



Procedure 3.3.1 Assessment for Course Placement

Part 1. Purpose

To establish consistent practices and procedures among colleges and universities for assessment of students' knowledge and skills for course placement.

Part 2. Definitions

ACT

A national standardized test designed to measure knowledge and skills in four areas: English, mathematics, reading and science. The test is offered by ACT Inc., is taken by an individual/student, and generally used by colleges and universities for college admissions.

ACCUPLACER

An adaptive test designed to measure knowledge and skills in reading, writing, and mathematics and used to assess student preparedness for introductory college-level courses. The test is offered by the College Board, is taken by an individual/student, and generally used by colleges and universities for course placement purposes. The term "ACCUPLACER" refers to the *classic* ACCUPLACER test while NGA refers to the Next Generation ACCUPLACER test.

College-level courses

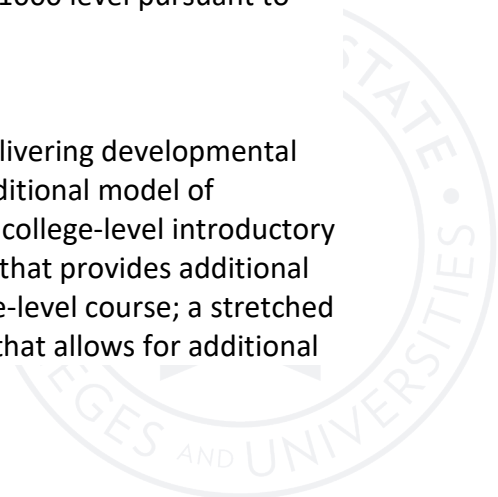
A college or university course that meets college-level standards. Credits earned in a college-level course apply toward the requirements of a certificate, diploma, or degree.

Developmental-level course

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. Developmental-level courses are numbered under 100 or 1000 level pursuant to Operating Instruction 3.36.1.1. Course Numbering Convention.

Developmental models

Various models of curricula and student support approaches of delivering developmental education. Examples of models include, but are not limited to, traditional model of sequenced courses; co-requisite, where students are enrolled in a college-level introductory course and concurrently enrolled in a developmental-level course that provides additional support or receives additional supplemental support to the college-level course; a stretched college-level course that is extended over a longer period of time that allows for additional



academic curricula and support; models that combine multiple developmental education levels into a single course; or models that compress the course content over a shorter period of time so that two levels of developmental education courses can be completed within one semester.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA)

The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) and alternate assessments (MCA-Modified and MTAS) are the state tests designed to measure student progress toward Minnesota's academic standards and meet the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The MCAs are administered in grades 3-8, 10th and 11th in the subject areas of reading, mathematics, and science. The MCA applicable to System Procedure 3.3.1 are the Grade 10 MCA Reading test and the Grade 11 MCA Mathematics test. Parents may opt out of MCA testing, pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 120B.31.

Placement

The upper limit of the coursework in a particular discipline a student is qualified to enroll in based on pre-identified measures and cut scores. Additional factors may increase the placement, such as the consideration of additional measures, campus appeals process, etc. Students must be given the opportunity to enroll in the corresponding college-level or developmental-level course based on their placement. Students cannot be required, but have the option, to enroll in a course lower than their placement.

SAT

A national standardized test designed to measure knowledge and skills in three areas: reading, writing, and mathematics. The test is offered by the College Board, is taken by an individual/student, and generally used by colleges and universities for college admissions.

System-endorsed placement instrument or measure

The course placement instrument or measure identified by Minnesota State as the instrument or measure used for course placement purposes at the colleges and universities.

Validation period

The period an acceptable placement score is valid for purposes of course placement.

Part 3. Assessment for Course Placement Committee

A standing system Assessment for Course Placement Committee (ACPC) must be maintained.

Subpart A. Committee membership

The committee must include college and university faculty members in reading, writing, mathematics, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), academic and student affairs staff and administrators, and students.

Subpart B. Committee responsibilities

The ACPC shall periodically review national course placement instruments and placement practices and submit recommendations to the senior vice chancellor for academic and student affairs on the following:

- acceptable placement measures,
- the instruments to be designated as the system-endorsed placement instruments,
- the minimum scores on the system-endorsed placement instruments for placement into courses at the college level,
- changes to board policy and system procedure related to course placement measures, and
- other items as needed to address consistency of measures utilized and placement practices at colleges and universities.

