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ABSTRACT

This report presents the results of a nationwide survey on the freshman placement practices of American colleges and universities. The report includes subgroup analyses by degree level, affiliation, size, region, and selectivity. Sources of information used for placement in English and mathematics are reported, including the most commonly found combinations of sources. Finally, changes made in placement practices over the past 5 years, and changes anticipated in the next 5 years, are reported, including results based on analyses when institutions were grouped according to the standardized test(s) they used for placement. The survey findings reveal that course placement is a complex, time-consuming process at many institutions. It is noted, however, that the extent and scope of local placement testing and the degree of change in placement practices were unexpected. Many institutions appear not to take full advantage of standardized tests in placement. Appendices provide the research objectives and questions, the survey instrument, and the results of subgroup analyses. (Author/GLR)

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Course Placement Practices of American Postsecondary Institutions

Terry McNabb

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COURSE PLACEMENT PRACTICES OF AMERICAN POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Terry McNabb

ABSTRACT

Placing incoming freshmen into appropriate first year courses has become an increasingly challenging task for colleges and universities. The results of a nationwide survey of placement practices are presented, including subgroup analyses by degree level, affiliation, size, region, and selectivity. Sources of information used for placement in English and mathematics are reported, including the most commonly found combinations of sources. Finally, changes made in placement practices over the past five years, and changes anticipated in the next five years, are reported, including results based on analyses when institutions were grouped according to the standardized test(s) they used for placement.

As expected, it was found that course placement is a complex, time-consuming process at many institutions. The extent and scope of local placement testing and the degree of change in placement practices were unexpected. Many institutions appeared not to take full advantage of standardized tests in placement.

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Course Placement Practices of American Postsecondary Institutions

Two of the most important changes in American higher education during the last two decades have been an apparent decline in the level of the academic skills of entering students, and a simultaneous attempt to make postsecondary education accessible to a larger group of high school graduates. Both these changes have challenged all but the most selective institutions to find ways to accommodate the more diverse academic needs and talents of their entering students.

A key issue related to these changes is student persistence. There are many factors that influence persistence, some of which are not under the control of the institution. One factor institutions can influence is academic success, which can be facilitated by optimizing the fit between students' academic preparation and the demands of their freshman year courses. The accurate placement of college freshmen into first year courses, thus, is important both to students' and to institutions' success.

In early 1986, ACT began a comprehensive study of the course placement functions of postsecondary institutions in the United States. The three major objectives of this study were: 1) to determine how institutions make course placement decisions, 2) to determine how institutions evaluate their placement decisions, and 3) to identify ways in which ACT's data and research services could be changed to help institutions make better placement decisions. A detailed description of the research objectives and related research questions is contained in Appendix A.

We believe that the results of the study will help us to understand the scope and nature of institutions' placement systems, as well as to examine our role in assisting institutions in placement. The results will also provide

institutions with information against which they can evaluate and compare their own placement procedures.

The first part of this report is a description of the methods used to collect and analyze the data. The second part is primarily a descriptive analysis of existing course placement practices nationwide, and addresses five major topics:

1. Subject areas in which course placements are made,
2. Sources of information used for placement in English and mathematics,
3. Patterns of test data use for placement in English and mathematics,
4. Changes in institutional course placement practices, and
5. Institutional evaluation of placement practices.

The third part of the report compares the placement systems of institutions when they are grouped according to the standardized test data they use for course placement.

Method

The study's objectives were pursued by surveying institutional officials about their institution's placement practices. The target population for the study consisted of all accredited 2- and 4-year institutions with enrollments greater than 500. It was assumed that institutions with fewer than 500 students did not face the placement-related challenges of larger schools. Institutions were randomly selected, by level, within each of four groups. These groups corresponded to participation in one of ACT's three research services: Basic Research Service, Standard Research Service, or Class Profile.* The fourth group was made up of institutions that did not

* Institution's can participate in the Class Profile Service along with the Basic or Standard Service. The third category included institutions that participated only in the Class Profile Service.

participate in ACT's research services. Two hundred institutions were selected from each of the first three groups, and 300 were selected from the last group, for a total sample size of 900. All analyses conducted for this report were weighted by user group.

A questionnaire was designed, extensively reviewed, and pretested during the first half of 1986. Questionnaires were mailed in late July, 1986 to the Academic Vice Presidents of randomly sampled colleges and universities. Three followup mailings were then sent to nonrespondents; the last was sent in November, 1986. A copy of the survey instrument is included in Appendix B.

The response rate after four mailings was 64%. The final sample consisted of 72% user institutions and 28% non-user institutions. Thirty-five percent of the responses were from 2-year institutions and 65% were from 4-year institutions.

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the sample after weighting by user group to reflect the national population of 2- and 4-year institutions. Also shown in Table 1 are analogous percentages computed from ACT's Institutional Data Questionnaire (IDQ) file, which contains information about all institutions in the national population. Comparison of the two sets of percentages indicates that the weighted sample data are representative with respect to degree level, affiliation, selectivity, and region. It was not possible to make comparisons on enrollment size, because such data were not available for about half of the institutions in the IDQ file.

In order to examine the possible relationships between placement practices and other institutional characteristics, the survey responses were analyzed separately using five subgrouping variables. These variables were: degree level (2- or 4-year), institutional affiliation (public, private religious, private nonreligious), enrollment size (under 1,000; 1-2,000;

2,001-4,000; 4,001-6,000; 6,001-10,000; over 10,000), geographical region (ACT's 6 service regions), and self-reported selectivity** (highly selective, selective, traditional, liberal and open). Institutional affiliation, enrollment and selectivity were obtained from ACT's IDQ file. Degree level and region were contained in the Higher Education Directory computer tape (1985), from which the sample was selected.

In the body of this report, general results are discussed and highlights of the subgroup analyses are summarized. For a more detailed discussion of the subgroup analyses, see Appendix C.

EXISTING COURSE PLACEMENT PRACTICES

Subject Areas in Which Course Placements Are Made

As anticipated, English and mathematics are the subject areas in which institutions most frequently make course placements, and they are the only subject areas discussed in this report. As shown in Figure 1, 88% of the sample reported placing students in freshman English, and 82% reported placing students in freshman mathematics. Placements are also frequently made in reading (65%) and freshman science (33%). The difference between mathematics and English is not as great in developmental sections (81% for mathematics, 86% for English), or for standard sections (82% for mathematics, 88% for English) as in advanced sections (63% for mathematics, 44% for English).

Placement in developmental sections of English and mathematics is reported most frequently by 2-year colleges, less selective institutions, and public institutions. Placement in advanced sections of both subjects is made

** The selectivity categories are defined as follows: highly selective: majority of accepted freshmen in top 10% of high school graduating class; selective: majority in top 25%; traditional: majority in top 50%; liberal: many accepted freshmen from lower half of high school graduating class; open: all high school graduates accepted.

