



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
CRIMINAL JUSTICE STANDARDS DIVISION

ROY COOPER
ATTORNEY GENERAL

PO DRAWER 149
RALEIGH
27602-0149
PHONE: (919) 716-6470 • FAX: (919) 716-6752

WAYNE WOODARD
DIRECTOR

**Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) Reading Standard
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
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Question #1: What is the new reading-level standard for admission to Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET)?

Answer: Effective for any BLET school starting on or after September 1, 2010, colleges may not enroll any student who has not been assessed and documented as reading at a 10th grade level or above, as defined in NC Administrative Code (NCAC) 12 09B .0203(e) below:

12 NCAC 09B .0203 ADMISSION OF TRAINEES

(e) The school shall not admit an individual, including partial or limited enrollees, as a trainee in a presentation of the Basic Law Enforcement Training Course unless the individual has taken the reading component of a nationally standardized test within one year prior to admission to Basic Law Enforcement Training and has scored at or above the tenth grade level, or the equivalent. A nationally standardized test is a test that:

- (1) reports scores as national percentiles, stanines or grade equivalents; and
- (2) compares student test results to a national norm.

All reading assessment scores must be current within one year of admission to BLET. In addition, there are no exceptions or exclusions to this standard. Currently, any student, including partial or limited enrollees, who participates in any part of BLET must meet the standard. The Criminal Justice Commission voted on February 18, 2011, to change the Administrative Code pertaining to Admission of Trainees to note that those officers who currently hold general certification or have held general certification within 12 months prior to the date of partial enrollment will not have to pass the Reading Comprehension segment for entrance into BLET. Additionally, the Commission recommended that the reading rule as it is currently written not be applied to officers described above.

Question #2: Are there any exceptions to the testing requirement?

Answer: There is only one exception to the reading standard testing requirement, as described in Question #1. There are no other exceptions, including for students who may possess other types of educational credentials, such as a bachelor's degree.

Question #3: Who mandated this rule and why?

Answer: The reading standard was mandated by the Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission, or CJ Commission, in relation a goal in the Commission's System Plan (6th Edition, 2001-2011). Goal 1 in the Plan states: "Continue to study reading comprehension and writing competency and their relationship to successful completion of Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) and success as a criminal justice officer." It is part of the Commission's overall vision for law enforcement training and professionalism. School Directors received official notice of the change to 12 NCAC 09B.0203 via a June 2, 2010 email titled "Implementation of the Commission's BLET Reading Comprehension Standard" sent from Mark Dearth, Training Systems Manager, Criminal Justice Standards, Department of Justice. The email noted that although the rule became effective on June 1, 2010, the Commission mandated that it would be implemented for BLET offerings starting September 1, 2010, and after, to give delivery agencies time to respond.

Question #4: Is there a list of approved reading assessments that meet the Commission's reading standard?

Answer: There is no list of approved assessments. Each delivery agency is given the flexibility and responsibility to choose any assessment that meets the criteria outlined in 12 NCAC 09B.0203(e).

Question #5: How can I know if the reading assessment used meets the criteria?

Answer: It is recommended that each BLET School Director work with administrators and testing officials to make this determination. The relevant questions, based on the criteria outlined in 12 NCAC 09B.0203(e), follow:

- Does the selected assessment have a reading component?
- Does the assessment report scores as national percentiles, stanines or grade equivalents?
- Does the assessment compare student test results to a national norm?
- Does the assessment allow the school/agency to determine if an individual has scored at or above the tenth grade level or equivalent?

Question #6: How will the standard be audited on this issue? What documentation is needed?

Answer: Compliance with the reading standard will be audited by Department of Justice staff, per guidance given in the 06/02/10 memo referenced above. The DOJ memo included the following information about auditing and documentation:

The Criminal Justice Standards Division of the Department of Justice will require each Commission-accredited BLET school to maintain the mandatory documentation ensuring that your selected reading component of a nationally standardized test complies with the Commission's mandate of this rule. This documentation can be in the form of written material and/or statement from the vendor supplying your test; however, it is incumbent upon the Commission BLET School and Commission School Director for ensuring compliance to this rule. (6/2/10 DOJ memo)