Placement Testing Information
for
Incoming Freshmen and Transfer Students

What is placement testing?

In accordance with the Board of Higher Education, Fitchburg State requires all incoming freshmen to take placement tests that provide the University with information about a student’s level of accomplishment in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. The results of these tests indicate the most appropriate courses for an incoming student at Fitchburg State University. The placement tests must be completed prior to orientation and course registration. New students will receive a course schedule during summer orientation, which will be based on placement scores, high school adjusted GPA, and major.

Transfer students must check in with their college transfer advisor to determine which, if any, placement tests are necessary. Most transfer students have university credits for Writing I and therefore do not need to complete the Reading Comprehension or Writing Placement exams.

What Placement Tests are required?

Incoming Freshmen

Unless noted below, all incoming freshmen must take the Accuplacer Reading Comprehension test, Write Placer test, and Elementary Algebra test. There are some exceptions to this policy:

- If a freshmen has submitted an SAT score of 610 or greater on the evidence based reading section the student does not have to take the Reading Comprehension or Write Placer tests. If the score is between 560 and 610, the student does not have to take the Reading Comprehension placement test.

- Any student who has received college credit for an Advanced Placement Calculus course does not have to take the Elementary Algebra test.

- Any student who wishes to enroll in College Calculus must take the Elementary Algebra test and pass with a score of 82 or better and additionally take the College Level Math placement test and pass with a score of 100 or higher.

Foreign Language Tests:

Any student who wishes to enroll in a foreign language course must take a placement test if the student:

- Completed a high school level course in French, Spanish or Latin.
- The foreign language is the student’s native language or if the student has prior experience with the language.

These tests are also given on a computer and are untimed.

**Transfer Students**

Transfer students will be notified by an Admissions Counselor or Academic Advisor regarding which placement tests they must take. Most transfer students have university credits for Writing I and therefore do not need to complete the Reading Comprehension or Writing Placement tests. However, any transfer student without Writing I credit will have to take the both of these tests.

Transfer students who enter Fitchburg State University in Fall 2017 or later are required to take the Elementary Algebra placement test unless the student meets one of the following conditions:

- The student can supply official Accuplacer placement test results from a previously taken test.
- The student has successfully transferred credits for a course equivalent to Basic Math II or a college level mathematics course at a regionally accredited institution of higher education.

The above exemption does not apply to Nursing students who are all required to achieve a score of 82 or higher on the ACCUPLACER Elementary Algebra Placement Test or pass Basic Mathematics II with a grade of 2.0 or higher prior to registering for nursing courses.

Non-degree students are exempt from taking the ACCUPLACER Elementary Algebra placement exam.

**Information about the Test**

The tests are administered on the Fitchburg State University campus, and are free of charge to Fitchburg students, if the tests are taken on campus. The tests are given by Accuplacer, which is part of the College Board. All tests are administered on a computer and students are given unlimited time to complete each test. The typical amount of time a student spends on each test is between 30 minutes and 1 hour. The reading comprehension and elementary algebra tests are multiple choice. The Writing test requires a written essay.

Students will be supplied with a pencil and scrap paper to work out any problems or to outline a paper. Students are not permitted to bring calculators, books, notebooks or any type of resources into the exam. All cell phones must be shut off for the duration of the test.

Once a student finishes the test/s, the test/s is immediately graded and the student leaves with a hard copy of the test results. It may take the Placement Office a day to upload all scores onto our campus database which is required before the Registrar’s office can make or change student schedules.

**Test Taking at another Location**

If a student lives a significant distance from Fitchburg State University and getting to campus creates a hardship, a student can opt to take the placement tests at a college/university or testing center closer to his/her home or have the test administered by a guidance counselor at their high school.
If a student chooses to take the placement tests at an official test center (at a college/university or a private test center), it is the student’s responsibility to find a nearby location which administers the correct College Board Accuplacer placement tests and the student must make all test taking arrangements with the test site on their own. The Placement Office at Fitchburg is happy to let an incoming freshman know which tests he/she needs to take. The Office can also generate test vouchers if the off-site location requires a voucher. Any costs associated with taking a test at an alternate test site are the responsibility of the student. Once the test is completed, the test site administrator must fax the results to Fitchburg State. We cannot accept unofficial test results that a student might have been given at the test site. The fax number for official test results is (978) 665-4835, attention: Ellen Hughes.

If a guidance counselor at a student’s high school is willing to proctor the test for the student, the Fitchburg State University Placement Office can provide information to the guidance counselor such that the testing can be administered at the student’s high school. In order for this type of testing to occur, the high school must be able to provide the student a location on campus in which the student can work uninterrupted and free from distractions for up to three+ hours, on a school computer, and with counselor who is responsible for monitoring and supervision throughout the test. If a high school guidance counselor is able and willing to proctor such a test, the guidance counselor should contact Ellen Hughes to make arrangements. Her number is (978) 665-3499.

If a student has already taken the correct placement test elsewhere, the Placement office will accept test results when faxed to us, directly from the testing facility.

**Are there test accommodations for students with disabilities?**

If you have a disability or a temporarily disabling condition and you would like an accommodation please contact Disability Services at (978) 665-4020 well in advance of the time you would like to take the placement tests. This office may be able to arrange testing on a day other than the test dates listed.