Subpart C. System minimum course placement scores for placement instruments

The ACPC shall develop and recommend to the senior vice chancellor for academic and student affairs a process for establishing system minimum course placement scores and recommend the system college-level minimum course placement scores for 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 D. Placement instrument review and approval

A complete review of the system-endorsed placement instrument must be conducted at least every five years, and the senior vice chancellor for academic and student affairs shall approve the system-endorsed placement instruments that are specified in this procedure. Criteria used to justify the recommendation for the system-endorsed instruments must include instrument validity and reliability indices, cost, ease of test administration, availability of related vendor support services, and other relevant information.

Part 4. Placement Measures

Subpart A. Acceptable placement measures

For students who present subject area test scores from the ACT, SAT, Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA), and the system-endorsed placement instrument (ACCUPLACER), colleges and universities must use them to determine student course placement. When a course, program or college/university requires a specific level of reading, writing, or mathematics skill, the subject area test scores from these measures must be used to determine student placement in courses.

Colleges and universities shall not require students to have taken the ACT, SAT or MCA tests for course placement purposes. For students who have not taken these tests, or do not meet the exemptions in Part 6, colleges and universities shall require students to take the system-endorsed instrument (ACCUPLACER) in the appropriate subject area.

Subpart B. System-endorsed placement instrument

Effective July 1, 2016, the College Board ACCUPLACER is designated as the system-endorsed placement instrument. College and universities shall evaluate students with the ACCUPLACER as specified in this procedure.

Subpart C. Assessment for course placement in a higher-level course

Colleges and universities may use additional assessment measures in reading, writing or mathematics for placement into a course above the introductory college level only if the acceptable placement measures do not assess for placement into the higher-level course. These additional assessment measures must be administered at no cost to the student and be available as an opportunity to all students.

Subpart D. Assessment of students who are non-native speakers of English

A student identified as being a non-native speaker of English must be evaluated for college readiness in the area of English language proficiency using one or more parts of the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) version of the system-endorsed placement instrument (ACCUPLACER). A college or university may use additional measures (e.g., writing samples, oral interviews) to supplement the use of the Accuplacer ESOL tests for course placement purposes in ESOL.

Subpart E. Additional assessment measures

For purposes other than placement in reading, writing, mathematics, or ESOL, colleges and universities may require additional measures (e.g., computer literacy, study skills inventories, occupational-related tests, or readiness for online courses) for advising and placement purposes. These additional assessment measures must be administered at no cost to the student and be available as an opportunity to all students.

Subpart F. Multiple measures for course placement

When a student does not meet college level scores on the acceptable measures, a college or university may use additional measures (e.g., writing samples, oral interviews) to determine placement in reading, writing, or mathematics. These additional measures must be administered at no cost to the student and be available as an opportunity to all students.

Part 5. ACCUPLACER Administration

Subpart A. ACCUPLACER testing and retesting process

Prior to testing, colleges and universities shall inform students how their test score(s) will be used for course placement. When taking the ACCUPLACER for the first time, a student will be provided a reasonable opportunity and time to review ACCUPLACER test materials, including a sample test. When course placement requires the student to take a developmental-level course, the student must be provided the opportunity to retest at the earliest time determined by the student when testing is available, including retesting during or after a student has taken a developmental-level course. Colleges and universities may

have a policy that limits the number of ACCUPLACER retests in a given time period and limits the total number of ACCUPLACER retests.

Subpart B. Student fees ACCUPLACER

A student must not be charged a fee for the ACCUPLACER tests. A college or university may charge a fee to a student who requests a retest of an ACCUPLACER subject area test.

Subpart C. Common background questions for collection of demographic data

College and universities shall incorporate a set of system-established student demographic background questions into the assessment process.

Subpart D. Accommodations for ACCUPLACER testing

When requested in advance by a student through an authorized reasonable accommodation process, colleges and universities shall provide students reasonable accommodations for ACCUPLACER testing.

Part 6. Criteria for Student Exemptions

Colleges and universities shall exempt students from course placement requirements under the criteria identified below.

Subpart A. Exemptions from course placement requirements

Students are exempted from submitting documentation of test scores from the ACT, SAT, or MCA or from taking the ACCUPLACER subject area tests based on;

1. enrollment exclusively in non-credit courses, or
2. documentation of successful completion of a college-level course in the area for which the course placement score is used, or
3. documentation of completion of an associate's degree, a baccalaureate degree, or higher degree.

Students may be exempted from submitting documentation of test scores from the ACT, SAT, or MCA or from taking the ACCUPLACER subject area tests based on;

1. documentation of completion of a diploma or certificate, or
2. documentation of completion of postsecondary courses that indicates a high probability of success in the introductory college-level course for which a course placement score is required.