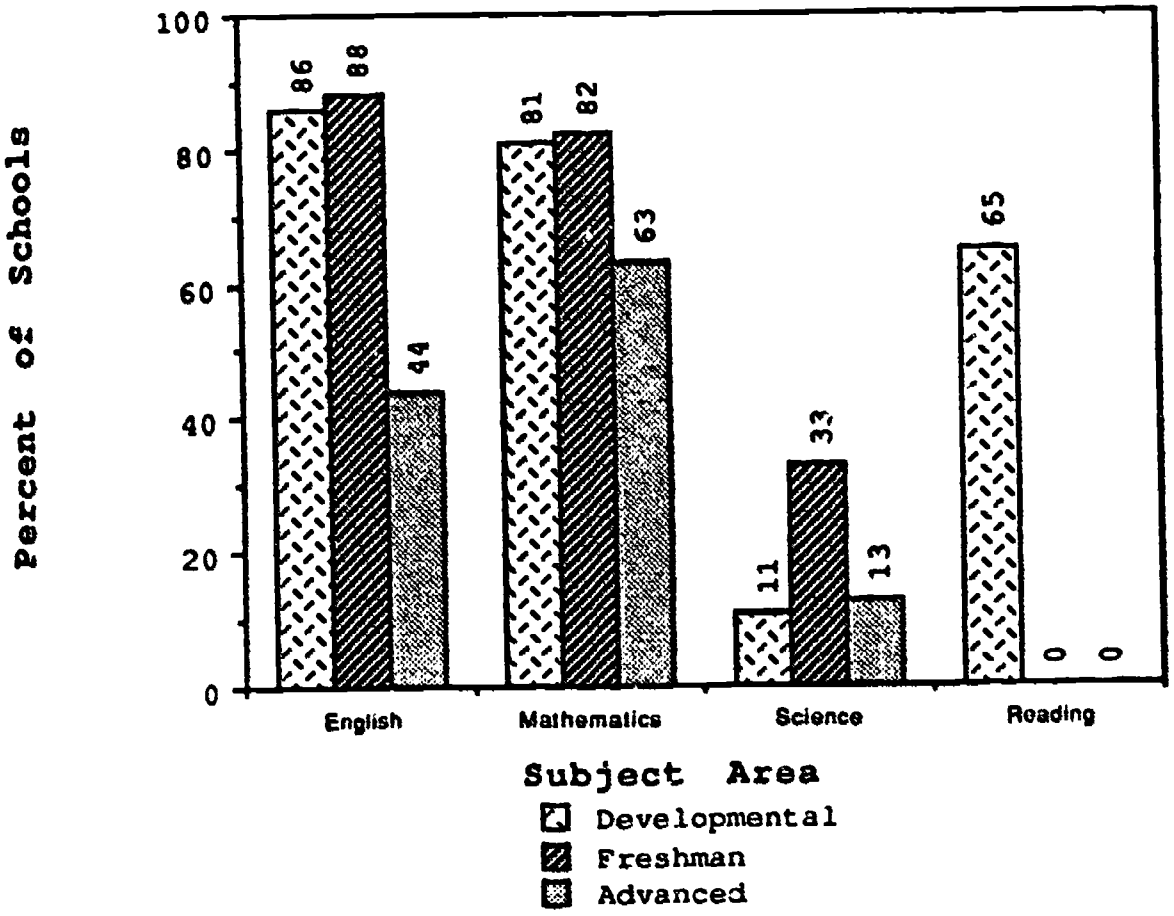
Table 1

Characteristics of U.S. Postsecondary Institutions According to Survey and IDQ File

Institutional characteristic	Percentages: Survey participants (weighted)	Percentages: IDQ file
Degree Level		
2 year	41	47
4 year	59	53
Enrollment		
Not available	0	50
1-999	28	40
1000-2000	27	6
2001-4000	17	3
4001-6000	11	1
6001-10,000	9	0
Over 10,000	8	0
Affiliation		
Public	66	52
Private nonreligious	12	21
Private religious	22	27
Selectivity		
Highly selective	5	3
Selective	12	12
Traditional	25	25
Liberal	13	17
Open	45	42
Region		
East	23	23
Midwest	28	26
Mountains/Plains	8	7
Southeast	20	22
Southwest	9	10
West	12	11

Note: The "IDQ File" is ACT's Institutional Data Questionnaire File.

Figure 1
Placement by Subject Area



most frequently by 4-year colleges, and larger schools. The most selective institutions make more advanced placements in mathematics than do less selective institutions, and private institutions make more advanced placements in English than do public institutions. These findings are discussed in greater detail in Appendix C.

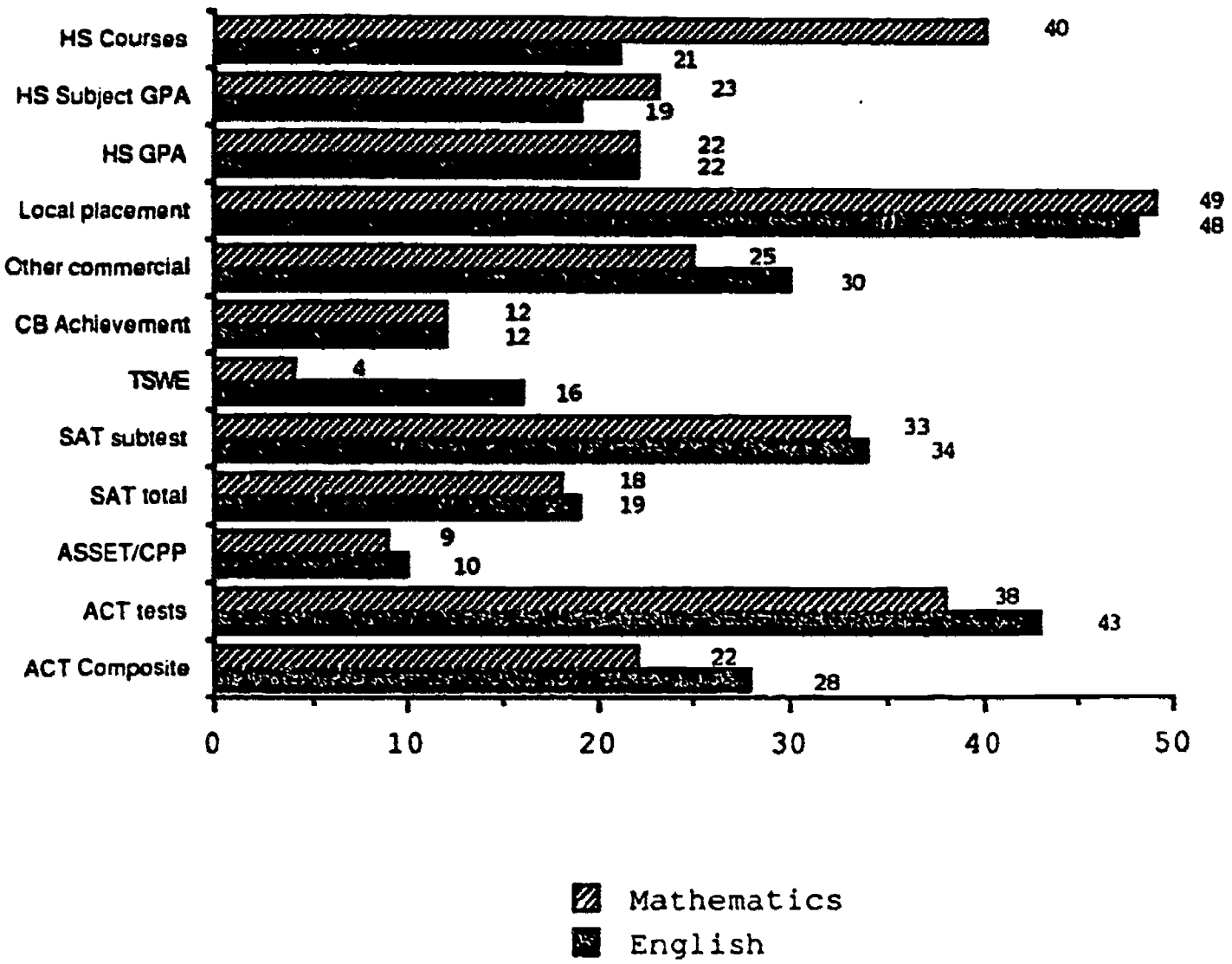
Sources of Information Used For Placement in English and Mathematics

Survey respondents were asked to complete a checklist indicating the sources of information they used when making placement decisions. The checklist included several kinds of admissions test data, other commercial test data (e.g., CPP, MAPS, Nelson-Denny), local placement test data, and several types of high school information. Respondents were asked tc check all sources they used of the 15 listed. As shown in Figure 2 below, the most frequently reported sources for English placement were local placement test scores (48%), ACT Assessment test scores (43%), SAT subtest scores (34%), other commercial test scores (30%), and ACT Assessment Composite scores (28%). For mathematics, the most frequently reported sources were local placement tests (49%), high school courses completed (40%), ACT test scores (38%), and SAT subtest scores (33%).

