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Most teachers, or folks becoming teachers, will have to take a Praxis exam at some point. I'm working toward a specialist licensure in Early Childhood Special Education through CU-Denver, so I took the first two weeks of summer to study for a Praxis exam, and then I signed up to take it at home since that seemed easiest. Well, I was very wrong. My experience taking the Praxis exam at home can be summed up easily, if not ridiculously: I almost got my scores thrown out because I glanced at a wall. Thankfully, not only did my scores not get thrown out, but I also passed the test. And—lucky for you—I'm here to explain what it's like taking the Praxis at home versus going to a testing center like a fellow colleague did. (Spoiler: Go to a testing center if you can.)

Once I could sign into the specific site at my testing time, a proctor from Educational Testing Services (ETS) joined via messaging and could see and hear me. They took control of my computer to turn off the ability to take a screenshot and put it into Do Not Disturb mode. I was allowed to use a small whiteboard or a sheet of paper inside a transparent sheet protector with an erasable marker for notes. I had to show that my ears were open and visible and that my forearms were clear. Then, I had to pan around the room. I live in a small condo with my desk set up in my living room, so I had to scan my entire kitchen/living room space. When my desk is against the wall, the bathroom door is behind me; the proctor needed me to have my back to the main door, so I had to move my desk to make that happen. Luckily, my desk is small, but I am not really sure what would have happened if I couldn't physically do that. I also had to use my phone's camera to show them that nothing was on, around, or under my desk. At this point, with my desk turned awkwardly, I was facing a window with a wall directly to my right—all of which the first proctor running this first video screening could see. Once I started the test, things went smoothly. I was getting in the zone until a new proctor came on. Then, they interrupted my concentration. They told me I needed to tilt my computer down just slightly so they could see better. Eventually, after about two hours of staring at a screen, my eyes grew tired. Because a third new proctor had joined, they evidently didn't know I was next to a wall. When I glanced over briefly, they interrupted me again. They paused the test, and I had to go through the entire video screening again. I was not happy. In fact, I was quite furious. I asked them how I was supposed to stare directly at a 13-inch screen and nowhere else outside that screen for two and a half hours when my eyes got tired. Their answer? Put in an official request for a disability accommodation to "rest my eyes" well before the testing date. For the last 30 minutes of the test, I willed myself not to look away from the screen. Because this didn't materially affect anything related to demonstrating my abilities while taking the test, according to ETS and their proctors, no further action was taken and my scores were reported. The whole thing was upsetting, to say the least. I understand that there are cheaters out there, and these processes are put in place for a reason. But the entire call-out of glancing off-screen after I had gone through the visual video check was ridiculous. It wasn't my fault that the proctors changed at least three times and missed that first part of the check. I did pass, which I found out another few weeks after that email. A colleague of mine who also took her Praxis at home had a similarly upsetting experience. Her first proctor told her that there would be a break in between sections to use the bathroom. When that time came, my colleague (who was seven months pregnant!) tried to get the proctor's attention for several minutes. At this point, she believes that it was the third new proctor who, when they finally answered, told her that there isn't a set break and that she could just use the bathroom whenever she needed to. Overall, my colleague wasted about eight minutes trying not only to get the proctor's attention but also using the bathroom when she could have just gone whenever she wanted all along. Eight minutes wasted during a Praxis is precious, precious time. Whitney Bartkey, a colleague of mine at a private school in Boulder, Colorado, is working toward the same specialist licensure I am obtaining. She chose to take the test at a center to avoid interruptions. Luckily, she found plentiful options for when and where to take the test and opted for a local community college. (She also had concerns about her Internet running properly at home, which is definitely something to consider.)

