

MEMORANDUM

To: Chief Academic Officers
From: Vita Rabinowitz
Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost
Subject: Exit Standards for Non-Course-Based Developmental Interventions
Date: September 28, 2016

This memo is a follow up to the one Dean David Crook sent you on August 12 describing the changes in policy and procedures related to exit from developmental education. That communication focused primarily on developmental instruction in reading, writing and mathematics delivered in conventional courses during the regular semester. As stated in the memo, CUNY's practice of determining readiness to exit developmental course sequences will no longer hinge on passing a single high-stakes exit test, as it has until now. Rather, exit will be determined by passage of the top-level developmental course in a developmental sequence. A mandatory University common final exam will count 35 percent of the grade and class performance will count as the other 65 percent. The timing and details of that policy are spelled out in the August 12 memo.

In this memo we consider non-course-based interventions (NCBIs), developmental instruction offered in settings other than semester-based courses. NCBIs vary widely in format and curriculum and include but are not limited to CUNY Start, Math Start, CLIP, summer and winter immersion, and workshops offered by CUNY as well as organizations outside the University. Placement policies must be tailored to each type of NCBI because of wide variation in their format and curriculum.

Pre-matriculation Interventions

Several interventions are designed primarily to prepare prospective college students to meet CUNY's proficiency standards, particularly CUNY's assessment tests. Given this purpose, these students will be administered the CUNY assessment tests at the end of the intervention to determine their level of proficiency at that time.

CLIP. CLIP offers ESL students an opportunity to improve their English language skills and to prepare for the CUNY assessment tests by taking up to four modules during the course of a year. Students may register for as many modules as they wish before opting to matriculate and retake the CUNY assessment tests in reading and writing. The amount of instruction that a student receives varies with the student. For this reason, students may opt to retest on ACCUPLACER and the CATW at any time they choose, and placement will depend entirely on their test scores. This policy is a continuation of past practice.

College Focus, LINCT to Success, and other interventions offered to high school students.

Students participating in these programs will be administered the appropriate CUNY assessment tests at the end of their intervention to assess their level of proficiency at that time.

CUNY Start and Math Start

Because of their length and close adherence to the learning outcomes of regular developmental courses, successful completion of CUNY Start and Math Start will be determined in the same manner as it is in regular developmental courses, on the basis of performance on the University common final exam (35 percent) and performance in the intervention itself (65 percent). Class performance will be measured with a common rubric developed by program staff. Students who pass CUNY Start or Math Start will qualify for the same credit courses as students who pass developmental courses during the regular semester. Students who do not achieve full skill proficiency in CUNY Start or Math Start and who wish to enroll in a regular developmental course will be placed into a top-level developmental course in the college's sequence. (These students may also take a short intervention, if offered.) This policy will take effect December 2016 for math and reading and Fall 2017 for writing.

Interventions for Matriculated Students

The general rule for NCBIIs offered to matriculated students (e.g. immersion, workshops targeted to students who fail elementary algebra, EOC instruction) is that readiness to exit developmental education will be based on successful completion of the instruction, which will be determined on the basis of performance during the intervention (65 percent) and University common finals (35 percent)—the CATW, the CEAFE or other common final, and a common final in reading. (As noted in the August 12 memo, departments will administer their own reading common departmental final in December 2016, and a to-be-determined CUNY-wide final in Spring 2017.) If it is not feasible to define successful completion of the intervention in terms of 65 percent class performance and 35 percent final exam score, the chief academic officer of the college in consultation with the appropriate department will have discretion to implement an alternative approach such as relying on the University common departmental final (and University cut scores) alone. Successful completion must be recorded in CUNY First. If you do opt to employ an alternative to the 65-35 approach for these interventions, please notify me in advance.

Policies governing readiness to exit all other NCBIIs will be determined by the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs on a case by case basis.

Calculator Usage on the CEAFE

Following the August 12 memo, we received several questions about the new policy allowing scientific calculators on the CEAFE, prompting the following clarifications. Because the testing software does not contain a built-in calculator, students will bring their own scientific calculator for use on the CEAFE. Students will be permitted to use the model with which they are familiar. However, students will not be permitted to use a graphing calculator or their cell phone or other communication device as a calculator. Testing staff will be trained to identify acceptable calculators and will quickly inspect each calculator as students enter the testing site.

I look forward to further collaboration with you as we move ahead with our efforts to improve developmental education at CUNY.

cc: Dean David Crook
Dean Lucinda Zoe
Dean Donna Linderman
Mathematics Discipline Council
Reading Discipline Council
Writing Discipline Council
English Discipline Council
ESL Discipline Council
Directors of Testing
Members of the CUNY Task Force on Developmental Education