To examine the relationship between the information used for placement in English and other institutional characteristics, the 15 data sources used were analyzed with the institutions grouped by degree level, selectivity, enrollment, region and affiliation. For a more detailed discussion of subgroup differences, see Appendix C.

ACT test scores were most frequently reported to be used for English placement by 4-year colleges, those with traditional or liberal admissions, large institutions, public institutions and private religious institutions, and institutions from other than the Eastern and Western regions. SAT subtest

Figure 2
Percent of Schools Using Specific Sources for English and Mathematics Placement



scores were used most frequently by 4-year, selective, large, or private institutions, and those from the Eastern region. ASSET and other commercial tests were most often used by 2-year institutions and institutions with open admissions. Local placement tests were most used by 4-year colleges, those with traditional admissions requirements, large institutions, private nonreligious institutions, and Eastern or Western institutions. High school data were most often reported to be used by smaller institutions, private religious institutions, and institutions from the Mountain/Plains region. College Board achievement tests were used most frequently by highly selective schools.

The data usage patterns for mathematics placement were similar to those for English placement: schools with selective or traditional admissions policies used local placement tests more frequently than did institutions in the other three categories; schools from the East, Southeast and Southwest reported using SAT subtest scores more frequently than did institutions in other regions.

Patterns of Test Data Usage For Placement in English and Mathematics

By analyzing responses to the checklist indicating the sources of data institutions used for making placement decisions, it was possible to determine the most frequently reported patterns of test data usage. These patterns were examined only for test data, and do not include high school information.

As reported in Table 2, local placement tests alone were used for placement by 11% of the sample for English, and 17% for mathematics. Seven percent of the institutions used no test data at all for English, and 10% used none for mathematics. Three percent of the sample reported using only ACT subject area test scores for placement in English and mathematics, compared with less than 1% using only SAT Verbal and Mathematics subtest scores. The

Table 2

Most Commonly Reported Patterns of Test Data Usage (Actual Frequency > 10) for Placement in English and Mathematics

Data Source	Subject: English Rank	English Percent	Mathematics Rank	Mathematics Percent
Local placement tests only	(1)	11	(1)	17
No test data used	(2)	7	(2)	10
Commercial and local tests	(3)	6	(5)	3
Commercial tests only	(4)	5	(3)	8
ASSET/CPP only	(5)	4	(8)	3
ACT subject area tests only	(6)	3	(7)	3
ACT subject area tests and SAT subtests only	(7)	3	(11)	2
ACT Composite and subject area tests only	(8)	2	(12)	2
ACT Composite and subject area tests, SAT Total and subtests	(9)	2	(10)	3
ACT subject area tests, SAT subtests and local test	(10)	2	(4)	4
ACT Composite subject area tests, and local test	(11)	2	(13)	2
ACT subject area tests and local tests	(12)	2	(6)	3
ACT Composite subject area tests, SAT Total and subtests, and local tests	--	--	(9)	3

majority of institutions in the sample used test data from multiple sources (e.g., ACT, SAT, other commercial tests, local test). The 13 usage patterns reported in Table 2 account for nearly half (48.5%) of the patterns of English placement reported by the institutions in the study. and 62% of those reported for mathematics. The remainder of the institutions used high school data or some other combination of the 15 data sources.

Comparison of Information Used in English and Mathematics

Table 3 reports differences in the use of data sources for English and mathematics placement. ACT scores appeared to be used somewhat more frequently for English placement than for mathematics placement (for the ACT Composite score, 28% vs 22%; for ACT test scores in particular subject areas, 43% vs 38%). Virtually no difference was observed for SAT scores: for the SAT Total, 19% vs 18%; for SAT Verbal and Mathematics subtests, 34% vs 33%. As would be expected, TSWE was used more for English (16%) than for mathematics (4%) placement. Other commercially available tests were also used more for English than for mathematics: 30% used other commercial tests (e.g., Nelson-Denny, MAPS) for English vs 25% for mathematics. High school overall GPA and high school rank were used at virtually the same frequency, but high school courses completed were used considerably more frequently for mathematics than for English placement.

Table 4 shows the percentage of institutions using local placement tests in English and mathematics, by the five subgrouping variables. Overall, local tests were used with virtually identical frequency for English and mathematics placement (48% vs. 49%), and they were used more often by 4-year colleges, large institutions, private nonreligious institutions, those with traditional admissions policies and those with selective admissions (for mathematics only). For English placement, Eastern schools reported the highest use of

Table 3

Percentages of Institutions Using Various Data Sources for Placement in English and Mathematics

	Source	Subject area	
		English	Mathematics
1.	ACT Assessment Composite score	28	22
2.	ACT Assessment subject area test scores	43	38
3.	ACT Assessment probability values (provided by ACT's prediction research service)	4	3
4.	ACT ASSET/CPP scores	10	9
5.	SAT Total score	19	18
6.	SAT subtest scores	34	33
7.	SAT TSWE scores	16	4
8.	College Board Achievement Test scores	12	12
9.	Other commercially available tests (e.g., MAPS, Nelson Denny, etc.)	30	25
10.	Local/institutional placement test scores	48	49
11.	High school overall GPA	22	22
12.	High school subject area GPA	19	23
13.	High school rank	14	13
14.	High school courses completed	21	40
15.	Other (specify)	14	14

Table 4

Percentage of Institutions Using Local Placement Tests in English and Mathematics, by 5 Subgrouping Variables

Subgrouping variable	Subject area	
	English	Mathematics
College Type		
2 year	44	40
4 year	50	54
Enrollment		
Under 1000	51	47
1000-2000	42	45
2001-4000	45	46
4001-6000	49	42
6001-10,000	46	59
Over 10,000	64	76
Affiliation		
Public	46	45
Private nonreligious	53	58
Prviate religious	49	55
Selectivity		
Highly selective	35	50
Selective	50	61
Traditional	57	59
Liberal	45	34
Open	45	44
Region		
East	56	50
Midwest	42	52
Mountain/Plains	52	48
Southeast	49	43
Southwest	44	42
West	42	60
Total	48	49

local tests (56%), and for mathematics placement, Western schools reported the heaviest use (60%).

Changes in Placement Practices Over Past Five Years

Survey respondents were asked to indicate which of ten specific changes they had made in their course placement procedures, for both English and mathematics, over the past five years. An eleventh response option was "no changes have been made." These responses were analyzed by each of the five subgrouping variables. General results for both English and mathematics are summarized in Table 5. A more detailed discussion of the subgroup analyses is contained in Appendix C.

Only one quarter of the colleges reported having made no changes in their placement practices over the past five years; three quarters have made one or more changes. The most frequently reported change in both English and mathematics placement practices was "modified cutoff scores" (39% for English and 42% for mathematics). Over 20% reported either adding or revising a local test for both English and mathematics. Similarly, over 20% reported adding a standardized test score, compared with seven percent who reported dropping a standardized test score. Ten percent reported changing the standardized test score used for both English and mathematics.

