

## FRAMEWORK FOR RECOMMENDATION ON COMMON CUT SCORES

### Background

The community college presidents approved common statewide cut scores in 2008-2009, based on recommendations from the academic officers as follows:

- 1 ACCUPLACER Elementary Algebra: 76
- 1 ACCUPLACER WritePlacer (or an in-house writing test scored on the same College Board writing rubric): 5 or 6, pending completion of the statewide validity study.

### Key Placement Principles

Having now reviewed the results of the statewide validity study plus numerous national studies and placement practices in other states, the academic officers support the following key principles for framing a recommendation on common placement test cut scores:

- 1 Rather than a single cut score (actually two - one for math and one for English), colleges should be given the flexibility to use a “decision zone” below the cut score to allow more flexibility in the placement process.
- 1 Students scoring at the cut score and above should be placed in college-level courses. Students scoring below the cut score but within the “decision zone” should be considered for college-level courses, based on other multiple measures. Students scoring below the “decision zone” should be placed into remediation.
- 1 At least for 2012-2013, NJ’s community colleges should be encouraged to explore different measures for students in the “decision zone” so that the different approaches can be studied, which will then better inform our statewide efforts to further revise our common placement practices starting in Fall 2013.
- 1 For math, Colleges should be further encouraged to consider different measures and combinations of measures depending on whether students are enrolling in: (a) the calculus track; (b) college statistics; or (c) math for non-STEM majors.
- 1 For English, we need to be mindful that some of our colleges use WritePlacer (the College Board’s computer-adaptive test) while others use faculty readers to assess students’ writing. While both approaches use the same 8-point College Board writing rubric, there is strong consensus in our sector that the two approaches merit somewhat different placement practices.

### Recommendations

Building on these key principles noted above, the academic officers recommend the following specific placement policies for first-time students enrolling at NJ’s community colleges in 2012-2013:

#### For Math

- 1 Cut score: 76
- 1 Decision zone: 63 to 75 – Students scoring in the decision zone could, at the discretion of each institution, be permitted to enroll in college math based on related multiple measures.

#### For English

- 1 Cut Score:
  - For colleges using faculty readers: 6  
(Note: Some colleges may want to have students scoring a 6 complete a brush-up writing course before they enroll in college-level English).
  - For colleges using WritePlacer: 7
- 1 Decision zone:
  - For colleges using faculty readers: 5
  - For colleges using WritePlacer: 5 to 6
  - Students scoring in the decision zone could, at the discretion of each institution, be permitted to enroll in college-level English based on related multiple measures.