

Spring 2014 Policy Campus Review Comments

March 17-31, 2014

****The comments below were received from the campus community between March 17 and March 31. The Policy Committee reviewed every comment received and either made the requested change or responded to the comment. The result of the discussion at Policy Committee is in blue below each comment.**

3.3.1 Placement for Success Procedure:

1. (Faculty) From faculty in Academic Development, ESOL, and English
 - a. Part 1: Subpart C. Waivers
 - i. Transfer students who have a minimum of two reading-intensive courses (examples include history, sociology, psychology, political science, biology) with a grade of C- or better and an overall GPA of 2.0 or higher will be exempted from the placement test in reading.
 1. We changed the language to 6 college level credits and removed the department examples. The discussion at Policy Committee was that there are courses outside of these departments that could be considered “reading-intensive.”
 - ii. Subpart D: Non-Degree Seeking Students with No Prior College Experience
 1. Non-degree seeking students with no prior college experience will not be required to take the college’s placement test but cannot register for reading intensive courses (examples include history, sociology, psychology, political science, biology), English or math until the placement test is completed.
 - a. We changed the language to read “Non-degree seeking students with no prior college experience will not be required to take the college’s placement test but must meet all pre-requisites of the course.” It is not possible to differentiate non-degree seeking students with college experience and those without in the registration system, so we couldn’t enforce this language.
 - b. Part 3: Placement Testing
 - i. Subpart A. Testing Requirements
 1. Allotted Time: The test session is untimed; however, students take an average of 2 hours to complete the entire battery of tests. ESOL students have 50 minutes to complete the written placement test.
 - a. We added the language, but created a separate bullet for the ESOL time limit.

- ii. Our departments review students' coursework and complete a "Faculty Permission to Override Mandatory Placement Level" form if that semester's coursework merits exemption from the next course in the skill sequence. Exemption from any required program course must be teacher-initiated and based on demonstrated student ability reflecting the semester's work in a course. We do not support student-initiated retesting as a reliable placement tool for English, Academic Development, and ESOL.
 - 1. [We agree with this rationale.](#)
- 2. (Faculty) I feel that math is significantly different than reading. Sometimes students just need a refresher to do better; however, reading takes time, vocab acquisition and background knowledge. One cannot necessarily study for the placement. Either they read well or sadly, they don't.
 - a. [We agree with this rationale.](#)
- 3. (Staff) Question: Is the term "developmental" referring to all pre-college courses offered by Math, Adev/Eng and ESOL, or just the courses offered by the Academic Development department? I tend to use the term developmental in the broad sense, but know several staff/faculty at NHCC who use developmental in the narrow sense. For example, I hear some staff/faculty tell me that ESOL 930 is not a developmental course, but just an English course. In any case, if there is diversity in the usage of this term, then I would suggest adding a definition to the policy. Otherwise, there might be some confusion in implementing the newly added retest provision.
 - a. [We broke the exceptions section of the procedure into two pieces: 1\) math and 2\) ADEV, English, and ESOL. This should help with some of the confusion.](#)
 - b. [We will define "developmental" in the policy when it is reviewed in fall 2014.](#)
- 4. (Staff) When I was sitting pumping gas this morning, I noticed that the TV screen on the pump that was giving me messages about services that the gas station provides (e.g., food for sale, car wash, rewards card, etc.). Given all of the renewed focus on placement for success, this reminds me of a recommendation that I made awhile back. I think there should be monitors in the areas where students wait before they take their placement exam – like in the hallway outside the testing center. This waiting time – analogous to the time spend standing by the gas pump while my car fills with gas, is a "deadtime" that could be used to share institutional messages on themes tied to student success. For example, there could be messaging about the waiver process for students with certain prior credits, the ability to retest, the reason/rationale for giving the test, resources that exist for students to study up in Eng, Reading and Math, and so on.
 - a. [The Policy Committee thought this was a good idea to consider. Dan Hall will look into the cost of a monitor near the seating area for the Testing Center.](#)

