

Ohlone College Assessment Program Review

SPRING 2007

Updated: April 26, 2007

I. Program/Service Description

Placement testing for math and language skills is mandated by Matriculation (AB 3 and Title V).

Primary Mission of Assessment Program:

To provide a holistic process through which Ohlone assesses information about students to ensure their appropriate placement into the basic skills curriculum.

YEARLY ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

A student needs to take a placement test if they plan any of the following:

1. Completion of a certificate/degree or transfer program.
2. Enrollment in an English or math class.
3. Enrollment in courses which have an English or math prerequisites.
4. Apply for financial aid without a high school diploma or equivalent.
5. Apply to the Registered Nursing, Physical Therapy Assistant, or Respiratory Therapy programs and have not yet met specific reading requirements.
6. Enroll in Chemistry 101A without competing Chemistry 102.

Comment [MW1]: Completion of

Comment [MW2]: prerequisites

A student is not required to take the Placement Test if:

1. They have an associate or higher degree from an accredited institution in the United States.
2. They are enrolling in courses for which there are no English, Reading, or Math prerequisites.
3. They have a transcript with satisfactory grades in appropriate courses from other accredited colleges or universities in the United States.

Comment [MW3]: Reading, or Math

Placement Testing Schedule

Testing sessions (for English, math, and Ability to Benefit) are offered in the Testing Center from mid-April until mid-September, and from early November until mid-February. During these periods, tests are given every Monday and Thursday (morning and afternoon) and selected Tuesdays and Wednesdays in the late afternoon and evening. Up-to-date schedules are posted on the Testing Center website, given by phone on the Placement Center Info Line, and posted outside the Testing Center. During non-testing periods, testing can still be arranged on an individual, as-needed basis.

Comment [MW4]: to

ESL placement tests are given 6-8 times each semester at various times depending on the availability of the ESL instructors/readers.

Chemistry Placement Tests are given 3-5 times each semester at various times depending on the availability of the testing center and the Chemistry faculty (for proctoring).

Placement Tests at Ohlone College

The English, math and ESL placement tests are administered through computerized testing systems. The English and Math testing program is Accuplacer by College Board. The ESL testing program is Compass/ESL by ACT.

Both Accuplacer and Compass are computer-adaptive tests. These tests are called adaptive because the computer selects the items to be administered to a specific student based, in part, on the proficiency of the student—the computer adapts or “tailors” the exam to each student. This tailoring is done by keeping track of a student’s performance on each test item and then using this information to select the next item to be administered.

The tests are not timed. However, if a student cannot finish a test within the scheduled testing session, he/she will be asked to come back to another testing session to complete the test. These students will be able to start where they left off at the end of the initial test session.

Most students will finish the English and math testing within 1.5 hours. ESL testing lasts approximately 2-2.5 hours but also includes orientation & advising; total time for ESL testing, orientation and advising is approximately 4 hours.

English Test (Accuplacer)

All students take the following 2 tests:

Reading Comprehension Test consists of 20 questions

Sentence Skills Test consists of 20 questions

Math Test (Accuplacer)

Based on the preliminary questions at the beginning of the testing session, the students are given one or more of the following tests:

Arithmetic Test consists of 17 questions

Elementary Algebra Test consists of 12 questions

College Level Math Test consists of 20 questions

Note: Students who do well in the Arithmetic or Elementary Algebra tests will automatically be given the next higher level test; students who start with the Elementary Algebra test and do poorly will be given the Arithmetic test.

Comment [MW5]: higher level

English As a Second Language Tests (Writing Sample and Compass/ESL test)

The ESL Writing Placement Essay is a 30-minute writing sample (Note: this essay is the only “paper-pencil” test; the tests below are computerized.)

Compass/ESL Grammar Usage Test consists of 16-18 questions

Compass/ESL Reading Test consists of 15-17 questions

Compass/ESL Listening Test consists of 12-14 questions

Math tests are not given during ESL testing. Prospective ESL students who wish

to enroll in a math class must take a regular math assessment test.

Chemistry Placement Test

This is a 44 question test on basic general chemistry. If a student scores 22 or higher, he/she is waived from the chemistry prerequisite for Chemistry 101A which is currently Chem 102.

The Chemistry Placement Test is a paper-pencil test published by the American Chemical Society. Students are given 45 minutes to complete this test.

Comment [MW6]: from the chemistry prerequisite for Chem 101A which is currently Chem 102.

Ability to Benefit Testing

The Testing Center offers the Ability to Benefit test in 2 versions: Accuplacer and Compass ESL. Accuplacer is administered to native English speaking students. Compass ESL is administered to students who speak English as a second language.

Comment [MW7]: offers

Comment [MW8]: is

Comment [MW9]: is

High School Testing

Starting in March, 2007 computerized placement testing was offered at local feeder high schools.

Testing was offered at all but two of the primary feeder high schools in Fremont.