**How do I sign up for a test?**

Once a new student has indicated that they are attending Fitchburg State and submitted their monetary deposit with the school, the Admissions Office will send placement test information to the student as well as a Fitchburg identification number. Once a student obtains his/her ID number, they can sign up to take the test through the admissions portal online. The days and times for the remaining test dates before orientation include:

- Mon. June 4th @ 9 am
- Tue. June 5th @ 1 pm
- Wed. June 6th @ 9 am and 3 pm
- Thur. June 7th @ 1 pm
- Fri. June 8th @ 9 am
- Mon. Jun. 11th @ 9 am
- Tues. Jun 12th @ 1 pm
- Wed. Jun. 13th @ 9 am

Seating is limited and given on a first come first served basis.
Can I prepare for the test?

The College Board provides test information and practice tests for the “Classic Accuplacer Placement Tests” in Elementary Algebra, Reading Comprehension, and Writeplacer - the three placement tests we administer routinely to incoming freshmen and transfer students. For students wishing to take an additional math test for entry into Calculus, they too can find information on the website listed above for the College Level Math Test.

The two URLs are:


https://accuplacer.collegeboard.org/student/inside-the-test

Another good source for practice tests: https://uniontestprep.com/accuplacer-test/practice-test

When will I find out the results of the test?

As soon as the test is finished, the student will see the score on the computer screen and will also receive a paper copy of the results to take with them. On a rare occasion a writing score is listed as “pending” and is scored by hand by the College Board. In these instances, the results may take 24 hours to get.

What do the results mean?

The Write placer scores range from 1 – 8. A score of 4 or better indicates that the student is ready for a first year college level writing class. A score less than 4 indicates that the student needs to take a remedial writing course.

The Reading comprehension scores from 0 – 120. A score less than 70 indicates that the student may have difficulties with reading comprehension at the college level. Those who score less than 70 are encouraged to seek help from the tutor center or to get an academic coach when they arrive on campus in the fall of their freshmen year.

The Algebra scores range from 0 – 120. If a student scores 82 or better, they can take any entry level college math course required for their major. For scores less than 82, math placement is dependent on the student’s adjusted high school GPA and their declared major; the registrar’s office will place these students in the appropriate mathematics course. Students who find out at summer orientation that they have been placed in a remedial math course may opt to re-take the algebra placement test one more time during their freshmen year. Test dates for re-take tests will be published after summer orientation and will take place in the summer and throughout the fall semester.
Can I retake the test?

Once a student receives their fall course schedule, at orientation in June, the student may sign up to re-take a placement test if a passing score would change their course placement in Math or English. Incoming freshmen or transfer students who wish to re-take a placement test can do so after July 1st, 2018. A tentative schedule of retake dates is listed at the end of this announcement.

Students are permitted to re-take the WritePlacer test only one time if they scored less than 4. Students are permitted to re-take the Elementary Algebra placement test only one time if they scored less than 81. There is no need for students to re-take the Reading comprehension placement test because the results do not preclude a student from taking any college level course. No retake tests will be administered until after orientation, when all students will be given a schedule, listing the Math and English course they are eligible to take, based on high school adjusted GPA, declared college major, and placement test results. For many majors, a student will be placed in the first college math course required of their major if their adjusted high school GPA is a 2.7 or higher, even if the student does not pass the math placement test. This is why re-take tests occur after orientation, when a student officially learns of their placement into fall courses.

Historically, the testing center has found that students who do not put in 20-30 hours of preparation/studying for the algebra placement test typically do not score more than 5 points higher or lower than their first placement test. The test is very robust; it is a very good indicator of one’s ability to apply the algebraic concepts required in order to succeed in more rigorous math courses at the college level. Re-taking a placement test without putting forth significant preparation is not likely to produce a significantly different test score from a previous test score, therefore the Testing Center strongly urges students to spend a significant portion of time reviewing and practicing the concepts covered on the test before re-taking it.

Summer Re-take Placement Test Dates:

These dates will be available for reservations in early July. You will not be able to reserve a spot until then. Students who attempt to reschedule another test date before July will be denied access to the test when they arrive on campus to re-take it.

- Thursday, July 12th at 4 pm
- Wednesday, July 18th at 9 am
- Wednesday, July 18th at 1:30 pm
- Thursday, July 19th at 4 pm
- Tuesday, July 24th at 9 am
- Thursday, July 26th at 1:30 pm
- Tuesday, July 31st at 1:30 pm
- Thursday, Aug. 2nd at 9 am
- Wednesday, Aug. 8th at 9 am
- Thursday, Aug. 9th at 4 pm
- Tuesday, Aug. 14th at 9 am
- Thursday, Aug. 16th at 1:30 pm
- Wednesday, Aug. 22 at 9 am
- Wednesday, Aug 22 at 1:30 pm
Additional re-take dates will be established during the first week of classes in September, in plenty of time for students to switch classes before the add/drop period ends. These dates will be announced in August.

**More Questions?**

You may call the Placement Office with any questions you might have with regard to taking the placement test. We do not create student schedules, nor advise students on what courses to take; we merely administer the test. If you have course schedule questions you should contact your advisor, the Admissions Office or the Registrar’s Office. If you leave a message on our answering machine, please be sure to leave your name and a return number or email where you can be reached.

Ellen Hughes: Administrative Assistant (978) 665-3499  
[ehughes4@fitchburgstate.edu](mailto:ehughes4@fitchburgstate.edu)

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