

FOR STUDENTS ENTERING IN SPRING 2020, CUNY WILL NO LONGER USE PLACEMENT TESTS TO ASSIGN STUDENTS TO REMEDIATION



What does this mean for me?



Starting in Spring 2020 you'll no longer have to take a placement exam (CUNY Assessment Test) to meet CUNY proficiency standards. Meeting these standards means you're eligible to take credit-bearing courses.

Wait, how do I know if I've met CUNY proficiency standards?



Any of these college readiness benchmarks scores can be used to meet CUNY proficiency standards:

Math

SAT Math – 530+
Algebra 1 Regents – 70+
Geometry Regents – 70+
Algebra 2/Trig Regents – 65+
ACT Math Score 21+

Reading & Writing

SAT EBRW – 480+
English Regents – 75+
ACT English score of 20+

[CUNY Testing FAQs](#)

I'm meeting college readiness benchmarks, now what?



If you're already meeting college readiness benchmarks, then you're eligible to enroll in credit-bearing courses in math and English.



I'm not meeting college readiness benchmarks, now what?



Don't worry, CUNY can use a combination of your **high school GPA, Regents scores and/or SAT scores** to determine a proficiency status and after you apply, will post your status in the milestone section on [CUNYfirst](#).

- If your status is math proficient, you're eligible to enroll in a credit-bearing math course. If your status is reading/writing proficient, you're eligible to enroll in a credit-bearing English course.

I've checked the [CUNYfirst](#) student center and I'm not seeing that I'm proficient, now what?



Students who are not proficient have several different options for achieving proficiency and they are a little different at every CUNY campus, so you should meet with an advisor at your chosen college to discuss all your options.

Turn over for more answers

The information below will help in planning postsecondary support for students who are applying for college in the next academic year!

Starting fall 2019 for applicants entering in the spring of 2020, The City University of New York (CUNY) will stop using placement tests to assign students to remediation.

Why is CUNY changing its remedial assignment policy?

This change in remedial assignment practice is part of CUNY's comprehensive remediation reform, which will also change the way colleges provide developmental education. CUNY plans to phase out stand-alone non-credit remedial courses and replace them with corequisite math or English courses. In coreq courses, students receive additional instruction or tutoring while enrolled in a credit-bearing course. CUNY will also offer targeted interventions prior to matriculation (i.e., CUNY Start, Math Start).

What are the new changes to CUNY's remedial assignment policy?

As happens now, applicants who meet benchmark scores on the SAT, ACT, or Regents exams will be considered proficient and eligible to enroll in credit-bearing courses in the subject (math or English).[1]

In the past, students who had not met those benchmarks were required to take placement tests at a CUNY college to determine whether they were eligible for credit-bearing courses or required to complete remedial interventions first.

Moving forward, CUNY will use a proficiency formula that combines overall high school grade point average with SAT and Regents scores to determine whether the applicant has a good chance of succeeding in a credit-bearing math or English course without any additional support. The new proficiency formula will be used to place students in remedial interventions.

How will the new proficiency formula work?

There are separate proficiency formulas for math and English. Both use information that is already part of the application for freshman admissions: student's overall high school GPA at the time of application, SAT scores, and Regents scores. If an applicant has both SAT scores and Regents scores, the formula will use both scores, but if they have only Regents or only SAT, it will use whichever is available. The formula places more weight on high school grades than test scores, but higher test scores can help offset lower grades and vice versa.

How will students find out about their proficiency status and what happens next?

The new proficiency status will be available when the student's application is evaluated for admission. Students will be able to see if they have met proficiency standards in the

CUNYfirst Student Center. If a student has met proficiency standards, there will be labels that say “Math Proficient,” “Read Proficient,” and “Write Proficient” in the Milestones section of the Student Center. If they have not met proficiency standards, the Milestone section will be empty.

Students who are not proficient have several different options for achieving proficiency, which vary at each CUNY campus. Prospective students should meet with an advisor at their chosen college as soon as possible to discuss which developmental options are best for them. Below is a brief overview of the kinds of options available at each campus:

- Students who are not proficient can enroll in free or low-cost developmental interventions during the summer (or winter term if spring entrants) so they can enroll in credit-bearing courses when they matriculate. These interventions include ***University Skills Immersion Program (USIP)*** workshops for students with lighter developmental needs and the ***Math Start program*** for students with deeper remedial math needs.
- ***Corequisite courses*** allow students to enroll in credit-bearing math and English courses, without completing a remedial intervention first, but require them to spend additional time in class or tutoring sessions. The corequisite course offerings vary by college.
- Students assigned to developmental work in both math and English should consider enrolling in ***CUNY Start***. CUNY Start is a semester-long intervention offered to students before they matriculate designed to address remedial needs in reading, writing, and mathematics. Students delay matriculation by a semester and pay \$75 in order to participate in CUNY Start.

