

**South Dakota Board of Regents
English and Mathematics Placement**

I. Policy Overview

The Board of Regents has developed a standardized placement process to ensure that entering students are placed into math and English courses most appropriate for their ability and background. The requirements for placement are set forth in BOR Policy 2:7 Baccalaureate General Education Curriculum and BOR Policy 2:26 Associate Degree General Education Requirements. Both policies contain the same statement included below.

A. Academic Preparation.

1. Effective Spring 2000, entering students must show evidence of their level of academic preparation prior to enrollment into their initial mathematics and English courses. All entering students seeking a baccalaureate degree must provide valid ACT scores (within the last five years) or must take the ACT COMPASS examination in the areas of writing skills, mathematics, and reading. All non-degree seeking students enrolling in English and mathematics courses must provide ACT scores or must take the ACT COMPASS examination in the areas of writing skills and mathematics.
2. Students enrolled prior to Spring 2000 who have already been placed into their initial mathematics and English coursework, and transfer students who have completed equivalent general education coursework in English and mathematics are exempt from this requirement.
3. Transfer students will be allowed to transfer their placement test scores and continue their sequence of courses in English and/or mathematics.

B. Testing Accommodations.

Each institution shall give students prior notice that it will provide reasonable accommodations for test takers in keeping with institutional practices implementing the South Dakota Human Relations Act of 1972, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (refer to Board Policy 1:19).

II. Placement Goals

A placement system enables students to enroll in courses that suit their ability level and background. Students with deficits will receive the remediation they need to progress through the required general education mathematics and English courses with minimal risk of failure. Other students will be tracked into higher-level courses challenging their abilities without overwhelming or boring them. The fit between student ability and course level should increase retention, as students have a greater likelihood of succeeding in courses tailored to their capacity. The placement system also provides valid and reliable assessment data on incoming freshmen for later comparisons with proficiency examination (CAAP) scores in mathematics and writing (English).

III. Testing Instruments: Enhanced ACT Assessment and ACT COMPASS

A. ACT Assessment.

The ACT Assessment was selected as the primary instrument for the placement process. By using students' ACT Assessment scores, the placement process for entering students is streamlined through the elimination of the need for additional testing.

B. ACT COMPASS.

1. The ACT COMPASS testing software was selected as the secondary assessment instrument. Only those students who fall into one of the following categories are required to sit for the COMPASS placement test:
 - a. Student does not have ACT Assessment scores in English and/or Math

- b. Student's ACT or COMPASS Assessment scores are more than 5 years old
 - c. Student challenges their course placement
 - d. Student wishes to enroll in a mathematics course above the level of college algebra
2. The COMPASS testing system is a computer-based adaptive assessment program that uses modules that are self-paced allowing students to work at their own speed and comfort level. The tests are adaptive in that the questions are adjusted to the ability level associated with the responses to the previous questions. COMPASS provides immediate scoring, identifies student deficits and can be equated with ACT scores. A tutorial program is used prior to testing to acquaint students with the navigation and response patterns. The COMPASS test does not have a time limit and the scores do not affect admission. Most students take about 20 – 40 minutes per section. The Regental universities operate the COMPASS testing system under a site license agreement with ACT.

IV. Placement Process

The placement process is to be consistent across the South Dakota Unified System of Public Higher Education and pertain to both degree seeking and non-degree seeking students.

A. Initial Placement

1. First-Time Students with Valid ACT Scores

- a. For all students with valid ACT Assessment scores, the Enhanced ACT English and ACT Math scores will be used to determine placement into initial English and mathematics courses.
- b. Placement is determined by the ACT and Compass Placement Score matrix (Appendix A).
- c. Valid ACT Assessment scores are those scores that were earned by the student within five (5) years of the date of initial enrollment within the Regental system.
- d. If a student has multiple ACT scores, the highest ACT Math and ACT English scores are used for placement purposes.

2. First-Time Students without Valid ACT Scores

- a. Students without valid ACT Assessment scores must sit for the COMPASS Writing, Mathematics and Reading placement exams.
- b. Placement is determined by the ACT and COMPASS Placement Score matrix (Appendix A).
- c. Valid ACT Assessment scores are those scores that were earned by the student within five (5) years of the date of initial enrollment within the Regental system.

3. International Students

- a. International, non-native English speakers and immigrant, non-native English speaking students are not exempt from Board policies 2:7 and 2:26.
- b. Each institution may develop a process for determining whether international students should be required to enroll in ESL courses prior to enrollment in ENGL 031, 032, 033 or 101.
- c. Upon completion of required ESL coursework, international students will be tested using the COMPASS writing placement exam to determine whether they are sufficiently prepared to enroll in ENGL 101 or require additional remediation. An example of an institutional process is provided in Appendix B.