5. (Staff) I received some rich feedback from an International Student who is from Palestine and currently studying at Century College. I talked with the student about one week after the John Asmussen's Developmental Study at NHCC on February 4. This student is currently studying in pre-college ESOL courses at Century College. He told me that he decided not to test in Math upon transferring to Century from the Intensive English Program at SCSU, because he believed he would test low and that these low test scores would reflect his lack of English proficiency, not his Math skills. He asked me why colleges require that students test in Math if they are not highly proficient in English. I told him that some college leaders are aware of this concern and that I did not know why college policies/procedures/practices have been designed in such as to require Math testing of students who test low in English proficiency. I also told the student that this concern had been recently addressed by a speaker at my college, indicating to me that things might change in the future.
 - a. [Added language to Part 2, #4 that reads "Students unsure whether they are at college level in reading are advised not to take the math portion of the placement test until they test into college-level reading or complete the developmental reading sequence of courses."](#)

6. (Staff) 3.4 f. Can a student retest for a class they are taking in the middle of that class? Would this affect enrollment? When are they allowed to retest- before taking the class after taking the class? E.g. After taking Adev 0951 and wanting to try for college level?
 - a. [Cannot retest for ADEV, English, or ESOL. Could retest for math, but would not affect placement for that semester.](#)

7. (Staff) I strongly support the changes proposed in 3.3.1 placement language (all of them).

8. (Staff) I saw this in MnSCU Board Procedure 3.36.1 Academic Programs. It sort of confirms the NHCC policy committee's use of the term.
 - a. <http://www.mnscu.edu/board/procedure/336p1.html>. Developmental. Developmental course content prepares students for entry into college level courses. Developmental level course credits do not apply toward a certificate, diploma, or degree.
 - i. [We will define "developmental" in the policy when it is reviewed in fall 2014.](#)

9. (Staff) From the Advising Center staff
 - a. Part 1. Pre-Testing. Subpart C. Waivers. Section 1e:
 - i. Can we also include cut scores for the SAT?
 1. [Yes, we included SAT scores in the revised procedure.](#)
 - b. Part 2. Pre-Placement Testing for Math
 - i. Have we considered using a student's reading ability as a measure for determining whether a student should or should not take the Math test?
 1. [Added language to Part 2, #4 that reads "Students unsure whether they are at college level in reading are advised not to take the math portion](#)

of the placement test until they test into college-level reading or complete the developmental reading sequence of courses.”

ii. More explanation:

1. I think that reading should be one of the measures used for determining if a student takes the Math course immediately after admission to NHCC. In particular, if students have a low reading ability (like 7-8 grade reading level or ESOL 0830), then I don't think they should take the math test.

a. Agreed.

2. This issue was raised by John Asmussen during his Developmental Study presentation at NHCC on February 4, as well as voiced by one of the Math faculty in the breakout that I attended and Deb Atkins led immediately following John Asmussen's presentation.

a. Agreed.

3. This could be implemented in the following manner. Students take the English/reading. Then if their reading scores are low (e.g. ESOL 0830, etc.), they would not be given the math test.

a. Agreed.

iii. Section 1:

1. We need to be aware this new policy will change a number of our current practices and process. There are layers of impact for this change, such as orientation sign up processes, number of referrals back to the testing center, longer times for students to get registered in courses (math or courses with math pre-requisites in particular), etc. For example, we currently require students to have the placement exam done in all areas (math, reading, English) prior to signing up for orientation. Then at orientation, a student meets with an advisor and discusses their degree and long-term educational plans. MANY students change their mind regarding their major and courses they believe they will take based on these conversations. We can change our sign up requirements to match the policy, however, we believe this will lead to a number of students deciding at orientation that they will want to go back and take the placement exam. This leads to delayed registration, back ups at testing, etc.

a. The Policy Committee agrees, but support process/logistic changes as a result of policy/procedure modifications. The impact on students could be significant (positive).

2. How and when would the “consultation with advisor or transfer specialist” for students who have been out of school for two years happen? Are these the best positions to determine their recommended beginning test level? Specific criteria needs to be

developed, and how would students access these resources prior to testing? Logistically, this is a very challenging change.