It is also important for students to discuss the type of major they are interested in with their advisor to determine which math courses are required. Science, engineering, and economic majors will all require algebra and calculus courses. Social science majors, like psychology and sociology, will likely require statistics rather than algebra. Humanities majors, like English, music, or art will likely require a more general mathematical or quantitative reasoning course.

Does this mean students won't have to take any more placement tests at CUNY?

Individual colleges may still administer placement tests to determine which credit-bearing courses a student should take (e.g., College Algebra or Pre-Calculus, which level of a foreign language).

Colleges may also administer a diagnostic test to determine whether a student is likely to benefit from English as a Second Language instruction. These exams will be scheduled and coordinated by individual colleges.

Can AP scores and College Now courses be used to determine proficiency?

If a student has earned an AP test score that a college honors for credit in English or math, the student will be considered proficient. Similarly, if a student has earned math or English credit through a College Now or Early College Initiative (ECI) course, the student will be considered proficient.

What if some students have a high Regents score and a lower SAT score—are they better off not submitting the SAT score?

No. Students should submit SAT scores if they have them. Submitting more information will allow CUNY to make a more accurate determination of proficiency. SAT scores are also required for consideration of freshman admissions to any CUNY bachelor's program, including through the SEEK program. If the scores are submitted for admissions they will also be used for the proficiency formula.

Which date of high school GPA and test scores will be used? Can students re-take the SAT and Regents exams to meet proficiency standards?

The proficiency formula uses the same high school GPA used for admissions decisions. For students who apply to CUNY during their senior year of high school this will most likely be their high school GPA through the end of 11th grade. The formula will run first with the SAT and Regents scores available when the application is evaluated, but if the student retakes the Regents or SAT exams through June of their senior year and gets higher scores, the formula can be run again with those new scores.

Different high schools have different grading practices. How can CUNY rely on students' high school GPAs to determine whether they are ready for credit-bearing college courses?

Despite differences in grading practice between high schools, extensive research at CUNY and across the country has found that high school grades do a better job of predicting grades in college courses than standardized test scores. High school grades are also significantly better for predicting persistence into a second year and on to college graduation. The new CUNY proficiency formula uses both grades and standardized test scores, so if an applicant attends a high school with strict grading standards, their test scores can boost their overall proficiency formula value.

Why does the formula use overall high school GPA and not a math-specific or English-specific GPA?

Research found that the overall GPA performed slightly better than math or English-specific GPAs as a predictor of performance in college courses, largely because it is based on more courses.

Will fewer students be assigned to developmental education at CUNY when the proficiency formula is implemented?

In the first years of implementation we anticipate that a similar number of students will be assigned to developmental education as were in the past.

Will the new proficiency formula impact admissions to the colleges?

Each CUNY 4-year college has its own admission requirements and admission review process, which is separate from determinations of proficiency. In most cases, students have to meet proficiency standards in math and English in order to be admitted to a bachelor's program, but simply meeting the proficiency standards does not guarantee admission to a bachelor's program. CUNY's 4-year colleges also have special programs for admitting some students who have not yet met proficiency but show potential to succeed in college, such as the SEEK program — the proficiency formula will not impact admission through those programs.

What are corequisite courses? How do they work? What are the implications for financial aid?

Corequisite courses allow students with developmental needs to enroll in regular credit-bearing math and English courses, but require that they also spend some time enrolled in non-credit bearing support to help them succeed in those courses. The developmental support can be structured in different ways: as another developmental course that students enroll in concurrently with the credit course, as additional hours of the same course, or as mandatory tutoring workshops. If the support is in the form of another course or extra course hours, students will be charged tuition for the course and the course time will be eligible for financial aid—just like prerequisite remedial courses are now.

Can a student appeal his or her proficiency status? Can they volunteer to take a placement test to demonstrate proficiency?

There will be an optional review process for applicants for whom the proficiency formula does not apply, such as those who have high school equivalencies rather than regular high school GPAs, or students who attended high school in a foreign country. This review process is not intended for recent graduates of local high schools. The colleges will not administer a new test to applicants to determine proficiency.

How does this policy apply to PBAT schools/ schools where students do not take Regents exams?

If the applicant has SAT scores, the SAT scores will be used in the proficiency formula.

[1] See the CUNY testing webpage for the benchmark scores on each exam that demonstrate proficiency: <http://www2.cuny.edu/academics/testing/testing-faqs/>.