



**NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM**  
*Dr. R. Scott Ralls, President*

March 19, 2013

MEMORANDUM

To: Community College Presidents  
Chief Academic Officers  
Chief Student Development Administrators

From: Sharon Morrissey  
NCCCS Executive VP for Programs and Chief Academic Officer

Subject: State Board of Community Colleges Placement Policies

The State Board of Community Colleges recently approved two new policies for implementation of developmental education curriculum redesign and placement reforms. *Multiple Measures for Placement Using High School Transcript GPA and/or Standardized Test Scores* was approved at the February State Board meeting, and *Testing Policies for the North Carolina Diagnostic Assessment and Placement (NC DAP) Test* was approved at the March State Board meeting. The two policies are attached.

The *Multiple Measures* policy establishes a hierarchy of measures that colleges will use to determine recent high school graduates' readiness for college-level courses. The first measure is an unweighted high school GPA of 2.6, the second measure is ACT or SAT scores, and the third is placement testing. The policy stipulates that students who graduated from high school more than five years ago or who do not meet the GPA or ACT/SAT threshold must take a placement test. Additional stipulations for this policy are found in the attached document. Colleges may implement Multiple Measures for Placement beginning Fall Semester 2013, with a required implementation date of Fall Semester 2015.

*Testing Policies for NC DAP Test* establishes policies and cut scores for implementation of the new math diagnostic assessment for Fall Semester 2013. Colleges will continue to use Accuplacer, Asset or COMPASS for English/Reading until the NC DAP English/Reading diagnostic assessment is implemented in 2014.

If you have questions or need additional information regarding these policies, please contact me ([morrisseys@ncccommunitycolleges.edu](mailto:morrisseys@ncccommunitycolleges.edu)) or Cynthia Liston ([listonc@ncccommunitycolleges.edu](mailto:listonc@ncccommunitycolleges.edu)).

Attachments

C: R. Scott Ralls, President  
Jennifer Haygood, Executive VP for Operations and Chief Budget Officer  
Cynthia Liston, Associate VP for Policy Research and Special Projects  
Wesley Beddard, Associate VP for Student Learning and Success  
Elizabeth Self, Executive Director of Audit Services

**CC13-005**  
**EMAIL**

**Policy Using High School Transcript GPA and/or Standardized Test Scores for Placement  
(Multiple Measures for Placement)  
February 15, 2013**

The Multiple Measures for Placement Policy establishes a hierarchy of measures that colleges will use to determine students' readiness for college-level courses:

- (1) A recent high school graduate who meets the specified GPA benchmark will be exempt from diagnostic placement testing and will be considered "college-ready" for gateway math and English courses.  
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- (2) If a recent high school graduate does not meet the GPA benchmark, the college will use specified ACT or SAT subject area test scores to determine placement.  
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- (3) If a recent high school graduate does not meet the GPA threshold or have college-ready ACT or SAT scores, the college will administer the diagnostic placement test to determine placement.  
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- (4) If an applicant does not have a recent high school transcript or ACT or SAT scores, the college will administer the diagnostic placement test to determine placement.

**Multiple Measures for Placement Policy**

Unweighted GPA = or > 2.6 And FRC Code 1, 2, 3, or 4*	Student is college ready for any gateway math course and any course that has a DMA prerequisite. Colleges may require students with a GPA <3.0 enrolling in MAT 151, 155, 161, or 171 to take a supplemental math lab as a co-requisite.
Unweighted GPA = or > 2.6 And FRC Code 1, 2, 3, or 4*	Student is college ready for any English course up to and including English 111 and any course that has a DRE prerequisite. Colleges may require students with a GPA < 3.0 enrolling in ENG 110 and ENG 111 to take a supplemental English composition lab as a co-requisite.
Unweighted GPA < 2.6	College will evaluate subject-area ACT or SAT scores to determine if student is college ready in math and English using the following scores (based on national and state validation studies): <u>English</u> : ACT Reading 20 <b>OR</b> ACT English 18 SAT Writing 500 <b>OR</b> SAT Critical Reading 500 <u>Math</u> : ACT Math 22 SAT Math 500
Unweighted GPA < 2.6 and subject-area score(s) below college ready	Student will take the subject-area diagnostic assessment(s) to determine placement. (Colleges will continue to use Accuplacer, Asset or COMPASS until NC's custom diagnostic assessment is fully implemented.)
Students without a recent transcript GPA or without ACT or SAT scores	Student will take the subject-area diagnostic assessment(s) to determine placement. (Colleges will continue to use Accuplacer, Asset or COMPASS until NC's custom diagnostic assessment is fully implemented.)

1. This policy is effective upon approval by the State Board of Community Colleges for students enrolling in Fall semester 2013. Colleges have up to two years to implement the policy; all colleges must implement the placement policy by Fall semester 2015.
2. This policy applies to an individual who has an official transcript grade point average (GPA) from a high school that is legally authorized to operate in North Carolina and who graduated from that high school within five years of college enrollment.
3. For students who apply for admission before they graduate from high school, colleges will consider a student's cumulative GPA at the end of 1<sup>s</sup> semester of 12<sup>th</sup> grade or ACT/SAT test scores in determining placement.
4. Colleges will establish local policies regarding using GPA for placement for students graduating prior to 2013 who do not have FRC Codes\* on their transcripts and for students with transcripts from out-of-state high schools.
5. Placement cut scores for diagnostic assessments will be developed for developmental math modules in Spring 2013 and for developmental reading/English in Spring 2014. Colleges must use State Board-approved cut scores to place students into the appropriate developmental math (DMA) module or reading/English (DRE) course.
6. Colleges will establish local policies to allow students who are assessed near college ready on the diagnostic assessment to co-enroll in a college course and the appropriate developmental education module/course that is a prerequisite for the college-level course.
7. The North Carolina Community College System will review student placement and success rates within two years of implementation of this policy and will report to the State Board of Community Colleges.