While the overall percentages of institutions reporting specific changes in their placement practices were very similar for English and mathematics, some subgroup differences were apparent. Schools in the Western region reported making more changes in mathematics than in English while in the Southwest region, more changes were reported for English than for mathematics: 19% dropped a local test for English compared with 8% for mathematics; 31% added a local test for English compared with 22% for mathematics. In the Mountain/Plains region, 13% added a standardized test for

Table 5

Percentage of Institutions Making 12 Types of Changes in English and Mathematics Placement Practices Over Past 5 Years

Change		English	Mathematics
1.	No changes made	24	23
2.	Added local test	20	22
3.	Dropped local test	10	10
4.	Revised local test	22	23
5.	Modified cutoff scores	39	42
6.	Modified prediction equation	7	8
7.	Changed reporting procedures	20	21
8.	Added standardized test score	22	20
9.	Dropped standardized test score	7	6
10.	Changed standardized test score use	10	10
11.	Changed evaluation procedures	8	9
12.	Other	12	11

English and 26% for mathematics. In the Eastern region, 34% revised a local English placement test, and 24% revised a local mathematics placement test.

Larger institutions reported that they modified cutoff scores in mathematics placement tests (42-58%) more often than in English placement tests (30-37%). Also, more schools with traditional admissions policies reported adding a local placement test in mathematics (28%) than in English (19%).

Anticipated Changes in Placement in Next Five Years

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the areas related to course placement in which they expect to make changes in the next five years. Three possibilities (tests used, cutoff scores or prediction equations used, reporting procedures) were listed, as well as an "other" category. The majority of "other" responses indicated that placement practices were under review. A general summary of the results is presented here (see Table 6); a discussion of the subgroup analyses is contained in Appendix C, and related tables are Tables 16A-20A.

The overall patterns of responses regarding institutions' anticipated changes were very similar for English and mathematics. Nearly one-half of the schools expected to make changes in either English or mathematics. Nearly a quarter expected to change either the tests or the cutoff scores they used. More two-year colleges, public institutions, institutions from the East and West regions, and less selective institutions expected to make changes in both English and mathematics placement than did institutions from other subgroups.

Institutional Evaluation of Placement Practices

Respondents were asked to answer several questions that addressed the ways in which they evaluated their current placement practices. These responses are summarized in Table 7. Approximately 44% indicated that they

Table 6

Percentage of Institutions Anticipating Changes in English and Mathematics Placement Practices in the Next 5 Years

Change	English	Mathematics
No changes	47	47
Tests used	23	24
Cutoff scores or prediction equations	22	23
Reporting procedures	11	11
Other	15	18

Table 7

Institutional Evaluation of Placement Practices

Evaluation practice	Percent
Conduct studies to determine accuracy and effectiveness of placement system: "Yes" response	44
Frequency of evaluation	
Yearly	82
Every 2 years	10
Every 3 years	5
Every 4 years	0
Every 5 years	3
Who conducts these studies?	
Institutional staff	83
Predictive research service of ACT	4
Predictive research service of College Board	0
More than one of above	8
How does your institution judge a "successful" placement?	
Student completing course	2
Student attaining grade of B or better	1
Student attaining grade of C or better	29
Student passing course	13
Student enrolling for next term	1
Other	5
More than one of above	50

conducted studies to assess the accuracy and effectiveness of their placement systems. The large majority of these institutions (over 80%) conducted such studies annually. At 83% of the institutions that conducted validity studies, the studies were conducted by institutional staff.

Finally, most institutions defined a "successful" placement using more than one criterion. The most frequently selected single criterion was that the student attain a grade of "C" or better (29%).

Placement Procedures of 2- and 4-Year Schools

The survey instrument contained several questions related to the procedural aspects of course placement. Responses to these questions were considered to be of greatest interest when analyzed by degree level (2- and 4-year). These analyses are summarized in Table 8.

Nearly one-half (49%) of the colleges in the sample relied on more than one functional office to analyze the available placement data and make placement decisions. Fifty-nine percent of 2-year schools and 42% of 4-year schools indicated that more than one of the staff groups (i.e., admissions staff, counseling/advising staff, department chairs, faculty advisers, testing centers) performed this function. The single response that was most frequently given was "department chairs", and this was more frequently indicated by 4-year colleges (19%) than by 2-year colleges (10%).

Equal proportions of 2- and 4-year colleges (47%) indicated that placement decisions were reported to students by more than one staff group. The counseling/advising staff appeared to perform this function in more 2-year schools (32%) than 4-year schools (14%), and faculty advisers communicated placement decisions in more 4-year schools (16%) than in 2-year schools (9%).

A larger proportion of 2-year than 4-year colleges reported that their placement decisions were advisory, rather than mandatory (29% vs 19%), and a

Table 8

Percentage of Institutions Giving Particular Responses to Survey Questions Related to Placement Procedures, by Degree Level

Question	Degree level		Total
	2 Year	4 Year	
Who analyses placement data to make placement decisions?			
Admissions staff	2	3	3
Counseling/advising staff	10	6	8
Department chairs	10	19	15
Faculty advisers	6	8	7
Testing/evaluation centers	6	4	5
Combination of 2 or more of above	59	42	49
Other	7	19	14
Who communicates placement decisions to students?			
Admissions staff	4	5	5
Counseling/advising staff	32	14	21
Department chairs	1	7	5
Faculty advisers	9	16	13
Testing/evaluation centers	6	2	4
Combination of 2 or more of above	47	47	47
Other	1	9	6
Is placement advisory or mandatory?			
Advisory	29	19	23
Mandatory	51	54	53
Advisory for some students, mandatory for some	20	27	24
Is compliance monitored?			
Yes	80	82	81
No	20	18	19
Can students change courses once term has begun?			
Yes	97	90	93
No	3	10	7

larger proportion of 4-year colleges (27%) than 2-year colleges (20%) reported that placement decisions were mandatory for some students and advisory for others. Almost ninety-three percent of all institutions (97% of 2-year and 90% of 4-year) reported that students were permitted to change courses once the semester begins.

USER GROUP ANALYSES

From respondents' answers to questions on the survey related to the sources of information they used to make placement decisions, it was possible to identify four discrete groups of colleges: 1) those that used only ACT data 2) those that used only SAT data 3) those that used both ACT and SAT data and 4) those that used neither ACT nor SAT data.* Table 9 reports the crosstabulation of this "user group" designation and each of the five subgrouping variables, and describes the schools in each of these user groups.

The largest group, overall, is made up of institutions that used neither the ACT Assessment nor the SAT for placement (40%). While the majority of 2-year colleges tended to use neither test (55%), approximately equal percentages of 4-year schools either used both tests (32%) or used neither test (30%). Almost one-quarter of 4-year colleges used only the ACT Assessment (22%), and fewer than one-sixth used only the SAT (16%).

Over one-quarter of highly selective schools used only SAT scores for placement, compared to 2% that use only ACT scores. Over 40% of the highly selective schools, however, used neither test. Almost half of the colleges with open admissions used neither test, and another quarter used only the ACT tests. Only 3% of open admissions schools used only the SAT.

*Note that this classification refers only to colleges' use of nationally standardized test data. Most schools also used local placement test data and/or high school data when making placement decisions.

Table 9

Percentages of Colleges in 4 Test Usage Categories, by 5 Subgrouping Variables

Subgrouping variable	Test used			
	ACT only	SAT only	Both	Neither
College Type				
2 year	20	5	21	55
4 year	22	16	32	30
Enrollment				
Under 1000	26	10	25	39
1000-2000	18	11	29	42
2001-4000	19	14	21	47
4001-6000	24	17	31	28
6001-10,000	22	16	31	32
Over 10,000	16	4	41	39
Affiliation				
Public	24	9	23	44
Private nonreligious	5	29	24	42
Private religious	22	10	41	27
Selectivity				
Highly selective	2	26	30	41
Selective	10	21	31	39
Traditional	21	13	36	30
Liberal	25	23	25	26
Open	25	3	22	49
Region				
East	2	28	20	50
Midwest	28	1	32	40
Mountain/Plains	40	0	21	40
Southeast	25	21	26	28
Southwest	37	4	42	17
West	12	3	28	57
Total	21	12	28	40

Almost 41% of the largest schools (i.e., enrollment over 10,000 students) used both the ACT and SAT for placement. Interestingly, almost as many (39%) use neither test. Sixteen percent use only the ACT, compared with 4% that use only the SAT.

