

Mountwest Administrative Procedure

Placement Scores

RATIONALE:

- 1) Current placement scores are needed for all new students in order to ensure timely and appropriate course placement. The state recognizes the use of certain placement tests for course placement, however it does not indicate when these scores become “outdated”. Current scores will ensure a proper assessment of the incoming student’s academic needs and abilities so that course placement can be accurate and appropriate for that student.
- 2) All 100- and 200-level courses at Mountwest are “college-level courses.” Since Mountwest offers open enrollment, students who are admitted to Mountwest may elect to take any course that does not have an existing pre-requisite. This includes developmental students who are academically underprepared, who need remediation in reading, writing, and math.
- 3) Currently no bottom threshold of placement exists for academic developmental coursework at Mountwest. Coupled with open enrollment, this means that students of any academic ability level, even those with severely limited academic skills, may register for coursework. A high school diploma or GED is not necessarily an indication of college readiness. In fact, placement scores of many students who possess a GED or high school diploma indicate that those students do not possess even the minimum skill levels to begin the lowest developmental course. Mountwest is ethically bound to ensure that students receive a fair and equitable chance of success. This includes ensuring the appropriate placement of students in coursework and preventing them from being allowed to enroll in courses for which they do not possess the necessary skills to succeed.
- 4) Failure to require a minimum level of competency for entering students and failure to limit the number of developmental course work attempts will likely have the following effects upon our institution:
 - a. Our Federal Financial Aid default rate could become alarmingly high, which could theoretically stop our college from participating in the Federal Financial Aid Programs.
 - b. Our graduation / completion rates will continue to appear to be lower than they should.
 - c. Our pass rates for all developmental courses will never significantly improve.
- 5) Developmental courses are designed to be completed and passed in one semester. The overwhelming reason for not passing a developmental course in one semester is lack of attendance.

The Mountwest Retention and Readmissions Committee, in conjunction with the Mountwest Admission Standards Ad Hoc Committee, recommends new student placement standards that include the

establishment of a period of time in which previous placement scores become outdated, minimum prerequisites on all courses, minimum threshold placement scores, guidelines for students who test below minimum threshold placement scores, and guidelines for students who fail to successfully complete a developmental course within two attempts. These recommendations are as follows:

- 1) ACT or SAT or other placement scores to be used for current enrollment into courses will be less than 5 years old. In the event that the available scores are 5 years old or older, or if no scores at all are available, the ACCUPLACER test will be administered to determine student placement prior to the registration of classes.
- 2) Appropriate pre-requisites will be placed on all courses in all divisions, keeping in mind the reading, writing, and mathematical abilities needed for successful completion of those courses. In almost every case, a developmental course pre-requisite or placement score above the developmental level would be appropriate.
- 3) The purpose of developmental education is to prepare students for college-level coursework by providing transitional education to those who are underprepared. Because Mountwest only offers one tier of developmental coursework, a bottom threshold placement score will be used for all developmental course placements to ensure that students placed in a developmental course possess the potential to succeed. Recommended placement scores for each developmental course are as follows:

READING: For placement in REA 098:

ACT reading score of at least 13/ Accuplacer reading score of at least 40/ SAT reading score of at least 230.

(*note - competencies reflect a minimal reading comprehension level of 8th grade.)

For placement in REA companion & contextualized courses:

ACT reading score of at least 13/ Accuplacer reading score of at least 40/ SAT reading score of at least 230.

(*note - competencies reflect a minimal reading comprehension level of 8th grade)

For placement in REA & ENL combined accelerated course:

ACT reading score of at least 13/ Accuplacer reading score of at least 40/ SAT reading score of at least 230.

(*note – competencies reflect a minimal reading comprehension level of 8th grade.)

ACT writing score of at least 14 / SAT verbal score of at least 290 / Write Placer minimum score of 4.
(*note -competencies for this referral reflect a minimal writing level of 9th grade.)

WRITING: For placement in 3 credit ENL 095:

ACT writing score of at least 14 / SAT writing score of at least 290 / WritePlacer minimum score of 4.

(*note-competencies for this referral reflect a minimal writing level of 9th grade.)

For placement in 5 credit ENL 095 –

ACT of at least 12 /SAT of at least 250 OR WritePlacer minimum score of 3.

(*note-competencies for this referral reflect a minimal writing level of 6th grade.)

MATH: For placement in MAT 096:

ACT score of at least 12 / SAT score of at least 290 / Accuplacer arithmetic score of 36

An elementary algebra score of 23.

(*note – these scores reflect a minimal competency level of 7th grade.)

- 4) Students whose scores fall below the bottom threshold score will be offered non-credit options for “intervention and placement score retesting”. These options may include but are not limited to: referral to ABE, boot camps, test prep tutoring, etc., as available and as offered by the college. Students who test below the bottom threshold score in any of these three areas will be referred to the MCTC Adult Basic Education program so that they may receive appropriate remediation. In a case in which a student scores high enough in one or two of the areas and not in the other(s), he or she will be allowed to enroll into the courses for which his or her scores are appropriate.
- 5) Students who fail to successfully complete a developmental course will be allowed to repeat the course one time only.
- 6) All developmental coursework must be completed within 24 credit hours. No additional coursework may be attempted until developmental requirements are satisfied.

Effective date: 06/05/2013

Approved by: Dr. Keith Cotroneo, President

