CASAS Exam Guide: Reading, Math, and Listening Assessments

The CASAS exam is a three-part test used by many nursing programs to screen applicants for nursing coursework. Think of it as three gates, not one average. You do not need nursing knowledge. You need accurate reading, basic mathematics, and the ability to understand spoken information.

Understand the CASAS exam format and pass rule

For nursing admissions, CASAS means Clinical Admission Skills Assessment. It is computer-based, multiple-choice, and divided into thre timed sections:

- **Reading assessment:** 50 questions in 75 minutes.
- **Math assessment:** 50 questions in 75 minutes.
- **Listening assessment:** 40 questions in 40 minutes.

That is 140 questions in 190 minutes, excluding breaks. By item count, the test is about 36% reading, 36% math, and 29% listening. The sections produce separate results, so do not assume these percentages create an automatic combined score.

There is no national CASAS pass mark. Your program sets the cut score—the minimum required result—and may require you to meet it ir every section. If you fail that standard, your application may be delayed or may not move forward. Retake waiting periods and score-validity rules vary, so check them before booking.

Know what you must be able to do

Reading assessment

The reading comprehension test asks for main ideas, supporting details, purpose, tone, word meaning in context, and supported conclusions. An **inference** is a conclusion supported by clues rather than stated outright.

Example: After a paragraph says a student "skipped class to study," you may be asked what the student most likely values.

Math assessment

The mathematics test covers whole numbers, fractions, decimals, percentages, ratios, basic algebra, measurement, and conversions.

Example: "What is 15% of 80?" The answer is 12. You need solid arithmetic, not advanced calculus or nursing dosage knowledge.

Listening assessment

The listening comprehension test uses recorded conversations and presentations. You must catch details, explain word meaning in context, and identify a speaker's purpose or attitude. You hear each passage once.

Example: "I can meet after lunch" means "not before lunch," not necessarily "immediately after lunch."

Avoid the mistakes that cost points

- **Chasing exact words:** A correct paraphrase can look wrong. Cost: lost reading points.
- **Over-calculating:** Estimate first, then calculate precisely. Cost: running out of time.
- **Listening passively:** Note who, what, and why. Cost: missing reasons and examples.
- **Answering from nursing knowledge:** CASAS tests academic basics. Cost: confident wrong answers.
- **Ignoring program rules:** Cost: a wasted attempt and a delayed application.

Build a realistic study plan

Reserve **6–8 hours a week** in five 60–90-minute blocks. I would start with an official sample under timed conditions. Sort every miss into reading, calculation, listening, or timing.

Then study in this order:

1. **Reading:** Main idea, detail, purpose, inference, and vocabulary.
2. **Math:** Fractions, percentages, ratios, basic algebra, measurement, and conversions.
3. **Listening:** Details, word meaning, purpose, and attitude.
4. **Mixed timed practice:** Add repair work on your weakest area.

Move your weakest section forward. Work untimed first, review every miss, then repeat under time. Continue until two consecutive mixed sets meet the required standard within the time limit.

Prepare during the last 48 hours

Revise your error log, percentage and conversion methods, and the main-idea, inference, and purpose patterns. Do one short timed set and review it carefully. Confirm test-day rules and required ID, sleep normally, and stop cramming.

Skip new topics, marathon sessions, and course memorisation. They add stress rather than dependable marks.

Conclusion: Your shortest reliable route is to learn the question patterns, practise under time, and repair the section costing you points. That is how preparation becomes a passing CASAS exam result.

Frequently asked questions

Is there one CASAS passing score?

No. Your program sets the minimum, often separately for each section.

Can one strong section offset a weak one?

Do not assume so. Each section may be a separate gate.

Can I skip a section?

Do not plan to; your program may require all three.

How often can I retake?

Check the waiting period, whether retakes are section-based, and the score-validity rule.

Should I guess?

Yes. Wrong multiple-choice answers carry no extra penalty, so answer every item.

How long should I study?

Let your diagnostic and timed results set the pace, rather than relying on a fixed promise.