Half of the schools in the East and 57% of schools in the West used neither the ACT nor the SAT for placement. Only 17% of Southwestern schools used neither test. In fact, almost 80% of Southwestern schools used the ACT either alone (37%) or with the SAT (42%). This compares with 22% of Eastern schools (2% used only ACT, and 20% used both ACT and SAT). Twenty-eight percent of Eastern schools and 21% of Southeastern schools used only SAT scores, compared with less than 4% for Southwestern and Western schools, and fewer than 1% of Midwestern and Mountain/Plains schools. By contrast, 40% of Mountain/Plains schools, 37% of Southwestern schools, 28% of Midwestern schools, and 25% of Southeastern schools used only ACT scores.

Over one-fifth of both public and private religious schools used only ACT scores, compared with less than 5% of private nonreligious schools. By contrast, 29% of private nonreligious schools used only SAT scores, compared with less than 10% of the other two groups. The private religious college group reported the highest proportion using both tests (41%), while similar percentages of public and private nonreligious schools used neither (44% and 42%, respectively).

Changes Made in Past Five Years

A larger percentage of schools that used only the ACT Assessment for placement than schools in the other three user groups reported that they made no changes in their placement procedures (see Table 10): 29% of ACT-only colleges, compared with 19% of SAT-only colleges reported no changes. Fifteen percent of ACT-only schools dropped a local placement test, compared with 5% of SAT-only schools; 22% of ACT-only schools added a local placement test,

Table 10

Percentage of Institutions Making Various Changes in Their Placement Procedures, by User Group

Changes made in past 5 years	Test used				
	ACT only	SAT only	Both	Neither	Total
No changes made	29	19	24	22	24
Added local test	22	15	23	17	20
Dropped local test	15	5	9	9	10
Revised local test	10	27	26	24	22
Modified cutoff scores	34	49	41	38	39
Modified prediction equation	9	11	6	6	7
Changed reporting procedures	19	19	16	23	20
Added standardized test	22	20	26	21	23
Dropped standardized test	4	1	8	9	7
Changed how standardized test scores are used	11	10	13	7	10
Changed placement program evaluation procedures	7	8	9	8	8
Total	21	12	28	40	100

compared with 15% of SAT-only schools. Approximately one-quarter of schools in the "SAT only," "both," and "neither" groups revised a local test in the past five years, compared with 10% of ACT-only schools. Almost half of SAT-only schools (49%) modified their cutoff scores, compared with 34% of ACT-only schools.

Anticipated Changes in Next Five Years

Most ACT-only institutions (56%), and most SAT-only institutions (51%) expected to make no changes in their placement systems in the next five years (see Table 11). Over one-third (36%) of SAT-only colleges expected to change the tests they use for placement, compared with 18% of ACT-only colleges. Over one-fifth of all colleges expected to change their cutoff scores or prediction equations, and the percentages were comparable for all user groups.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study confirm what administrators know only too well: Course placement is a complex process. Most of the institutions that participated in this study used multiple sources of information to make placement decisions and the resources of multiple departments to evaluate and execute these decisions. While the general level of complexity of the placement function was an expected finding, two other major findings were not. First, the extent and scope of local placement testing was surprisingly great. Second, the degree of change in placement practices was unexpectedly high.

Institutions and their students spend large sums of money on standardized tests, yet they continue to rely heavily on local placement tests as well. It appears that many institutions are not taking full advantage of the placement potential offered by standardized admissions tests. Several interpretations

Table 11

Percentage of Institutions Anticipating Various Changes in Their Placement Procedures, by User Group

Anticipated change	Test used			
	ACT only	SAT only	Both	Neither
No changes	56	51	44	43
Tests used	18	36	21	23
Cutoff scores or prediction equations	19	20	25	21
Reporting procedures	9	6	11	13

are possible: that the institutions are not participating in the prediction research services offered by the testing companies; that they are not using the data offered by these services; that the standardized tests do not adequately predict performance in specific courses; that for other educational or political reasons, college faculty and administrators prefer local placement tests over standardized tests. For whatever reasons, nearly half of the institutions in this study continue to invest time and money in developing, revising, and administering local placement tests while also using standardized test data.

The first three possibilities suggested above have clear implications for ACT's Research Services. The fourth suggests that the institutions carefully examine their own placement policies to determine why additional testing is conducted and whether it is necessary.

Many economical alternatives exist to administering local tests to all incoming freshmen. One such possibility would be to use standardized test scores to assign the majority of students to sections. For example, the lowest, highest, and middle scores would indicate placement in remedial, advanced, and general sections. Local placement tests would then be given only to two relatively small groups of students whose test scores did not clearly indicate their best placement (i.e., those whose scores are between remedial and general or between general and advanced). ACT's Research Services could help institutions to identify these "critical regions" on the basis of their students' past performance.

There might also be students whose standardized test scores do not appear to reflect their true capabilities, and institutions might wish to test these students further. Many such decision rules would probably be generated at

each institution, but the resulting number of students tested would be far lower than at present.

A second surprising finding of this study was the high incidence of change in placement practices. A great majority of institutions, especially two-year colleges, made changes in their placement systems. As would be expected, the most selective institutions, whose freshman classes are likely to be quite homogeneous in ability, made the fewest changes. For most schools, however, it is likely that increasingly diverse student populations have necessitated more sophisticated and precise placement programs, which must change with the changing composition of each year's freshman class.

The high incidence of change by institutions over the past five years could also reflect a high level of dissatisfaction with their current options and practices. A longitudinal study to track institutional changes over several years might reveal whether these adjustments reflect a planned institutional strategy or a more haphazard, try-anything approach. In any case, changes in placement practices are expected to continue during the next five years, for example, nearly two-thirds of public institutions expect to make changes, mostly in cut scores.

It seems clear from the results of this study that ACT could play a larger role in the placement process of most institutions. With the advent of the Enhanced ACT Assessment, new possibilities abound. The new Assessment yields 12 scores, rather than 5, which allows for greater prediction precision. The challenge remains, however, for ACT's Research Services to find a way to communicate its findings in a way that is more understandable and useful to the average institutional researcher or admissions counselor.

REFERENCE

The Higher Education Directory [Machine-readable data file] (1985). Falls Church, Virginia: Higher Education Publications, Inc.

APPENDIX A

Research Objectives and Research Questions

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

I. To identify ways in which institutions make course placement decisions.

A. What information/data does the institution use to place students in courses? (including exemption and awarding credit)

1. Are any ACT data used? If not, what is used? If so, are ACT data used alone? If used with other information, what is the other information? If ACT information is received by the institution but not used, why not?

2. What technical procedures does the institution use to make placement decisions? (Are any other factors considered? Are cut scores, regression formulas, expectancy tables or look up tables used?) Are these procedures the same for all subject areas/curricular areas? Is the same information used for all students? (e.g., does the institution use different regression equations on the basis of sex, race, age).

B. In which subject and/or curricular areas do institutions place students in courses? What information is used to refer students to remedial (non-credit) courses?

C. How does the institution make placement decisions for special populations? (e.g., older students, underprepared students, high ability students, handicapped). Are placement procedures the same for all students?