- a. The Policy Committee agrees, but support process/logistic changes as a result of policy/procedure modifications. The impact on students could be significant (positive).
- iv. Section 2. Will all students know if they have taken Algebra 2? Some high school math classes may be called Integrated Math or Math 1.
 1. The math department will develop a list of challenging math classes at local high schools and share the list with advisors.
- v. Section 3. Does “out of school for more than two years” refer to high school or college? Or is it any type of schooling?
 1. High school
- c. Part 3. Placement Testing. Subpart B. Technology Skills Assessment.
 - i. How are technology skills currently being assessed? Was is the expectation of advisors in using the assessment results with students?
 1. Technology skill is currently not being assessed, but there is agreement that we need to find a way to assess technology skills.
- d. Part 4. Post-Placement Advising
 - i. Section 3. Will students be notified of their modified placement in PPA? How will the adjustment be recorded in ISRS?
 1. Yes, the Testing Center staff would adjust the placement in ISRS and notify the student.
 - ii. Section 5. What is the appeal process for English and Reading?
 1. If the student is unhappy with the English and/or Reading placement, then they have the opportunity to retest. Otherwise they must follow the developmental sequence they placed into.
- e. Part 5. Enrollment After the Placement Test. Subpart B. Exceptions. Section 4.
 - i. Will there be more specific language indicating when the new placement goes into effect and the expectations of the institution in regards to their current course? Example: “new placement is effective the following semester. A new placement will not exempt students from the financial and academic obligations of their current course. Tuition refunds will not be issued”
 1. Added under Part 5, subpart B, “New placement is effective the following semester. A new placement will not exempt a student from the financial and academic obligations of their current course. Tuition refunds will not be issued.

10. (Staff) This is an additional comment from the Advising Center regarding the placement procedure. During the Pre-Assessment section for math, can something be added about whether or not they should take a math course here is dependent upon their major and their future transfer plans?

- a. Language added to the procedure.

3.4 and 3.4.1 Admission:

1. (Faculty) From faculty in Academic Development, ESOL, and English
 - a. Part 6: Placement for Success
 - i.Placement is required of all students seeking a degree or certificate at NHCC. Students who are not seeking.....Test scores are considered valid if taken within two year for math and three years for reading, English and ESL. If students have completed their course placement sequence, are in good academic standing, and have had continuous college enrollment, students will not be required to retest. If they have not had continuous enrollment, students will need to retest after three years.
 1. We incorporated these changes into the draft procedure.
 - ii. Placement test scores may indicate that a student is not ready to start college classes. Students who test Adult Basic Education (ABE) will need to take ABE classes before starting classes at NHCC.
 - iii. A student is allowed to retest once a term. Retest options apply only to initial course placements. Once coursework in English, reading or ESOL has begun, the retest option cannot be used to change course placement.
 1. We incorporated these changes into the draft procedure. The paragraph now reads “A student is allowed to retest once a term. Retest options apply only to initial course placements. Once coursework in English, reading or ESL has begun, the retest option cannot be used to change course placement. A student may retest in math once coursework has begun. Retest fees apply.”
2. (Staff) I strongly support the changes in 3.4.1 Placement language which waives application fees for students who had been recipients of “free and reduced” lunch.

3.35.1 Credit for Prior Learning:

1. No comments received.

4.10 and 4.10.1 Individual Professional Development Plan for Unlimited Faculty:

1. (Faculty) I had one additional comment concerning the policies submitted for review. It was concerning the 4.10.1 (Professional Development Plan).
 - a. Subpart B: Individual Professional Development Plan (paragraph 2). Should there be something like the following???
 - i. *The plan should be highly individualized and developed by the faculty member in collaboration with the supervising dean. It may include activities relevant to the following areas:*
 1. We agreed with making a change. The revised language now reads “The plan should be highly individualized and faculty-driven in collaboration with the supervising dean. The plan may include activities relevant to the following areas:”
 - ii. Note: This is one way of looking at it. We have run into issues in the past in which the Dean has wanted to drive this process. I do not believe that it should be a Dean driven process, so I would like to see something in it about the faculty member’s involvement in their own development.
 - iii. An alternative could also be:
 1. *The plan should be highly individualized and based upon the faculty member’s assessment of their own performance within areas relevant to their work. These may include activities within the following areas:*
 - a. Chose the above language instead of this.

5.33 and 5.33.1 Tobacco Use and Sales:

1. (Faculty) To whomever is on the other side of this email: How many of our students smoke and how do they feel about the increasing restriction for smoking?
 - a. [The college survey students and employees in fall 2013 \(results online at http://www.nhcc.edu/about-nhcc/policies-procedures-disclosures/policies-procedures-under-review\)](http://www.nhcc.edu/about-nhcc/policies-procedures-disclosures/policies-procedures-under-review). A majority of our students and employees do not use tobacco. However, a majority did not want tobacco outright banned, but recognized the need for increased restrictions. Therefore, the policy committee built the proposed policy/procedure using that input.

