



ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY, AFFORDABLE EDUCATION FOR ALL COLORADANS

REMEDIAL EDUCATION REPORT

FEBRUARY 2002

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The statute (**C.R.S. 23-1-113.3**) defined the Commission's role and responsibilities, including to (1) design and implement statewide policies for remedial education, (2) provide the General Assembly information on the number, type, and cost of remedial education provided, (3) develop appropriate funding policies that support the institutional roles and missions, (4) ensure the comparability of these placement or assessment tests, and (5) ensure that each student identified as needing basic skills remedial course work is provided with written notification identifying which state institutions offer such basic skills courses and the approximate cost and relative availability of such courses, including any electronic on-line courses.

In August 2000 the Commission adopted its Remedial Education Policy.

In March 2001 the Commission revised its FTE Policy. The policy clearly identifies that only community colleges, Adams State College and Mesa State College may claim FTE in remedial courses for state support.

In October 2001 the Commission accepted the remedial plans submitted by the Colorado public colleges and universities. In all cases, students had two opportunities to demonstrate that they had mathematics, writing and reading skills necessary to succeed in college. Institutions have integrated the testing into Student Success Centers and advised students on available options to satisfy remedial needs, including the availability of on-line courses.

CCHE staff, in consultation with the governing boards, developed a reporting system. The reporting system is designed to provide the General Assembly with information on remedial students and provide feedback reports to the high schools. The first remedial assessment file was submitted October 15, 2001. Institutions will report remedial enrollments on the 2001-02 Student Enrollment File. Linking the remedial assessment data with the enrollment data will provide a composite picture of remedial needs, the responsiveness of Colorado higher education to meet student needs, and costs of remedial education.

The initial data indicate that 40% of assessed first-time students need some form of remedial assistance. The greatest need is in mathematics, with 8,518 students requiring at least one remedial math course. This equates to 32% of students entering a two-year or four-year public college who need math remediation. The four-year college math remediation rate is 13% while 74% of the students entering a two-year college need math remediation.

ACT has agreed to assist CCHE in future analyses. ACT and CCHE share a mutual interest in learning whether Colorado's junior year ACT test increases the college participation rate of Colorado high school students and whether statewide testing improves the level of college preparation. This study will be included in the January 2003 legislative report.

II. **BACKGROUND**

The policy applies to all state-supported institutions of higher education, including all four-year state-supported universities and colleges that admit freshmen, extension programs of the state-supported universities and colleges, junior and community colleges, and local district colleges. The governing boards and institutions of the public system of higher education in Colorado are obligated to conform to the policies set by the Commission within the authorities delegated to it by C.R.S. 23-1-113.3.

C.R.S. 23-1-113.3 Commission directive – basic skills courses. (1) ON OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1, 2000; THE COMMISSION SHALL ADOPT AND THE GOVERNING BOARDS SHALL IMPLEMENT STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES WHEREBY BASIC SKILLS COURSES, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 23-1-113 (4) (c), MAY BE OFFERED BY STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION.

III. **CCHE REMEDIAL POLICIES**

At its August 2000 meeting, the Commission approved a new Remedial Policy designed around three policy goals:

- All degree-seeking first-time students are prepared to succeed in college level courses.
- Students assessed as needing remedial instruction have accurate information regarding course availability and options to meet the college entry-level competencies.
- Colorado public high schools are informed about the level of college readiness of their recent high school graduate.

In March 2001 the Commission revised its FTE Policy. The current FTE Policy clearly identifies that only community colleges, Adams State College and Mesa State College may claim state support for remedial education and what circumstances apply. As part of the policy design, a new FTE reporting form was included in the annual FTE Report making it possible to monitor the state cost of supporting remedial education.

IV. **REMEDIAL PLANS**

In accordance with CCHE's Remedial Policy, each governing board submitted remedial plans for its institution. CCHE staff reviewed the remedial plans for completeness, comparability of cut scores and compliance with the statute. While certain institutions are using additional assessment tools to determine the level of college readiness, the scores on these tests correlate to the ACT subtest scores. The Academic Council had previously negotiated common cut scores for ACT subtests, including:

A student must score a 19 or higher on the Act Math subtest to be considered college-ready in mathematics.