D. Who is reponsible for making placement decisions or giving placement advice? Who first receives data necessary to make placement decisions? (ACT, SAT scores, student high school transcripts)

E. Is course placement made by assignment or advice? How and when is placement information communicated to students? Is there any follow-up of student compliance in the latter case?

F. Do any systematic differences in placement practices exist regarding the size of the institution, region, of the country, type of course, etc?

G. What is the institution's policy regarding adjustments to initial placement decisions? (e.g., how long is the drop/add period? Who can initiate changes?)

II. To identify ways in which institutions evaluate their placement decisions.

A. Do institutions conduct validation studies? If so, how? How frequently?

B. Are institutions satisfied with their evaluation procedures? If not, what is needed?

C. Have institutional practices regarding placement changed over the past 5 years? How? What changes are anticipated over the next 5-10 years? How long has the current placement system been in place?

III. To identify ways in which ACT data and/or research services could be changed to help institutions make placement decisions.

A. Are there changes in the ACT Assessment itself that would facilitate placement decisions (e.g., to provide greater discrimination at the extremes)?

B. Are there changes in ACT research procedures that would give institutions better information to use in making placement decisions (e.g., in predictor variables, criterion variables, data analysis procedures)?

C. Could existing ACT data be presented more effectively?

D. Could ACT provide additional service to institutions in validation of their existing placement systems?

E. Could ACT provide assistance to institutions in assessing the difficulty of their existing courses?

IV. To conduct research on possible improvements in the analytical methods used for ACT supported placement activities.

A. Are there systematic differences in the predictive validity of ACT data by course type or level?

B. Do certain placement systems work better (i.e., predict better) for certain institutions?

C. Is there statistical information other than correlational that would be of use to institutions in evaluating their placement decisions?

D. Could institutions benefit from the use of a more flexible prediction formula? Could ACT provide this service?

APPENDIX B

Survey Instrument

College Course Placement Survey

1985-86

The American College Testing Program
Research Division
P. O. Box 168
Iowa City, Iowa 52243
(319) 337-1489

Instructions

The attached questionnaire is designed to collect information about course placement. For the purposes of this study, "course placement" refers to the assignment of incoming freshman students varying in ability and experiences to courses varying in difficulty and content. At some institutions, placement includes course exemptions and/or the awarding of credit on the basis of predetermined criteria. If this is true at your institution, be sure to include this information in your responses.

The questionnaire consists of three sections: a **Course Placement Checklist, Part I and Part II.** When completing the Checklist, indicate the subject area for which your institution places students into courses by level of difficulty. For all subject areas, the following definitions are assumed:

"Freshman": the course into which the majority of students are placed

"Developmental": a course of lower difficulty (i.e., remedial) than the freshman course

"Advanced": a course of greater difficulty (i.e., honors), than the freshman course

Part I of the questionnaire seeks four types of information: we are interested in knowing about the information that your institution collects to make placement decisions and how this information is used, how your institution's placement procedures are implemented, how your institution evaluates it's placement procedures, and how satisfied your staff is with the current procedures.

A separate copy of Part I is to be completed **for each subject area** in which your institution does placement (e.g., math, English). We have enclosed two copies of Part I. If your institution places students into different levels of courses in more than two subjects, we ask that you photocopy and complete additional copies of Part I.

Part II of the questionnaire elicits information about your staff's level of satisfaction with the placement programs and services provided by the American College Testing Program. It also requests information about the extent to which various technologies are now available and used in your institution.

ACT Questionnaire on Course Placement
Course Placement Checklist

For each subject area, please check the course level(s) for which you make freshman course placements.

English or Rhetoric

- ☐ Developmental or Remedial English (or equivalent)
- ☐ Freshman English (or equivalent)
- ☐ Advanced English (or equivalent)
- ☐ Other (specify)_____

Math

- ☐ Developmental or Remedial math (or equivalent)
- ☐ Freshman math (e.g., Algebra or equivalent)
- ☐ Advanced (e.g., Trig, Analytic Geom, Calculus, Pre-calc or equivalent)
- ☐ Other (specify)_____

Science

- ☐ Developmental or Remedial science
- ☐ Freshman science (e.g., Chemistry, Biology, Physics)
- ☐ Advanced science
- ☐ Other (specify)_____

Reading

- ☐ Developmental or Remedial reading
- ☐ Other (specify)_____

Other (specify) _____

PART 1

COMPLETE A COPY OF THIS PART FOR EACH SUBJECT AREA.

_____
Subject Area

_____
Name of Respondent

_____
Title or Position

_____
Phone

Section I: Policy

The questions below seek to identify the information your institution uses to place incoming students in courses. In the first column, check the types of information that your institution has available for consideration in placement decisions in this subject area. In the second column, check which of these types of information is actually used to make placement decisions.

	Information is Available for Use in Placement Decisions	Information is Used in Making Placement Decisions
1. ACT Assessment composite score	☐	☐
2. ACT Assessment subtest scores	☐	☐
3. ACT Assessment probability values (provided by ACT's prediction research service)	☐	☐
4. ACT ASSET/CPP scores	☐	☐
5. SAT total score	☐	☐
6. SAT subtest scores	☐	☐
7. SAT TSWE score	☐	☐
8. College Board achievement test scores	☐	☐
9. Other commercially available test scores (e.g., MAPS, Nelson Denny, etc.) (specify)_____	☐	☐
10. Local/institutional placement test scores	☐	☐
11. High school overall GPA	☐	☐
12. High school subject area GPA	☐	☐
13. High school rank	☐	☐
14. High school courses completed	☐	☐
15. Other (specify) _____	☐	☐

1. In order to better understand how information is used for placement, we need a written description of your placement procedures in this subject area. If one exists, please attach it and return it with this form. If one does not exist, please provide a brief narrative description below.

2. Do the procedures described above differ for subgroups of students according to age, sex, race or disability? If so, please describe these differences.

3. Please describe any current or anticipated statewide policies or requirements that would affect your placement practices in this subject area.

Section II: Institutional Placement Tests

The following questions involve your institution's use of locally made placement tests in this subject area. If you do not use such tests, please skip to Section III.

1. When do most students take the placement test(s) in this subject area? Check all that apply.

   - ☐ prior to orientation
   - ☐ at orientation or registration (before classes begin)
   - ☐ during the first week of classes
   - ☐ other (specify) _____

2. What is the nature of the test(s) you give in this subject area?

   - ☐ essay tests
   - ☐ objective tests
   - ☐ both essay and objective tests

3. Approximately how long does it take for the typical student to complete the test(s)? _____

4. Who administers the test(s)? Check all that apply.

   - ☐ departmental faculty
   - ☐ orientation/admissions staff
   - ☐ advising or counseling staff
   - ☐ testing center staff
   - ☐ other (specify) _____

5. Who scores the test(s)?

   - ☐ departmental faculty
   - ☐ departmental support staff
   - ☐ on campus testing/evaluation center
   - ☐ commercial scoring service
   - ☐ temporary, trained staff
   - ☐ other (specify) _____

6. Estimate the staff time involved in performing each of the following tasks related to your local placement tests (number of hours per exam per academic year).

_____ development (e.g., creation of test items)
_____ preparation (e.g., typing, duplicating, assembling test)
_____ administration
_____ scoring
_____ interpretation of student scores

7. Are students charged a fee to take this placement test?

☐ no
☐ yes (If yes, how much?_____)

8. Can students be exempted from taking the placement test based on their scores on a standardized (i.e. ACT, SAT, CLEP, PEP, APP) examination?

☐ no
☐ yes (explain) _____
_____
_____

9. Can students be exempted from taking the placement test based on their high school grades, courses, or class rank?

☐ no
☐ yes (explain)_____
_____

10. Do you feel that you are obtaining information through the use of your local placement test(s) that is not available through other sources (e.g., high school grades, standardized test scores, etc.)?