4. Transfer Students

- a. Transfer students who have not completed the necessary general education coursework in English and/or mathematics from an accredited institution are subject to the placement requirements outlined in section IV.A.1. Transfer students who have official placement scores from ACT may transfer those scores from the first university. Students seeking to transfer English or mathematics courses from a South Dakota Technical Institute may do so under the current Technical Institute

General Education Agreement. English or mathematics courses that are not covered in this agreement may not be used to establish initial placement within the Regental system.

- b. Effective Spring 2006, if a mathematics course equivalent to MATH 101 has been successfully completed (a grade of A, B, C, or S), the student may follow the appropriate mathematics course sequence at the second university without additional placement testing.

5. High School Students Enrolling in Dual Credit Courses

High school students enrolling in dual credit English and/or mathematics courses are subject to the placement requirements outlined above for first-time students based on the availability of valid ACT scores.

6. Distance Education Students

- a. Distance education students who have not completed the equivalent of ENGL 101 and/or Math 101 (per IV.A.4.b), are subject to the placement requirements outlined above for first-time students based on the availability of valid ACT scores.
- b. Those students without valid ACT scores may take the appropriate COMPASS placement exam at any one of the six Regental universities or at an approved testing site using the Internet COMPASS. Their scores will be sent to the institution offering the distance education course.

7. Non-Regental Students

The availability of the COMPASS placement exam for students enrolling in courses at non-Regental institutions is determined by each Regental university. The Regental university may charge such students a fee to cover the costs associated with the administration of the placement exam.

8. Students with SAT I Scores

- a. For all students with valid SAT I scores, the SAT Critical Reading and SAT Mathematical exam scores will be equated to Enhanced ACT English and ACT Math scores based on concordance information provided by ACT, Inc.
- b. Placement is determined by the ACT and Compass Placement Score matrix (Appendix A).
- c. Valid SAT I scores are those scores that were earned by the student within five (5) years of the date of initial enrollment within the Regental system

9. Regental Student Placement in Pre General Education English Courses

Regental students seeking degrees from a Regental institution other than the Regental university offering the pre general education English course in which the Regental student enrolls, will be placed in ENGL 031, ENGL 032, or ENGL 033 according to the guidelines of the Regental university offering the course. An exception will be made for the pre general education English courses offered at University Center. At the University Center, all students being placed in a pre general education English course will be placed in ENGL 033.

B. Exceptions

1. Placement into a Lower Course

Students who wish to enroll in courses that are lower than indicated by their placement scores must request an exception from the Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee by submitting a completed exception form.

2. Placement into a Higher Course

- a. Students who wish to enroll in courses that are higher than indicated by their placement scores may challenge their placement by sitting for the COMPASS examination.
- b. A student who is still unable to earn the necessary prerequisite for enrollment in the higher course may request an exception by submitting a completed exception form to the Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee.
- c. Students seeking an exception must provide evidence, to the satisfaction of the VPAA or designee of the university offering the course, that they have the necessary level of preparation to have a reasonable chance of successfully completing the higher level course. Evidence the VPAA or designee may take into consideration when deciding whether to grant an exception includes high school coursework, level of motivation, etc.
- d. Exceptions must be approved prior to the official add/drop date for the term in which the student is enrolled.
- e. Students challenging their placement must pay a testing fee as determined by SDBOR to cover the cost of COMPASS testing.

C. Inappropriate Enrollment

1. Unless granted an exception, students are required to enroll in the initial English and mathematics coursework indicated by the placement process.
2. Regental universities will use the prerequisite course checking function of the Colleague software to insure students are enrolled appropriately.
3. Students who disregard placement directives and are found to be enrolled in the incorrect course will be administratively withdrawn from that course and enrolled in the correct one.

V. Completion of Pre-General Education Courses in English and Mathematics

Effective Fall 2003, students are required to complete pre general education courses in a timely manner (Board Policy 2:7). Pre-general education courses include ENGL 031, ENGL 032, ENGL 033, MATH 021 and MATH 101.