A student must score 18 or higher on the ACT English subtest to be considered college-ready in writing.

A student must score 17 or higher on the ACT English subtest to be considered reading at college level.

Setting the common cut scores was critical to ensure that no student would be tested twice or receive conflicting advice regarding their need for remedial assistance.

The cut scores were based on an analysis conducted by ACT that 50% of the students who earn a 19 or higher on the ACT Math subtest will earn a C or better in college level math. Similarly, a student who scores 18 or higher on the ACT English subtest will earn a C or better in college composition course. Reading did not have a similar statistic research base but the studies show that reading is closely correlated to writing skills: students who lack college-level reading skills most probably will lack college-level writing skills. CCHE and the institutions agreed to monitor the reading cut score.

The remedial plans share a common definition of who will be assessed -- all first-time, degree-seeking students. First-time means a student who enrolls at a college for the first time or those who change enrollment status from non-degree-seeking to degree-seeking regardless of the number of college credits earned. Prior enrollment as a high school concurrent student does not prevent a student from being categorized as first-time. The following students are exempt from taking a placement test in reading, writing, or mathematics:

- Students who have earned a bachelor or associate degree.
- Students who have been previously assessed at a Colorado public college or university.
- Students who have successfully completed basic skills instruction in mathematics, writing or reading are exempt from testing in that subject area only.
- Students who have successfully completed a college-level course in English are exempt from the requirement for basic skills assessment in writing and reading.
- Students who have successfully completed a college-level course in mathematics are exempt from the requirement for basic skills assessment in mathematics.
- Students enrolled in a vocational certificate program, unless they seek to enroll in college-level English or mathematics

In general, colleges are using the ACT test either as a screening test or actual college-level basic skills test. A screening test differentiates students who demonstrate college readiness from those who need to take a specific placement test. For example, community colleges use the ACT test for screening and the Accuplacer for placing a student in a particular math or writing course. In all plans, a student who does not meet the basic skills standards in the initial testing has an opportunity to retake the test or use the placement assessment to measure college readiness. Because all incoming Colorado high school graduates will take the ACT test in their junior year, it minimizes the testing burden on the student.

The following table summarizes the institutional remedial plans, listing the placement or challenge test for each institution with the cut score following the assessment test, the frequency of testing, institution notification procedures for informing students of test results and information on remedial course availability.

INST	PLACEMENT / CHALLENGE TESTS	TEST AVAILABILITY
CC	Mathematics: Accuplacer Elementary Algebra test – 72 Reading: Accuplacer test – 83 Writing: Accuplacer test in Sentence Skills -- 86	Provides assessment testing continually before and during each semester. No cost to student
AIMS	Mathematics: Compass 88 or Accuplacer 70 Reading: Compass 83 or Accuplacer -- 83 Writing: Compass 93-94 or Accuplacer 100	Walk in testing at Greeley; testing by appointment at Fort Lupton and Loveland
CMC	Mathematics: Accuplacer Elementary Algebra test – 72 Reading: Accuplacer test – 83 Writing: Accuplacer test in Sentence Skills -- 86	Provides assessment testing continually before and during each semester. No cost to student
ASC	Mathematics: Adams State developed a Mathematical Placement Exam based on questions developed by the Mathematical Association of America Placement Testing Program -- 19 English: Adams State English Placement – 46 Reading: CAAP Reading Test – 22	Testing is free but each enrollment in remedial course is \$50.
CSM	Mathematics: NA – CSM does not admit students who score below 25 on Math Reading: CSM developed reading test; scored by 2 readers Writing: CSM developed writing test; scored by 2 readers	Prior to registering for first semester courses
CSU	Mathematics: For students with ACT scores 19 or above -- CSU's Mathematics Placement Exam. For others: Entry Level Mathematics Exam that was written to align with high school exit standards Writing: CSU's Composition Placement exam with a score of 3 out of 6. Scoring guidelines parallel ACT essay guides.	Orientation sessions
FLC	Mathematics: FLC Mathematics Placement Exam with score of 13 Reading: Accuplacer test – 80 Writing: Accuplacer test in Sentence Skills -- 86	Tested during freshmen orientation session before registering for class. Additional test dates continuously between first day of class and census date.
MESA	Mathematics: Compass -- 50	ACT scores are available before

