

Assessment Archive: Florida College Entry-Level Placement Test (CPT)

This assessment is no longer actively administered in Florida.

Section 1008.30 (formally 240.117), Florida Statutes, requires the State Board of Education to develop and implement a common placement testing program to assess the basic computation and communication skills of students who intend to enter a degree program at any public community college or state university. This policy has been implemented by the Board through Rule 6A-10.0315, Florida Administrative Code.

In July 1993, the Department of Education issued a Request for Proposals (#094-005) to solicit testing products and services for the common placement testing program. The winning vendor was the College Board, and a contract was approved for these activities in December 1993.

The contract required the College Board to prepare core placement tests in the areas of reading, writing, and elementary algebra. Additional tests were to be made available for both lower- and higher-level mathematics that would contain optional arithmetic and college-level mathematics components. The Levels of English Proficiency Test also would be provided for students with language difficulties to diagnose second language interference problems. The common placement tests would not include any performance component such as requiring students to prepare a written essay.

The College Board proposed using the Computerized Placement Tests™ (CPTs), part of the ACCUPLACER system, and preparing written versions of the tests for those postsecondary institutions that do not have computer testing laboratories. The written versions of the placement tests would be available in two equivalent forms, A and B. The CPTs are computer adaptive tests, thus providing both flexibility of administration and considerable test security.

In July 1995, the postsecondary institutions began implementing the common placement testing program. Institutions were permitted an option of delaying full-scale implementation for one year. As of this date, all institutions are using the common placement tests. In practice, the new tests are used primarily in the state's public community colleges, since most university students have scores on the SAT or ACT that are sufficiently high to exempt them from the placement testing process.

Historically, the State Board of Education established a minimum passing score for each subtest of the common placement tests through Rule 6A-10.0315, FAC, but the individual institutions were free to adopt higher passing scores. Over the years, the community colleges had implemented a variety of scores, so there were considerable differences in the criteria for entering developmental courses. To provide a uniform criterion across all institutions, the Department convened study committees to define single passing scores for the common placement tests. The State Board of Education adopted these new scores in May 1996; however, institutions were permitted an optional one-year delay in implementing the new, higher performance standards. By June 30, 1997, all community colleges are required to use the uniform standards. The Standards are as follows:

Reading Comprehension: Standard Score = 83

Sentence Skills: Standard Score = 83

Elementary Algebra: Standard Score = 72

In 1996, the Florida Legislature amended Section 240.117 FS (now section 1008.30), to permit the common placement tests to be administered to high school tenth-grade students. Such administrations will be guided by agreements negotiated between the community college or university and the local school district. The intent of such testing is to encourage high school staff to counsel students into the appropriate combination of college preparatory courses and to inform students of the levels of proficiency that are expected of college students.

The results of the common placement tests are not reported in the same manner as those of the other statewide tests. An annual report is prepared by the Department to describe the number of students who are placed into developmental studies, by institution. In addition, each student's test scores are recorded in the database maintained by the Division of Community Colleges and are available for research purposes.

Questions about this program may be directed to the Student Assessment Services Section of the Department of Education.