

Testing Center

Effective with the fall 2003 semester, all public colleges and universities shall assess the academic skills of each entering undergraduate student prior to enrollment of the student. Under exceptional circumstances, an institution may permit a student to enroll in freshman-level academic coursework without assessment but shall require the student to be assessed not later than the end of the first semester of enrollment in freshman-level academic coursework.

An institution offering collegiate-level credit to students via a Multi-Institution Teaching Center (MITC) or a university system center or to in-state students by distance learning delivery systems shall ensure that students are assessed as required by this section. An institution may not use the assessment or the results of the assessment as a condition of admission to the institution. **STC reserves the right to revise testing requirements as dictated by the state on an as needed basis.**

The following assessment instruments may be used:

- 1) ASSET and COMPASS offered by ACT;
- 2) ACCUPLACER offered by The College Board;
- 3) Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) (formally TASP) offered by National Evaluation Systems, Inc.

The Testing Center administers ACCUPLACER and the THEA test throughout the year. Information on test dates, registration deadlines, and general information is available upon request. Call 1-800-742-7822 for information or contact the Testing Center at (956) 872-3484, or visit the web site at:

<http://www.southtexascollege.edu/studentservices/testing.html>. Any questions not covered regarding Alternative Exams & Developmental Education, please refer to the Institutional Development Educational Plan, which can be found at the Testing Center as well as on-line at: <http://www.southtexascollege.edu/develop/devDocuments/DevPlanRevised%204-19-05.pdf>

It is important to know that there is a \$15 Reservation Fee for both exams, and a \$29 fee for each examination on the day of testing. Reservations are not taken via the phone; you must be present to make your reservation.

The following minimum standards shall be used by STC to determine a student's readiness to enroll in freshman-level academic coursework:

- 1) ASSET: Reading Skills – 41; Elementary Algebra – 41; Writing Skills (objective) – 40; with a Written Essay – 6.
- 2) COMPASS: Reading Skills – 81; Algebra – 42; Writing Skills (objective) – 69; with a Written Essay – 6.
- 3) ACCUPLACER: Reading Comprehension – 78; Elementary Algebra – 95 or College Level Math - 63; Sentence Skills – 90; and with a Written Essay – 6.

- 4) THEA: Reading – 230; Mathematics – 250; Writing – 220.

For each student who fails to meet the minimum passing standards the following student success initiative will apply. **These new initiatives will foster the academic preparation necessary for students to be successful in future academic courses.**

- All developmental courses, including College Success, will be included in the Grade Point Average for all students at STC.
- Students in developmental studies will be limited to a maximum of 13 credit hours of course work per fall and spring semester, and seven credit hours of course work per summer session.
- Full-time students who have not met the college-level placement standard in two or more skills will be required to take two developmental courses each semester and one in each summer term. Part-time students are required to take one course.
- Students required to take developmental courses must also take College Success during their first semester.

For more information, visit the Counseling & Advising Center or call 872-8372, or 1-800-742-4STC.

For complete testing information, visit the Testing Center or call 872-3484.

Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA)

Senate Bill 286 requires that effective with the 2003 Fall semester, all Texas public college and university students be tested for reading, writing and mathematics skills. The Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) Test is one of the required tests for all students enrolling in a Texas public college and university pursuing an Associate's and/or Bachelor's degree. Alternative examinations include: ASSET, ACCUPLACER, COMPASS.

The THEA Test is administered throughout the year. Information on test dates, registration, deadlines and general information is available upon request, or go to NES's website: <http://www.thea.nesinc.com/>. Call 1-800-742-4STC for information or contact the Testing Center at (956) 872-6474.

Who Must Take an Assessment Test

Beginning with the fall of 2003 semester, students who plan to enroll in a Texas public college or university and students in high school enrolling in a college-level course **MUST** take an Assessment Test **before enrolling in any college level credit course.**

The following students must take ASSESSMENT:

- Students who are entering or are enrolled in a Texas public institution of higher education (i.e., a

college, university or technical institute) as a full-time or part-time student in an associate or baccalaureate degree program.