INST	PLACEMENT / CHALLENGE TESTS	TEST AVAILABILITY
	Reading: Compass – 76 Writing: Challenge by writing an essay score 3 on 6 point scale.3	students register. Challenge essays may be written anytime. Compass is a computer-based assessment and scores area available immediately.
METRO	Mathematics: MSCD developed test -- 9 out of 15 Reading: Nelson Denny Form G 84 Writing: 30 minutes to write essay; scored by faculty using Educational Testing Service scoring guidelines. -- 3 out of possible 6	Assessment testing by appointment
UCB	Alternate demonstration of college readiness: Analyze high school transcripts, including enrollment in AP courses in English or Math, four or more years in English or Math with passing grades in all courses.	Students will be advised to enroll in a community college course during the first semester of college enrollment.
UCCS	Opportunity to retake ACT exam Alternate demonstration of college readiness: Analyze high school transcripts, including enrollment in AP courses in English or Math, four or more years in English or Math with passing grades in all courses.	In addition to the state ACT test date, national test date, UCCS offers the ACT exam at its testing center (\$33).
UCD	Mathematics: Accuplacer Elementary Algebra test – 72 Reading: Accuplacer test – 83 Writing: Accuplacer test in Sentence Skills -- 86	Contracts with CCD to test transfer and freshmen without ACT scores students using the Accuplacer.
UNC	Mathematics: Accuplacer Elementary Algebra test – 50 Reading: Accuplacer test – 56 Writing: Accuplacer test in Sentence Skills – 66	UNC offers on-line and paper versions of Accuplacer test at the Career Services Testing Center
USC	Mathematics: USC Placement exam scoring at Intermediate Algebra mastery level; worked with ACT on scoring guidelines Reading: Accuplacer test – 81 Writing: USC proctored 300 – 500 word essay scored by 2 faculty.	During Student orientation or by appointment at USC's Learning Center
WSC	Mathematics: MAA Basic Algebra – 16 Reading: WSC English Placement I -- 15 Writing: WSC English Placement II – 18	Placement tests offered during orientation sessions.

INST	DELIVERY			STUDENT INFORMED	INFORMATION ON REMEDIAL COURSE AVAILABILITY
	REGULAR COURSE	CASH FUNDED	CONTRACT WITH CC		
CC	X		NA	Writing	Published in course schedule, catalog, and on web site.
AIMS	X		NA		Published in course schedule, catalog, and on web site.
CMC	X		NA		Published in course schedule, catalog, and on web site.
ASC	X			Same day as test	Published in course schedule, catalog, and on web site.
CSM			X (RRCC)	Personal letter	Required one-on-one tutoring in CSM Writing Center during first CSM semester while co-enrolled in Remedial course.

INST	DELIVERY			STUDENT INFORMED	INFORMATION ON REMEDIAL COURSE AVAILABILITY
	REGULAR COURSE	CASH FUNDED	CONTRACT WITH CC		
CSU			X (FRCC)	Writing	Published in course schedule, catalog, and on web site.
FLC		X			Published in course schedule, catalog, and on web site.
MESA	X				Published in course schedule, catalog, and on web site.
METRO			X (CCD)	Within 2 days	Available remedial courses listed on class schedule, information sheets at the Assessment Center and from academic advisors.
UCB				Individually notified	Provide student with list of remedial courses available in the Denver Boulder area and on-line
UCCS		X	X (PPCC)	Mail notification	
UCD			X (CCD)	Notified individually	Student Success Advising Center for freshmen and sophomores informs students, assists in registering, monitors progress. Provides list of all remedial courses offered in metro area.
UNC			X (AIMS)	Notified by College Transition Center	List of remedial courses that will satisfy requirements, including AIMS, video, correspondence, weekend, on-line courses.
USC			X(PCC)	Notified with 24 hours of ACT test; within 3 hours of USC tests	Notification at orientation session, catalog, semester bulletins, advising handbook and at web site.
WSC		X		Prior to registering fall semester	Registration packet contains information on placement and basic skills needs and course schedule for basic skills courses. Offered every semester.