Retest Policy

Students may retake the English and/or Math placement tests 1 time within a one-year period. Students must wait a minimum of 3 weeks from their initial test date to retake the test.

Comment [MW10]: Math

Comment [MW11]: to retake the test.

The ESL and Chemistry Tests can be retaken after 6 months.

[Note: retest appeals can be referred to the Assessment Coordinator or Dean of Counseling.]

Multiple Measures

As required by Matriculation guidelines, course placements are based on multiple criteria including placement test scores, previous courses, study skills, and other applicable information. Accuplacer adjusts test scores slightly, based on the multiple measures questions established by the English and Math Assessment Committees.

ESL placements are a combination of a writing sample, reading, grammar and listening test scores.

Impact of Assessment Program on the College

Placement testing is one of the first steps of the Matriculation process in which students have direct contact with Ohlone College. The majority of new students are required to complete the English and math placement tests. The placement

tests are an important step in welcoming, supporting and guiding students, and therefore affect enrollment and retention.

Baseline Statistics

Data from 1999-2003

The table below was taken from the Assessment Center Program Review, Spring 2003. [There was no data collection from 2004-2005.]

Type	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Reg Students	3247	3210*	3243	3632
ESL Students	583	523	719	593
HS Students	258	444	356	382
Total	4188	4177	4318	4607

Testing Data from April 2006 to February 2007

The data below indicates the number of tests given and the placement results. Since there was a change in the retest policy, a limited number of students took one or more of the tests (Sentence Structure, Reading Comprehensive, or Math) two times. At the current time, we are unable to identify the number of students who retested.

Number of English tests given:

Total tests records: 2457

ESL/English 151A: 303 students, 12.3%
English 151A: 619 students, 25.2%
English 151B: 796 students, 32.4%
English 101A: 739 students, 30.1%

Number of Reading tests given

Total test records: 2606

English 162: 1128 students, 43.3%
English 163: 607 students, 23.3%
No Reading Required: 871 students, 33.4%

Number of Math tests given

Total test records: 2658

Math 190:	721 students, 27.1%
Math 151A/151:	357 students, 13.4%
Math 152A/152/153/155/196:	1076 students, 40.5%
Math 152/156/159:	151 students, 5.7%
Math 156/159/166/167/181:	121 students, 4.5%
Math 188:	104 students, 3.9%
Math 101A:	128 students, 4.8%

Number of Ability to Benefit (ATB) tests given

Total test records: 192 *

Pass 52 students,
Fail 150 students,

* Note: Accuplacer recorded a testing session as an ATB test if the student was not a high school graduate and was planning to apply for financial aid. [A handful of students tested were still in high school and not yet eligible to apply for Financial Aid.] Of the students who did not pass initially, some were recommended to take the Compass ESL test and/or to retest using Accuplacer in 21 days.

II Relationship to Ohlone College Mission and Goals

Primary Mission of Assessment Program:

To provide a holistic process through which Ohlone assesses information about students to ensure their appropriate placement into the basic skills curriculum.

This relates to the Student Services core value of Responsibility:

“Student Services helps students develop personal responsibility for their lives, and their learning skills such as time management, budgeting and ability to meet deadlines. Students learn self-sufficiency, responsibility, and accountability through the co-curriculum process of online admissions, assessment, orientation, financial aid, transfer and career services, individualized counseling, and personal health services.”

Comment [MW12]: Students

By completing the assessment process, students become aware of their abilities in the basic skills subjects, and can apply this information to develop their own academic and career plans. In this way they develop their sense of responsibility.

The SLO’s below are ways to measure this development.

III. Program Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students who complete the assessment process will be able to identify which English and math levels they are qualified to enroll in.

This SLO will be measured by having students write the answer the following questions at their New Student Orientation:

Which English and math courses are you eligible for?

English (writing) _____

English (reading) _____

Math: _____

This will be a sampling of 60-80 students (3-4 orientation sessions). The survey will need to include the student name and ID# so we can compare answers to the student's actual placement.

2. Students will be able to access the placement test study guides prior to completing the placement test.

To be measured in 2 ways:

1. Preliminary questions on Accuplacer:

- a. Were you aware that Study Guides were available for these tests?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

- b. Did you obtain the study guides through any of the following sources?

- i. Online
- ii. Counseling Department
- iii. Other
- iv. Not applicable—I did not obtain study guides

3. Students will continue to complete the matriculation process by attending an orientation or meeting with a counselor.

This SLO can be measured by matching the students who completed the placement test with students who attended orientation (data from Allison Bly) and from data from SARS of which students saw a counselor by appointment or drop-in.

IV. Assessment of Student Success in Reaching Student Service Outcomes

Data will be gathered as described in Section III.

In addition, all assessment instruments are required to undergo continuing validation studies.

In the Accuplacer Validation study (fall, 2006) English and math instructors evaluated whether students in their classes were appropriately placed. Students also evaluated whether they were appropriately placed into English and math courses, and how they rated their placement testing experience.

