



Date: July 17, 2024

To: Ben Passmore, Associate Vice President, Universities of Wisconsin

From: Charles Isbell, Provost, UW-Madison

Re: Report on Scope and Effectiveness of UW-Madison's Developmental Education

In response to the Board of Regents' triennial requirement to submit a report on the scope and effectiveness of Developmental Education, please find a summary of UW-Madison's relevant activities and initiatives below. UW-Madison does not offer developmental English courses. Therefore, the institutional information provided focuses solely on developmental math.

The number of students who place into developmental math at UW-Madison remains small in comparison to most other institutions. However, since 2017 there has been an increase, both in percentage and number, in new students who place into developmental math (MATH 96). In 2017, there were 16 new freshmen (0.2% of the class that year) that placed into developmental math. That number increased to 192 students by fall 2023 (2.4% of the class). This increase has resulted in a need for more resources devoted to developmental math instruction and additional advising resources devoted to ensuring students are able to make adequate degree progress while completing their developmental math requirement. The increase in students requiring developmental math coincides with the timing of COVID when we know middle and high school instruction was impacted. It also corresponds to the implementation of test optional policies by the UW System Board of Regents.

Related to developmental math, UW-Madison has focused its efforts on the following activities:

1. Ensuring that placement into developmental math is appropriate. Students are placed into developmental math based on low scores on the Math Fundamentals portion of the UW System Math Placement Test. Students who disagree with this placement are able to retake the placement test and proceed directly to a college-level math course if their scores improve.
2. Encouraging early completion of developmental math. Even though the revised UW System developmental education policy no longer requires completion of developmental requirements within the first thirty credits, UW-Madison has several processes in place that collectively incentivize early completion. At the required orientation program, advisors communicate the expectation that students who place into developmental math

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complete it in their first semester. Students are expected to leave their orientation session enrolled in MATH 96. Students cannot enroll in courses that meet the Quantitative Reasoning Part A requirement (required to be completed before graduation and before the second level of the Quantitative Reasoning requirement) without first successfully completing developmental math.

3. Providing opportunities for early completion of the developmental math course. Institutional summer bridge program participants (Summer Collegiate Experience (SCE)) who test into developmental math complete MATH 118 during the summer. This is a two-credit course designed to position students to retake the UW System Math Placement Test at the end of the summer with the goal of placing into a college-level math course for the fall. Several schools/colleges have their own summer bridge programs and are working intensively with students who place into developmental math to accelerate their progression into college-level math courses.
4. Consideration of alternative evidence of math preparation. National efforts to reduce the need for developmental math encourage the use of "multiple measures" of math ability. These multiple measures often consist of consideration of ACT or SAT math scores or high school GPA as alternatives to a placement test. The size of UW-Madison's incoming class, the variety of high school grading scales and processes used, the significant number of international students who did not attend high school in the United States, and the fact that submission of ACT and SAT scores is now optional makes the use of multiple measures impractical. Many students enroll at UW-Madison with the equivalent of a college-level math course already completed or have scored highly on the math portions of Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate tests. In these cases, regardless of math placement test results, the developmental math requirement (and usually other lower-level math courses) is considered completed.
5. Supporting students and their math learning. The Math Learning Center, offered by the Math Department, offers drop-in tutoring and peer mentoring support for students in developmental math. A new one-credit course called Success in Your Math Course (INTERDIS-LS 144) is a relatively new option for students enrolled in developmental math. It focuses on study skills needed for success in mathematics in general and coordinates with the developmental math course such that information about test taking strategies is presented at the time that tests in developmental math are occurring.