CCHE will continue to monitor the implementation of these plans to determine if they meet the needs of students.

V. REMEDIAL DATA

CCHE began collecting data on remedial assessment in 2001. The first file was submitted October 15, 2001. It includes assessment data on all undergraduate students entering Colorado's public colleges and universities. The remedial assessment data is designed to describe which students need remedial education and to inform school districts of their graduates' level of college readiness statewide.

The 2001 data collection year field-tested the robustness of the data design. The primary purpose of this submission was to ascertain if the data reported would answer the legislative questions regarding the state of remedial education or whether additional reports are necessary. Based on prior experience with new data submissions, CCHE anticipated that the 2001 file submission would have data shortfalls, but it would provide all constituent institutions an opportunity to verify their data for accuracy and consistency -- particularly the community colleges reporting undergraduate applicant data for the first time -- before the first legislative remedial data report.

Although the first legislative report on the number, type and cost of remedial education is scheduled for January 2003, the following tables give a brief overview of student remedial needs. Table 1 illustrates the proportion of undergraduate degree-seeking students who would be enrolling in post-secondary education for the first time who were assessed as requiring remediation in at least one subject. As open admission institutions, students entering two-year colleges are less likely to have ACT test scores. This situation will improve next academic year because all Colorado graduates will have ACT scores from the 11th grade testing.

Table 1. Status of Remedial Assessment at Time of Report				
	Total Cohort	# Completely Assessed	#Exempt / Waived	% Completely Assessed (Excluding Exempt)
2 Year School	18,165	8,388	2,551	53.7%
4 Year School	21,196	18,587	377	89.3%
Total	39,361	26,975	2,928	74.0%

Table 2 shows the percentage of students who require some remedial assistance. Collectively, the four-year remedial rate parallels the size of the admission window. Institution analysis will show if this observation applies across the board to all admission selectivity levels. The two-year college freshmen class includes a higher proportion of adults than recent high school graduates. This accounts in part for the high remedial rate. The 2003 report will include more descriptive analysis, comparing recent high school graduates between sectors.

Table 2. Results of Remedial Assessment at Time of Report			
	# Completely Assessed	# Assessed as Remedial in at Least One Area	% Assessed as Remedial
2 Year School	8,388	7,127	85.0%
4 Year School	18,587	3,774	20.3%
Total	26,975	10,901	40.4%

Table 3 demonstrates the distribution of remedial students across the remedial subject areas reading, writing, and mathematics. It confirms that 32% of students entering

college need math remediation. The four-year college math remediation rate is 13% while 74% of the students entering a two-year college need math remediation.

Table 3. Type of Remediation Identified for Assessed Students						
	2 Year Schools		4 Year Schools		Total	
No Remediation Required	1,261	15.0%	14,813	79.7%	16,074	59.6%
Math, Writing, and Reading	1,913	22.8%	205	1.1%	2,118	7.9%
Math and Writing	996	11.9%	518	2.8%	1,514	5.6%
Math and Reading	623	7.4%	148	0.8%	771	2.9%
Math Only	2,635	31.4%	1,479	8.0%	4,114	15.3%
Math or some combination with Math	6,167	74%	2,350	13%	8,518	32%
Writing Only	346	4.1%	409	2.2%	755	2.8%
Reading Only	251	3.0%	841	4.5%	1,092	4.0%
Writing and Reading	363	4.3%	174	0.9%	537	2.0%
Total Assessed	8,388		18,587		26,975	