

Informing Students About Their Placement

What to include in an MMA placement report

Course placement can be communicated to students in various ways. If you plan to develop a placement report or document, consider including the following:

- **The student's course placement.** The placement document should indicate what level course (prerequisite developmental education, corequisite, or standalone college-level) the student placed into and whether the placement is a requirement or a recommendation. It might also indicate their course options, including which developmental education course the student placed into or the student's college-level course options based on different factors, such as their major or pathway (for example, college-level statistics or college-level algebra).
- **Brief overview of measures that factor into course placement.** A placement document could let students know that multiple measures including test scores and high school GPA are factored into the placement decision. It could also provide students with a personalized list of their scores and GPA on record, if feasible.
 - **Tip:** Be consistent when providing students with information about placement measures. If you are providing students with values for various measures, provide values for all measures that you have on record. For example, if you provide students' ACCUPLACER scores, also list their high school GPA on record, etc. This ensures information is consistent and makes it more meaningful for the student if a value is missing.
- **Next steps for students.** Depending on when students will receive their placement, your campus's placement report might highlight the next steps for the student. Potential next steps might be attending orientation or an advising and registration session. The placement document should also include information for students who would like to retest or appeal their placement or who have questions about the placement process. Provide contact information for the admissions, testing, and advising offices.

What topics should be discussed in post-assessment advising?

When discussing placement with students, it might be helpful to:

- Review the placement report
- Have access to students' test scores and high school GPA on record, should students have questions about their placement
- Inform students how they can learn more about how their placement was determined and how they can retest or appeal placement decisions

- Encourage students to register for the course they placed into unless they plan to retest
- Inform students about resources—both in class and outside of class—that they can access to support their success in their courses

Tip: Do not inform students who are placed into college-level courses using test scores and/or high school GPA that they would have been in developmental education under the old system. Research has shown that multiple measures and the incorporation of high school GPA is a valid predictor of students' readiness.

Encourage students to accept higher-level placements

If your placement system builds in discretion for advisors or students on final placement, it's important to remember that evidence suggests most students do better when placed in college-level courses, even students who would have been placed in developmental courses in the past. Some students may lack confidence and underestimate their abilities, resulting in lower placements. For instance, some [studies have found](#) that Black and female students are less likely than other students to place themselves in college-level math. Men are more likely than women to place themselves in developmental writing courses. Bias can also play a role in underplacements.

Potential questions from students

Consider these questions you are likely to hear from students and be prepared to address them:

- How was my course placement determined? Why was I placed into this course?
- I heard there is a new course placement system that uses multiple measures. As a continuing student (who was assigned to developmental education), will I be re-placed using multiple measures?
- How close am I to placing into college-level?
- How can I change my placement?
- Can I take a college-level course even if I didn't place into it?
- Can I take a developmental education course even if I didn't place into it?
- Can I retest?

[Back to the Toolkit](#)