

STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Testing Policies for the North Carolina Diagnostic Assessment and Placement (NC DAP) Test

Request

NCCCS requests that the State Board of Community Colleges approve testing policies for the new North Carolina Diagnostic Assessment and Placement (NC DAP) test, effective April 2013. These policies will create a standard set of expectations for colleges and will provide consistency in how students taking the same test are treated across all our colleges.

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

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