
TITLE: PLACEMENT TESTING AND DEVELOPMENTAL COURSE RECOMMENDATIONS

POLICY NO: 2-12

EFFECTIVE DATE: 08/16/90

VCCS POLICY NO: [6.4.0.2](#)

REVISED DATE: 07/07/15

I. Purpose:

To describe the conditions under which students must take placement tests and complete any required developmental course prerequisites prior to enrolling in a course, in order to maximize students' opportunities for success in the courses in which they are enrolled.

II. Definitions:

Transient student: a student who enrolls at the college with the intent of completing a program at his/her home institution.

III. Policy:

A. Placement testing requirements

1. Placement testing for curricular students: All curricular students shall be required to take placement tests in reading, writing, and mathematics prior to registering for any course at the college. Students may be required to take additional specialized placement tests before enrolling in certain courses or curricula.
2. Placement testing for non-curricular students: Non-curricular students shall be required to take placement tests in reading, writing, and mathematics when:
 - a. they wish to enroll in one (1) or more of the courses for which placement testing is required such as English, mathematics, biology, chemistry, and others as listed in the *College Catalog* and *Registration Information Booklet*, or
 - b. they have accumulated nine (9) or more semester credits in college courses and are experiencing academic difficulty in one (1) or more areas. In this case, academic difficulty means having a cumulative GPA of less than 2.0 or earning an "F" or "U" in a class.
3. Placement testing for students whose first language is not English: Students whose native language is not English must take the college's English as a Second Language (ESL) placement test before registering for any courses at the college. Students who successfully exit the ESL test shall be referred to the Testing Center to take the other placement test(s).
4. Placement testing for students with disabilities: Special testing accommodations designed to meet the needs of disabled students shall be provided if it is determined

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that the student is eligible for accommodations (see [Reynolds Policy No. 1-15](#), Eligibility of Students with Disabilities to Receive Accommodations).

5. Placement testing for distance learning/online students: Placement testing may occur at a distance at an acceptable, proctored testing site. Students interested in placement testing from a distance should contact one (1) of the college's Testing Centers for instructions on how to test from a distance.
6. Limitations
 - a. Placement test scores are valid for a period of two (2) years from the date of the test and course recommendation.
 - b. In the event that a student has taken a placement test, and has received a developmental recommendation in a subject area, but has not enrolled in the recommended developmental course, the student may retake the placement test within a one (1) year period, but no sooner than four (4) months from the date of the original placement test. Exceptions to this rule are permitted; however, the student must request a retest at any campus Testing Center.
 - c. Once a student enrolls in a developmental course, no retests shall be allowed.
 - d. Students who retest and pass the designated section or the entire test shall not be eligible for a late tuition refund, a late withdrawal, or a refund of a previously paid testing fee.
 - e. ESL students must consult with the ESL Office before retesting. ESL students who have separated from the college for more than one (1) year may be required to retake the ESL placement test.
7. Exemptions and waivers
 - a. Students who hold an associate, baccalaureate, or graduate degree from a college or university where English is the language of instruction or who can present other evidence of proficiency in a subject area, may receive a waiver of one (1) or more tests by providing an official transcript documenting such proficiency to the Office of Admissions and Records or Enrollment Services. A transcript is considered official when it has the institution's official seal, has the signature from a registrar, and is presented in a sealed envelope from the institution.
 - b. Transient students who have submitted a completed [JSRCC Form No. 11-0006](#), Transient Student Approval Form, may have placement testing requirements waived.
 - c. Students may receive a waiver of or be exempted from taking one (1) or more tests under the following conditions:

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- (1) For reading, students must have successfully completed a minimum of nine (9) credits of college-level, reading-intensive coursework with a grade of "C" or better. These can include but are not limited to: college composition, literature, social science, and science courses.
 - (2) For mathematics, students must have successfully completed with a grade of "C" or better a college-level mathematics course equivalent to the prerequisite requirements for the course the student is seeking to enter.
 - d. The ESL placement test shall be waived for non-native speakers of English only if the student meets one (1) of the following requirements:
 - (1) holds an associate, baccalaureate, or graduate degree from a college or university at which English is the language of instruction;
 - (2) receives transfer credit for credit-level college composition (ENG 111); or
 - (3) provides evidence of having earned specific scores on the computer-based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or paper TOEFL. TOEFL scores are good for one (1) year.
 - e. SAT and ACT scores may be used to waive the reading, writing, and mathematics placement tests, under the following conditions:
 - (1) Official scores must be received from the testing entity or from the high school. Once received, placement scores shall be documented in the Student Information System (SIS).
 - (2) Specific scores on tests shall be required to waive placement tests (see [Addendum](#), Placement Waiver/Exemption Criteria).

