

## Question 1

Do you use the Accuplacer cut scores (MnSCU procedure 3.3.1) or do you have other “floors” or cut scores you use for assessment testing? If other than the standard MnSCU cut scores, what are they? (Please include rationale for the designated "floors" or cut scores if known.)

### Summary of Findings

26 colleges responded to this question. The majority of the schools reported that they do follow Accuplacer cut scores. There was no noted variance other than the following comments:

- Century College does not currently have a floor set for Math. In addition, ESOL of MN is working to set bottom scores and collaborate with Adult Basic Ed on this initiative.
- Riverland Community College uses Accuplacer for students that are not enrolling in ESL. For that group they use the TESL assessment.
- Rochester Community and Technical College reports that their designated floors are different than MnSCU standards in Reading (MnSCU-78, RCTC-77), and Writing (MnSCU-86, RCTC-85).

### Recommendations / Questions to Explore:

1. Are the cut scores effective?
2. How often can a student take and repeat the Accuplacer exams? Does this vary between colleges?

## Question 2

Where are the low-scoring Accuplacer students referred for developmental coursework?

### Summary of Findings

- 25 colleges responded to this question.
- 84% of respondents said that low scoring Accuplacer students are referred on-campus for developmental coursework.
- 40% of respondents also noted that they refer the lower scoring students to an offsite Adult Basic Education program.
- Century College noted that their ESOL students are referred to an ESOL advocate.
- Lake Superior College noted that students are also referred to the Learning Center to work on refreshing their skills through PassKey.
- Minnesota West Community and Technical College offers basic skill development classes to complement developmental courses. Students are also referred to counselors and advisors to develop learning contracts.
- North Hennepin Community College has pre-requisites/placement result holds on all registrations until they take the required courses. They also use intrusive advising with students that test into the developmental score range.
- Rainy River Community College responded that developmental students are placed into the appropriate courses and are referred to the Learning Center. They also noted that additional assessments are given in class to determine college-level readiness.
- South Central College said that students that do not meet the minimum cut scores are placed into college readiness courses. Completion of college readiness with a grade of C or above is required to proceed forward on coursework.

### Recommendations / Questions to Explore:

1. How many students that are referred to developmental courses actually enroll?

2. Does enrollment in college readiness courses increase success or retention?
3. What is the process for referring students for developmental coursework? Is there a best practice?

### Question 3

What developmental courses does your college offer in Reading? Writing? Math? ESOL? Please include course numbers, course names, course sequencing, and number of credits of each offering.

### Summary of Findings

(See Developmental Course Offerings section - MnSCU Two-year Institution Developmental Course Offerings Table)

Significant variability was identified among developmental course offerings within MnSCU.

- In Reading, the number of sequential course offerings varies from 1-3, varying from 1-5 credits per course. The designator for developmental reading courses varies (they include: ENGL, DVCM, ADEV, STSK, GTEC, RDG, READ).
- In Writing, the number of sequential course offerings varies from 1-3, varying from 2-5 credits per course.
- In Math, the number of sequential course offerings varies from 1-11, varying from 1-5 credits per course.
- In ESOL, course offerings listed on grid if provided through the survey. Feedback was limited for ESOL offerings. The designator for ESOL courses varies (they include: ESL, ENSL, EAP, ELL, ENAP, ENGL)

### Recommendations / Questions to Explore:

1. Does the variability in developmental course offerings lead to variability in remediation and preparation for college-level (MNTC) coursework?
2. How important are course offering designators when referring students to developmental courses for reading, writing, math, and ESOL? Does the variability in designators create confusion?
3. Do developmental courses transfer from one MnSCU institution to another? Why or why not?
4. Are we enforcing prerequisite to align with the sequential course offerings?

## QUESTION #4

Do you have adult basic education offerings? If so, are they on-campus or off-campus?