2. (Faculty) Hi Landon. I was on a bit of rant about this today. As a non smoker, I am not a fan of smoke. However, as an observer on this transient campus, I feel strongly that we should foster the ways students do connect and --though not ideal, I know -- one of the ways they connect is around the ash can. I don't want to lose that. And I do not think we should Bloomberg (new verb) our way to health. I think we can promote healthy choices (through programs and awareness) and simultaneously allow smokers to be part of our community. I worry that a ban would simply force smokers to their cars or off campus altogether when they might otherwise spend an afternoon using the library or hanging out for extra curricular activities.

Forcing them to smoking zones that are disconnected from the rest of campus seems tantamount to a ban, in a way. Where are these 2 areas? Is it realistic for students to get to these areas in between classes? How exiled are they?

Just some mid week thoughts.

- a. [There is strong consensus on the Policy Committee that an outright ban should not occur. We did not want to follow other campuses that have done an outright ban for many of the reasons mentioned above. But there were also concerns about the current policy which essentially allows smoking anywhere on campus as long as it is not within 30 feet of a building entrance. So there are 3 parts of campus where smokers can smoke in the draft language: 1\) on the east side of the campus center \(so in the middle of campus\), 2\) between LRC and Plant Services, and 3\) in all parking lots. Given the large amount of parking space and the central location of the campus center, we weren't necessarily pushing smokers off campus. We had a 4th spot that was next to the bell tower, but that was removed in earlier drafts.](#)

3. (Faculty) Thanks for the reply, Landon. What about between the CLA and the CBT buildings on the East side of campus (there is a big stretch there...)? I saw some kids out there today and that seems like a good spot.
 - a. [The Policy Committee discussed this idea and opted not to include the area. With the proximity to the parking lot just to the east, smokers could smoke there.](#)

4. (Student) Hi, I'm a student, and I would like to comment in support of the new policies on tobacco use, and adding e-cigarettes in particular.

As an example of the impact:

I was in the learning resource center just before mid-terms, and someone in the study carrel right next to me was vaping. They were puffing out cloud after cloud of mist. I did not want to be exposed to whatever chemicals are in that mist.

I didn't know if there was a policy or not and just needed to concentrate on studying, so I decided not to confront them about it and got up and moved to another area far away from them to study. But of course the mist was diffusing into the air that everyone in that room was breathing, and maybe was also getting into the carpet, coating the surfaces and books, etc.

The other aspect of this is related to why many towns are banning smoking even outdoors in parks; it's because they don't want to normalize use of tobacco in places where young people will see it, to make sure they don't give even the appearance of sanctioning its use.

When NHCC does the siting for the outdoor smoking and vaping area, I hope you will locate it downwind (considering the prevailing wind being from the northwest toward the southeast) from the campus buildings; and perhaps partially screen and enclose it with something really ugly and un-cool. Maybe have no seats. I would also suggest monitoring cameras to prevent people from using that area for drug use other than nicotine.

Further, you might want to consider a rotating display of posters in that area that educate about public health programs that help people quit, including health information about tobacco use, the monetary cost over the course of a year to the user, the dirtiness of the habit (clothes stink, breath smells), employer preferences for nonsmokers because they're not always taking time to run outside to smoke as well as because health insurance premiums are lower for nonsmokers, the amount that tobacco companies spend and the sleazy ways they get people addicted to nicotine, how the companies focus on lower-income communities where people can least afford it, etc.

I am VERY glad to see that policy work is being done on this subject. Thank you!

5. (Student) I feel that ANY restrictions on e-cigarettes to be a grave mistake. There is NO second hand smoke issue and it should be treated in the same manner as chewing gum or excessive perfume.

Anything else shows that those that benefit from the money raised by tobacco tax are fighting to keep those addicted smoking. thank you.

1. [The restrictions on e-cigarettes is different than that of smoking. E-cigarette users can use e-cigarettes anywhere on campus EXCEPT indoors and within 20 feet of building entrances. The Policy Committee did not feel this was an excessive restriction.](#)