

ASSESSMENT FOR COURSE PLACEMENT

POLICY

As part of its commitment to student success and in accordance with Minnesota State Policy 3.3, Ridgewater College (hereinafter “the College”) has developed a process to assess the reading and mathematics skills of new students requiring course placement.

Adherence to this policy offers many benefits to students:

- Supports students’ access and success by ensuring they have to develop skills to compete in the college-level curriculum.
- Increases success in college-level courses, resulting in improvement in persistence and graduation rates.
- Eases transfer among Minnesota State institutions since a single, portable assessment method will be in place at all Minnesota State institutions.
- Assures the integrity of the college-level curriculum can be maintained by ensuring students enrolled in courses have achieved the prerequisite academic skill levels.
- Allows development of seamless and successful transitions from high school to college. Explicit benchmarks for college readiness can be connected to high school graduation standards.

The College requires all students needing course placement to complete an incoming student assessment that includes basic measures of reading comprehension and mathematics unless they meet the exemption criteria. The College will use the assessment instrument and minimum course placement scores required by [Minnesota State Board Policy 3.3](#).

The College also uses a set of screening questions to identify students who may benefit from English language support. If identified by the screening process, these students are asked to complete the ESL Accuplacer assessments for appropriate placement into English 1210.

The incoming student assessment shall not be used to make decisions related to college admission.

Students with Disabilities

Accommodation for individuals with documented disabilities is available with advanced notice to the Accessibility Services Office.

History:

02.21.2007 Adopted; 05.12.2011 Revised

12.20.2016 Proposed; 02.13.2017 Revised

11.20.2017 Proposed; 02.21.2018 Revised

11.18.2019 Proposed; 03.30.2020 Revised

08.24.2021 Proposed – Reviewed and Revised for Equity Compliance

11.17.2021 Revised

10.15.2025 Proposed; 01.15.2026 Revised

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PROCEDURES**Minimum Standards for Access to College-Level Courses**

Students who score below the College's minimum test standards must successfully complete appropriate developmental education through courses or other means before enrolling in selected college-level courses. Retesting is allowed under certain circumstances (see Ridgewater College Test Center Procedures).

Students placed into developmental mathematics by their mathematics placement score who think the placement is incorrect are encouraged to retake the mathematics portion of the Accuplacer placement exam. They may also request an exemption by contacting an unlimited full-time mathematics faculty member, who may perform an assessment of skills depending on their mathematics placement score.

Criteria for Student Exemptions

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

Exemptions from Course Placement Requirements

- Students are exempted from submitting documentation of test scores from the American College Test (ACT), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), or Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) or from taking the Accuplacer subject area tests based on:
 - Enrollment exclusively in non-credit courses, or
 - Enrollment exclusively in a diploma or certificate program, or
 - Documentation of successful completion of a college-level course in the area for which the course placement score is used, or
 - Mathematics: C- or higher in an equivalent mathematics course.
 - Reading: A student who presents a transcript demonstrating 24 credits or more in at least two of the following three areas: history and the social and behavioral sciences; humanities and fine arts; mathematical/logical reasoning or natural sciences (with a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher) or a C- or higher college-level English course may be placed in courses that designate college-level reading skills as a prerequisite
 - Documentation of completion of developmental coursework from a post-secondary institution as follows:
 - Reading: C- or higher in an equivalent course.
 - Mathematics: C- or higher in an equivalent course.
 - Documentation of completion of an associate's degree, a baccalaureate degree, or higher degree. If the degree includes a college-level mathematics class, all assessments will be waived. If not, the student will be required to take the mathematics assessment.

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,

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writing, or mathematics skills. However, a student must be exempted from taking all or portions of the ACCUPLACER based on documentation of:

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

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.

Placement Based on Accuplacer (a.k.a. Classic) and Next Generation Accuplacer (NGA) Scores

- Documentation of reading comprehension Accuplacer test scores taken with five (5) years, inclusive of the current calendar year and mathematics Accuplacer test scores taken with two (2) years, inclusive of the current calendar year:
 - Reading:
 - Students scoring a 250 or higher (NG Reading) may be placed in college-level English
 - Students with a score of 236-249 and that have a cumulative high school GPA of 2.5 or higher from within the last 10 years.
 - Mathematics:
 - Students scoring a 250 or higher (NG Mathematics) will be placed in college-level algebra.
 - Students with a score of 236-249 and that have a cumulative high school GPA of 2.7 or higher from within the last 10 years.