Scores must be current, or within two (2) years of the date the student is requesting the waiver for reading and writing. Math scores are valid for up to two (2) years from the date the student is requesting the waiver.
 - f. Documentation shall be required for waivers. A student who changes a curriculum or who later chooses to take classes for which placement testing is required shall be re-evaluated for placement testing requirements.
8. Test administration
- The vice president of student affairs shall be administratively responsible for administering placement testing and the day-to-day operations of the Testing Center where placement testing shall be administered.
9. Assessment and evaluation

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The vice president of academic affairs shall be responsible to the executive vice president for periodic assessment and evaluation of the placement-testing program.

B. Developmental course requirements

1. Establishment of placement testing and developmental course requirements

- a. Faculty in disciplines with developmental-level courses (such as English and mathematics) shall be responsible for designing, within the structure provided by the *VCCS Curriculum Guide*, the developmental courses and sequences of college-level courses in their respective disciplines. They shall also be responsible for establishing the criteria by which students shall be placed in college-level courses in their respective disciplines.
- b. Faculty in disciplines without developmental-level courses shall determine whether a placement test in reading, writing, or mathematics is required for their college-level courses and, if appropriate, establish developmental course prerequisites in these courses.

2. Enforcement of developmental course requirements

- a. The college shall take appropriate measures to ensure that students meet all developmental prerequisites for college-level courses.
- b. Students must successfully complete the required developmental course (and any other required sequential developmental courses), or successfully pass the placement test in the appropriate subject before enrolling in college-level courses for which they are prerequisite. This is inclusive of ESL.

IV. Procedures:

A. Placement testing requirements

1. Placement testing for curricular students

- a. Students identified as curricular will be referred by Enrollment Services staff to the appropriate Testing Center.
- b. Students may take one (1) section or all sections of the placement tests at the same time.
- c. At advising appointments, students and counselors or student services specialists will discuss the student's placement scores, required courses and, if appropriate, additional courses.

2. Placement testing for non-curricular students

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- a. Students identified as non-curricular will be referred to Enrollment Services when these students attempt to enroll in courses requiring placement tests.
 - b. In the event that a non-curricular student will need to take the placement test, he/she may take all tests or the test that is required for the course(s) in which he/she plans to enroll.
 - c. Non-curricular students will be allowed to register in these credit courses after they have taken the appropriate placement tests, had the results evaluated, and successfully completed any identified and recommended developmental courses.
3. Placement testing for students whose first language is not English
- a. Students who identify themselves as non-native speakers of English on the [Virginia Community College Online Admissions](#) application form or [JSRCC Form No.11-0000](#), Application for Admission, will be referred to the ESL Office to schedule an appointment to take the ESL placement test.
 - b. Students will take the ESL placement test, which consists of a standardized test, an oral interview, and a writing sample.
 - c. Immediately after taking the ESL test, students must make an appointment with an ESL advisor to discuss the student's placement scores, required ESL courses, and, if appropriate, additional courses. Advising appointments normally take place within three (3) days of the test.
4. Placement testing for students with disabilities
- a. Enrollment Services or other college staff must refer students who identify themselves as having a disability to the Office of Student Accommodations.
 - b. It will be determined by the Office of Student Accommodations staff if the student is eligible for accommodations and, if appropriate, the staff will recommend special testing accommodations based on documentation required of the student.

V. Other Information:

[Virginia Community College Online Admissions](#) Application Form

[Addendum](#), Placement Waiver/Exemption Criteria

[Reynolds Policy No. 1-15](#), Eligibility of Students with Disabilities to Receive Accommodations

[JSRCC Form No.11-0000](#), Application for Admission

[JSRCC Form No. 11-0006](#), Transient Student Approval