



Academic and Student Affairs

DATE: August 10, 2020

TO: Senior Academic and Student Affairs Officers

FROM: Ron Anderson, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs

SUBJECT: REVISED GUIDANCE – Course Placement under COVID-19

Due to continued disruptions in course placement testing due to the ongoing pandemic, the previous guidance issued on May 4th, 2020 **has been extended through the 2020-2021 academic year for students enrolling in courses requiring placement in fall 2020, spring 2021, and summer 2021.**

As before, this guidance applies to all students who do not currently have a valid course placement on record. Students who already have a valid course placement on record and wish to have that placement re-evaluated should follow the guidance provided in the relevant section below.

This directive is effective immediately, supersedes previous guidance, and will remain in effect until indicated or until withdrawn by the Chancellor.

General Course Placement (REVISED)

Colleges and universities shall use **any** of the following placement measures that meets the indicated benchmarks to determine a student's placement into college-level reading, writing, and college algebra courses:

1. Documentation of successful completion of a college-level course in the area for which the course placement score is used.
or
2. Eligible ACT, SAT, and/or MCA scores
 - a. All validity windows apply as outlined within [System Procedure 3.3.1](#).*or*
3. Eligible ACCUPLACER scores (i.e., Classic or Next Generation ACCUPLACER).
 - a. Scores already on file may be used. All benchmarks and validity windows apply as outlined within [System Procedure 3.3.1](#).
 - b. Remote proctoring of the Next Generation ACCUPLACER is available across a variety of options, including through a video/chat conferencing service such as Zoom as outlined by The College Board. Due to bandwidth constraints, locally facilitated remote

proctoring is limited to 3-5 participants per proctor. To test, students will need access to the following:

- i. A computer (desktop or laptop)
 - ii. Stable internet connection
 - iii. Webcam
 - iv. Headset
 - v. Note that devices such as cell phones, Chromebooks, iPads, Surface, and other tablets, will not work.
- c. Students who are unable to test in person or who do not have access to an environment conducive to testing or are without the technology necessary to complete the ACCUPLACER via an approved remote proctoring process should be placed using cumulative HS GPA or informed self-placement as outlined below.
 - d. Colleges and universities may locally determine the extent to which the ACCUPLACER is administered via the approved remote proctoring process and should follow the guidance outlined in the corresponding section below.

or

4. Cumulative HS GPA

- a. **Reading.** A student who presents a HS GPA of 2.6 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 college or university may establish lower minimum HS GPA score(s) for placement into developmental reading courses. A college or university may establish higher minimum score(s) for placement into a higher-level reading course(s).
- b. **Writing.** A student who presents a HS GPA of 2.6 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. A college or university may establish lower minimum HS GPA score(s) for placement into developmental writing courses. A college or university may establish higher minimum score(s) for placement into a higher-level writing course(s).
- c. **College Algebra.** A student who presents both a HS GPA of 2.8 or higher and the self-reported completion of High School Algebra II or its equivalents with a grade of "C-" or above must be given a placement of college-level that allows for enrollment in College Algebra. A college or university may establish minimum HS GPA score(s) for placement into 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).
- d. Self-reported HS GPA *must be accepted* in the absence of an official, transcribed GPA.
- e. For purposes of course placement, **HS GPA is valid for a period of up to 10 years** from the date of high school graduation or, if the student has not yet graduated, from the date submitted.

Colleges and universities may use informed self-placement as follows:

5. Informed Self-Placement

- a. Informed Self-Placement (GSP) is a locally developed tool or process that allows students, in consultation with counselors, advisors, or other faculty and staff, to determine suitable coursework including the appropriate mathematics, reading, English, and English as a Second Language (ESL) course.

- b. Colleges and universities may allow students without valid ACT, SAT, MCA, ACCUPLACER, or HS GPA scores to register for courses up to and including the college-level gateway course within the disciplines of reading, writing, and mathematics (i.e., college algebra) through a locally developed informed self-placement model.
- c. As part of a locally established informed self-placement model, colleges and universities may use scores from alternative assessments to provide course placement recommendations, including but not limited to the following:
 - i. The Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)
 - ii. General Education Development (GED)
 - iii. Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)
- d. To the greatest extent possible, students who qualify for informed self-placement should meet with an advisor prior to registration as outlined in the pre-registration advising section below.

