COMPASS
DIAGNOSTIC AND PLACEMENT ASSESSMENT

What Is COMPASS? Why is it important?

- COMPASS (a computerized assessment in reading, writing, and math) is part of the College of Mount St. Joseph’s admission process. Your COMPASS scores are an indication of your preparedness for college-level work. They identify what classes you should take during your first semester. Our goal is to ensure that you begin at the right level for you, with classes that are neither so easy that they don’t challenge you nor so difficult that you’ll feel overwhelmed.
- Everyone’s COMPASS is unique because it is an adaptive test. “Adaptive” means that COMPASS administers questions based on your answers. If you answer easy questions correctly, COMPASS will give you more difficult questions. By adjusting to your particular skill level, COMPASS seeks to challenge but not discourage you.

What kinds of math questions will I find on COMPASS?

- The mathematics portion of COMPASS has five levels: pre-algebra/numerical; algebra; college algebra; geometry; and trigonometry. You will begin with pre-algebra/numerical questions. As you answer questions correctly, COMPASS will give you harder questions. If you answer incorrectly, COMPASS will give you easier questions. When your test ends, you’ll know what math level is appropriate for you. For tips on preparing for the mathematics portion, see How Should I Prepare for COMPASS below.

Why do I need to complete COMPASS?

- Adult students are required to take COMPASS if one or more of the following applies:
  1. You completed high school but have no previous college experience.
  2. Your cumulative GPA from previous college work at a regionally accredited institution is below a 2.0.
  3. You have less than 12 semester hours or 18 quarter hours of college work from a regionally accredited institution and/or no English composition credit.
  4. Your previous college work is from a non-regionally accredited institution.

(Note: Students not required to complete COMPASS for admission may be required to take the math portion for advising if they do not have any previous college math.)

Do I need computer skills?

- No. COMPASS is a very user-friendly test. But if you need help, The Learning Center staff is readily available.

When should I take COMPASS?

- As soon as possible. A final admission decision cannot be made until you take COMPASS.

How much time will I need to complete COMPASS?

- Generally, you should allow about three hours to complete all three sections (reading, writing, and math), although you may find that you need less time. COMPASS is not timed, so you can take as much time as you need. If setting aside three hours is difficult for you, you can schedule COMPASS sections on more than one day.

How should I prepare for COMPASS?

Experience has shown that individuals who review prior to taking COMPASS often achieve higher scores. We strongly recommend that you review sample COMPASS questions at www.act.org/compass/sample/algebra.html. Here are two additional very helpful websites on which some great preparation tips and sample tests can be found: http://www.gsc.edu/academics/acadenrich/lis/CPE/Pages/default.aspx and http://www.highlands.edu/site/learning-support-compass-practice. A study guide called Chart Your Success On The COMPASS (Commander, Cotter & Calahan) can be found in some libraries and bookstores or ordered from the Contemporary Publishing Company of Raleigh, Inc. For algebra review, try websites such as www.khanacademy.org or www.sosmath.com.

Call The Learning Center at 513.244.4202 to make an appointment.