On the day of her test, she arrived 30 minutes early as recommended, however, the building wasn't open yet. Beyond that minor snafu, the rest of the morning went seamlessly. There was clear signage of where to go, and Bartkey brought in only her ID for check-in. Lockers were available if she needed to secure something outside the testing room. The testing room consisted of about 20 small cubicles with desktop computers. To enter, Bartkey was scanned by a metal-detecting wand. Each computer space had two pieces of paper and a pencil for taking notes, which would be turned in and thrown away at the end. Bartkey was instructed that if she needed to use the bathroom, she could just head to the door, and someone would check her out and back in. At no point was Bartkey interrupted by a proctor. Overall, she could concentrate, understood the parameters of the actual test taking, and passed as well. "Taking the Praxis was smoother and less intense than I had anticipated," says Bartkey. "The in-person environment was great because professionals could handle some details. There was an expert there to deal with potential challenges." If getting to a testing center is a pain, don't worry too much about taking it at home. Just be prepared for what I've described above. But if you have access to a testing center, you're more likely to have a hassle-free experience.

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Student teachers have the option to take their Praxis exams online — at home or another secure location — this year, ETS announced today. This online option is intended to give students a convenient, flexible and safe way to take their exam in the midst of disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The online option is being offered in addition to testing at test centers, which are currently closed or limited in seating. Students can begin registering on May 15 for the online Praxis exams, which start on May 19. Here is what you need to know about the at-home Praxis exams.

The content, format and on-screen experience of an online Praxis exam is identical to that of the Praxis exam taken at a test center. The online testing is available in the United States as well as American Samoa, ASHA, DODEA, Guam, NASP, Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands. To preserve the integrity of the exam, a human proctor will be monitoring and recording you as well as your computer screen during the exam, using a video camera. Your photo will also be taken. You can take a Praxis exam at home if you meet these conditions: The desktop or laptop you plan to use satisfies the Praxis requirements, including the installation of the ETS Test Browser and the ProctorU Systems Check;The room in which you plan on taking the exam is an acceptable environment; andThe exam subject is being offered as an at-home option. For the May Praxis exams, ETS is making only the more popular exams available for the at-home option. Click here to check if your exam is being offered online.

ETS plans on adding more exam titles for the June exams. You can use a desktop or a laptop. You should make the determination of which device works best for you beforehand. You are not allowed to use a tablet or mobile device. First, you need to go through an equipment and environment checklist to make sure you meet all the criteria. For example, only Chrome and Firefox are approved as browsers and your computer's camera must be capable of showing the proctor a 360° view of your room. And your computer and keyboard must be placed on a desk or other tabletop surface. Second, you should have an acceptable ID ready. To be acceptable, your ID must contain your name, photo and signature. Examples of acceptable forms of ID include your passport, valid driver's licence, national ID, and military ID. Check here for details on ID requirements.

Lastly, you need to set up an ETS account for the Praxis exam if you don't have one already. The name you use for your account should match the name on your primary ID. For details on your equipment and environment must comply with the exam requirements, check here.

Log in to your ETS account and select "Register for a Praxis Test." Then, select the option for the at-home Praxis exam. After you've completed the registration, you will receive a confirmation email from ETS. You will also receive an email from ProctorU with instructions on how to complete your ProctorU registration and select your exam date and time. Once you've completed this process, you will receive an on-screen confirmation as well as by email. If you need to reschedule your Praxis exam, you must log in to your ProctorU account and make the change no later than 30 minutes before your exam start time. You can cancel as long as you do so at least 24 hours before your exam start time, if you want a partial refund of your fees. To cancel, call 1-800-772-9476 (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET). There are online resources that you can use to help you prepare for specific Praxis exams.

