

MONTANA BOARD OF REGENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Policy and Procedures Manual

SUBJECT: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
Policy 301.17 – Composition Placement
Adopted: November 16, 2007

Board Policy:

- A. Composition placement policy is based on the writing proficiency section of policy 301.1, which sets thresholds for full admission to the four-year programs at Montana State University-Bozeman, Montana State University-Billings, Montana State University-Northern, The University of Montana-Missoula, Montana Tech of The University of Montana, and The University of Montana Western. This placement policy applies to the programs listed above, as well as Montana university system (MUS) programs with open admissions and dual enrollment programs that offer composition courses for college credit.
- B. This policy reflects the Montana board of regents' expectation that students should not be required to take multiple writing examinations as part of their initial matriculation in the system.
- C. This policy provides campuses with the flexibility to select assessment measures based on their own course offerings, course content, and predictive studies. Campuses must clearly communicate their placement practices to students, counselors, staff, and advisors.
- D. Students who earn the following **minimum** scores on tests taken during high school may be placed into a college-level freshman composition course without further testing:
1. **7** on the writing subscore or 18 on the combined English/writing section of the optional writing test of the ACT; or
 2. **7** on the essay or 440 on the writing section of the SAT; or
 3. **3.5** on the MUS writing assessment (MUSWA).
- E. Students who score below the thresholds set in D will be placed into developmental courses. Campuses have the discretion to allow students who do not meet the thresholds in D, but scored at least 5 on the ACT or SAT essays or 2.5 on the MUSWA, to challenge this placement through one of the following approaches:
1. A campus-administered writing assessment modeled upon the MUSWA: Students are given 40 minutes to respond to a persuasive prompt and two trained scorers use the MUSWA six-point holistic scoring rubric to arrive at a score; or
 2. A campus-specific measure, such as portfolios, approved by the writing proficiency steering committee; or
 3. Regular and supervised participation in a tutoring program/learning center from which students can exit with the threshold scores set in section H of this policy.
- F. Students will be placed into developmental courses, without further testing, if their writing scores are below 5 on the ACT or SAT or below 2.5 on the MUSWA or the campus-administered writing assessment modeled upon the MUSWA.
- G. Students may be placed into advanced composition courses, where they are available, based on MUSWA, ACT, SAT, advanced placement, or international baccalaureate scores as determined by the English department of each campus.
- H. Students without writing placement examination scores, students whose writing scores were earned more than three years before enrolling, or students exempted under section IV of policy 301.1 (non-traditional students, summer-only, and part-time students) are placed into college-level composition by taking examinations offered by the two-year or four-year campuses and earning the minimum scores listed below. Students with scores below these thresholds are placed into developmental composition courses:
1. **50** on the CLEP general examination with an essay; or
 2. **7** on the COMPASS E-write examination; or

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3. **90** on the COMPASS writing skills test until a proficiency measure is put into place on the campus; or
4. **71** on the COMPASS writing skills test if a proficient essay is also submitted, or
5. **3.5** on a campus –administered writing assessment modeled upon the MUSWA: Students are given 40 minutes to respond to a persuasive prompt and two trained scorers use the MUSWA six-point holistic scoring rubric to arrive at a score.

History:

ITEM 89-003-R1195 Proficiency Admission Requirements and Developmental Education in the Montana University System, approved November 17, 1995; ITEM 107-109-RO500 Report from Joint K-16 Composition Standards Committee on Writing Proficiency Standards for Admission and Graduation from MUS, approved July 6, 2000; ITEM122-115-R0104 Writing Proficiency Recommendation, approved January 15, 2004; ITEM 129-109-R1105 Writing Proficiency Policy, approved November 16, 2005, ITEM 135-1110R0507 Revisions to Policy 301.16, Writing Proficiency, approved May 31, 2007.