



Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System Procedures Chapter 3 – Educational Policies

Procedure 3.3.1 Assessment for Course Placement

Part 1. Definitions.

Subpart A. College-level courses. A college-level course is a college or university course that meets college-level standards. Credits earned in a college-level course apply toward the requirements of a certificate, diploma, or degree.

Subpart B. Developmental-level course. A developmental-level course is a course designed to prepare a student for entry into college-level courses. Developmental-level course credits do not apply toward a certificate, diploma, or degree.

Part 2. Assessment for Course Placement Committee. The vice chancellor of academic and student affairs shall appoint an Assessment for Course Placement Committee (ACPC).

Subpart A. Committee membership. The committee shall include college and university faculty, academic and student affairs staff, and students.

Subpart B. Committee responsibilities. The ACPC shall periodically review national assessment instruments and submit recommendations to the vice chancellor on the following: the instrument to be designated as the system-endorsed placement instrument, the minimum scores on the system-endorsed placement instrument for placement into courses at the developmental or college level, changes to board policy and system procedure related to assessment, and other items as needed to address consistency of assessment and placement practices at system colleges and universities.

Part 3. Placement Instruments.

Subpart A. System-endorsed placement instrument. Effective July 1, 2006, the College Board Accuplacer is designated as the system-endorsed placement instrument. Each college and university shall evaluate students with the system-endorsed placement instrument. A student who meets one of the conditions specified in Part 5. Subpart A. of this procedure may be exempted from completing the Accuplacer for course placements. A student who presents ACT subject area test scores may also be exempted from completing the Accuplacer for course placements, and the ACT subject area test scores may be used to determine course placements. System colleges and universities shall not require the ACT test for course placements.

Subpart B. Assessment for course placement in a higher-level course. A college or university may use additional assessment measures in reading, writing or mathematics for placement into a course above the introductory college level only if the system-endorsed course placement instrument does not assess for placement into the higher-level course. Additional assessment measures as specified in this subpart shall not be used in place of the

system-endorsed course placement instrument. These additional assessment measures shall be administered at no cost to the student.

Subpart C. Assessment of students who are non-native speakers of English. A student who is identified as being a non-native speaker of English shall be evaluated for college readiness in the area of English language proficiency using the ESL version of the system-endorsed placement instrument.

Subpart D. Additional assessment measures. A college or university may require additional assessment measures (e.g., computer literacy, study skills inventories, or occupational-related tests) for purposes other than the objectives (reading, writing, and math) of the system-endorsed placement instrument for advising and placement purposes. These additional assessment measures shall be administered at no cost to the student.

Subpart E. Student fees for system-endorsed placement instruments. A student shall not be charged a fee for the system-endorsed placement instrument. A college or university may charge a fee to a student who requests a retest of the system-endorsed placement instrument.

Subpart F. Common background questions for collection of demographic data. Each college and university shall incorporate a set of system-established student demographic background questions into the assessment process.

Part 4. Placement Instrument Review and Approval. A complete review of the system-endorsed placement instrument shall be conducted at least every five years, and the vice chancellor shall approve the system-endorsed assessment instrument that shall be specified in this procedure. Criteria used to justify the recommendation for the system-endorsed instrument shall include instrument validity and reliability indices, cost, ease of test administration, availability of related vendor support services, and other relevant information.

Part 5. Criteria for Student Exemptions. Each college and university shall develop criteria for exempting a student from all or portions of the system-endorsed placement instrument and/or the course placement decisions recommended based on the assessment results. A student enrolling exclusively in non-credit courses shall not be required to complete the Accuplacer.

Subpart A. Exemptions. A student may be exempted from taking all or portions of the system-endorsed placement instrument based on documentation of:

1. Assessment scores taken on the system-endorsed placement instrument at any system college or university within three calendar years, inclusive of the current calendar year, with the provision that mathematics scores are valid for only two calendar years, inclusive of the current calendar year, as defined in Subpart A. 2. below;
2. Subject area test scores equivalent to or above the system-endorsed minimum on standardized college admissions tests (ACT) taken within three calendar years, inclusive of the current calendar year, for reading and writing and two calendar years, inclusive of the current calendar year, for mathematics;
3. Assessment scores on an assessment instrument other than the system-endorsed instrument at an institution outside the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, providing that placements can be determined by using the placement levels of the alternative instrument;

4. Successful prior postsecondary education indicating a high probability of success in the introductory college-level course for which a course placement score is required; or fulfillment of a college-level course in the area for which the course placement score is used.

Subpart B. Course placement decisions. A student may be exempted from course placement decisions that are based on assessment scores according to institutionally-based criteria. A college or university shall specify the type(s) of additional evidence that will be considered to exempt a student from the results of the assessment scores and the processes that will be used to make the decision.

