



Policies and Procedures

TITLE: PLACEMENT TESTING AND DEVELOPMENTAL COURSE RECOMMENDATIONS

POLICY NO: 2-12

EFFECTIVE DATE: 08/16/90

VCCS POLICY NO: [6.4.0.2](#)

REVISED DATE: 07/15/08

I. Purpose:

This policy and the procedures describe the conditions under which students must take placement tests and must complete any required developmental course prerequisites prior to enrolling in a course. The goal of placement is to maximize students' opportunities for success in the courses in which they are enrolled.

II. Definitions: N/A

III. Policy:

A. Placement testing requirements

1. Placement testing for curricular students: All curricular students shall be required to take placement tests in reading, writing, and mathematics prior to registering for any courses at the college. Students may be required to take additional specialized placement tests before enrolling in certain courses or curricula.
2. Placement testing for non-curricular students: Non-curricular students shall be required to take placement tests in reading, writing, and mathematics when:
 - a. they wish to enroll in one or more of the courses for which placement testing is required such as English, mathematics, biology, chemistry, and others as listed in the College Catalog and Schedule of Classes; or
 - b. they have accumulated nine or more semester credits in college courses and are experiencing academic difficulty in one or more areas. In this case, academic difficulty means having a cumulative GPA of less than 2.0 or receiving an "F" or "U" in a class.
3. Placement testing for students whose first language is not English: Students whose native language is not English must take the college's English as a Second Language (ESL) placement test before registering for any courses at the college.
4. Placement testing for students with disabilities: Special testing accommodations designed to meet the needs of disabled students shall be provided if it is determined that the student is eligible for accommodations (see [JSRCC Policy 1-15](#)).

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5. Limitations

- a. In general, students may not take a placement test in the same subject matter more than one time in a four month period. Exceptions to this rule are permitted, however the student must petition the Testing Center for a re-test. The Testing Center will permit a re-test for students who meet the designated criteria established by the English and Math Departments (see [Addendum](#)).
- b. Students who retest and pass the designated section or the entire test, will not be eligible for a late tuition refund, a late withdrawal, or a refund of a previously paid testing fee.
- c. Placement test scores are valid for a period of one year from the date of the course recommendation.

6. Exemptions and waivers

- a. Students who hold an associate, baccalaureate, or graduate degree from a college or university where English is the language of instruction or who can present other evidence of proficiency in a subject area may receive a waiver of one or more tests, by submitting JSRCC [Form No. 60-0001](#), Placement Test Waiver/Exemption Approval.
- b. Transient students who have submitted a completed JSRCC [Form No. 11-0006](#), Transient Student Approval Form may have placement testing requirements waived.
- c. Students may receive a waiver of or be exempted from taking one or more tests under the following conditions:
 - (1) For reading, students must have successfully completed a minimum of nine credits of college level reading intensive coursework, with a grade of "C" or better. These can include but not be limited to: college composition, literature, social science, and science courses.
 - (2) For mathematics, students must have successfully completed with a grade of "C" or better a college-level mathematics course equivalent to the prerequisite requirements for the course the student is seeking to enter.
- d. The ESL placement test will be waived for non-native speakers of English only if the student meets one of the following requirements:
 - (1) holds an associate, baccalaureate, or graduate degree from a college or university at which English is the language of instruction
 - (2) receives transfer credit for credit-level college composition (ENG 111)

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- (3) provides evidence of having earned specific scores on the computer-based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or paper TOEFL. TOEFL scores are good for one year.
 - e. SAT, PSAT and ACT scores may be used to waive the reading, writing and mathematics placement tests, under the following conditions:
 - (1) Official scores must be received from the testing entity or from the high school. Once received, placement scores will be documented in the SIS system.
 - (2) Specific scores on tests will be required to waive placement tests (see [Addendum](#)).
 - (3) Scores must be current, or within one year of the date the student is requesting the waiver.
 - f. Documentation shall be required for waivers. A student who changes a curriculum or who later chooses to take classes for which placement testing is required shall be re-evaluated for placement testing requirements.
- 7. Test administration

The associate vice president of student affairs shall be directly responsible for administering placement testing and the day-to-day operations of the Testing Center where placement testing will be administered.
- 8. Assessment and evaluation

The associate vice president of academic affairs shall be responsible to the executive vice president for periodic assessment and evaluation of the placement-testing program.
- B. Developmental course requirements
 - 1. Establishment of placement testing and developmental course requirements
 - a. Faculty in disciplines with developmental-level courses (such as English and mathematics) shall be responsible for designing, within the structure provided by the VCCS Curriculum Guide, the developmental courses and sequences of college-level courses in their respective disciplines. They shall also be responsible for establishing the criteria by which students shall be placed in developmental and college-level courses in their respective disciplines.
 - b. Faculty in disciplines without developmental-level courses shall determine whether a placement test in reading, writing, or mathematics is required for their college-level courses and, if appropriate, establish developmental course prerequisites in these courses.

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- c. Selection of placement instruments, determination of cut-scores, establishment of waiver criteria, and other substantive matters shall be determined by appropriate discipline faculty with coordination by the associate vice president of academic affairs, the executive vice president's designee for college-wide coordination of placement testing.
2. Enforcement of developmental course requirements
 - a. The college shall take appropriate measures to ensure that students meet all developmental prerequisites for college level courses.
 - b. Students must successfully complete the required developmental course (and any other required sequential developmental courses), or successfully pass the placement test in the appropriate subject before enrolling in college-level courses for which they are prerequisite.

IV. Procedures:

A. Placement testing requirements

1. Placement testing for curricular students
 - a. Students identified as curricular will be referred by Student Success Center staff to the appropriate Testing Center where they must make an appointment. Students must pay to take placement tests in reading, writing, and mathematics (and the chemistry placement examination when applicable) at one of the college's Business Offices.
 - b. Students may take one, two, or all three placement tests at the same time. If students take fewer than all three tests at the same time, they will need to pay an additional fee in order to take the remaining placement tests before enrolling in any courses.
 - c. At advising appointments, students and counselors or student services specialists will discuss the student's placement scores, required courses and, if appropriate, additional courses.
2. Placement testing for non-curricular students
 - a. Students identified as non-curricular will be referred by Student Success Center staff to a counselor or student services specialist when these students attempt to enroll in courses requiring placement tests.
 - b. Non-curricular students will be allowed to register in these credit courses after they have taken the appropriate placement tests, had the results evaluated, and have successfully completed any identified and recommended developmental courses.

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3. Placement testing for students whose first language is not English
 - a. Students who identify themselves as non-native speakers of English on the JSRCC [Form No. 11-0001](#), Application for Admission will be referred to the ESL Office to schedule an appointment to take the ESL placement test.
 - b. Students will take the ESL placement test, which consists of a standardized test, an oral interview, and a writing sample.
 - c. Immediately after taking the ESL test, students must make an appointment with an ESL advisor to discuss the student's placement scores, required ESL courses, and, if appropriate, additional courses. Advising appointments normally take place within three days of the test.
 - d. Students who successfully exit the ESL test will be referred to the Testing Center to take the other placement tests.

4. Placement testing for students with disabilities
 - a. Student Success Center or other college staff must refer students who identify themselves as having a disability to the Office of Student Accommodations.
 - b. It will be determined by the Office of Student Accommodations staff if the student is eligible for accommodations and, if appropriate, recommend special testing accommodations based on documentation required of the student.

V. Other Information:

[Addendum](#) – Placement Retest and Waiver/Exemption Criteria

JSRCC [Form No. 60-0001](#), Placement Test Waiver/Exemption Approval