

MONTANA BOARD OF REGENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Policy and Procedures Manual

SUBJECT: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Policy 301.17 – Mathematics and Writing Course Placement

Adopted: November 16, 2007; Revised: September 18, 2014, May 16, 2024

Board Policy:

A. Purpose. This policy:

1. Sets forth expectations and requirements pertaining to math and writing placement assessment on Montana University System campuses. Establishing placement approaches at all MUS campuses that follow common guidelines is intended to enhance implementation of best practices, enhance student ability to pass gateway math and writing in the first year, and create more seamless experiences for students within the system.

B. Expectations and Requirements. All MUS campuses shall have a mechanism for assessing all students' readiness for college-level mathematics and college-level writing courses. MUS campus placement processes and methods must meet the minimum requirements in this policy. Campuses have discretion in determining implementation of the policy.

C. Definitions

Placement: In this document, *placement* refers to the assignment of a student to math and writing courses with a determination of the level of support needed. Students may be placed into college level courses with no additional support, co-requisite courses with support, or pre-requisite courses.

Pre-requisite: In this document, *pre-requisite* refers to stand-alone courses that do not earn college credit. Many college-level courses have other college-level courses that are listed as "course prerequisites," and this document does not refer to those prerequisites.

Co-requisite: In this document, *co-requisite* refers to additional support connected to a college-level, credit-bearing course. The co-requisite portion may either be for additional credit or included in the course credits. Co-requisite courses provide access to college-level courses by providing academic support when taken alongside college-level courses.

Gateway courses: In this document, *gateway* courses are those that are 100-level or above courses in math or writing.

D. Mathematics and Writing Course Placement Requirements.

1. Campuses may waive placement assessment if a student has AP, IB, dual credit, and other types of coursework evaluated as college credit bearing.
2. Campus placement guidelines should emphasize determining the level of support needed and appropriate course placement for students to pass gateway math and writing courses within the first year while minimizing credits to passing the course. To align with national best practices, students are generally to be placed into college credit-bearing courses, and additional support such as corequisites should be added when appropriate. In rare cases when institutions demonstrate that students have a higher likelihood of success in a pre-requisite course than a credit-bearing college level course with support, institutions may offer a prerequisite model.
3. Campus placement models must include multiple measures, including academic measures, students' educational goals and degree paths, and college readiness skills. Placement models should allow students opportunities to build skills to avoid pre-requisites and place directly into college-level courses.

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4. For math placement, campuses must follow MUS Math Pathways to guide placement into appropriate gateway math courses for students' degree path.
 5. For students transferring within the MUS, all institutions shall accept gateway placement determination from other MUS institutions within the appropriate MUS Math Pathways of non-STEM or STEM math pathways. This guidance does not refer to placements beyond gateway math and writing courses.

E. Reporting of Campus Placement Processes and Data Tracking.

1. **Campus reporting.** All campuses must provide to the Developmental Education Steering Committee rationale and outcomes data to support their institution's placement model including metrics established by the Developmental Education Steering Committee and defined in the implementation manual.
2. **Placement process review.** The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education shall designate a Developmental Education Steering Committee to regularly review campus placement processes and metrics. The steering committee shall provide recommendations to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education based on the Committee's review.
3. **Reporting.** The Developmental Education Steering committee will report to the Board of Regents placement outcomes, including placement by demographic and preparedness, gateway course success, and other metrics established in the implementation manual.

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. Revised September 18, 2014, Item 164-103-R0914. Revised May 16, 2024, Item 212-109-R0524.