- Students who are seeking admission to an educator preparation program in either a public or private institution in Texas.
- Students who are in a certificate program of 43-59 semester credit hours or the equivalent.
- Students who are transferring from outside Texas or from a Texas private college or university to a Texas public college or university.

Who Does Not Have to Take an Alternative Assessment Test:

- A student who has previously attended any institution and has been determined to have met readiness standards by that institution.
- Students who have achieved a sufficiently high score on ACT, SAT, or TAAS/TAKS. ACT and SAT scores may be no more than five (5) years old, and exit level TAAS/TAKS scores may be no more than three (3) years old.
- Students who are enrolled in a **certificate program of one year or less** (42 or fewer semester credit hours or the equivalent) unless required for a prerequisite.
- Students who have graduated with an associate's or baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution of higher education.
- Transfer students from an accredited institution of higher education who have earned a "C" or better in a corresponding course (See Developmental Education Plan Procedures Guide.)

When Must A Student Take an Alternative Assessment Test?

All students enrolling in credit programs at STC for the first time must have scores from an assessment instrument approved by the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) prior to advisement and registration.

Registration for the ACCUPLACER Test

To register for the ACCUPLACER Test, a student must fill out an STC Admissions form prior to the test administration. Once an Admissions form has been processed, the student may reserve a test date at the Testing Center (Reservation Fee - \$15.00).

Payment for the ACCUPLACER Test

The ACCUPLACER Test fee is \$29.00 on the day of the testing.

Registration For The THEA Test

To register for the THEA Test, a student must fill out a registration form prior to the test administration or register via Internet www.tasp.nesinc.com. The THEA Test Registration Bulletin provides the student with all the information necessary to register and is available through the Testing Center and Student Information Centers.

All registration is handled through the National Evaluation System, Inc. (NES) located in Austin, TX. STC is a designated test site. Tests are administered several times during the year.

Payment for the THEA Test

The THEA Test fee is \$29.

Taking and Passing an ASSESSMENT Examination

To be considered College Ready, a student must meet the college-level placement standard in **all** three sections--reading, writing, and math. If the student wishes to retest, the student may register for an Assessment Test again and take only the section(s) of the test that he/she has not passed. Students who have not met the college-level placement standard in any skills must participate in developmental coursework until they meet the college-level standard in all three skills. Full-time students who have not met the college-level standard are required to take developmental courses in at least two skills. Part-time students must take at least one developmental course.

ASSESSMENT Tests

Each section of any Assessment Test is designed to measure a student's academic skills in relation to an established standard for the college-level. The score on each section of the test is based on the mastery of the skills being tested.

ASSESSMENT Tests consists of the following sections:

Reading

The reading section includes reading selections similar to those found in course materials (e.g., textbooks, lab manuals, essays) that students are likely to encounter during their first year in college. Each selection is approximately 300 to 750 words in length. Students will be asked to answer several multiple-choice questions about each selection.

Mathematics

The mathematics section contains multiple-choice questions covering four general areas: fundamental mathematics, algebraic graphic and equations, algebraic operations and quadratics, and geometry and reasoning. The test questions focus on a student's ability to perform mathematical operations and/or solve problems. Appropriate formulas will be provided for students to use in performing some of the calculations required by the test questions. Examinees will be allowed to use a "four-key" (add, subtract, percent, and division) function calculator during the test.

Writing

The writing section consists of two subsections: a group of multiple-choice questions and a writing sample portion. Examinees must take both writing subsections. The multiple-choice subsection of the test assesses students' skills in various elements of effective writing. The writing sample subsection requires students to demonstrate their ability to communicate effectively by writing on a given

topic. Students will be instructed to provide a writing sample of approximately 300 to 600 words. Generally, topics will allow examinees to draw from personal experience and general knowledge. Students will not be allowed to use dictionaries.