Colleges and universities that offer ESOL/ESL/EAP course pathways

All colleges and universities with students who would under normal conditions have needed to take the ACCUPLACER test for Reading and Writing are strongly encouraged to administer a survey containing the three background questions below or the language background questions normally used at the college or university. Note that fluency in two or more languages does not automatically denote the need for ESOL-specific instruction. Branching profiles (i.e., determining which measures should be applied to which students) should thus be equitable and consistent and operate in concert with local placement practices to ensure the accuracy of course placement decisions for all English language learners (ELL).

1. What language did you learn to speak first?
 - a. English only
 - b. English and another language
 - c. Another language

2. Which language do you speak most often at home?
 - a. English only
 - b. English and another equally
 - c. Another language

3. How many years of education (elementary through high school) were in the United States?
 - a. 0-4
 - b. 5-7
 - c. 8-10
 - d. 11 or more

ELL who have been identified and assessed using locally determined assessments shall be placed according to the results of those assessments.

Pre-registration Advising

To the greatest extent possible, students, including those using informed self-placement, should meet with an academic advisor prior to registration to:

- review the student's academic background and course needs;

- recommend an appropriate course placement;
- review the college or university policy for satisfactory academic progress (SAP);
- orient the student to the available academic support services;
- review the registration process; and
- review the withdrawal process and all related deadlines.

All course placement recommendations must be based on the student’s academic background, occupational experience, and relevant skills and abilities, as well as any established program requirements. **At no time should a student’s demographic status be used for purposes of course placement, including but not limited to the student’s race, ethnicity, gender, age, accent, or background.**

Should a student using informed self-placement elect to register for a course that is at a higher level than was recommended, the student should be advised of the risks associated with this decision, including, but not limited to the academic and financial consequences of being unsuccessful.

It is a recommended practice that colleges and universities retain documentation of all directed self-placement advising sessions.

Proctoring of Next Generation ACCUPLACER (NEW)

Colleges and universities may locally determine the extent to which the ACCUPLACER is administered via the approved remote proctoring process and should follow the guidance outlined above. Colleges and universities that are administering the ACCUPLACER on site must do so in alignment of local campus COVID practices and in accordance with system and Department of Health guidelines.

The Use of Additional Measures (NEW)

Per [System Procedure 3.3.1](#), locally determined measures may only be used *in addition* to the system-endorsed measures for placement into college-level reading, writing, and college algebra courses (Part 4, Subpart A). For the purposes of this interim guidance, these measures include ACT, SAT, MCA, HS GPA, and ACCUPLACER scores. When a student does not receive a college-level placement on any of these 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 4. Subpart F).

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 (Part 4. Subpart E).

Multiple Measures for Course Placement (MMCP) Phase I Implementation

Colleges and universities may implement or continue to implement the MMCP Phase I framework, using a combination of assessment data and HS GPA data to determine a student's course placement. However, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, colleges and universities may postpone implementation until fall 2021.

PSEO and Concurrent Enrollment Students

High school students planning to participate in college or university courses in the 2020-2021 academic year and beyond must still meet the eligibility criteria outlined in System Procedure 3.5.1 and/or the most recent official guidance. For purposes of course placement, PSEO and concurrent enrollment students shall be placed using the measures used for the general student population outlined in this memorandum.

International Students

Each college and university should determine and document the means through which international students will be placed. This process should be posted on the college or university website and made available to students.

Retesting and Re-evaluation of Initial Placement

Due to the suspension of on-site course placement testing and the current constraints associated with ACCUPLACER remote proctoring, students requesting a re-evaluation of their initial course placement may be allowed to receive a placement decision using standalone, self-reported HS GPA, or, in the absence of a valid, reportable HS GPA, guided self-placement without being required to take the ACCUPLACER in accordance with local placement practices. At no point shall a student who is requesting a re-evaluation of their initial placement be directed to enroll in a course that is at a lower level than indicated within their initial placement.

Any student requesting to re-take the ACCUPLACER through a College Board-approved remote proctoring service shall be allowed to do so as outlined within System Procedure 3.3.1 as local capacity allows unless financial constraints or technology access limit or preclude the use of online proctoring.

Additional Considerations

Colleges and universities should identify the means and measures for obtaining alternate course placement data in the absence of ACCUPLACER scores for the following:

- Program admission requirements;
- Course pre-requisites;
- Developmental course placements;
- Higher level course placements (e.g., Calculus);
- Courses outside of reading, writing, and mathematics;
- Summer bridge program eligibility, and;
- Any other local decisions for which ACCUPLACER score data is used.

cc: Presidents
College and University Deans
Testing Directors
PSEO Directors
Concurrent Enrollment Directors