

**STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES**  
**Temporary Cut Scores for North Carolina Diagnostic Assessment and Placement**  
**(NC DAP) Reading & English Test**

**Background:**

NCCCS contracted with the College Board in 2012 to create the NC Diagnostic Assessment and Placement (NC DAP) Test to serve as an improved placement tool. This effort falls under the state's *Developmental Education Initiative* which focuses on increasing the number of students who successfully complete college level coursework. The NC DAP directly aligns with new developmental courses in the state's Combined Course Library, curricula that were created by faculty panels from across the state during 2011-12. The new developmental courses are shorter and more flexible than previous long sequences of courses through which few students successfully persisted. The goal is that streamlined courses paired with new placement tools will promote student acceleration toward credit-bearing college level courses and into programs of study.

For colleges that have implemented the Multiple Measures for Placement Policy (approved February 2013; revised March 2014), the NC DAP is the new placement test for those students who are not eligible for placement into college level courses under other criteria (qualifying HS GPA or SAT/ACT scores within 5 years). At colleges that have not yet implemented Multiple Measures, the NC DAP is used to assess students prior to enrolling in college courses with developmental prerequisites.

In March 2013, the State Board of Community Colleges approved Testing Policies for the North Carolina Diagnostic Assessment and Placement (NC DAP) Test. These policies included a statewide NC DAP Math cut-score to indicate placement into or out of each of the eight new one-credit developmental math modules. In May 2013 and January 2014 the State Board approved revisions to cut-score and placement policies for the Math portion of the NC DAP.

The Reading & English portion of the NC DAP was released by College Board in April 2014. The test contains three components – reading comprehension, revising/editing writing, and an essay. A composite score will place students into Developmental Reading & English (DRE) or curriculum English courses.

In April 2014, eight colleges pilot tested the Reading & English part of the NC DAP in order to generate preliminary test data to help set a cut score.

**Request:**

We request that the State Board approve the following Temporary Cut Scores for the Reading & English portion of the NC DAP. These scores are recommended by the members of the NC DAP working group, a statewide team comprising developmental and English faculty, Chief Academic Officers, testing coordinators, and student services staff.

| <b>Course Placement</b> | <b>Placement Score Ranges</b> | <b>Proposed Temporary Cut Scores</b> | <b>Estimated Distribution</b> |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Basic Skills            | 100 to 103                    | 103                                  | 1%                            |
| DRE 096                 | 104 to 116                    | 116                                  | 3 – 4%                        |
| DRE 097                 | 117 to 135                    | 135                                  | 17 – 18%                      |
| DRE 098                 | 136 to 150                    | 150                                  | 31 – 33%                      |
| ENG 111                 | 151 or higher                 | 151 or higher                        | 45 – 47%                      |

Three sets of data were considered to determine the proposed cut scores:

1. A Standard-Setting Report that involved faculty members from more than 45 colleges who participated in a test-item bookmarking process that resulted in recommended cut scores for placement into specific courses.
2. Analysis of historical placement data, including placement distribution and performance in ENG 111.
3. Analysis of approximately 200 test results from 8 pilot colleges using the Reading & English NC DAP test.

Upon State Board approval, colleges may implement the Reading & English part of the NC DAP effective immediately. The mandatory implementation date is March 1, 2015. Colleges may continue to use previously-approved ACCUPLACER or COMPASS assessments and cut scores prior to March 1, 2015.

**Future:**

During Summer 2014, staff will continue to track and analyze NC DAP Reading & English scores and will recommend a final cut score to the State Board by fall 2014. Those scores will apply for students enrolling Spring 2015.

Moving forward, College Board will carry out validity studies that examine cut scores and student outcomes to determine if adjustments are needed for appropriate placement.

**Contact:**

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