Engaging students, changing lives

April 7, 2020
8:30 p.m.

Dear Colleagues and Students:

These are ever-changing times. We know there are a number of hurdles to overcome; collectively we will accomplish the Chancellor’s directive and guidance by focusing our efforts on these two priorities:

- To safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of our faculty, staff, and students
- To enable students to complete the spring semester and progress toward their educational goal

We expect to provide a COVID-19 update to the campus Tuesday and Thursday (until further notice).

VIRUSES DON’T DISCRIMINATE – NEITHER DO WE

As has been shared and reported in the news media, individuals are experiencing racist remarks and stigma in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Specific incidents have been directed toward individuals of Asian-descent. Minnesotans and international students of Asian-descent indicate that their safety may be compromised because of increasing xenophobic and racist behaviors. These behaviors go against Minnesota State’s values of equity and inclusion and are not tolerated on the college and university campuses of Minnesota State. In support of the State of Minnesota’s “Viruses don’t discriminate and neither should we” campaign, including a discrimination helpline, the Minnesota State Office of Equity and Inclusion has developed an anti-stigma social media campaign plan that NHCC will support. See Governor Walz’s 45 second request here: https://twitter.com/GovTimWalz/status/1247210962828038145

COVID-19 PEACETIME EMERGENCY SURVEY

Human Resource Directors are working with COVID-19 campus contacts to provide weekly updates pertaining to the number of employees taking COVID-19 leave, costs of COVID-19 to campuses, and logistical support campuses provide to other medical agencies. Hats off to the Deans & Directors for providing their information to our HR Director by noon every week so we can meet our deadline. Additionally, Minnesota Management and Budget has asked each agency to assess their own ability to complete our work during these times. The System Office plans to adjust the survey to allow each institution to make their own respective assessment.

ACADEMIC CONTINUITY PLANNING

You can expect to see revisions soon to the guidance the System Office provided on March 27, 2020. Main points include:

- **Grading & Pass/Satisfactory Grade.** The main question is how will grades be accepted?
  - NHCC has chosen a Pass/No Credit option for students. Details, timeline, and processes will be communicated to campus no later than Monday, April 13, 2020.
  - Grades in-transfer (summer or fall) from Spring 2020 would be accepted the same as a letter grade. For example, if a student came with a SATISFACTORY or PASS GRADE from Spring 2020, it would count towards graduation requirements.
• **Course Placement/Testing Revision.** There is now a no-cost proctoring service available to students. The System Office has lifted the suspension of the test. However, if students don’t have the ability to take the Accuplacer, NHCC can use high school grades/GPA as a viable option. Please see attached revised guidelines.

• **System-wide Migration.** 95% of our courses have migrated to non-face-to-face. Great job!

• **Summer Term.** Guidance issued by the System Office on 3/27/2020 assumes there is no regular campus-based instruction and that there will only be non-face-to-face, or non-face-to-face with in-person components. Furthermore, the System Office advised campuses to schedule face-to-face courses or components later in the summer to increase the likelihood of them happening (due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. NHCC will follow that guidance. Stay tuned for more direction on internships, etc.

Better Together,

![Signature]

**Stephen E. Kent**  
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Memo from Minnesota State

Academic and Student Affairs

DATE: April 7, 2020

TO: Presidents

FROM: Ron Anderson, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs

SUBJECT: REVISED GUIDANCE – Course Placement Testing under COVID-19

Due to changing conditions and the new availability of no-cost remote proctoring of the ACCUPLACER, previous guidance issued on March 24, 2020 has been revised as outlined below.

As before, this guidance applies to all students who do not currently have a valid course placement on record. Students who already have a valid course placement on record and wish to have that placement re-evaluated should follow the guidance provided in the relevant section below.

This directive is effective immediately, supersedes previous guidance, and will remain in effect until withdrawn by the Chancellor.

General Student Population (REVISED)

Colleges and universities shall use one or more of the following placement measures to determine a student’s course placement within reading, writing, and mathematics:

1. Documentation of successful completion of a college-level course in the area for which the course placement score is used.

   and/or

2. Eligible ACT, SAT, and/or MCA scores
   a. All validity windows apply as outlined within System Procedure 3.3.1.

   and/or

3. Eligible ACCUPLACER scores (i.e., Classic or Next Generation ACCUPLACER).
   a. Scores already on file may be used. All benchmarks and validity windows apply as outlined within System Procedure 3.3.1.
   b. Remote proctoring of the Next Generation ACCUPLACER is now available through a video/chat conferencing service such as Zoom as outlined by The College Board (see attachments). Due to bandwidth constraints, remote proctoring is limited to 150 participants per session. To test, students will need access to the following:
      i. A computer (desktop or laptop)
      ii. Stable internet connection
      iii. Webcam
      iv. Headset
      v. Note that devices such as cell phones, Chromebooks, iPads, Surface, and other tablets, will not work.
   c. Students who do not have access to the technology necessary to complete the ACCUPLACER via the approved remote proctoring process should be placed using their cumulative high school grade point average (HS GPA). If they do not have a valid and reportable HS GPA, these students should be provided with the option of guided self-placement as outlined below.

