



Basic Skills Assessment and Placement Guidelines

The Basic Skills Assessment and Placement Guidelines are applicable to any incoming degree or certificate student prior to enrollment at a Missouri public postsecondary institution.

Assessment of basic skills for all certificate-seeking or degree-seeking students.

1. Institutions shall use multiple measures to assess the basic skills of all incoming certificate-seeking or degree-seeking students in mathematics, English and reading. The basic skills assessment will be used to place students in appropriate college-level courses.

Rationale.

- Using multiple assessment measures—rather than a single assessment such as an ACT subscore or Compass score—to place students in college-level coursework provides a more precise measurement of a student’s ability to succeed in college.
- The use of a single, high-stakes assessment to place students in credit-bearing or remedial courses is unfair to students and contributes to lowered persistence and completion rates.
- Research has shown that too many students are being placed in non-credit bearing remedial courses when, with appropriate academic support, they are likely to succeed in credit-bearing, college-level courses.

Implementation.

- Institutions have at their disposal an array of assessment instruments to determine the proper placement of students in college-level courses, including the SAT, the ACT, and other standardized assessment scores, as well as high school grade point average, high school end-of-course examination scores, or an institutional created assessment instrument, to name a few.
- Institutions shall have the discretion to determine the number and combination of measures used for placement decisions. Institutions must be able to demonstrate the process used for placement decisions. Further, institutions will be expected to monitor the effectiveness of their placement matrix and, if necessary, adjust the matrix to improve the effectiveness of the placement.
- Institutions using one of the assessments listed below to place students in college-level courses shall adhere to the statewide placement score for that assessment instrument.

Assessment Instrument	Subject Area	Statewide College-Level Placement Score
Accuplacer	Reading	85
	English	92 (Sentence Skills)
	Mathematics	114 (Arithmetic)
	Mathematics	116 (Elementary Algebra)
ACT	Reading	18
	English	18
	Mathematics	22
Asset	Reading	41
	English	41
	Mathematics	23 (College Algebra)
Compass	Reading	81
	English	70
	Mathematics	66 (Algebra)
SAT	Reading	360
	English	430 (Writing)
	Mathematics	510 (Mathematics)
Smarter Balanced	English/Language Arts	3
	Mathematics	3

2. Placement scores will be valid for a minimum of two years. Scores may be considered valid for longer than two years at an institution's discretion.

Process.

The following describes in general the process for assessing a student's basic skills and placing them in appropriate mathematics courses. A similar process should also be followed when placing students into the appropriate English composition and writing courses. In this example, the ACT math subscore is the initial instrument used to assess the student's basic skills.

A. Is the student's ACT Math subscore 22 or greater?

1. YES:

a. The student is placed in a credit-bearing, college-level mathematics course appropriate to the student's course of study.

2. NO:

a. The institution will consider other factors to determine in which mathematics course the student will be placed. These other measures may include:

1. High school GPA: Despite on-going complaints about grade inflation, research has found that a student's high school GPA remains a strong predictor of academic success in postsecondary education. When used in combination with a standardized test, the predictive value increases significantly. MDHE is working with DESE to have students' GPA included on all high school transcripts.
2. High school curriculum: Research has found that students who take at least four years of mathematics have greater success in college.
3. End-of-course mathematics examination scores: As these tests are criterion-based, they provide a more accurate assessment of a student's specific abilities.
4. Other assessment scores, such as Accuplacer, Compass, or an institution-specific assessment.
5. Non-cognitive measures as appropriate.

b. Accounting for these additional measures, is it likely the student has a good chance of being successful in a credit-bearing mathematics course?

1. YES:

a. The student is placed in a credit-bearing, college-level mathematics course appropriate to the student's course of study.

2. NO:

- a. How severe is the student's lack of basic skills?
- b. Could the student be successful if placed in a co-requisite course, or provided with academic support appropriate to the student's specific needs?
- c. If yes, the student is placed in a co-requisite course, or provided with academic support appropriate to the student's specific needs.
- d. If no, the student may have to be referred to other programs, such as Adult Education, to address the student's academic deficiencies.