Part 6. Course Placement.

Subpart A. System minimum course placement scores. The Assessment for Course Placement Committee (ACPC) shall develop and recommend to the vice chancellor a process for establishing system minimum course placement scores on the system-endorsed instrument for use by colleges and universities to place a student appropriately in developmental courses or introductory college-level writing, mathematics, and reading-intensive courses.

Subpart B. Implementation of system minimum course placement scores. The following course placements based on Accuplacer subtest scores indicate that a student is ready for introductory college-level courses. A student who obtains the minimum score or higher shall be placed in the corresponding college-level course(s).

1. Reading.
 - a. College-level Reading: A student who scores 78 or higher on the Reading Comprehension test shall be placed in courses that designate college-level reading skills as a prerequisite.
 - b. Developmental Reading: A student who scores below 78 on the Reading Comprehension test shall be placed in developmental reading courses.
2. Writing.
 - a. College-level Writing: A student who scores 78 or higher on the Reading Comprehension test shall be placed in college-level writing courses. However, if a system college or university chooses to use the Sentence Skills test as an additional placement measure, a student who scores 78 or higher on the Reading Comprehension test and 86 or higher on the Sentence Skills test shall be placed in college-level writing courses.
 - b. Developmental Writing: A student who scores below 78 on the Reading Comprehension test shall be placed in developmental writing courses. However, if a system college or university chooses to use the Sentence Skills test as an additional placement measure, a student who scores below 86 on the Sentence Skills test shall be placed in developmental writing courses.
3. Mathematics.
 - a. College Algebra: Placement into College Algebra shall be based on two test scores. A student must score 76 or higher on the Elementary Algebra Test and also must

score 50 or higher on the College Level Mathematics test. A student attaining the minimum scores shall be placed in College Algebra.

- b. A system college or university may establish lower minimum score(s) for placement into introductory college-level mathematics courses other than College Algebra and for developmental mathematics courses.

| <u>Placement</u> | <u>Minimum Score</u> | <u>ACCUPLACER Subtest</u> |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--|
| College-level reading | 78 | Reading Comprehension |
| College-level writing | 78 and 86 | Reading Comprehension Sentence Skills (optional additional measure for college-level writing)* * If a college or university opts to use the Sentence Skills subtest as an additional measure, the minimum scores must be attained for both subtests. |
| College Algebra | 76 and 50 | Elementary Algebra College Level Mathematics Both scores are required. A student attaining the minimum scores or higher on both subtests shall be placed in College Algebra. |

Subpart C. Placement based on ACT subject area test scores. A student shall be exempted from taking all or portions of the system-endorsed placement instrument based on documentation of subject area test scores on the ACT test taken within three calendar years, inclusive of the current calendar year, for reading and writing and two calendar years, inclusive of the current calendar year, for mathematics. A student who obtains the following minimum scores or higher shall be placed in the corresponding college-level course(s).

1. Reading. A student who presents a reading subject area test score of 21 or higher shall be placed in courses that designate college-level reading skills as a prerequisite.
2. Writing. A student who presents an English subject area test score of 18 or higher shall be placed in courses that designate college-level writing skills as a prerequisite.
3. Mathematics. A student who presents a mathematics subject area test score of 22 or higher shall be placed in College Algebra. A system college or university may establish lower minimum score(s) for placement into introductory college-level mathematics courses other than College Algebra and for developmental mathematics courses.

Subpart D. Course placement scores for advanced courses. Each college and university may set course placement scores higher than the minimum scores established in Procedure 3.3.1 for college-level courses that are beyond the introductory college level.

Part 7. Ongoing Reporting on Course Placement. Each college and university shall ensure that placement data are entered into the Integrated Statewide Record System (ISRS) according to the standards of the system office, including the following:

- Placement test results;
 - Course placement, and;
 - Student responses to system-approved and required demographic questions asked at the time of assessment.
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Approval Date: 9/12/06,

Effective Date: 1/14/08,

Date and Subject of Revision:

12/8/12 – Amended Part 6, Subpart C. to reflect adopting ACT systemwide minimum course placement scores to waive Accuplacer testing. Other technical clean-up changes were made throughout.

1/25/12 - The Chancellor amends all current system procedures effective February 15, 2012, to change the term “Office of the Chancellor” to “system office” or similar term reflecting the grammatical context of the sentence.

6/10/09 - Amended Part 6, Subpart B to reflect programming changes made by Accuplacer which converted scores from decimals to whole numbers.

1/14/08 - System minimum course placement scores added, obsolete language deleted and clarifying language added.