☐ no
☐ yes (explain)_____

11. Are your local placement tests used for any purposes other than to place your incoming freshmen into courses?

☐ no
☐ yes (explain)_____

Section III: Procedures

The questions in this section are related to how your institution's placement procedures are carried out.

1. Who has major responsibility for analyzing placement criteria and arriving at placement decisions in this subject area? Check all that apply.

   - ☐ admissions staff
   - ☐ counseling/advising staff
   - ☐ department chairs
   - ☐ faculty advisors
   - ☐ testing/evaluation center
   - ☐ other (specify) _____

2. Who has major responsibility for communicating placement information to students in this subject area? Check all that apply.

   - ☐ admissions staff
   - ☐ counseling/advising staff
   - ☐ department chairs
   - ☐ faculty advisors
   - ☐ testing/evaluation center
   - ☐ other (specify) _____

3. Is placement in this subject area advisory or mandatory?

   - ☐ advisory for all students
   - ☐ mandatory for all students
   - ☐ advisory for some students, mandatory for some students (explain)_____
     _____

4. Is any attempt made to determine student compliance with placement advice or assignment?

   - ☐ yes
   - ☐ no

   If yes, approximately what percentage of students comply?_____

5. Once the school term has begun, are students permitted to change their course selections or assignments?

☐ no
☐ yes

A. If yes, for how long a time period can changes be made? _____

B. Who initiates the majority of course placement changes?

☐ students
☐ faculty

SECTION IV: Assessment of Placement Practices

The questions below are related to your institution's assessment of its placement procedures in this subject area. Use the checklist below to identify any changes in placement procedures for this subject area made by your institution in the past five (5) years. Check all that apply.

1.
☐ no changes have been made
☐ added a local placement test
☐ dropped a local placement test
☐ revised a local placement test
☐ modified cutoff scores for placement into courses
☐ modified prediction equation (e.g., added or dropped a predictor; changed prediction weights)
☐ changed the way in which placement recommendations are reported to students
☐ added a standardized test score
☐ dropped a standardized test score
☐ changed the way in which standardized test scores are used
(explain) _____

☐ changed the way in which the accuracy and effectiveness of your placement decisions are assessed
(explain) _____

☐ other (explain) _____

2. Do you conduct studies to determine the accuracy and effectiveness of your placement system? (e.g., compare students' predicted and attained course grades?)

☐ No (skip to #3 below)
☐ Yes

A. If yes, how often?_____

B. Who conducts these studies? (check all that apply)

☐ institution staff (e.g., faculty, professional staff)
☐ predictive research service of ACT
☐ predictive research service of College Board
☐ other

C. On what basis does your institution judge a "successful" placement? Check all that apply.

☐ student completing course
☐ student attaining a grade of B or better
☐ student attaining a grade of C or better
☐ student attaining a passing grade
☐ student enrolling for next term
☐ other (specify) _____

3. Do you anticipate making changes in any of the following placement procedures in this subject area in the next five (5) years? Check all that apply.

☐ no changes anticipated
☐ tests used (explain)_____
☐ cutoff scores or prediction equations used (explain)_____
☐ reporting procedures used (explain)_____
☐ other (specify) _____

PART 2

COMPLETE THIS PART ONLY ONCE

Name of Respondent

Title or Position

Phone

Section I: The ACT Assessment

The following questions involve your institution's satisfaction with the products and services provided by ACT. If your institution does not use student scores on the ACT Assessment for placement, please skip to Section II.

1. Does the ACT Assessment provide enough discrimination at the extremes (i.e. for high and low ability students) for your placement needs?

   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No, not for low ability students [In what subject area(s)?]_____
   ☐ No, not for high ability students [In what subject area(s)?]_____

2. Are the results of the ACT Assessment presented on score reports in a way that makes them easily interpreted and easily used for placement?

   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No, not easily interpreted (explain)_____
   ☐ No, not easily used (explain)_____

3. Has your institution ever participated in ACT's predictive research services (i.e., Basic, Standard, Class Profile)?

   ☐ No (Why not?)_____
   (Skip to Section III)

   ☐ Yes, but we do not currently participate (i.e., have not used Basic or Standard services in the past four [4] years, or Class Profile in the past two [2] years).
   (Why do you no longer participate?)_____
   (Skip to Section III)

   ☐ Yes, we currently participate (i.e., have used Basic or Standard services in the past four [4] years, or Class Profile in the past two [2] years). **(Please answer the following eight questions)**

4. Are the statistics presented in a clear, usable way?

   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No (explain)_____

5. Do the user materials adequately explain the statistics provided?

☐ Yes
☐ No (explain)_____

6. Are enough examples provided?

☐ Yes
☐ No (explain)_____

7. Are the statistics that are given adequate for your needs?

☐ Yes
☐ No (If no, what additional statistics would be beneficial to you?)

_____

8. Are the tables and charts presented in a readable and usable form?

☐ Yes
☐ No (If no, how could they be made more useful?)

_____

9. Is the prediction service flexible enough to meet your needs? (e.g., regarding subgroup options, predictor variables, timing of service, turnaround time, etc.)

☐ Yes
☐ No (If no, specify the areas in which more flexibility is needed.)

_____
_____

10. What are the obstacles, if any, to your institution's use of the ACT Assessment for placement?

_____
_____

11. Do you have any suggestions of improvements that could be made in the ACT Assessment Research Services?

_____
_____

Section II: ASSET/CPP

If your institution does not use student scores on the ASSET/CPP for placement, please skip to Section III.

1. Does the ASSET/CPP provide enough discrimination at the extremes (i.e. for high and low ability students) for your placement needs?

   ☐ yes
   ☐ no, not for low ability students [In what subject area(s)?]_____
   ☐ no, not for high ability students [In what subject area(s)]_____

2. Are the results of the ASSET/CPP presented on score reports in a way that makes them easily interpreted and easily used for placement?

   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No, not easily interpreted
   ☐ No, not easily used

   If no, please explain _____

3. What are the obstacles, if any, to your institution's use of the ASSET/CPP for placement?

4. Do you have any suggestions of improvements that could be made in the ASSET/CPP Research Services?

Section III: Technology

The questions below pertain to your institution's access to technology for use in placement.

1. Does your institution have test scoring equipment?

   ☐ no
   ☐ yes (If yes, what type? _____)

   Is this equipment currently used in placement?

   ☐ no
   ☐ yes (explain) _____

2. Does your advising staff have access to microcomputing equipment for making course placement decisions?

   ☐ no
   ☐ yes

   Is this equipment currently used in placement?

   ☐ no
   ☐ yes (explain) _____

3. Would your institution find it useful to have information on a computer disk that shows the relationship between students'admission test scores and their probability of success in a particular course?

   ☐ yes
   ☐ no

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION. PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE TO:

James Maxey
Research Division
ACT
P.O. Box 168
Iowa City, Iowa 52243

APPENDIX C

Results of Subgroup Analyses

SUBJECT AREAS IN WHICH COURSE PLACEMENTS ARE MADE

Degree Level

When comparing the placement practices of 2- and 4-year colleges, the patterns for English and mathematics were similar (see Table C-1). Not surprisingly, two-year colleges made course placements in developmental sections more than did 4-year colleges, and 4-year colleges placed students in advanced sections more than did 2-year colleges. Ninety-six percent of 2-year colleges placed students in developmental English, compared with 80% of 4-year colleges, while 27% of 2-year colleges placed students in advanced English, compared with 55% of 4-year colleges. For mathematics, 92% of 2-year colleges placed students in developmental sections, compared with 73% of 4-year colleges; 57% of 2-year colleges placed students in advanced mathematics compared with 68% of 4-year colleges. Two- and 4-year colleges placed students in "standard" courses with comparable frequency.

