

Understanding Your *HiSET*® Scores

This publication is intended to assist you in understanding your *HiSET*® test scores. ETS provides scoring for the exam on a continuing basis. Scores are processed daily and results are transmitted to the state or jurisdiction as they become available.

How the HiSET Test is Scored

Multiple-choice test scoring

Multiple-choice answer sheets are scored by machine, which gives virtually 100 percent scoring accuracy.

- Each correct answer is worth one raw point.
- The total raw score is the number of questions answered correctly on the full test.
- The scaled score is computed from the total number of raw points in a way that adjusts for the difficulty of the questions.

Essay test scoring

Each essay response is scored by trained, supervised scorers who follow strict scoring procedures. Written responses to each question are read and scored by qualified human scorers specifically trained to score the responses to that question.

Passing score

Each state sets its own passing criteria. To know what you have to do to pass in your state check [Requirements by State or Jurisdiction](#).

Most states use the *HiSET*® passing criteria which means to pass the HiSET exam, you need to:

- Score at least 8 out of 20 on each of the five subtests
- Score at least 2 out of 6 on the essay
- Achieve a total scaled score on all five HiSET subtests of at least 45 out of 100

The HiSET pass score is based on a national study of high school juniors and seniors and indicates that 60 percent of graduating high school students would

pass the HiSET exam. Your score reports show whether or not you passed.

What is a scaled score?

Most tests we take in school report a percentage score or raw scores — in other words, the number right versus the number wrong. This method of scoring works well if there is one version of a test. But the HiSET exam uses multiple versions called "forms." So we can't do a simple comparison of number right versus number wrong because the test you took might have been slightly easier or slightly harder than the test the person sitting next to you took. To make it fair, we use a "scaled score."

A scaled score is a scoring method that makes it easier to compare scores across different forms of the same test. We get it by statistically adjusting and converting raw scores onto a common scale. This means on an easier test form, you need to answer slightly more questions correctly to get a particular scaled score. For a more difficult test, you can get the same scaled score by answering slightly fewer questions correctly.

Your passing score of 8 doesn't mean you got eight questions right, it means given the difficulty of the test form you took, you achieved an 8 on a scale. It also means if you took a different version of the test tomorrow without more study, it is likely you would get the same score. A scaled score makes it easy to keep tests fair and to support retesting.

Paper-delivered tests

Scoring for paper-delivered tests is pending receipt of returned answer sheet documents from the test center. Once they are received at ETS, scores are available in approximately:

- Three business days for multiple-choice tests (Reading, Science, Social Studies, Math)
- Five business days for essay tests (Writing)

Computer-delivered tests

For computer-delivered tests, scores are available in approximately:

- Three business days for multiple-choice tests (Reading, Science, Social Studies, Math)
- Five business days for essay tests (Writing)
- Unofficial scores are immediately displayed on the screen after you complete the test for all multiple-choice sections. However, unofficial scores are not displayed for the writing test.

Understanding scores

- HiSET scores are reported on a 1–20 score scale in 1-point increments.
- ETS has set a national passing score of 8 for each of the five subtests and a combined

score of 45 to pass the HiSET exam. **Note:** some states set their own passing score.

- Test takers must also achieve a minimum score of 2 on the Language Arts – Writing essay to pass.
- The HiSET exam also has a College and Career Readiness (CCR) minimum scaled score of 15 for each subtest except the Language Arts – Writing essay. The CCR score for the Language Arts-Writing essay is a 4.

College and Career Readiness (CCR) Score

- The college-/career-ready indicator, available only on the Individual Test Reports, will display if you show a level of performance similar to the minimum level required to succeed in college-level credit-bearing courses.
- If you score at least 15 out of 20 on any of the subtests and at least a 4 on the essay, that indicates college and career readiness. Your college- and career-readiness score means you scored at the 75th percentile of graduating high school students and indicates that you should be able to enroll in credit-bearing course work in the university level.

Glossary of Terms

Raw score – For multiple choice questions, each raw point corresponds to a single question. For the essay, the raw score refers to the rating assigned by scorers.

Scaled score – The reported score that determines whether a test taker has passed the test. Scaled scores are derived from raw scores and take into account the difficulty of the test form administered.

Passing score – The minimum score required to pass the HiSET exam. This score may differ from state to state.

Possible score range – The lowest to highest scaled score possible on any form of the test.

Frequently Asked Questions

How many questions do I need to get right to pass the test? Unfortunately there is no way to predict this. There are several forms for each subtest and each form contains different questions. The questions on one form may be slightly more difficult (or easier) than those on another form. To make all forms for each subtest comparable, raw scores are converted to scale scores that adjust for difficulty among forms. There is no way to predict which form you will be assigned.

Did I pass? Your HiSET score report includes a Yes/No indicator of whether you passed your exam. This is based on your highest score compared to your state's passing requirements.

How can I access my scores? Your scores are available through your My HiSET account. They are not sent in the mail. If you do not have Internet access or you need help, contact your test center. As long as you have taken at least one subtest at a test center, they will be able to access your scores. Be prepared to show an approved form of ID to the test center administrator.

I need to take one of the HiSET subtests again. What can I do to improve my score? ETS provides a variety of preparation and study tools to help you prepare for your test. For more information on the resources available to you go to [Preparing for Your HiSET Exam](#).

Intended Use of Scores

Test takers' scores on the HiSET are intended to reflect their level of knowledge and skills for each of the five HiSET subtests (i.e., Language Arts - Reading, Language Arts - Writing, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies). The scores are used to classify test takers in terms of their level of proficiency with regard to high school equivalency and college and career readiness. ETS supports the use of HiSET scores for purposes supported by validity evidence, and advises against using HiSET scores for purposes that have not been supported by validity evidence. Although there are minimum cut scores for awarding a high school equivalency certificate or for being identified as college and career ready, it is not appropriate to use and/or interpret HiSET scores without supporting validity evidence. Examples of inappropriate uses without supporting validity evidence are the *requirement of a minimum score on the HiSET for credit-by-examination, advancement to candidacy or any non-educational purpose; requirement of scores on the HiSET for employment decisions, including hiring, salary, promotion, tenure or retention; and use of the five HiSET subtests as an outcomes assessment.*

If it is determined that there is no validity evidence to support the intended use, ETS researchers can offer advice on the design of a validity study or they may be able to suggest alternate ways for the institution to achieve its goals. ETS's objective is always to protect test takers and programs from unintended consequences and unnecessary risks due to score misuse. Please contact HiSET@ets.org with any questions about the appropriate use of scores.