

# College Readiness Standards for the Missouri Community Colleges

*Adopted January 2011*

## I. Introduction

At a summer 2010 meeting of the Missouri Community College Association (MCCA) Presidents and Chancellors, the presidents' group developed the following charge to the Chief Academic Officers (CAO group) regarding placement and entry to the community colleges.

*“On behalf of the MCCA Presidents/Chancellors Council, I charge the MCCA CAO group to*

*(A) Develop a common standard for college readiness to be adopted by all MCCA institutions, and*

*(B) Define the courses that should be considered part of developmental education at MCCA institutions.”*

Since the CAO group was notified, the CAO group has had, at their regular meetings, ongoing discussions regarding the charge and its implications and has reviewed standardized test score materials, readiness scores, and other states' similar efforts to align to a common standard for college readiness. In addition, the CAO's have listened to the concerns expressed by the local and regional discipline organizations and the Missouri Developmental Education Consortium (MoDEC).

As the CAO group reviewed options for a common college readiness standard, several important points were considered in the discussion:

- The adopted college readiness standard must be based on research and best practice.
- The standard must align with other placement testing tools.
- Consideration should be given to the approach other states took in adopting a statewide standard.

In its review of ACT based college readiness materials and publications, and in consultation with ACT staff and researchers, the CAO group arrived at two options: the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks and the “Stage 1” Cut Off Scores. Following several lengthy discussions, consultation with staff from ACT and conversations with representatives from other states about adoption of a common standard, the CAO group recommends the adoption of the Stage 1 ACT cut off scores to be the Missouri Community College Readiness Standards (see attached document).

The recommended standards, along with the detailed information regarding students' points of entry into the community college systems, the proposed two year phase in and

the commitment of the CAO's to complete the necessary curriculum revisions, all support the ongoing obligation of the institutions to promote student success, provide access to college and support student learning.

## II. Proposed Missouri Community College Readiness Standards

All students will be required to demonstrate college readiness for placement into college level coursework (typically coursework numbered 100 level or above) as defined in the chart below using ACT scores as noted. Concordant scores in other placement tests as indicated below may also be used for students who do not present an ACT score.

### Proposed Minimum Entry Scores for College Level Coursework

	ACT	COMPASS	ASSET	SAT
Writing	18	70	41	Critical Reading 450
Reading	18	81	41	Critical Reading 460
Mathematics	23	66 (Algebra Test)	23	Math 460

## III. Entry Assessment, ACT or Concordant Scores

### All Community College Students

All **credit seeking** students entering a Missouri community college will be required to demonstrate college readiness by either an ACT score, a concordant score on another test as required by the individual campuses, or transfer-in prerequisite coursework from a regionally accredited institution as required by institutions' transfer policies. Students may present an ACT to be used for placement into college level coursework or test using the campus placement testing process. Students with an ACT below the minimum will be required to test for placement. Student placement will be based on the best or highest result of all test options. **The timing of submission of scores will be determined at the local institution, based on each institution's placement and enrollment policies (for example, at admission, at entry into a mathematics course, etc.).**

### Students Seeking a Transfer Degree (AA, AAT, other transfer degrees)

Students entering a Missouri community college for the first time seeking a transfer credential (i.e. AA, AAT, AFA, etc.) must present an ACT score at admission. Students seeking entry without an ACT score will be required to test at the individual campuses and use the placement test procedures published by the institution.

Each institution will provide concordant test score information, benchmarked to the ACT, for use in placement of students into college level coursework. Each institution will publish test score placement information for all coursework below the college level.

In general, student test scores will be considered as valid for a three year period from the test date. However, test scores will remain valid as long as a student remains continuously enrolled. Each institution may develop entering student assessment policies that determine expiration of student test scores.

### **Transfer-in Students Seeking College Transfer Credit**

Students entering a Missouri community college as a transfer-in without the college level coursework in English or mathematics will be required to present an ACT score. Students entering without an ACT score and without the college level coursework will be required to test as indicated by the institution's placement testing policies.

Students entering the college as a transfer-in without college level coursework but with coursework that may satisfy the college level course prerequisite will have the coursework reviewed for transfer and equivalency as required by each institution's transfer policies. Institutions will review coursework for age, relevancy, equivalency, currency and other criteria as established in the institution's transfer policies.

### **Career Preparatory Degree Seeking Students**

Students entering a Missouri community college for the first time seeking a career preparatory credential (i.e. an AAS or certificate) must present an ACT score. Students entering without an ACT score will be required to test as indicated by the institution's placement testing policies.

The Missouri community colleges recognize that not all students enter college intending to transfer; community colleges offer career preparatory degrees with general education requirements that may be met by coursework in mathematics and/or English that is not intended for transfer. Individual institutions will maintain and publish lists of courses that satisfy general education requirements for career preparatory degrees but are not intended to satisfy a baccalaureate degree general education requirement. Information specific to the placement requirements for such general education coursework, degrees and/or certificates is available from the college's admissions office.