A. Completion of Pre-General Education Courses

1. Students placed in pre-general education courses must enroll in and successfully complete the courses within the first 30 credit hours.
2. If a student does not successfully complete the pre-general education course(s) within the first 30 credit hours attempted, a registration hold is placed on the student's record. In any subsequent registration during the next 12 credit hours attempted, the student must enroll in and successfully complete the pre-general education course(s).
3. If the pre-general education course(s) is not successfully completed within the first 42 credit hours attempted, the only course(s) in which a student may enroll is the pre-general education course(s); and the student's status is changed from degree seeking to non-degree seeking. This change will ONLY be in effect at the end of the Spring semester. (e.g. barring any other academic issues [e.g. academic suspension] students can enroll full-time in the Spring semester even though they may have more than 42 attempted credit hours) Students transferring from non-Regental institutions must enroll in pre-general education courses during the first 30 attempted Regental credit hours. These students may enroll in other courses concurrently with the pre-general education courses. If the student does not complete the pre-general education courses during the first 30 Regental credit hours attempted, during the next 12 credit hours attempted, the student must enroll in and complete the pre-general education course(s). If the student does not successfully complete the pre-general education course(s) within 42 attempted Regental credit hours, the only course(s) in which a student may enroll is the pre-general education course(s); and the student's status is changed from degree seeking to non-degree seeking. The Vice President for Academic Affairs may grant an exception. This change will ONLY be in effect at the end of the Spring semester. (e.g. barring any other academic issues (e.g. academic suspension) students can enroll full-time in the Spring semester even though they may have more than 42 attempted credit hours).

4. Students who are placed into MATH 021 are expected to successfully complete both MATH 021 and MATH 101 before enrolling in MATH 102. However, a student who performs exceptionally well in MATH 021 may petition the VPAA to bypass MATH 101 and enroll in MATH 102 as their next mathematics course. These students must sit for the COMPASS Math placement exam and earn scores that meet or exceed the placement score necessary for enrolling in MATH 102.

B. Credit Hours and Grades

1. Credit hours for the pre-general education courses are included in the total number of credit hours attempted.
2. The grades assigned for courses numbered less than 100 will be RI, RS and RU.

Appendix A
ACT and COMPASS Placement Scores
 Effective Fall 2011

PRE GENERAL EDUCATION PLACEMENT

University	Course(s)	Enhanced ACT Scores	COMPASS Scores
ENGLISH			
BHSU	ENGL 033 Basic Writing: 3 credits*	ACT English: 1 to 17	Writing: 1 to 73
	ENGL 101 English Composition: 3 Credits	ACT English 18 – 36	Writing 74 - 100
DSU & NSU	ENGL 033 Basic Writing: 3 credits*	ACT English: 1 to 17	Writing: 1 to 73
SDSMT	ENGL 033 Basic Writing: 3 credits*	ACT English: 1 to 12	Writing: 1 to 32
	ENGL 032 Basic Writing: 2 credits*	ACT English: 13 or 14	Writing: 33 to 48
	ENGL 031 Basic Writing: 1 credit*	ACT English: 15 to 17	Writing: 49 to 73
SDSU	ENGL 033 Basic Writing: 3 credits*	ACT English: 1 to 13	Writing: 1 to 38
	ENGL 032 Basic Writing: 2 credits*	ACT English: 14 to 17	Writing: 39 to 73
USD	ENGL 032 Basic Writing: 2 credits*	ACT English: 1 to 17	Writing: 1 to 73
MATHEMATICS			
ALL	MATH 021 Basic Algebra	ACT Math: 1 to 17	Pre-Algebra: 0 to 100 OR Algebra: 0 to 30
ALL	MATH 101 Intermediate Algebra	ACT Math: 18 to 19	Algebra: 31 to 40

*Depending on the university, enrollment in ENGL 031/032/033 may occur either concurrently or sequentially with ENGL 101.