### Summary of Findings:

- 24 colleges responded to this question
- 58% of respondents indicated that they offer adult basic education
- 79% of those who offer ABE courses offer them on campus
- 42% of respondents indicated that they do not offer adult basic education
- Many of those who do not offer the ABE courses indicated that the offerings are available through the school district.
- Many collaborate with and refer students to other programs rather than offering the ABE courses on campus (Adult Learning Center, School Districts, or Community Education Programs).
- One college is considering connecting an ABE teacher to the lowest level math course offering.
- One college has a program called SHAPE, where students can choose where to attend.
- One college runs ABE through Continuing Education / Customized Training.
- A few colleges offer ABE courses both on and off campus.

### Recommendations / Questions to Explore:

1. What ABE courses does each school currently offer?
2. What are the barriers to offering ABE on campus?
3. How many students enroll in your ABE offerings each year?
4. Which discipline has the greatest need for ABE?
5. For students who are referred to other locations for ABE offerings, how many return to take college-level coursework?
6. What are our retention numbers for ABE?

## QUESTION #5

Do you offer fast-track developmental courses? If so, which courses? How do you offer them (timeline/length of course)?

### Summary of Findings:

- 24 colleges responded to this question
- 42% of respondents currently offer fast-track developmental course offerings
- 58% of respondents currently do not offer fast-track developmental course offerings
- 8.3% of respondents are currently exploring fast-track options for developmental coursework
- Some offer fast-track courses only in the summer
- The majority of fast-track offerings are offered over 8 weeks (half of a semester)
- The minimal length of time indicated for fast-track developmental course is 3 weeks
- Math is the least common course for fast-track offerings.
- English is the most common course for fast-track offerings
- Some offer fast-track for all developmental offerings, others offer fast-track options for Math and/or English only
- One college offers a self-paced College Prep Program (MN West)

### Recommendations / Questions to Explore:

1. What are retention and attrition rates of students enrolled in fast-track offerings? How do they compare with traditional developmental offerings?
2. What is the enrollment and student interest for fast-track developmental course offerings?
3. Which disciplines are students most successful in for fast-track developmental offerings?
4. Which disciplines are students least successful in for fast-track developmental offerings?
5. What is a reasonable credit offering for a fast-track course?

## Question 6

How are your developmental courses evaluated? (Pass/Fail or Graded?) What is the minimum grade for progressing to the next level?

### Summary of Findings:

The majority of the colleges reported that their developmental courses are graded and the student needs a “C” or better to progress to the next level. There were a few that still allow a “D” or better to progress. A couple of those allow programs or departments to set higher levels for their classes. It was interesting that one of the colleges reported that individual faculty will not give a letter grade of “D” therefore the student either passes with a “C” or fails the course. The only colleges that have P/F for developmental courses were for the very lowest levels of remedial work and after that the courses were graded.

- 24 colleges responded to this question.
- 71% of respondents said they graded developmental courses and require a C or better. One college noted some courses require a B or better.
- Three colleges reported offering a pass / fail option at the lowest level of courses. Higher level courses are graded.
- Four colleges required a D or better. Two of the four stated that some programs or departments require a C or better.
- Three have pass / fail courses for the very basic classes, but higher level ones are graded.

### Recommendations / Questions to Explore

1. Given the inconsistencies in letter grades required to pass developmental courses, how do grading scales influence this?
2. Do we recommend or require that students with a passing grade (above an F) repeat courses?
3. How many times can a course be repeated? Is there any remediation available?

## Question 7

What programs or success strategies is your college using to support student success in developmental coursework? (learning communities, pairing of courses, tutoring...) How effective are these strategies for student success, completion, and retention?

## Question 8

Do you view any of these strategies as best practices? Please explain.

### Summary of Findings:

- 26 colleges responded to this question.
- 53 % of respondents reported that felt that they had “best practices” to share.
- The fact that only 14 out of the 26 responding schools felt that they had “best practices” to share was telling that there is a need to improve early success initiatives and developmental educator processes.
- A variety of methods of tutoring as well as learning communities were the front runners in best practices, with five schools identifying tutoring as a best practice, and four reporting learning communities.

#### **Tutoring methods include the following:**

- Hennepin Technical College began an individualized tutor program this year. The tutor is an actual instructor who meets individually or with small groups of ESL students outside of the classroom to work on individualized areas or instructional needs, for both ESL and non-ESL courses.
- Inver Hills Community College has a certified peer tutor program that has had great results.
- Minnesota State College-Southeast Technical noticed that at the Essentials I levels (Math and Reading), skills were low and that students benefited greatly from one-on-one tutoring assistance.