In the absence of eligible ACT, SAT, MCA, and/or ACCUPLACER scores, college and universities may use cumulative high school grade point average (HS GPA) as a standalone measure as follows:

4. Cumulative HS GPA
a. Reading. A student who presents a HS GPA of 2.6 or higher must be given a placement of college-level that allows for enrollment in courses that designate college-level reading skills as a prerequisite. A college or university may establish lower minimum HS GPA score(s) for placement into developmental reading courses. A college or university may establish higher minimum score(s) for placement into a higher-level reading course(s).

b. Writing. A student who presents a HS GPA of 2.6 or higher must be given a placement of college-level that allows for enrollment in a college-level writing course and in courses that designate college-level writing skills as a prerequisite. A college or university may establish lower minimum HS GPA score(s) for placement into developmental writing courses. A college or university may establish higher minimum score(s) for placement into a higher-level writing course(s).

c. Mathematics. A student who presents both a HS GPA of 2.8 or higher and the self-reported completion of High School Algebra II or its equivalents with a grade of “C-“ or above must be given a placement of college-level that allows for enrollment in College Algebra. A college or university may establish minimum HS GPA score(s) for placement into introductory college-level mathematics courses other than College Algebra and for developmental mathematics courses. A college or university may establish higher minimum score(s) for placement into a higher-level mathematics course(s).

d. Self-reported HS GPA must be accepted in the absence of an official, transcripted GPA.

e. For purposes of course placement, HS GPA is valid for a period of up to 10 years from the date of high school graduation or, if the student has not yet graduated, from the date submitted.

The Use of Standalone HS GPA (REVISED)
Initial placement decisions should utilize ACT, SAT, MCA, and/or ACCUPLACER scores whenever and wherever available. Standalone HS GPA may be used in the absence of such scores. HS GPA information is collected within the universal application and viewable within ISRS. Colleges and universities are encouraged to contact students in situations where no HS GPA is recorded.

Multiple Measures for Course Placement (MMCP) Phase I Implementation
Colleges and universities may implement or continue to implement the MMCP Phase I framework, using a combination of assessment data and HS GPA data to determine a student’s course placement. However, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, colleges and universities may postpone implementation until the fall 2020 semester.

PSEO and Concurrent Enrollment Students
High school students planning to participate in college or university courses in the 2020-2021 academic year must still meet the eligibility criteria outlined in system procedure 3.5.1. For purposes of course placement, PSEO and concurrent enrollment students shall be placed using the measures used for the general student population outlined in this memorandum.

Adult Learners and Those without HS GPA (REVISED)
Colleges and universities may allow students who are unable to take the ACCUPLACER and who are without a reportable or valid cumulative high school GPA to register for courses up to and including the college-level gateway course within the disciplines of reading, writing, and mathematics.

Pre-registration Advising
To the greatest extent possible, students, including those using guided self-placement, should meet with an academic advisor prior to registration to:
- review the student’s academic background and course needs;
- recommend an appropriate course placement;
- review the college or university policy for satisfactory academic progress (SAP);
- orient the student to the available academic support services;
- review the registration process; and
- review the withdrawal process and all related deadlines.
All course placement recommendations must be based on the student’s academic background, occupational experience, and/or relevant skills and abilities. At no time should a student’s demographic status be used for purposes of course placement, including but not limited to the student’s race, ethnicity, gender, age, accent, or background.

Should a student using guided self-placement elect to register for a course that is at a lower level than was recommended, the student should be advised of the time and costs associated with this decision. Should a student using guided self-placement elect to register for a course that is at a higher level than was recommended, the student should be advised of the risks associated with this decision, including, but not limited to the academic and financial consequences of being unsuccessful.

It is a recommended practice that colleges and universities retain documentation of all directed self-placement advising sessions.

**International Students**
Each college and university should determine and document the means through which international students will be placed. This process should be posted on the college or university website and made available to students.

**English Language Learners (REVISED)**
For purposes of course placement, English Language Learners (ELL) shall be placed using the measures used for the general student population outlined in this memorandum. Generally, ELL are encouraged to complete the ACCUPLACER. Understanding that not all ESOL students may have sufficient access to take the ACCUPLACER through the approved remote proctoring process, Colleges and universities with ESOL curriculum are encouraged to collect a writing sample and/or additional information relevant to course placement from all developmental writing students by the end of the first week of the term to identify students who may benefit from ESOL instruction. Students electing to withdraw and re-enroll in an ESOL course based on a faculty recommendation should be allowed to do so without penalty provided there is sufficient room in the requested course and the student has initiated the request within a reasonable amount of time.

Colleges and universities who deviate from this approach should determine and document the means through which ELL will be placed. This process should be posted on the college or university website and made accessible to students.

**Retesting and Re-evaluation of Initial Placement (REVISED)**
Due to the suspension of on-site course placement testing and the current constraints associated with ACCUPLACER remote proctoring, students requesting a re-evaluation of their initial placement should be routed through the measures used for the general student population outlined above. If a student is unable to take the ACCUPLACER via the official remote proctoring process, initial placement decisions may be re-evaluated using standalone HS GPA until further notice. At no point shall a student who is requesting a re-evaluation of their initial placement be directed to enroll in a course that is at a lower level than indicated within their initial placement.

Any student requesting to re-take the ACCUPLACER through a College Board-approved remote proctoring service shall be allowed to do so as outlined within System Procedure 3.3.1 as local capacity allows unless financial constraints or technology access limit or preclude the use of online proctoring.

**Additional Considerations**
Colleges and universities should identify the means and measures for obtaining alternate course placement data in the absence of ACCUPLACER scores for the following:

- Program admission requirements;
- Course pre-requisites;
- Developmental course placements;
- Higher level course placements (e.g., Calculus);
- Courses outside of reading, writing, and mathematics;
- Summer bridge program eligibility, and;
- Any other local decisions for which ACCUPLACER score data is used.
cc: Senior Academic Officers
    Senior Student Affairs Officers
    College and University Deans
    Testing Directors
    PSEO Directors
    Concurrent Enrollment Directors