Based on this research, cut-scores for the English, math and ESL test cut-scores may be modified.

See Appendix A for the Cut-score Validation Report from fall 2006.

ESL data was gathered Fall 2006. This data will be analyzed during the summer 2007 by the ESL Assessment Committee to determine whether changes in cut scores are necessary.

The following table shows the results of the student survey rating the placement process experience.

Survey Questions	% of Positive (q. 1-3)	Mean Score (q. 4)
1) able to take the placement test in a timely manner (yes/no)	90.9%	
2) receive your placement test results in a timely manner (yes/no)	91.1%	
3) find your placement results helpful in selecting classes (yes/no)	80.0%	
4) satisfied with the placement test experience (1-5 scale)		2.84

V. Assessment of Service Offering in Light of Data Analysis

Areas Needing Improvement

1. Research needs to continue to determine whether students are being properly placed by the Accuplacer and Compass ESL tests. Initial changes will be made in cut scores early in the Fall 2007 semester. Research should again be conducted in the Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 to determine if the new cut scores lead to a higher rate of appropriate placements (determined by both instructors and students).

Comment [MW13]: students

Comment [MW14]: Fall

Comment [MW15]: Fall

Comment [MW16]: Spring

Comment [MW17]: determined by both instructors and...

2. The Ohlone Accuplacer test needs to be upgraded to the new Accuplacer Platform. This change will be mandatory for all Accuplacer users by September 30, 2007.
3. Other local community colleges use a variety of assessment instruments approved for the Ability to Benefit testing which have a higher passing rate. The testing center needs to offer additional ATB tests to determine if they would be more appropriate for Ohlone students.
4. The testing schedule posted on the Ohlone website and in the Schedule of Classes needs to be reviewed and presented in a simpler and clearer format.
5. High School Testing could be expanded to increase the number of high schools giving the Accuplacer test, and increase the number of students testing at each of the schools. Also, high school career center staff and counselors should be trained so they can administer the test themselves on an “as-needed” basis.
6. The Ohlone Newark Campus is scheduled to open in January, 2008. A plan needs to be developed for placement testing at this new campus.
7. The student Placement Center Student Learning Outcomes survey needs to be administered during the New Student Orientations starting in the summer and fall 2007.
8. The English Assessment Committee and the ESL Assessment Committee need to address the issue of overlapping placement into ESL courses and English courses. Some students place into both ESL and higher levels of English. What is the most appropriate advisement for these students?
9. The English department is interested in exploring the possibility of incorporating a writing sample into the English assessment process. Research needs to be done about the costs, feasibility, and possible test development for such a test.

Learning and Work Environment

Staffing of the Testing Center during peak times is still an issue. There is a high demand for testing at the beginning of (and just prior to) the fall, spring and summer terms. During these times there needs to be regular staff available and trained to assist the one full time Testing Center Specialist.

Until the new Student Services building opens, modifications to the adjoining office (1405) could improve the efficiency of the testing center.

If a window was installed into the joining door and/or wall, testing staff would be able to conduct more work (particularly work involving the phone) while proctoring tests outside peak testing periods.

Recommendations/Implementation Plan (1-3 years)

Summer 2007

- Begin Placement Center Surveys during Orientations
- Complete a beta version of the Accuplacer New Platform.

Fall 2007

- Implement New Platform for Accuplacer
- Implement new Cut-scores for English
- Collect Cut Score data for English, math and ESL
- Begin validation study for the Chemistry Diagnostic Test.

Spring 2008

- Implement new ATB test
- Expand High School testing
- Review and approve Cut score Validation study;
- Explore whether to implement writing test for English assessment

Fall 2008

- Implement changes in cut scores for English, math and ESL

Spring 2009

- Implement cut score changes if necessary
- Validate English writing sample, if necessary
- Review and approve Cut Score Validation Study for English, math and ESL

Fall 2009

- Pilot English writing sample, if necessary
- Cut Score Validation Study for English, math and ESL

Spring 2010

- Implement English writing sample, if necessary
- Review and approve Cut Score Validation Study

VI. Assessment of Program Improvement Since Previous Program Review

1. Computerized testing has been implemented for placement into English, reading, math and ESL courses.

2. Students are able to get their placement results immediately after completing the test.
3. The re-test policy has been changed so that students can take the test again 21 days after their initial test.
4. The counselors' handbook has been expanded and updated.
5. A Chemistry Placement Test will be offered starting in May, 2007.
6. There are now two ATB tests available: one for native speaking students and one for students who speak English as a second language.
7. ESL assessment sessions have combined orientation, testing, counseling and registration into a single comprehensive session.
8. Multiple measures are built in to the computerized testing and incorporated immediately into the students' final placement.
9. Placement tests are offered on a more regular basis throughout the year.
10. The Placement Center website has been expanded and improved.

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