



COMPASS GUIDELINES

**For ARC Staff, Admissions, Records,
Students, and Advisors**

- 1) The COMPASS placement exam is for **“placement”** only. To better align Crowder College with ACT regulations, a student has the option of **one retake per section, per year** of the COMPASS (Math, Reading, and Writing). ACT clearly states that allowing more than one retake per year compromises the integrity of the test, and that **“statistically, placement rarely changes from the original score.”** Crowder College will honor the highest COMPASS score achieved for placement in prerequisite courses for enrollment of the following semester.
- 2) If a student wishes to “test out” of a class, the CLEP test is the more appropriate choice (for English or Math), or the Testing Out “Credit by Examination” option outlined in the Crowder College catalog. See the Crowder catalog for more information, and/or speak to ARC Staff for CLEP and Testing Out opportunities.
- 3) **COMPASS Placement and Retake Policies:**

The COMPASS exam is required of all first time students who are seeking a degree, enrolling for 7 credit hours or more, or enrolling for a course that has a placement requirement. Transfer students who have not completed their freshman requirements in English and/or math will be required to take the Crowder College placement exams or provide adequate ACT scores. Students who have completed 6 hours will be required to take placement exams prior to enrolling in additional coursework.

 - a. The COMPASS consists of three parts: Math, Reading, and Writing. The \$25 application fee to Crowder covers the cost of the first attempt of the test. Any retakes of any section cost \$5 each. If the student has ACT scores that meet the criteria in areas of the COMPASS, the student may not have to take a certain section. Also, if the student is not degree seeking, and plans only to take certain courses – they may not have to take the whole exam. However, at a later date, they may have to take the other portions if they change their mind about seeking a degree.
 - b. A student cannot retake a section on the same day a test was administered. The probability of the student scoring at or within a couple of points of the original score is very high without proper studying for a second administration of the test. It is the experience of ARC Staff that nothing is gained by immediate retakes. This however, can be appealed to the ARC Director or Crowder site managers if dire need is demonstrated for an immediate retake.
 - c. For students who have taken the COMPASS on a retake basis for the year (used their one time already) and wish to take the COMPASS again during any given year, may have the opportunity if the following takes place –1) an appeal must be made to the ARC Director, who then confers with the Dean of Students, 2) the student’s instructor (of which the student is currently taking a class) asks specifically for a retake, because they feel that the student is improperly placed and could take a higher course, 3) the student was physically ill, a malfunction of the computer, an emergency tore them away from the test, or a drill/emergency of some kind took place (fire, tornado) causing the test to end. These and other exceptions can be appealed with the ARC Director or a Crowder site manager on a case-by-case discretionary basis.
- 4) During group testing on the main campus, if a student is past 10 minutes late for their COMPASS appointment – they will be asked to reschedule. Those off campus sites who have walk-in availability, and/or do not do group testing may choose not to enforce this policy. Accommodations will be made on a case-by-case discretionary basis for those students who may have gotten lost, or had some other kind of dire need or excuse for arriving late. During group testing on the main campus – directions begin at the hour the test is scheduled to the entire group. Therefore, having people show up late to their appointment is difficult for staff to reiterate instructions to those who came in late. Also, given the amount of time for the COMPASS to be completed, a student arriving late may have to reschedule if they arrive too late to complete the entire test before the lab closes for the day.
- 5) For courtesy sake, during peak testing times – it is highly suggested that students make every effort to show up for their scheduled COMPASS testing time. Students who do not show up and do not cancel are taking spots of students who need to be tested.
- 6) A COMPASS guideline book is available that has study questions for students who need to take the test. The guideline book is available at the ARC. For further information about the test, students can visit ACT’s website at

www.act.org. This website also has calculator specifications regarding what kinds of calculators can be used during testing sessions.

- 7) At no time can a student copy or take with them any portion of the COMPASS test outside the testing facility. All test materials are the property of ACT, and scratch paper will be collected by test proctors for shredding.
- 8) Students who are served through the Office of Disability Services (ODS) need to inform ARC staff when making their testing appointments of any accommodations that may be necessary in order for them to successfully take the COMPASS test. Students who have yet to report a disability and do not have an open case will need to report their disability to ODS so a case will be opened for services.

Any questions regarding these policies, please direct them to the ARC Director, Amy Frieling, at Crowder College, 2nd Floor Newton Hall, on the main campus. ARC's phone number is (417) 455-5602.