

BOARD OF REGENTS
BRIEFING PAPER
Handbook Revision: Remedial Placement

BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:

Currently, Board policy provides benchmark scores for placing students into a college-level English or mathematics course using the ACT and SAT standardized subject tests. These test scores are not widely used among NSHE community colleges since their students are less likely to take these tests. Rather the colleges use Accuplacer, a College Board test. However, to the extent that the community colleges are currently using Accuplacer, the benchmark scores for Accuplacer for determining placement into a college-level English or mathematics course vary among the colleges. Therefore, staff in consultation with Academic Affairs Council, recommends that the current policy be revised to include standard benchmark scores for Accuplacer similar to established benchmarks for ACT and SAT. Although at this time no NSHE institution is utilizing Compass, staff recommends including the benchmark score recommended by ACT for the Compass test in the event that an institution uses the test in the future.

SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:

Amend Title 4, Chapter 16, Section 1 to establish benchmark scores for placing students into a college-level English or mathematics course using Accuplacer or Compass, in addition to the established scores for the ACT and SAT, effective Fall 2010. (See attached Policy Proposal.)

IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):

This recommendation is brought forward on behalf of the Academic Affairs Council whose members approved this policy proposal in conjunction with their faculty. This change mirrors the recently adjusted ACT and SAT score adjustments to reflect national research and data on college readiness.

BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

If approved, the revised policy will:

- Provide consistent benchmark scores to be used across the System for placement into a college-level English or mathematics course. Therefore, students taking the appropriate placement test at different institutions can expect similar outcomes in terms of placement.
- Allow institutions to utilize alternative placement tools if supported by institutional research.
- Provide better information to Nevada high school counselors about the standards set statewide for student placement into remedial English and mathematics, not just for ACT and SAT, but also for Accuplacer and Compass.

POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

- As this policy provides flexibility for institutions to utilize alternative placement tools if supported by institutional research, no arguments against the proposal have been brought forward.
- Changing the placement scores to reflect national data will result in difficulty in comparing placement rates of recent high school graduates from year to year in the transition from old scores to new scores.

ALTERNATIVE(S) TO WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED/RECOMMENDED:

Maintain the current policy whereby ACT and SAT are the only Board of Regents' established benchmarks for English and mathematics placement.

COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title # _____ Chapter # _____ Section # _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Amends Current Board Policy: <i>Title 4, Chapter 16, Section 1</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter # _____ Section # _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fiscal Impact: Yes _____ No <u>X</u> _____
	Explain: _____

POLICY PROPOSAL
TITLE 4, CHAPTER 16, SECTION 1
Remedial Placement – Effective Fall 2010

Additions appear in *boldface italics*; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

Section 1. NSHE Remedial Policy

The remedial policies of the Nevada System of Higher Education are intended to ensure a foundation of knowledge and competencies that will assist students in successfully pursuing and attaining an academic degree. Students are strongly encouraged to prepare for the rigors of higher education prior to entering the NSHE.

1. Pursuant to federal regulations, institutions may make ability-to-benefit determinations using federally approved tests and passing scores to receive federal student aid. The Nevada System of Higher Education reserves the right to cancel the admission or registration of any individual whose attendance at a university or college, in the opinion of the appropriate administrative officer and the President, would not be mutually beneficial, as determined by the ability-to-benefit test, to that individual and the university or college.
2. Placement testing should take place prior to matriculation. Additionally, English and mathematics testing must take place no more than two years prior to matriculation.
3. All degree-seeking students who place into developmental/remedial coursework must take the prescribed sequence of courses until remediation is completed. Students requiring remediation must complete all required coursework prior to completion of 30 college-level credits unless otherwise authorized by the institution.
4. English Placement. In order to be placed into a college-level English course, a student must achieve an ACT English score of at least 18, [~~or~~] an SAT critical reading score of at least 440, ***a Compass Writing Skills score of at least 69, or an Accuplacer Sentence Skills score of at least 86. Other appropriate placement tools may be used for English placement including departmental diagnostic tests or other proprietary tests if supported by institutional research.*** [~~Universities and colleges may set other scores if supported by institutional research. Additional placement may also be determined through formal assessment of students including departmental diagnostic writing and/or reading tests, submission of writing samples, and/or a student portfolio for evaluation by faculty, as determined by each institution's English department. Accuplacer, Compass, or other appropriate placement tools may be used for English placement in lieu of the ACT or SAT.~~]
5. Mathematics Placement. In order to be placed into a college-level mathematics course, a student must achieve an ACT Math score of at least 22, [~~or~~] an SAT Math score of at least 500, ***a Compass Mathematics score of at least 65, or an Accuplacer College Level Math score of at least 63. Other appropriate placement tools may be used for mathematics placement including departmental diagnostic tests or other proprietary tests if supported by institutional research.*** [~~Universities and colleges may set other scores if supported by institutional research. Additional placement decisions may also be made through formal assessment of students including departmental diagnostic tests as determined by each institution's mathematics department. Accuplacer, Compass, or other appropriate placement tools may be used for mathematics placement in lieu of the ACT or SAT.~~]