

MUS Placement Guidelines

Developed by the MUS Developmental Education Steering Committee

August 2023

COMMITTEE CHARGE *Adopted by the MUS Board of Regents November 2022*

Develop recommendations for a shared, system-wide, research-based approach to placement.

Committee should review both current placement strategies and best practices in placement. Desired practices should include multiple measures to demonstrate preparedness with the expectation of placing students in credit-bearing, college-level math and writing courses with established guidelines for exceptions for prerequisite placement.

Review and recommendations should be guided by three principles. Develop placement strategies that:

- *increase gateway course completion, shorten time and reduce cost to successful gateway course completion, and increased likelihood of retention and graduation;*
- *identify and implement practices demonstrated to support historically underserved students including underprepared, low-income, American Indian, and adult learners;*
- *account for implications of placement approaches on increasingly seamless enrollment across the MUS for students who either transfer among MUS institutions or who are cross-enrolled at two or more MUS institutions.*

GOALS

1. Identify and implement placement strategies that allow students to most efficiently and affordably complete gateway math and writing courses in their field of study. Guidelines should attend to persistent equity gaps in placement including for American Indian, low-income, and students from groups who may be academically underprepared as a result of systemic educational barriers and who have been disproportionately placed into below 100-level math and writing courses.
2. Align learning outcomes for all math and writing courses across the system to aid in consistent placement, preparation, and transfer;
3. Remove redundant placement-related barriers or repeating courses for transfer students and reduce burden on staff and students during cross-registration process;
4. Develop accountability structures (i.e. required annual reporting on dev. ed to MUS Board of Regents and review of campus placement strategy by steering committee) to support continuous improvement and recognize successes.

PLACEMENT GUIDELINES

1. Campuses have discretion to determine specific placement processes and methods; however, the strategy must meet minimum MUS guidelines.
2. Campus placement approaches should, by default, place students into college-level math and writing courses (regular or corequisite courses). Campus placement guidelines should emphasize determining the level of support needed for students to pass the gateway course within the first year.
3. Campuses must provide rationale and supporting outcomes data for placement into below 100-level pre-requisite math and writing courses with the goals of demonstrating better student

outcomes by placement into those courses as well as to share across the MUS effective placement methods for meeting developmental education needs.

4. Placement approach should be holistic and consider multiple measures, non-cognitive assessments, and students' career and educational goals. Avoid placement approaches such as a single exam with cut scores as a first step to placement. Multiple measures assessment should rely on data already available to institutions rather than asking students for new information. Advisors and faculty should have input in development of equitable, non-biased multiple measures and non-cognitive approaches. Campuses will provide rationale for their measures and processes appropriate for their institution.
5. For math placement, institutions must follow MUS Math Pathways.
6. Start placement process early, when possible, and provide students with opportunities to develop skills to place into the appropriate gateway course for their pathway.
7. For students transferring within the MUS, all institutions shall accept placement determination from other MUS institutions.

RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Convene faculty councils to align learning outcomes for below 100-level pre-requisite math and writing courses and review learning outcomes for all math and writing CCN courses (including courses taken as part of dual credit programs).
2. Steering Committee complete a review and assessment of current Math Pathways and revise as needed for change in degree programs.
3. Provide system and institutional professional development and training to support development and implementation of placement guidelines, math pathways, and aligned CCN math and writing courses.
4. Implement common data tracking for placement (to be developed in partnership with MACRAO).
5. Develop suggested toolkit for student-centered, student-ready messaging on placement that may be adapted to suit campus messaging and context.
6. Design reporting and feedback structure so MUS Developmental Education Steering Committee may assess and provide feedback on campus placement approaches, share best practices across the system, and provide regular reports to the Board of Regents.
7. Continue to provide system-wide professional development and convening opportunities to support effective, equitable corequisite instruction.

PROPOSED TIMELINE

August 30—Draft guidelines presented to campus CAOs for feedback

Wednesday October 11—Deadline for submitting feedback on guidelines

October 2023—Steering Committee reviews campus feedback and revises guidelines

November 2023 CAO meeting—Present revised guidelines to CAOs for review and discussion

January 2024 or March 2024 BOR—Submit guidelines as policy for BOR consideration

Spring 2024-Spring 2025—Support institutions in developed revised placement approaches to implement or pilot in Fall 2025

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING MUS PLACEMENT GUIDELINES

Dec. 2021—OCHE convened MUS Developmental Education Steering Committee

Nov. 2022—MUS BOR adopted charge to develop common system placement guidelines

February 2022—Steering Committee and OCHE hosted semester-long professional development series including “Rethinking Placement: Moving from Sorting to Supporting” by Dr. Connie Richardson from the Charles A. Dana Center at UT Austin

April 2022—MUS Corequisite Convening

- Best practices in placement led and facilitated by Connie Richardson
- Roundtable discussion on MUS Developmental Education Steering committee of draft placement guidelines led by Leanne Frost, Executive Director of Instruction and Director of General Studies, Great Falls College

August 2023—Steering Committee reviewed and revised guidelines for dissemination to campuses

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