- Minnesota State Community and Technical College faculty are given release credits to serve as expert tutors in the Learning Center. This strategy not only helps the students that need tutoring, but it also strengthens the relationship between the faculty and the academic tutors that work full-time in the Learning Center.
- Pine Technical College sees tutoring as a best practice on their campus.
- Ridgewater College has an academic support center on both campuses where they have both hired and peer tutoring. They also provide SMART tutoring for their students. They have modeled these programs after other programs and made adaptations to fit their particular student body.
- Riverland Community College hosts a Be Your Best Summer College Prep Academy, and as one component of this program, they are able to hire tutors who sit in class with the students during the summer and help them during class. They also have a peer tutoring program year round.
- Rochester Community and Technical College has a Comprehensive Learning Center for tutorial assistance from trained tutors. This center is jointly run by RCTC and Winona State University-Rochester and has had a number of visitors from other institutions study their model.

**Learning Community methods included the following:**

- Inver Hills Community College collected data shows for their campus that students in Learning Communities are more successful and better retained than the general population. (See the article on Inver Hills Community College's On Course program in appendix.)
- Minnesota State Community and Technical College piloted Learning Communities on the Moorhead campus in the fall of 2009. Several more were offered in spring 2010 and there are plans to expand the Learning Communities for fall 2010. They also see expanding the Learning Communities to other campuses in the near future. Current Learning Community offerings include ENGL 0095 (Academic Literacy), FYE 1101 (First Year Experience Course), SOC 1111 (Intro to Sociology).
- Minnesota West feels their Learning Communities have helped the students become more connected and willing to seek additional help when needed. The students feel supported in Learning Communities.
- North Hennepin Community College also sees their Learning Communities as a best practice.

**Other strategies reported as best practices included the following:**

- Minneapolis Community and Technical College had a best practice that is not specifically tied to developmental coursework, but to the initial placement for students that everyone completing the placement test receives a post-test advising from an advisor. The advisor meets briefly with the individual to review their scores and what they mean as far as placement, they get them signed up for new student orientation and they inform them of any next steps needed prior to enrollment. This has resulted in a greater conversion rate of applicants to enrolled students.
- Pine Technical utilizes a Focus on College series and mini-workshops to address issues related to study skill and how to use services on campus.
- St. Paul College Early Alert Referral System (EARS) where faculty notify retention specialists about students who may be experiencing difficulty in class for a variety of reasons. The retention specialists then follow up with students and faculty to determine what service or help students need to succeed. The EARS system has been replicated by several Twin Cities colleges.

## Recommendations / Questions to Explore

1. It is our hope that by highlighting what is working, and pulling out best practices, that other schools may be able to utilize them in their work with these processes and students.
2. How can we better share best practices? How do we know what truly is a best practice?

## Question 9

If readily available, what are the success (pass) rates for students enrolled in your developmental coursework? In Reading? Writing? Math? ESOL? Overall? (Any data that you can provide will be beneficial)

### Summary of Findings:

There is a broad range of pass rates.

<u>Discipline</u>	<u>Range</u>
English	39-81%
Reading	56-88%
Math	37-78%
Writing	(only one reported score)

### Recommendations / Questions to Explore

1. A consistent data collection and reporting format is needed.
2. For the most accurate data collection, include information regarding students repeating the developmental course and pass rates.
3. Colleges should consider retention, transfer, and graduation to determine success in course offerings.

## Question 10

If readily available, what are your college's retention rates for students in developmental courses?

### Summary of Findings:

The majority of the colleges were unable to readily get the data. There were four reporting colleges. Among the four, there was a lot of variation on how the data was reported. The retention rates ranged from 21% to 91%. Three of the four were in the 21-33% range with one reporting 91%. There is no way to know how each institution is calculating the retention rate.

### Recommendations / Questions to Explore:

1. It seems data should be readily available on retention rates for students in developmental courses.
2. How can colleges be encouraged to use this data in order to determine their programs' success?
3. This data would also allow us to define best practices.