org. At the website click Register Student and then enter our passcode which is 2UGH1RCCGM. You will then need to complete the information on the screen and then will be granted access to the preparation materials.

Reading Center – The Reading Center in Room 1320 Buzzard Hall (http://www.eiu.edu/~readctr/) offers an array of services for students preparing for the Basic Skills Test, providing workshops and individualized programs. Excellent skill building programs are available to assist students with reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, and writing. The programs take students through practice test assessments with prescriptive exercises to build those skills essential to passing the Basic Skills Test.

Student Success Center – The Student Success Center located in 9th Street Hall provides a wonderful website (http://www.eiu.edu/~success/), workshops, and personal assistance to help with test taking strategies as you prepare for the Basic Skills Test.

Commercial Guides (Illinois Basic Skills Test and ACT Study Guides) – Many commercial test preparation publishers have developed study guides for the Illinois Basic Skills Test. These study guides can be found at bookstores or on-line through sites such as Amazon. In addition to the Illinois Basic Skills Test Preparation books, many students have found ACT Study Guides a help in preparing for the test.

High School Texts (especially Math) available in Booth Library – The Ballenger Teacher Center in Booth Library has numerous high school textbooks in Mathematics and English that might assist you in reviewing the concepts covered on the Basic Skills Test.

Tutors (Private or commercial) – Consider seeking assistance from a former teacher, friend or acquaintance with exceptionally strong skills in the given area in which you need help. Some test preparation companies also provide tutoring that may be of assistance in preparing for the Basic Skills Test.