Testing Time Provided

The test session is five hours in length. Examinees may use the time available to work on any of the three sections of the test. The individual test sections (Reading, Mathematics, Writing) are not limited within the testing session. The test is designed so that most students should be able to finish all three sections within five hours.

Required Level of Proficiency in Developmental Courses

STC Policies mandate continuous developmental course work until the college-level standard is met in all three skills. A student must achieve a passing grade of “C” or higher when taking a developmental course before enrolling in the next higher course within the discipline.

This policy applies, without exception, to the following courses:

READ 0070, Developmental Reading I
READ 0080, Developmental Reading II
READ 0090, Developmental Reading III

ENGL 0071, Writing Skills I
ENGL 0081, Writing Skills II
ENGL 0091, Writing Skills III

MATH 0080, Developmental Mathematics
MATH 0085, Introductory Algebra
MATH 0090, Intermediate Algebra & Geometry

Enrollment in Developmental Courses

Students who have not placed at or above college-level for reading, writing, or mathematics must enroll in Developmental coursework and limit their credit-hour loads as follows:

- Full-time students (students enrolled in 12 or more hours during a fall or spring semester) who have not met the college-level Placement Standard in two (2) or more skills will be required to enroll in a minimum of two (2) Developmental courses, in addition to College Success, during the fall and spring terms. All students who have not met the college-level Placement Standard will be required to enroll in one (1) Developmental course each summer term.
- Part-time students (students who are enrolled in eleven (11) or fewer hours during the fall or spring semesters) who have not met the college-level Placement Standard in two (2) or more assessment skills will be required to enroll in a minimum of one (1) development course, in addition to College Success.

- All students who have not met the college-level Placement Standard will be limited to thirteen (13) hours of coursework per semester and seven (7) hours per summer session until they meet the standard.

Mandatory Participation

Students required to take Developmental courses including College Success must attend scheduled classes. If they drop or are dropped for non-attendance by their instructors, they are identified by the Office of Admissions as non-compliant. The Coordinator of Testing sends these students letters informing them of their non-compliant status. These students are responsible to the Coordinator of Testing. Students who fail to comply with any of the following policies and procedures may be withdrawn from all their classes and will not earn any college credit hours for the semester.

Developmental Initiatives

The following Developmental Initiatives were adopted by the South Texas College Board of Trustees and were implemented for fall 2007.

- A student taking Developmental courses whose current or cumulative GPA drops below 2.00 will be placed on *Early Academic Alert* and limited to thirteen (13) hours of coursework per semester. Students on *Early Academic Alert* must meet with a Counselor or Developmental Studies Retention Specialist and follow their *Intervention Agreement*.
- A student taking Developmental courses who was previously on *Early Academic Alert* and whose current semester GPA is below 2.00 will be placed on *Mandatory Intervention* and limited to no more than nine (9) hours of coursework. These students must meet with a Counselor or Developmental Studies Retention Specialist and follow their *Intervention Agreement*.
- A student taking Developmental courses who was previously on *Mandatory Intervention* and whose current semester GPA is below 2.00 will be placed on *Academic Suspension*. (See Policies 3320.) Developmental students who wish to appeal their placement on *Academic Suspension* must meet with the Developmental Studies Retention Team and must follow the Scholastic Appeal Procedures.

Mandatory Participation

Students required to take Developmental courses including College Success must attend scheduled classes. If they drop or are dropped for non-attendance by their instructors, they are identified by the Office of Admissions as non-compliant. The Coordinator of Testing sends these students letters informing them of their non-compliant status. These students are responsible for responding to the Coordinator of Testing. Students who fail to comply with any of the following policies and procedures may be withdrawn from all of their classes and will not earn any college credit hours for the semester.

Dropping or Withdrawing from Developmental Course Work

Students under TSI requirements who have been assigned developmental courses due to initial placement or failing a portion of an Alternative Exam may not drop these courses. Withdrawal from a developmental course must be associated only with withdrawal from the institution.

