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Study Guide for the School Guidance and Counseling Test
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Chapter 1

Introduction to the School Guidance and Counseling Test and Suggestions for Using This Study Guide
Introduction to the School Guidance and Counseling Test

The School Guidance and Counseling test assesses understanding of key concepts that school guidance counselors need to know in order to do their jobs. In developing assessment material for this test, Educational Testing Service (ETS) worked in collaboration with educators and accomplished practicing school guidance counselors to keep the test updated and representative of current standards.

The School Guidance and Counseling test is outlined below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Name and Code</th>
<th>Questions, Length of Test</th>
<th>Major Content Areas Covered and Approximate Percentage of Questions in Each Area</th>
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</table>
| School Guidance and Counseling (0420) | 120 questions (including 40 based on the listening section), two hours | • Counseling and Guidance (55%)  
• Consulting (15%)  
• Coordinating (15%)  
• Professional Issues (15%) |

Why should you use this study guide?

This test is different from a final exam or other tests you may have taken for other courses because they are comprehensive—that is, they cover material you may have learned in several courses during your entire counseling program. The test requires you to synthesize information you have learned from many sources and to understand the subject as a whole.

Therefore, you should review and prepare for it, not merely practice with the question formats. A thorough review of the material covered on the test will significantly increase your likelihood of success. Moreover, studying for your licensing exam is a great opportunity to reflect on and develop a deeper understanding of counseling and administrative knowledge and methods before you begin your counseling career. As you prepare to take the test, it may be particularly helpful for you to think about how you would apply the study topics and sample exercises to your own clinical experience obtained during your practitioner preparation program. Your counseling internship experience will be especially relevant to your thinking about the materials in the study guide.

How can you best use the “Study Topics” chapters of this study guide to prepare for the School Guidance and Counseling test?

First, assess your current knowledge and use that assessment to complete your preparation and review for the test.

- **Become familiar with the test content.** Learn, in chapter 4, what will be tested.
- **Assess how well you know the content in each area.** After you learn what topics the test contains, you should assess your knowledge in each area. How well do you know the material? In which areas do you need to learn more before you take the test? It is quite likely that you will need to brush up on most or all of the areas.
CHAPTER 1

- **Develop a study plan.** Assess what you need to study and create a realistic plan for studying. You can develop your study plan in any way that works best for you. A Study Plan form is included in appendix A at the end of the book as a possible way to structure your planning. Remember that you will need to allow time to find books and other materials, time to read the materials and take notes, and time to apply your learning to the practice questions.

- **Identify study materials.** Most of the material covered by the test is contained in standard textbooks in the field. If you no longer own the texts you used in your course work, you may want to borrow some from friends or from a library. Use standard textbooks and other reliable, professionally prepared materials. Do not rely heavily on information provided by friends or from searching the internet. Neither of these sources is as uniformly reliable as textbooks. Also review other relevant course materials provided by your instructors.

- **Work through your study plan.** You may want to work alone, or you may find it more helpful to work with a group or with a mentor. Work through the topics and questions provided in chapter 4. Rather than memorizing definitions from books, be able to define and discuss the topics in your own words and understand the relationships between diverse topics and concepts. If you are working with a group or mentor, you can also try informal quizzes and questioning techniques.

- **Proceed to the practice questions.** Once you have completed your review, you are ready to benefit from the practice test in chapter 5 of this guide.

What’s the best way to use the chapter on multiple-choice questions to prepare for the *School Guidance and Counseling* test?

- **Read chapter 3.** This chapter will sharpen your skills in reading and answering multiple-choice questions. For you to succeed on multiple-choice questions, you must focus carefully on the question, avoid reading too deeply into the question, pay attention to details, and sift patiently through the answer choices.

What’s the best way to use the practice-test chapter?

- **Answer the practice multiple-choice questions.** Work on the practice multiple-choice questions in chapter 5, then use the following chapter (“Right Answers and Explanations”) to mark the questions you answered correctly and the ones you missed. In that chapter, also look over the explanations of the questions you missed and see whether you understand them.

- **Decide whether you need more review.** After you have looked at your results, decide whether there are areas that you need to brush up on before taking the actual test. Go back to your textbooks and reference materials to see if the topics are covered there. You might also want to go over your questions with a friend or teacher who is familiar with the subjects.

- **Assess your readiness.** Do you feel confident about your level of understanding in each of the subject areas? If not, where do you need more work? If you feel ready, complete the checklist in chapter 7 to double-check that you have thought through the details. If you need more information about registration or the testing situation itself, use the resources in appendix B: “For More Information.”
Chapter 2
Background Information on The Praxis Series™ Assessments
CHAPTER 2

What are The Praxis Series™ Subject Assessments?

The Praxis Series™ Subject Assessments are designed by Educational Testing Service (ETS) to assess your knowledge of the area in which you plan to work, and they are a part of the licensing procedure in many states. This study guide covers an assessment that tests your knowledge of the actual content related to your intended specialization. Your state has adopted The Praxis Series tests because it wants to be certain that you have achieved a specified level of mastery of your subject area before it grants you a license to work in a school.