Subpart B. Exemptions from the ACCUPLACER

A student who does not obtain the minimum course placement subject area scores from the ACT, SAT, or MCA is required to take the ACCUPLACER tests for course placement purposes when a course, program, or college/university policy indicates a requirement for a specific level of reading, writing, or mathematics skills. However, a student must be exempted from taking all or portions of the ACCUPLACER based on documentation of:

1. Reading and writing subject area ACCUPLACER scores from any college or university, within five calendar years, inclusive of the current calendar year.

2. Mathematics subject area ACCUPLACER scores from any college or university, within two calendar years, inclusive of the current calendar year.

A student may be exempted from taking all or portions of the ACCUPLACER based on documentation of placement scores from an alternate instrument, providing that placements can be determined by using the placement levels of the alternative instrument, within the validation period.

Subpart C. Course placement decisions

A student may be exempted from course placement decisions that are based on assessment scores according to institutionally-based criteria. Colleges and universities 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. This subpart does not authorize the placement of a student below the minimum levels established in this procedure.

Part 7. System Minimum Course Placement Scores

Colleges and universities shall develop a course placement process in which a student who obtains the minimum subject area test score from any of the acceptable measures as indicated in the following subparts and is within the acceptable measures validation period must be given a placement into the corresponding college-level course(s) when a course, program, or college/university policy indicates a requirement for a specific level of reading, writing, or mathematics skills.

Subpart A. Placement based on ACT subject area test scores

A student who obtains the following minimum ACT subject area scores or higher based on documentation of subject area test scores on the ACT test taken within five calendar years, inclusive of the current calendar year, for reading, writing, and mathematics must be given a placement of college-level that allows for enrollment in the corresponding college-level course(s). The student must not be required to take all or the associated portion(s) of the ACCUPLACER.

1. Reading. A student who presents a reading subject area test score of 21 or higher must be given a placement of college-level that allows for enrollment 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 must be given a placement of college-level that allows for enrollment in a college-level writing course and 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 must be given a placement of college-level that allows for enrollment in College Algebra. A 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. A college or university may establish higher minimum score(s) for placement into a higher level mathematics course(s).

Subpart B. Placement based on SAT subject area test scores

A student who obtains the following minimum SAT subject area scores or higher based on documentation of subject area test scores on the SAT test taken within five calendar years, inclusive of the current calendar year, for reading, writing, and mathematics must be given a placement of college-level that allows for enrollment in the corresponding college-level course(s). The student must not be required to take all or the associated portion(s) of the ACCUPLACER.

1. Reading: A student who presents an evidence-based reading and writing (ERW) subject area test score of 480 or higher must be given a placement of college-level that allows for enrollment in courses that designate college-level reading skills as a prerequisite.
2. Writing: A student who presents an evidence-based reading and writing (ERW) subject area test score of 480 or higher must be given a placement of college-level that allows for enrollment in a college-level writing course and in courses that designate college-level writing skills as a prerequisite.
3. Mathematics: A student who presents a mathematics subject area test score of 530 or higher must be given a placement of college-level that allows for enrollment in College Algebra. A 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. A college or university may establish higher minimum score(s) for placement into a higher level mathematics course(s).

Subpart C. Placement based on MCA subject area test scores

A student who obtains the following minimum Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) subject area scores or higher based on documentation of subject area test scores on the MCA test taken within five calendar years, inclusive of the current calendar year, for reading and mathematics must be given a placement of college-level that allows for enrollment in the corresponding college-level course(s). The student must not be required to take all or associated portion(s) of the ACCUPLACER.

1. Reading: A student who presents an MCA Reading score of 1047 or higher must be given a placement of college-level that allows for enrollment in courses that designate college-level reading skills as a prerequisite.
 - a. Additional college readiness measures will be needed for a student who presents an MCA Reading score ranging 1042 - 1046 to determine appropriate course placement.
 - b. A student who presents an MCA Reading score of 1041 or below must be placed in courses that designate developmental education level unless additional information indicates differently.
2. College-Algebra: A student who wants to take College Algebra and presents an MCA Mathematics score of 1158 or higher must be given a placement of college-level that allows for enrollment in College Algebra.
 - a. Additional college readiness measures will be needed for a student who