Requirements for Students Registering for a Course More than Once Board Policy 3336 (4/28/05)

Students registering for a course for which they have earned a grade of D, F, or W at the College, will be required to participate in mandatory advising/counseling and comply with the stated provisions included in the Student Success Agreement: Academic Improvement Plan or Probation Contract. Students not participating in mandatory advising requirement will have an administrative hold placed on their record. The hold, which will prevent registration, will be removed upon completion of the mandatory advisement session and completion of a Student Success Agreement: Academic Improvement Plan or Probation Contract.

Students registering more than two times for a course for which they previously have earned a grade of D, F, or W at the College will be limited to enrolling in no more than 13 credit hours during the fall and spring terms and seven credit hours during each of the summer terms. Exceptions to the credit hour limit will require the approval of the Division Dean over the repeated course. (END POLICY)

Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment is a program that allows qualified high school juniors and seniors to enroll in college courses while attending high school. Courses are taken in place of, or in addition to, the normal course load in high school. High school credit may be earned with the approval of the principal. Check with your high school counselor for verification. College credit will be earned upon successful course completion. Students must submit an application form and an official high school transcript in order to register for the college course(s). The application must be signed by the high school principal or counselor, a parent or legal guardian, and an STC school official. Students must also have a passing score on an alternative test to be TSI exempt, or meet the standard TAKS scores of 2200+3 in English and/or a 2200 in Math, in order to enroll in academic courses. Students enrolling in TSI exempt certificate courses must meet the TAKS English and/or Math standard score. Please check with the Office of Admissions and Records, or the Director of High School, Academies Programs and Services for further details.

Tech Prep

South Texas College is a participating member of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Tech-Prep Consortium. Tech Prep is part of a national educational initiative in vocational and technical education. Programs developed cooperatively with

the area school districts enable high school students to enroll at STC and earn college credit in a technical program that will prepare them to enter the workforce in high-demand technical careers.

A high school student who successfully completes Tech Prep articulated courses at their high school is eligible to receive credit at STC when the following criteria are met:

1. Completes the high school course(s) with a grade of 80 (B) or better.
2. Meets all STC admission and program entrance requirements.
3. Enrolls in Tech Prep Associate of Applied Science Degree or related certificate at STC within 15 months after graduating from high school.
4. Successfully completes a minimum of six credit hours at STC with a grade of 70 (C) or better.

Upon registering at STC, the student should visit the Tech Prep advisor's office to ensure proper application of their credit.

Tuition/Fee Waiver for Dual Credit Students Sponsored by Cooperating School Districts Board Policy 3235 (rev. 7/28/05)

Tuition, registration, lab, and drop fees charged by the College will be waived for students of cooperating school districts who are participating in dual enrollment classes, provided the following conditions are met:

- 1) the cooperating school district agrees to provide a school district instructor who meets Southern Association for Colleges and Schools criteria and all qualifications to be employed as a College faculty member;
- 2) the cooperating school district agrees to follow all curriculum and textbook course requirements of the College;
- 3) the cooperating school district agrees to provide the classroom, equipment and materials, and cover any nursing/allied health course-specific testing fees and student liability insurance as applicable.

For those school districts that require a College instructor, registration, lab, and drop fees will be waived provided the following conditions are met:

- 1) the cooperating school district agrees to be invoiced and pay mileage and cost of the College instructors as delineated on the Dual enrollment course Agreement;
- 2) the cooperating school district agrees to follow all curriculum and textbook course requirements of the College;
- 3) the cooperating school district agrees to provide the classroom, equipment and materials, and cover any nursing/allied health course-specific fees and student liability insurance as applicable.

Tuition and eligible fees are waived for students enrolled in the Academies Program.

A late enrollment fee of \$150 per course will be assessed for each student admitted after the College's census date.

Enrollment of students in the College's Dual Enrollment Program will be governed by all applicable state and federal regulations. (END POLICY)