The Praxis Series tests are part of a national testing program, meaning that the test covered in this study guide is used in more than one state. The advantage of taking Praxis tests is that if you want to practice in another state that uses The Praxis Series tests, that state will recognize your scores. Passing scores are set by states, however, so if you are planning to apply for licensure in another state, you may find that passing scores are different. You can find passing scores for all states that use The Praxis Series tests either online at http://www.ets.org/praxis/prxstate.html or in the Understanding Your Praxis Scores pamphlet, available either in your college’s School of Education or by calling (609) 771-7395. You can also find them at www.ets.org/praxis/prxstate.html.

What is licensure?

Licensure in any area—medicine, law, architecture, accounting, cosmetology—is an assurance to the public that the person holding the license has demonstrated a certain level of competence. The phrase used in licensure is that the person holding the license will do no harm. In the case of licensing for counselors, a license tells the public that the person holding the license can be trusted to be a competent and professional practitioner.

Because a license makes such a serious claim about its holder, licensure tests are usually quite demanding. In some fields licensure tests have more than one part and last for more than one day. Candidates for licensure in all fields plan intensive study as part of their professional preparation: some join study groups, while others study alone. But preparing to take a licensure test is, in all cases, a professional activity. Because it assesses your entire body of knowledge or skill for the field you want to enter, preparing for a licensure exam takes planning, discipline, and sustained effort. Studying thoroughly is highly recommended.

Why does my state require The Praxis Series Assessments?

Your state chose The Praxis Series Subject Assessments because the tests assess the breadth and depth of content—called the “domain” of the test—that your state wants its school counseling professionals to have before they begin to work. The level of content knowledge, reflected in the passing score, is based on recommendations of panels of professionals and postsecondary educators in each subject area in each state. The state licensing agency and, in some states, the state legislature ratify the passing scores that have been recommended by panels of professionals. (See “What are The Praxis Series Subject Assessments?” above for where to find your state’s passing score.) Not all states use the same test modules, and even when they do, the passing scores can differ from state to state.
What kinds of tests are The Praxis Series Subject Assessments?

Two kinds of tests comprise The Praxis Series Subject Assessments: multiple-choice (for which you select your answer from a list of choices) and constructed response (for which you write a response of your own). Multiple-choice tests can survey a wider domain because they can ask more questions in a limited period of time. Constructed-response tests have far fewer questions, but the questions require you to demonstrate the depth of your knowledge in the area covered.

What do the tests measure?

The Praxis Series Subject Assessments are tests of content knowledge. They measure your understanding of the subject area that will be your specialization. The multiple-choice tests measure a broad range of knowledge across your content area. The constructed-response tests measure your ability to explain in depth a few essential topics in your subject area. The content-specific pedagogy tests, most of which are constructed response, measure your understanding of fundamental concepts in your field. The professionals in your field who help us design and write these tests, and the states that require these tests, do so in the belief that knowledge of the subject areas is the first requirement for licensing. School counseling combines many complex skills, only some of which can be measured by a single test. The Praxis Series Subject Assessments are designed to measure how thoroughly you understand the material in the subject areas for which you want to be licensed.

How were these tests developed?

ETS began the development of The Praxis Series Subject Assessments with a survey. For each subject, professionals around the country in various educational situations were asked to judge which knowledge and skills a beginning practitioner in that subject needs to possess. Professors in schools of education who prepare professionals were asked the same questions. These responses were ranked in order of importance and sent out to hundreds of professionals for review. All of the responses to these surveys (called “job analysis surveys”) were analyzed to summarize the judgments of these professionals. From their consensus, we developed the specifications for the multiple-choice and constructed-response tests. Each subject area had a committee of practitioners and postsecondary educators who wrote these specifications (guidelines). The specifications were reviewed and eventually approved by professionals. From the test specifications, groups of practitioners and professional test developers created test questions.

When your state adopted The Praxis Series Subject Assessments, local panels of practicing professionals and postsecondary educators in each subject area met to examine the tests question by question and evaluate each question for its relevance to beginning professionals in your state. This is called a “validity study.” A test is considered “valid” for a job if it measures what people must know and be able to do on that job. For the test to be adopted in your state, professionals in your state must judge that it is valid.

These professionals also performed a “standard-setting study”; that is, they went through the tests question by question and decided, through a rigorous process, how many questions a beginning professional should be able to answer correctly. From this study emerged a recommended passing score. The final passing score was approved by your state’s Department of Education.

In other words, throughout the development process, school counseling practitioners and educators have
determined what the tests would contain. The practitioners in your state determined which tests would be used for licensure in your subject area and helped decide what score would be needed to achieve licensure. This is how professional licensure works in most fields: those who are already licensed oversee the licensing of new practitioners. When you pass The Praxis Series Subject Assessments, you and the practitioners in your state can be assured that you have the knowledge required to begin practicing your profession.