



Frequently Asked Questions: Remediation in Colorado

Last revised January 2014

1. What is remedial education?

Remedial education, also called developmental education, refers to classes intended to bolster the basic skills of new college students so they are adequately prepared for college-level work. These classes may be non-credit courses and may not be covered by student's financial aid. These courses are usually offered by a community college. They may be offered by four-year institutions on a cash funded basis (except Metropolitan State University of Denver and the University of Colorado Denver).

2. How are students placed in remedial classes?

Typically students achieving an assessment score at or above the college-ready cut scores (see table below) may be placed into a college-level class. Students who do not attain a high enough assessment score, or fail to reach the college-ready cut score (see table below) are given a secondary evaluation (determined by the institution), which is used to determine whether remedial classes are needed.

College-Readiness Assessment Cut Score table

SKILL AREA	ACT Subscore	SAT Subscore	ACCUPLACER Score
Mathematics	Math: 19	Math 460	Elementary Algebra: 85
Writing	English: 18	Verbal 440	Sentence Skills: 95
Reading	Reading: 17	Verbal 430	Reading Comprehension: 80

3. How long must students stay in remedial classes?

It depends on the subject and on a student's performance on their secondary evaluation. In Colorado, most students assessed as needing remediation need help in math. Changes in remedial education are decreasing the amount of time students have traditionally spent in basic skills classes by streamlining the process and preparing students for their next course.

4. Can students take other college classes while in remedial classes?

Yes, though their selection may be limited by prerequisite requirements. State policy calls for remedial classes to be completed within a student's first 30 credit hours.

5. How common is it for students to need remedial help?

Forty percent of Colorado high school graduates in the class of 2011 who enrolled in state colleges and universities were either assessed as needing remediation or chose to enroll in one or more remedial classes. This rate has held steady for at least the past three years.

6. Who pays for remediation?

Students and their families bear the brunt of the costs. For 2011-12, the estimated total cost of remedial instruction was \$58.4 million, with \$39.3 million in student tuition and \$19.1 million in state funding for the institutions providing the remedial courses. By law, two-year colleges provide most remedial courses.

7. How does Colorado's remediation rate compare nationally?

National research reports typically show more than a third of new college students are assigned to remediation in at least one subject, with math being the most common remedial need. Colorado's recent advances in data-sharing between K-12 and higher education state agencies provide a more comprehensive accounting than many other states can currently achieve.

8. How does Colorado calculate remediation rates?

Colorado uses student assessment results as well as information regarding students who enrolled in a remedial course but did not have an assessment score on file to compile remediation rates. Additionally, the remedial rate is based upon in-state college enrollment and does not include data for those students enrolling in a college in another state.

9. What impact does remediation usually have on a student's college career?

Students assigned to basic skills classes are less likely to attain a degree, either at a two-year or four-year institution. Research shows the more remediation a student is assessed as needing, the less likely that student is to graduate.

10. Is the state doing anything to lessen the need for remediation?

Yes, a number of initiatives are underway at the K-12 and higher education levels. Examples of these include: Supplemental Academic Instruction; remedial policy changes at the higher education level; concurrent enrollment; and early remediation through Colorado GEAR UP.

Learn more about remedial education in Colorado at <http://highered.colorado.gov/Academics/Remedial/>

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