In partnership with ETS, Khan Academy provides an official Praxis Core Prep for math, reading and writing. The courses are free, personalized and designed to build your skills with instructional videos, exercises with instant feedback, and timed practice tests. Kaplan Praxis Prep is meant to be a complete Praxis study resource, with personalized online practice. It provides exclusive strategies and content review for the three core exams — math, reading and writing. In addition, it covers these exams: Principles of Learning & Teaching K-6, 5-9 & 7-12;Elementary Education: Content Knowledge; andElementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment. The course comes with 2,000+ practice questions, with full answers and explanations; 19 full-length practice tests — three for each Core exam, two each for the PLT K-6, PLT 5-9, PLT 7-12, Elementary Education Content Knowledge, and Elementary Education CIA exams; prep book; video instruction; and more. Kaplan charges \$399 for the Prep Course plan and \$499 for the Prep Course Plus plan. The only difference between the two plans is, the Prep Course Plus plan also includes 7.5 hours of video instruction on arithmetic, algebra, and geometry with 400+ practice questions. Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation. No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. Is your local Praxis test center closed due to Covid-19? Or do you simply feel uncomfortable going to a test center in light of the pandemic? If your answer to either of these questions is "yes," I have some good news. ETS, the makers of the Praxis exam, currently offer Praxis at Home, a service that allows you to take a real Praxis exam and receive a valid score report. Which Praxis exams can be taken at home? In addition to the three-part Praxis Core Exam, there are roughly a hundred Praxis II exams. So which of these can you take? Well, first, Praxis Core Reading, Math, and Writing are all available in "Praxis at Home" form. Second, at the time of this writing, slightly under half of the Praxis II exams are available to be taken at home. ETS is prioritizing the most commonly taken Praxis II tests, including the Praxis PLT (Principles of Learning and Teaching) series and the Praxis Elementary Education set of tests. More commonly taken subject tests for areas such as math, physical education, special education, and social studies are also available. The flip side of this, of course, is which Praxis exams can't be taken at home. Less commonly licensed subject areas such as foreign languages, business, or psychology are absent from the Praxis at Home lineup at the time of this writing. However, ETS has indicated that they may add more tests to their list of Praxis at Home assessments. To see if the Praxis test (or tests) that you need to take are currently available as a home test, check ETS's official list of Praxis at Home exams. How do you register for and schedule your Praxis at Home test? To take a Praxis at Home test, register for your Praxis through the ETS website. You can do this much in the same way you'd register to take the Praxis in a test center. However, there are a few differences. Most noticeably, you don't actually schedule your test on the ETS website. Instead, you pay for the test through ETS, and then receive an email from ProctorU, the partner company that schedules and supervises the Praxis at Home tests for ETS. The email from ProctorU will come within one business day of your registration with ETS, and usually comes immediately. This email gives you your login to the ProctorU website, and instructions on how to schedule your exam and connect with a ProctorU exam supervisor on test day. Detailed instructions on registration and booking can be found on the official Praxis website. What are the software and hardware requirements? The Praxis at Home can be taken either on a Windows or Mac OS computer. You will need a microphone, speakers, and webcam. The microphone and speakers cannot be a headset; headwear of any kind is forbidden during the test unless it's worn for religious purposes. You'll also need to pass the automated ProctorU equipment check, which tests your computer to make sure it has a fully compatible operating system, sufficient Internet speed, properly working audio and video equipment, and so on. Finally, you'll need to download and install the special ETS browser to be used with the test. For details on the technology requirements and the system check, see the official equipment page for the Praxis at Home. How is the test administered? On test day, you'll connect to your ProctorU exam supervisor (ProctorU provides instructions on how to do this). Your exam supervisor will speak to you through voice and text chat, walk you through the security check, and take control of your computer so that they can log in to your ETS browser and launch your test. The security check requires you to physically turn your camera so that your proctor can see your entire testing room. They will make sure you have no prohibited items in your immediate testing area—your desk and anything within an arm's reach. If you do have a prohibited item or device nearby, don't worry—you won't be disqualified from taking the test. Instead, you'll simply be asked to remove any disallowed items before the test begins. You'll also need to hold your ID up to the camera. The acceptable ID documents for Praxis at Home are the same ones you'd need to take the traditional Praxis. You'll be allowed to take notes on a small whiteboard, or on a sheet of paper inside a clear plastic sleeve. In either case, notes are taken with a dry erase marker. If you don't have a dry erase marker on test day, you can use a permanent marker and erase the marks with alcohol swabs. You will be required to erase all of your notes at the end of the test, holding up your notes to the camera to show the proctor that you've erased everything. When will I receive my scores? Praxis at Home scores are received and sent to schools and teacher licensing boards in the same way as test center Praxis scores. Kristin outlines that process in this post on score reports. Are you planning to take the Praxis at Home test? Let us know your experiences! More from Magoosh