



Minnesota  
STATE COLLEGES  
& UNIVERSITIES

## New Minnesota Statutory Requirements on Course Placement Testing

### *Frequently Asked Questions*

#### **Minnesota Statutory Requirement, Effective August 1, 2015:**

***ACT college ready score.** A state college or university may not require an individual to take a remedial, noncredit course in a subject area if the individual has received a college ready ACT score in that subject area.*

***What does this new statutory language mean?*** This language is constituent with current system procedure and does not require a change in institutional practice. Per existing [System Procedure 3.3.1, subpart C](#), a student who has completed an ACT subject area test and obtained the minimum score noted below is exempt from placement testing within that area.

- **Reading:** A student who presents a **reading** subject area test score of **21** or higher shall be placed directly into courses that designate college-level reading skills as a prerequisite.
- **Writing:** A student who presents an **English** subject area test score of **18** or higher shall be placed directly into courses that designate college-level writing skills as a prerequisite.
- **Mathematics:** A student who presents a **mathematics** subject area test score of **22** or higher shall be placed in College Algebra. (Note: a system college or university may establish lower minimum score(s) for placement into introductory college-level mathematics courses other than College Algebra and for developmental mathematics courses.)

***Do the current ACT validation dates still apply under this new legislation?*** Yes. Consistent with [System Procedure 3.3.1](#), a student shall be exempted from taking all or portions of the Accuplacer based on documentation of subject area test scores on the ACT test taken within the following time-frames:

- **Reading:** three calendar years (inclusive of the current calendar year)
- **Writing:** three calendar years (inclusive of the current calendar year)
- **Mathematics:** two calendar years (inclusive of the current calendar year)

***What if a student has ACT scores that are lower than the scores listed above?*** If a student has an ACT subject test area score that is 20 or lower in reading, 17 or lower in English, and/or 21 or lower in mathematics, the Accuplacer can be administered for course placement purposes, given that the student does not meet any other exemption criteria.

***Students choose to send ACT test results to specific institutions. Once one MnSCU institution enters the ACT test scores into ISRS, why can't other institutions have access to that data?*** Currently, ACT subject scores are considered prospect data, and as such are not defined as "core data" elements. Only "core data" elements are available for viewing across all institutions. (Note: Accuplacer test results and course placement data are defined as "core data" elements and are thus available for viewing across all

institutions.) We will forward this discussion consideration to the Assessment for Course Placement Committee.

***How should we communicate this to students?*** We would encourage you to communicate this to prospective and newly admitted students multiple times in multiple formats, especially within your current admissions, course placement testing, and advising communications, as well as in your institutional marketing materials (both print and web media).

Because the submission of ACT scores is not typically part of the admissions process at our colleges, students may not know that they can submit those scores for purposes of course placement. Minnesota high school students participate at very high rates on this exam and due to legislative changes, all high school juniors participated in the ACT in 2015. Considering the significant number of recent high school graduates with ACT scores, students, families, and area high schools should clearly understand the value of the scores to determine course placement at our institutions. There are implications on students' courses, time, and financial commitments.

#### **New Statutory Requirement, Effective August 1, 2015:**

*Testing process for determining if remediating is necessary. A college or university testing process used to determine whether an individual is placed in a remedial, noncredit course must comply with this subdivision. Prior to taking a test, an individual must be given reasonable time and opportunity to review materials provided by the college or university covering the material to be tested which must include a sample test. An individual who is required to take a remedial, noncredit course as a result of a test given by a college or university must be given an opportunity to retake the test at the earliest time determined by the individual when testing is otherwise offered. The college or university must provide an individual with study materials for the purpose of retaking and passing the test.*

***What does this new statutory language mean?*** Before taking the Accuplacer, a student must be given reasonable time and opportunity to review study materials, including sample tests.

If a student is required to take developmental education courses on the basis of the placement test results, the student must be given an opportunity to retake the test at the earliest opportunity they desire and testing is offered. Before a student retests, the student should be provided study materials to review.

***If students “must be given reasonable time and opportunity to review study materials” before they take the Accuplacer for the first time, how does this impact assessment processes that allow for walk-in versus appointments?*** Whether you use a walk-in or an appointment-based process for testing, it is important that you communicate with students about their opportunity to study before they take the tests and how they can access study materials and resources both on-line and on-campus. We would encourage you to communicate this to students at multiple times and in multiple formats.

***Does this mean that students can retest at any time?*** Yes. As long as the request to retest is within the available testing center hours and there is adequate time to complete the test, a student can retest at

his or her earliest determination. Students must also be provided study materials before they retest. You can encourage students to study the materials and retest based on your current campus recommendations for a waiting period, but the student cannot be prevented from retesting if they choose to do so earlier.

***How often can students retest?*** Your current campus policies on the number of retests allowed within a given period still applies.

***Can we continue to charge for retests?*** Your current campus policies on retesting fees, if applicable, still applies.

***If a student has started a developmental education course already, can they still retest?*** According to this new statutory language, the answer is yes. You must allow a student to retest whenever the student chooses to. However, depending on when they retest during the semester, students may have more limited options for other courses to take. We would encourage you to examine your current campus policies and course scheduling to see how students who retest during the semester and score higher on the Accuplacer can possibly take the corresponding higher-level course(s).

***How should we communicate this to students?*** We would encourage you to communicate this to prospective and newly admitted students multiple times in multiple formats, especially within your current admissions, course placement testing, and advising communications, as well as in your institutional marketing materials (both print and web media).

We would particularly encourage that your message stress the importance of studying before taking the Accuplacer tests and clearly articulate the implications of Accuplacer test results on subsequent course placement. Students frequently get messages that indicate they cannot fail the tests because the test assesses what students know. Nonetheless, how students score on the Accuplacer tests has major implications on their courses, time, and financial commitments – it is important for students to know this.

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