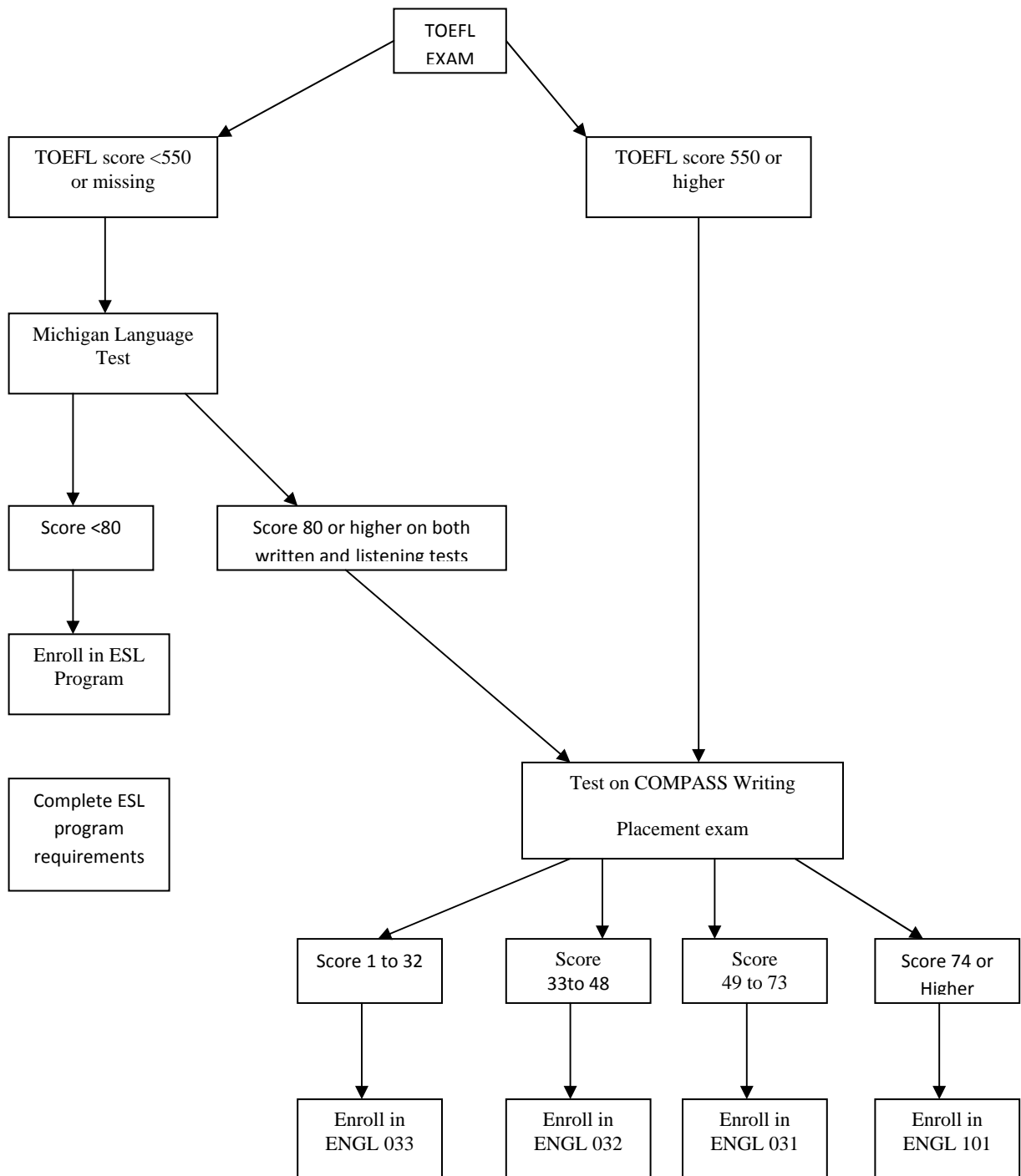
GENERAL EDUCATION PLACEMENT

Course(s)	Enhanced ACT Scores	COMPASS Scores
ENGLISH		
ENGL 101 Composition I	ACT English: 18 to 36	Writing: 74 to 100
MATHEMATICS		
MATH 102 College Algebra MATH 103 Quantitative Literacy MATH 104 Finite Mathematics	ACT Math: 20 or higher**	Algebra: 41 to 100 or College Algebra: 0 to 62
MATH 115 Precalculus MATH 120 Trigonometry MATH 121 Survey of Calculus Math 201, Introduction to Discrete Mathematics	Institutional Chairs of the Math Department (or his/her Designee) have the authority to use ACT or additional information to determine a student's appropriate placement in courses above Math 104.	College Algebra: 63 to 100 and/or Trigonometry: 0 to 39
MATH 123 Calculus I***	Institutional chairs of the Math department (or his/her designee) have the authority to use ACT or additional information to determine a student's appropriate placement in courses above Math 104.	Trigonometry: 40 to 100

** Students with an ACT of 20 or higher can enroll in Math 102 without additional placement testing.

Appendix B

Example of International Student Placement Process



Appendix C
SAT I to ACT Conversion

Concordance Between SAT I Recentered Verbal Score and ACT English Score			
SAT I Verbal	ACT English	SAT I Verbal	ACT English
800	36	540	23
790	35	530	23
780	34	520	22
770	34	510	21
760	34	500	21
750	33	490	20
740	33	480	20
730	32	470	19
720	32	460	19
710	31	450	18
700	31	440	17
690	30	430	17
680	30	420	16
670	29	410	16
660	29	400	15
650	29	390	15
640	28	380	14
630	28	370	14
620	27	360	13
610	27	350	13
600	26	340	13
590	26	330	12
580	25	320	12
570	25	310	11
560	24	300	11
550	24		

Concordance Between SAT I Recentered Mathematical Score
and ACT Mathematics Score

SAT I Math	ACT Math	SAT I Math	ACT Math
800	36	520	22
790	35	510	21
780	34	500	21
770	34	490	20
760	33	480	20
750	33	470	19
740	33	460	19
730	32	450	18
720	32	440	18
710	31	430	18
700	31	420	17
690	31	410	17
680	30	400	17
670	30	390	16
660	29	380	16
650	29	370	15
640	28	360	15
630	28	350	15
620	27	340	14
610	27	330	14
600	26	320	14
590	26	310	14
580	25	300	13
570	25	290	13
560	24	280	13
550	23	270	13
540	23	260	12
530	22	250	12