

MEMO



DATE: 10/09/2023
TO: Arkansas Public Colleges and Universities
FROM: Arkansas Division of Higher Education
SUBJECT: Arkansas Placement Guidance

ADHE and ACC offer the following placement guidance to public colleges throughout the state of Arkansas as part of our commitment to promoting student success by encouraging the use of Multiple Measures Assessment (MMA).

The following recommendations supplement existing placement policies, which are mentioned throughout. This information is based on [years of national research](#) and on the findings of the recent [Arkansas CAPR study](#)—all of which show that GPA is the best predictor of student performance in college. These studies also show that increasing student access to college-level courses improves student outcomes. Though colleges may implement these practices at their own discretion, we encourage you to adhere to the following recommendations.

Placement Recommendations

Colleges and universities shall use **any** of the following placement measures to determine a student's course placement within English and mathematics:

1. Cumulative high school grade point average (HS GPA)
 - a. English: A student who presents a HS GPA of 2.5 or higher must be considered college-ready and permitted to enroll in college-level Reading, Writing and English courses without a developmental prerequisite. A college or university may establish lower minimum HS GPA score(s) for placement into developmental courses. A college or university may also establish different prerequisites for placement into higher-level courses.
 - b. Mathematics. A student who presents a HS GPA of 2.5 or higher must be considered college-ready and permitted to enroll in entry-level college courses in the math department. A college or university may establish lower minimum HS GPA score(s) for placement into introductory college-level mathematics courses and for developmental mathematics courses. A college or university may establish different prerequisites for placement into higher-level mathematics courses.
 - c. Self-reported HS GPA should be accepted in the absence of an official GPA from a transcript.
2. Eligible ACT, SAT and GED scores
 - a. Students may demonstrate readiness using existing or revised ACT, SAT and GED placement policies.
3. Eligible ACCUPLACER scores (i.e., Classic or Next Generation ACCUPLACER).
 - a. Students may demonstrate readiness using existing or revised ACT and SAT placement policies.
 - b. Scores already on file may be used.
 - c. Students should be allowed to retest if desired. Specific retesting policies are set at the college level.
4. Other criteria as the institution deems suitable on the basis of appropriate data analysis
 - a. Measures supported by sufficient analysis of predicted student success as outlined in the [ADHE Student Placement Policy](#).

The Use of Standalone HS GPA

Due to the [overwhelming evidence](#) that supports the use of GPA as a placement measure, we advocate for the use of standalone HS GPA as the primary method of course placement. HS GPA is available through the Triand Data Center. Colleges and universities are encouraged to contact students in situations where no HS GPA is recorded.

We acknowledge the tension between this recommendation and Arkansas Code § 6-61-110, which requires colleges to collect, and report standardized test scores to ADHE. Please move toward the use of HS GPA as we work to address this.

Guidance for Students Without a Standard Cumulative GPA

Concurrent Enrollment Students

High school students planning to participate in college or university courses must meet the [existing placement policy for concurrent enrollment students](#).

Adult Learners

GPA remains an excellent predictor of student performance for at least 10 years after graduation. We suggest that HS GPA be used to place adult learners if possible. See below for additional guidance.

Others without HS GPA

Colleges may allow students without a reportable or valid cumulative high school GPA to register for courses up to and including the college-level gateway course within the disciplines of English, reading, writing, and mathematics based on advising.

Keeping with the goal of creating multiple pathways for students to demonstrate college readiness, colleges may find ways to obtain and utilize alternate course placement measures, including but not limited to:

- Program admission requirements;
- Fulfillment of course pre-requisites;
- Developmental course completion;
- Higher level course completion (e.g., Calculus);
- Summer bridge program eligibility;
- Other local decisions that utilize GPA, and;
- Co-requisites.

All course placement recommendations must be based on the student's academic background, occupational experience, and/or relevant skills and abilities. At no time should a student's protected statuses influence placement.

Pre-registration Advising

To the greatest extent possible, students should speak with an academic advisor or faculty advisor prior to registration to:

- review the student's academic background and course needs;
 - recommend an appropriate course placement;
 - review the college or university policy for satisfactory academic progress (SAP);
 - orient the student to the available academic support services;
 - review the registration process; and
review the withdrawal process and all related deadlines.
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