

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 Fall 2012, 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 or ACCUPLACER 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 or ACCUPLACER examination in the areas of writing skills and mathematics.

In addition to scores on these assessments, other information such as high school GPA and curriculum completed may also be considered as placement decisions are made.

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.

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. Secondary Assessment: ACT COMPASS and College Board ACCUPLACER.

The ACT COMPASS and College Board ACCUPLACER testing software have been selected as the secondary assessment instruments. Only those students who fall into one of the following categories are required to sit for the COMPASS or ACCUPLACER placement test:

- a. Student does not have ACT Assessment scores in English and/or Math
 - b. Student's ACT, COMPASS, or ACCUPLACER 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.
 3. The ACCUPLACER testing system is an internet-delivered assessment program that also uses self-paced modules allowing students to work at their own speed and comfort level. XX. ACCUPLACER provides immediate scoring and can be equated with ACT scores. The Accuplacer 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 Accuplacer testing system under a site license agreement with College Board.
 4. Initial placement testing with ACCUPLACER will be based on the following:
 - a. Elementary Algebra test will be administered to students with an ACT Math subscore of 17 or lower and to students who are at least 24 years of age and who have no valid ACT scores.
 - b. College Level Math test will be administered to all other students.

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 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, COMPASS, and ACCUPLACER 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 or ACCUPLACER Writing, Mathematics, and Reading placement exams.
- b. Placement is determined by the ACT, COMPASS, or ACCUPLACER 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 or ACCUPLACER 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 ACT COMPASS, or ACCUPLACER placement scores 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 or ACCUPLACER placement exam at any one of the six Regental universities or at an approved testing site. Their scores will be sent to the institution offering the distance education course.

7. Non-Regental Students

The availability of the COMPASS or ACCUPLACER 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 (formally Verbal) and SAT Mathematical exam scores will be equated to ACT English and ACT Math scores based on concordance information provided by ACT, Inc.
- b. Placement is determined by the ACT, COMPASS, or ACCUPLACER 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 or ACCUPLACER 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 or ACCUPLACER testing.
- f. Students are allowed one challenge using the COMPASS or ACCUPLACER.

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 notified.

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, MATH 095 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 or ACCUPLACER 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, COMPASS, and ACCUPLACER Placement Scores
Effective Fall 2015

PRE GENERAL EDUCATION PLACEMENT

University	Course(s)	Enhanced ACT Scores	COMPASS Scores	ACCUPLACER	Smarter Balance
ENGLISH					
BHSU	ENGL 032 Basic Writing: 2cr/ENGL 101C Core English	ACT English: 1 to 17	Writing: 1 to 73	Sentence Skills: 0-85	0 - 2582
DSU & NSU	ENGL 033 Basic Writing: 3 credits*	ACT English: 1 to 17	Writing: 1 to 73	Sentence Skills: 0-85	0 - 2582
SDSMT	ENGL 033 Basic Writing: 3 credits*	ACT English: 1 to 12	Writing: 1 to 32	Sentence Skills: 0-52	0-2492
	ENGL 032 Basic Writing: 2 credits*	ACT English: 13 or 14	Writing: 33 to 48	Sentence Skills: 53-70	0-2492
	ENGL 031 Basic Writing: 1 credit*	ACT English: 15 to 17	Writing: 49 to 73	Sentence Skills: 71-85	2493-2582
SDSU	ENGL 033 Basic Writing: 3 credits*	ACT English: 1 to 13	Writing: 1 to 38	Sentence Skills: 0-52	0-2492
	ENGL 032 Basic Writing: 2 credits*	ACT English: 14 to 17	Writing: 39 to 73	Sentence Skills: 53-85	2493-2582
USD	ENGL 032 Basic Writing: 2 credits*	ACT English: 1 to 17	Writing: 1 to 73	Sentence Skills: 0-85	0-2583
MATHEMATICS					
ALL	MATH 021 Basic Algebra	ACT Math: 1 to 17	Pre-Algebra: 0 to 100 OR Algebra: 0 to 30	Arithmetic: 0-120 OR Elm Algebra: 0-43	0-2542
	Math 095 Basic & Intermediate Algebra	ACT Math 1-19	Pre-Algebra: 0-100 OR Algebra 0-40	Arithmetic: 0-120 OR Elm Algebra 0-75	0-2627
ALL	MATH 101 Intermediate Algebra	ACT Math: 18 to 19	Algebra: 31 to 40	Elm Algebra: 44-75	2543-2627