Placement Based on American College Test (ACT) Subject Area Test Scores

- Documentation of subject area test scores on the ACT test taken within five calendar years, inclusive of the current calendar year, for reading and mathematics. A student who obtains the following minimum scores or higher shall be placed in the corresponding college-level course(s).
- Reading:
 - A student who presents a reading subject area test score of 21 or higher may be placed in courses that designate college-level reading skills as a prerequisite.
 - A student who presents a reading ACT score of 19-20 and has a cumulative high school GPA of 2.5 or higher from within the last 10 years may be placed in courses that designate college-level reading as a prerequisite.
- Mathematics:
 - A student who presents a mathematics subject area test score of 22 or higher may be placed in any college-level mathematics course.

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- A student who presents a mathematics ACT score of 20-21 and has a cumulative high school GPA of 2.7 or higher from within the last 10 years may be placed in any college-level mathematics course.

Placement Based on Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) Subject Area Test Scores

- Documentation of subject area test scores on the MCA assessments taken *within five calendar years*, inclusive of the current calendar year, for reading and mathematics:
 - Reading:
 - The MCA Benchmark Study concluded that the MCA Reading assessment scores were not an appropriate predictor of performance in college writing courses, and thus, Minnesota State/Ridgewater College will not use MCA scores for writing placements. A student who presents a MCA Reading assessment score of 1047 or higher shall be placed in courses that designate college-level reading skills as a prerequisite.
 - A student who presents an MCA score of 1042-1046 and has a cumulative high school GPA of 2.5 or higher from within the last 10 years may be placed in courses that designate college-level reading skills as a prerequisite.
 - Mathematics:
 - A student who presents a MCA mathematics assessment score of 1148 or higher may be placed in any college-level mathematics course with the exception of MATH1120 and MATH2070 (which require a MCA score of 1158 or higher).
 - A student who presents an MCA Statistics score of 1148 or higher may be placed in college-level statistics course. A student who presents an MCA Statistics score of 1146-1147 and has a cumulative high school GPA of 2.7 or higher from within the last 10 years may be placed in college-level statistics course.
 - A student who presents an MCA liberal arts mathematics score of 1150 or higher may be placed in a liberal arts mathematics course. A student who presents an MCA liberal arts mathematics score of 1146-1149 and has a cumulative high school GPA of 2.7 or higher from within the last 10 years may be placed in a liberal arts mathematics course.

Placement Based on Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) Subject Area Test Scores

- Documentation of subject area test scores on the SAT taken within five calendar years, inclusive of the current calendar year:
 - Reading:
 - A student who presents an Evidence-based Reading and Writing (ERW) subject area test score of 480 or higher shall be placed in courses that designate college-level reading skills as a prerequisite.
 - A student who presents an SAT score of 440-479 and has a cumulative high school GPA of 2.5 or higher from within the last 10 years may also be placed in any course with a college-level reading skills prerequisite.
 - Mathematics:
 - A student who presents a mathematics subject area test score of 530 or higher shall be placed in any college-level mathematics course.

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- A student who presents an SAT score of 520-529 and has a cumulative high school GPA of 2.7 or higher within the last 10 years may be placed in any college-level mathematics course.

Definitions

The following definitions are important to the interpretation of the Assessment for Course Placement Policy:

College-Level – Courses offered by the College numbered 1000 or above (prior to summer 2018, any courses numbered 100 or above in the transfer division) count toward the credit requirements of a certificate, diploma or associate degree.

Developmental Education – Courses numbered below 1000 (prior to summer 2018, any courses numbered below 100) are intended for students who do not meet minimum assessment standards. These courses do not count toward a certificate, diploma, or associate degree.

History:

02.21.2007 Adopted; 01.05.2008 Revised

05.12.2011 Revised

01.03.2012 Revised - Reflect system-wide adoption of ACT benchmark scores to waive Accuplacer testing.

04.15.2013 Adopted – For implementation Fall Semester 2013

02.06.2014 Revised

12.20.2016 Proposed; 02.13.2017 Revised

11.20.2017 Proposed; 02.21.2018 Revised

07.25.2019 – Revised to align document with Minnesota State Procedure 3.3.1

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