- presents an MCA Mathematics score ranging 1152 - 1157 to determine if the student can be placed into College Algebra.
- b. A student who presents an MCA Mathematics score of 1151 or below cannot be placed in College Algebra unless additional information indicates differently.
3. Statistics: A student who wants to take college-level statistics where the course is offered and presents an MCA Mathematics score of 1148 or higher must be given a placement of college-level that allows for enrollment in an introductory college-level statistics course.
 - a. Additional college readiness measures will be needed for a student who presents an MCA Mathematics score ranging 1146 - 1147 to determine if the student can be placed into college level statistics.
 - b. A student who presents an MCA Mathematics score of 1145 or below cannot be placed in college-level statistics unless additional information indicates differently.
 4. Liberal Arts Mathematics: A student who wants to take Liberal Arts Mathematics where the course is offered and presents an MCA Mathematics score of 1150 or higher must be given a placement of college-level that allows for enrollment in an introductory college-level liberal arts mathematics course.
 - a. Additional college readiness measures will be needed for a student who presents an MCA Mathematics score ranging 1146 - 1149 to determine if the student can be placed into Liberal Arts Mathematics.
 - b. A student who presents an MCA Mathematics score of 1145 or below cannot be placed in Liberal Arts Mathematics unless additional information indicates differently.

Subpart D. Placement based on ACCUPLACER (*a.k.a. classic*) and Next Generation ACCUPLACER (NGA) scores

As of March 1, 2018, the following course placements based on the NGA or the ACCUPLACER subtest scores indicate that a student is ready for introductory college-level courses. A student who obtains the minimum score or higher on either the NGA or the ACCUPLACER within five calendar years, inclusive of the current calendar year, for reading and writing and within two calendar years, inclusive of the current calendar year, for mathematics must be placed in the corresponding college-level course(s). Students who score lower than a college-level score must be given a preliminary placement of developmental-level in the respective discipline area, which may be revised based on consideration of additional measure(s). Students who receive placement in college-level courses may choose to enroll in developmental-level courses.

1. Reading: A student who scores 250 or higher on the NGA Reading test, or a student who scores 78 or higher on the ACCUPLACER Reading Comprehension test, must be given a placement of college-level that allows for enrollment in courses that designate college-level reading skills as a prerequisite.

2. Writing: A student who scores 250 or higher on the NGA Reading test, or a student who scores 78 or higher on the ACCUPLACER Reading Comprehension test, must be given a placement of college-level that allows for enrollment in a college-level writing course and in courses that designate college-level writing skills as a prerequisite. However, if a college or university chooses to use the ACCUPLACER Sentence Skills test as an additional placement measure, a student who scores 78 or higher on the ACCUPLACER Reading Comprehension test and 86 or higher on the ACCUPLACER Sentence Skills test must be given a placement in college-level writing courses.
3. Mathematics:
 - a. College Algebra: A student who scores a 250 or higher on the NGA Advanced Algebra and Functions test must be given a placement of college-level that allows for enrollment in College Algebra. Placement into College Algebra on the ACCUPLACER mathematics tests must be based on two test scores. A student must score 76 or higher on the ACCUPLACER Elementary Algebra Test and also must score 50 or higher on the ACCUPLACER College Level Mathematics test. A student attaining the minimum scores on both ACCUPLACER tests must be given a placement of college-level that allows for enrollment in College Algebra.
 - b. A college or university may use a course placement score from the ACCUPLACER Intermediate Algebra test for placement into College Algebra.
 - c. A college or university may establish lower minimum score(s) for both the NGA and ACCUPLACER tests for placement into introductory college-level mathematics courses other than College Algebra and for developmental mathematics courses.

Subpart E. Course placement scores for developmental-level courses

Each college and university may set course placement scores lower than the minimum scores established in Procedure 3.3.1 for developmental-level courses. Students who score lower than a college-level score and are given placement into developmental-level must enroll in developmental courses or models.

Subpart F. 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 8. Appeals.

Colleges and universities shall establish an appeals process that students may use to appeal a decision regarding course placement. The appeals process may utilize current college or university established processes, such as the academic appeals process.

Part 9. Ongoing Reporting on Course Placement

Subpart A. Entering data

Colleges and universities shall enter placement data into the student information system according to the standards of Minnesota State, including the following:

- Placement test results,
- Course placement, and
- Student responses to system-approved and required demographic questions asked at the time of assessment.

Subpart B. Annual report on additional measures or evidence used

Colleges and universities shall report on an annual basis the use of additional measures or evidence (e.g., writing samples, oral interviews) to supplement the use of the acceptable placement measures for course placement in reading, writing, or mathematics as indicated in Part 4, Subpart F and Part 6, Subpart C. Upon request, colleges and universities shall provide additional data on course placement to the Minnesota State system office.

Date of Adoption: 09/12/06

Date of Implementation: 01/14/08

Date of Last Review: 06/27/19

Date and Subject of Revision:

06/27/19 – Reviewed as part of the five year review cycle pursuant to Board Policy.
Significant amendments throughout the policy.

Additional HISTORY.