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

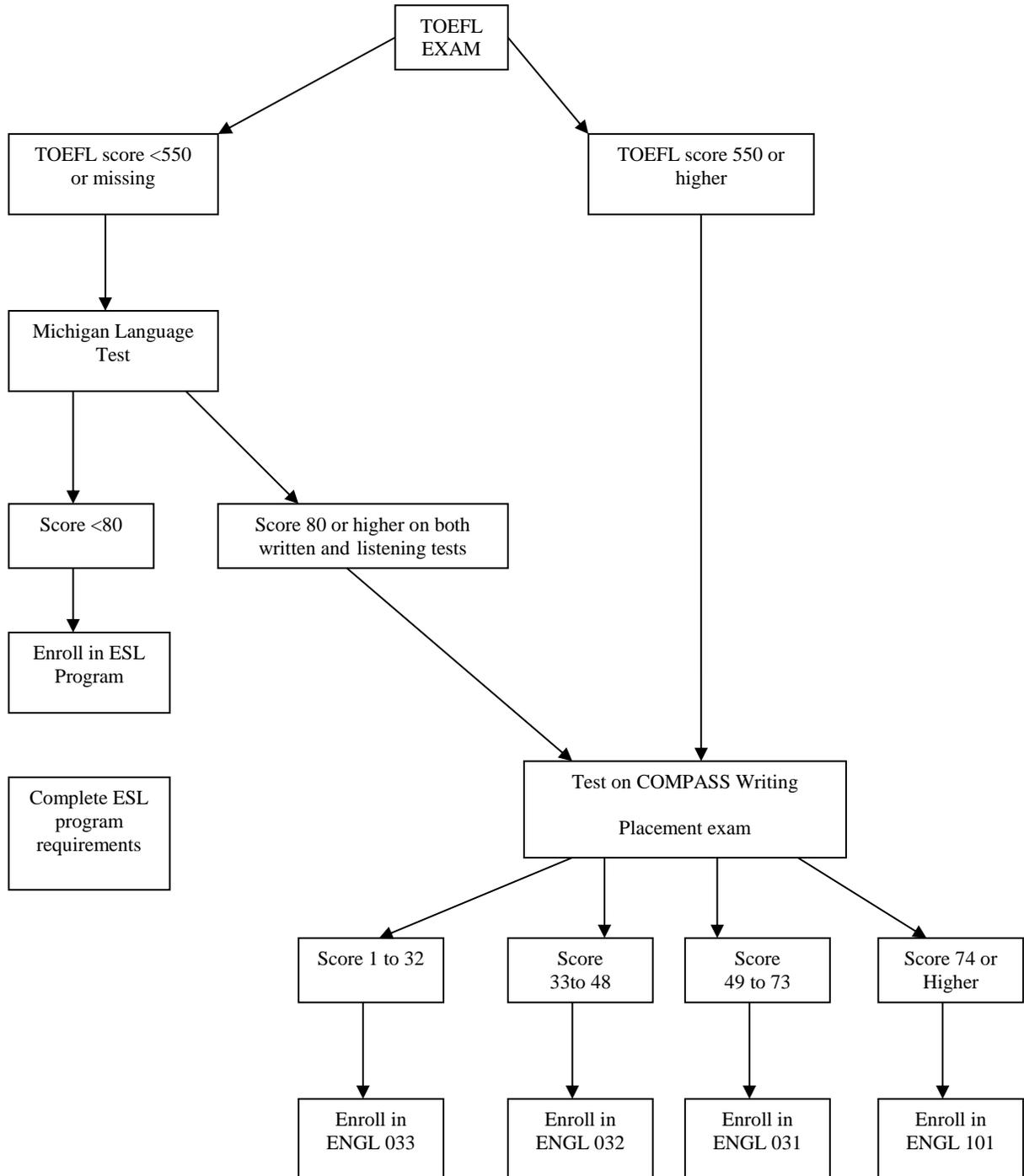
GENERAL EDUCATION PLACEMENT

Course(s)	Enhanced ACT Scores	COMPASS Scores	ACCUPLACER	Smarter Balance
ENGLISH				
ENGL 101 Composition I	ACT English: 18 to 36	Writing: 74 to 100	Sentence Skills: 86-120	2583 or higher
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	Elm: Algebra 76 -120 College Level: 0-50	2628 or higher
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: See Placement Coordinator	College Level 51+	NA
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.	See Placement Coordinator	NA	NA

** 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 Critical Reading Score (formerly Verbal) 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