### **Special Categories of Students**

#### **Visiting Students**

Each campus will establish policies relating to the status of visiting students (a student who has temporarily enrolled at the community college to take selected courses and without intention of getting a degree or credential) and placement into college level coursework. In general, visiting students should expect that placement requirements for entry into college level coursework must be satisfied.

Students entering a Missouri community college as a visiting student seeking enrollment in college level coursework in English or mathematics will be required to present an ACT score at admission. Students entering without an ACT score will be required to test as indicated by the institution's placement testing policies; such testing may be limited by institutions based on the students' enrollment goals.

### **Personal Interest Students**

Each campus will establish policies relating to the status of personal interest students (a student entering a community college as non degree seeking and enrolling in personal interest coursework) and placement into college level coursework. In general, personal interest students should expect that placement requirements for entry into college level coursework must be satisfied.

Students entering a Missouri community college as a personal interest student seeking enrollment in college level coursework in English or mathematics will be required to present an ACT score at admission. Students entering without an ACT score will be required to test as indicated by the institution's placement testing policies; such testing may be limited by institutions based on the students' enrollment goals.

### **Non-native Speakers**

Each campus will establish policies relating to the status of non-native speaking students and placement into college level coursework. In general, non-native speaking students should expect that placement requirements for entry into college level coursework must be satisfied.

The level of ESL support varies from campus to campus and non-native speaking students can find more information regarding such support programs from the admissions office of the respective community college.

### **Dual Credit Students**

The Missouri Department of Higher Education publishes policy statements detailing institutional expectations regarding admission and placement for dual credit programs.

The policy requires that high school students seeking enrollment in dual credit coursework must meet the same requirements for admission to such coursework as on campus college students.

Students seeking enrollment as a dual credit student in college level coursework in English or mathematics will be required to present an ACT score. Students seeking enrollment without an ACT score will be required to test as indicated by the institution's placement testing policies; such testing may be limited by institutions based on the students' enrollment goals.

## **IV. FAQ's**

### **What if a student does not have an ACT at admission?**

Each college will establish and publish policies for students entering at admissions without an ACT score. Colleges will make available to students information

that equates the college preparedness ACT score (above) to the concordant score for the test instrument in use.

Students with an ACT below the college preparedness score as agreed to will be required to test using the campus level placement test. Students may, based on the score received, test into the college level course using the placement test. In such case, placement will be based on the highest or best score achieved.

### **What if a student wants to challenge placement based on college preparedness scores?**

Students may use the individual college's alternative placement tool, if such a tool is available, to challenge the placement made based on the ACT score.

Institutional rules associated with the campus testing process will apply to such a challenge.

## **V. Waiver/Appeals Process**

The Missouri community colleges agree that institutions will not routinely waive the minimum ACT score requirement for placement into college level coursework.

Each institution will adopt and publish a waiver and/or appeal process related to placement test scores received using the institution's placement test and process. Such waiver and/or appeals process will allow students to present extenuating circumstances for consideration by the institution. Community colleges will publish information regarding such waiver and/or appeals process.

## **VI. Support for these recommendations**

Each institution agrees to the following as the phase in and implementation is undertaken:

- (a) Conduct appropriate curriculum review to determine the necessary and appropriate changes to accommodate the new placement scores.
- (b) Revise course goals and objectives to align coursework with the new placement scores.
- (c) Provide necessary student academic support services to accommodate the needs of the new mix of college ready and developmental students.
- (d) Provide a clear transition to the new cut off scores that is transparent, understood by the faculty and staff at each institution, and supports student placement.

## **VII. Phase-In Plan**

Institutions will develop a two year phase-in plan for the newly adopted college readiness scores. Full implementation will be in effect for Fall 2012 entry.

Student placement, based on scores presented at admission, will be effective throughout the student's continuous enrollment as the phased in scores are adopted.

Students with an interruption in enrollment will be required to re-enter the institution and for purposes of placement and testing, treated as a new enrollment.

In general, institutions will:

- Apply the Phase I cut off scores beginning with students admitted for Fall 2011 entry.

**Mathematics placement (college readiness score of 23)**

Phase I For Fall 2011, schools agree to  $23 \pm 2$   
Full implementation by Fall 2012 with the 23 ACT college readiness score

**English placement (college readiness score of 18)**

Phase I For Fall 2011, schools agree to  $18 \pm 2$   
Full implementation by Fall 2012 with the 18 ACT college readiness score

**Reading placement, (college readiness score of 18)**

Phase I For Fall 2011, schools agree to  $18 \pm 2$   
Full implementation by Fall 2012 with the 18 ACT college readiness score

- All schools will align with the cut off scores above by the start of Fall 2012.

**VIII. Follow Up Reporting**

Schools agree to review end of year data for each year of the implementation plan and evaluate movement and success rates in the courses impacted. Baseline years will be used as comparison as student enrollments shift due to the common college readiness standard. The data review will use, as baseline scores, AY 9 and AY 10 enrollments in entry level college coursework in English and mathematics, and those courses which require a college level reading placement as prerequisite. Enrollments in the course specific developmental prerequisites will also be reviewed.