\*Future Ready Core Transcript Code: Beginning with the 2013 graduating class, high school graduates' transcripts will include a Future Ready Core (FRC) Code of 1 – 9. FRC Codes 1, 2, 3, and 4 indicate that a student's high school course of study included Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, and a fourth math suitable for community college and/or university admissions. Both the unweighted high school GPA and the FRC Code will be included in the transcript data download that is being programmed to support the Multiple Measures of Placement Policy.

## NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

### Testing Policies for the North Carolina Diagnostic Assessment and Placement (NC DAP) Test March 14, 2013

The State Board of Community Colleges approved the following testing policies for the new North Carolina Diagnostic Assessment and Placement (NC DAP) test. These policies, which go into effect with the release of the new math diagnostic assessment in April 2013, create a standard set of expectations for colleges and provide consistency in how students taking the same test are treated across the North Carolina Community College System.

#### **Assessment and Placement Testing Policies**

- 1) North Carolina community colleges will implement the North Carolina Diagnostic Assessment and Placement (NC DAP) test to assess students' English, reading and math college readiness skills. The test will be administered to students who do not meet the High School Grade Point Average or ACT/SAT placement criteria included in the Multiple Measures for Placement Policy adopted by the State Board of Community Colleges on February 15, 2013. Any college that opts to delay implementation of the Multiple Measures for Placement Policy as defined in that policy must administer the NC DAP for placement decisions until the Multiple Measures Policy is implemented.
- 2) The NC DAP for mathematics will be implemented Fall Semester 2013. Colleges will continue to use Accuplacer, Asset or COMPASS for English/Reading until NC DAP is fully implemented Fall Semester 2014.
- 3) NC DAP scores will be valid for use for placement for five (5) years.
- 4) NC DAP scores are transferable to other colleges with permission of the student.
- 5) Colleges must develop and implement processes to validate student identification for testing.
- 6) Colleges must determine their own retest policies.
- 7) Students taking the NC DAP for developmental math will receive eight (8) separate test results, one for each of the eight developmental math modules. The range of possible scores for each test component is 1 to 12; the cut score that indicates proficiency for each developmental math module component is nine (9).
- 8) Students must satisfy all developmental pre- or co-requisites as indicated by test scores.

#### **Background – Development of New Placement Testing Policies**

Effective July 1993, the NC General Assembly enacted a special provision in SL 1993-321 requiring the State Board of Community Colleges to determine appropriate tests and proficiency levels to place students into developmental courses. In 1994 and in 1999 the State Board adopted policies to fulfill the requirements of the special provision.

In 2006, the State Board of Community Colleges adopted an NCCCS Placement Testing Policy directing community colleges to use one or more of the following tests for student placement into developmental education courses: ASSET, COMPASS, CPT, and/or Accuplacer. The policy also set cut scores for placement.

In 2010, the NCCCS' *Developmental Education Initiative* State Policy Team began its work to redesign developmental math, reading, and English courses. To support proper student placement in courses, reduce student time and financial aid resources allocated to developmental education, and help students move into their curriculum courses more quickly, the statewide policy team recommended the development of a new diagnostic placement test that directly aligns with the new NC developmental education curriculum which has been approved by the Curriculum Review Committee (February 2012 for Math and January 2013 for English and Reading.)

In February 2012 the Board approved a policy to create of a custom diagnostic placement test for North Carolina Community Colleges to be implemented Fall Semester 2013 for math. The English/Reading portion of the NC DAP will be created by April 2014.

In March 2012, after a competitive bidding process in accordance with the procurement practices of the State of North Carolina, the State Board approved awarding a contract to the College Board to create the new assessment.

In February 2013, the State Board approved a Multiple Measures Placement Policy which establishes a hierarchy of measures that colleges will use to determine students' readiness for college-level courses. The policy specifies that NC DAP will be administered to students who do not meet High School Grade Point Average or ACT/SAT placement criteria.

In January 2013, upon the recommendation of the DEI State Policy Team, System Office student services staff convened a working group of student development representatives from across the state to develop recommended NC DAP testing policies. In February 2013, these recommendations were discussed at a statewide meeting of instructional administrators and student development officers and revised based on feedback.

#### **Background—Setting the Cut Score for Developmental Math Modules**

College Board used the new developmental math modules curriculum created by the DEI Math Faculty Task Force (DMA 010, 020, 030, 040, 050, 060, 070, 080) to create and field test the test items for the College Math Readiness portion of the new NC DAP. Each DMA module is one-credit hour and designed for delivery over 4 weeks.

In February 2013 the College Board held a standards setting session with 53 math faculty – one from almost every NC community college. The purpose of this four-day session was to determine the proficiency standard that leads to the assessment “cut score” for each development math module. The College Board used a “Modified Bookmark Method,” a procedure for setting passing scores that has widespread support in the measurement profession, which has been used in more than 30 states, and has withstood legal challenges (see, for example, Lewis, et al., 1999, 2012; & Mitzel, et al. 2001).

The cut score for developmental math modules reflects a proficiency standard developed by NCCCS faculty through the standards setting process.