Two-year colleges reported placing students in developmental reading courses more frequently than did 4-year colleges (87% vs 50%), and 4-year colleges placed students in advanced science more frequently than did 2-year colleges (17% vs 8%).

Selectivity

As shown in Table C-2, there is a clear relationship between a college's self-reported selectivity and its placement practices in developmental English, mathematics and reading. Ninety-five percent of institutions with open admissions placed students in developmental English, compared with 55% of those who consider themselves highly selective. For mathematics, 93% of those with open admissions placed students in developmental mathematics, compared with 36% of the highly selective institutions. Selective schools were also more likely to place students in advanced sections of mathematics than were

less selective schools, but this was not true for English. Eighty-six percent of the "open" schools placed students in developmental reading, compared with 34% of the "selective" schools, and 48% of the "traditional" schools.

Enrollment

While enrollment size does not appear to be related to course placement in developmental or general sections, it does seem to be related to placement in advanced sections. For both English and mathematics, the percentage of institutions reporting placement in advanced sections increases as school size increases (see Table C-3). For example, 35% of institutions with under 1000 students reported placing students in advanced English, compared with 72% of the institutions with over 10,000 students. For mathematics, 54% of the smallest schools, compared with 89% of the largest schools, placed students in advanced sections.

Region

As shown in Table C-4, no apparent pattern of regional differences exists related to subject area or level of placement.

Affiliation

Public institutions more often placed students in developmental courses (93% for English, 90% for mathematics) than did either private nonreligious schools (68%, 55%) or private religious institutions (76%, 68%). This difference is not evident for advanced placement in mathematics. For English, however, private schools (55% - non religious, 55% - religious) reported placing students in advanced sections more often than did public schools (38%). For "general" sections, no differences are apparent for English placement, but public schools placed students more often than did private non-religious schools (86% to 71%) for mathematics. Seventy-seven percent of public institutions placed students in developmental reading, compared with

36% of private nonreligious institutions, and 45% of private religious schools. These findings are reported in Table C-5.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED FOR PLACEMENT IN ENGLISH AND MATHEMATICS

Degree Level

For English placement, the greatest apparent difference between the usage patterns of 2- and 4-year colleges is in the use of other commercially available tests (2-year 41%; 4-year 23%) and the ASSET/CPP (2-year 24%; 4-year 1%). The most frequently reported "other" tests were MAPS (actual N = 12) and the Nelson-Denny (actual N = 12). Four-year colleges relied more heavily on both the ACT Assessment and the SAT than did 2-year colleges: nearly 50% of the 4-year colleges reported using ACT Assessment subject area test scores for English placement, compared with 33% of 2-year colleges. Forty-four percent of 4-year colleges, compared to 20% of 2-year colleges, used SAT subtest scores. Four-year colleges also use other College Board tests more than did 2-year colleges: 15% of 4-year colleges used the College Board Achievement Tests, and 21% used Test of Standard Written English scores, compared with 8% and 9%, respectively, for 2-year colleges. Fully half of the 4-year colleges used scores from locally made placement tests, compared with 44% of 2-year colleges. These data are reported in Table C-6.

As was true for English placement, the greatest difference in the mathematics placement practices of 2- and 4-year colleges appeared to be in their use of the ASSET and other commercial tests (i.e., MAPS, Math Association of America, Advanced Placement tests). Four-year colleges appeared to rely more heavily on ACT subject area tests (44%) and SAT subtests (40%), as well as College Board Achievement tests (16%), than did 2-year colleges (29%, 21%, and 5%, respectively).

Selectivity

As shown in Table C-7, for English placement, ACT Assessment test scores were used most frequently by institutions with traditional and liberal admissions policies (51% and 48%, respectively), and least frequently by highly selective institutions (22%).

The two groups of selective institutions reported a much greater use of College Board Achievement test scores (44% of highly selective and 30% of selective schools) than did the less selective institutions (approximately 8% of each category). Approximately 52% of the most selective schools used SAT subtests, compared with 20% of open admissions schools. The most selective institutions did not appear to rely on local placement tests to the extent that less selective schools did: 35% of the highly selective group, compared with 57% of institutions with traditional admissions used local tests. Highly selective institutions also reported less frequent use of high school data than did less selective institutions.

For mathematics placement, institutions with the three most selective designations made greater use of SAT subtests, College Board Achievement tests, and local placement tests than did schools with liberal or open admissions policies. Institutions with traditional, liberal or open admissions requirements made greater use of ACT test scores and other commercial test scores than did more selective schools. Only 2% of the most selective schools used high school mathematics grades for placement, compared with a range of 19-31% for schools in the other four categories. Only institutions with liberal admissions requirements reported using ACT test scores for mathematics placement more than any other source.

Enrollment

As reported in Table C-8, local placement tests were the most frequently reported data source for English placement for institutions of every size except those with enrollments of 6,001 to 10,000. Institutions in the latter group reported using ACT test scores with slightly greater frequency than they reported using local tests (50% vs. 46%). The institutions with the largest enrollments appeared to consider more test-related data sources for English placement (e.g., ACT, SAT, local tests) than did smaller schools, while smaller schools relied more heavily on high school data (e.g., GPA, rank, courses).

There were no clear differences in the use of ACT and SAT data for mathematics placement by size of institution. However, 76% of the largest schools and 59% of the second largest used local placement tests for mathematics placement compared with 42-47% of schools in the other four enrollment groups. Also, the smallest schools appeared to rely on high school grades more than did larger schools; 26% of the institutions with fewer than 1,000 students, and 29% of those with enrollments of 1,000-2,000 used subject GPAs compared with 10% to 22% of schools in the other four groups. Interestingly, the largest schools used "high school courses taken" information more than did other sized institutions (49% compared with 30%-41% for other size groups).

Region

As shown in Table C-9, for two of the six regions (i.e., Midwest, Southwest), the most frequently used data source for placement in English was ACT test scores, followed by local placement test scores. For the Eastern region, local placement tests were reported to be the most frequently used source (56%), followed by SAT subtest scores (41%) and other commercial tests

(30%). For the Western region, local placement tests were used by 42% of the schools, followed by ACT test scores and other commercial tests (34%). The Mountain/Plains schools reported using high school data more than institutions in the other regions, especially when contrasted with Western region schools (e.g., 31% vs. 4% for subject area grade point average).

Institutions in the Eastern and Western regions reported lower use rates for ACT tests for placement in mathematics than did institutions in the other four regions (15% and 22%, respectively, compared with 39%-63% for the other four regions). As was true for English placement, schools in the Mountain/Plains region reported a particularly high use rate for high school GPA (43%), especially when compared with Western schools (8%). Western institutions showed a greater reliance on local placement tests in mathematics (60%) than did institutions from other regions; the next highest rate was 52% for Midwestern schools.

Affiliation

Institutions in the three affiliation categories reported considerably different patterns of data use for placement in English (see Table C-10). For public institutions, nearly 46% reported using local placement test scores, 42% used ACT test scores, 33% used other commercial test scores, and 27% used SAT subtest scores. For private nonreligious schools, 53% reported using local placement tests, followed by 46% using SAT subtest scores, 31% using College Board Achievement test scores, and 21% using ACT test scores. For the private religious institutions, ACT test scores were used by 58%, local tests by 49%, and SAT subtest scores by 47%. This subgroup reported making the greatest use of high school information: nearly 34% reported using high school GPA for placement, compared with 18% of public colleges and 22% of private nonreligious institutions.

For mathematics placement, public institutions and private religious institutions reported that they used ACT Mathematics Usage test and local mathematics placement tests with similar frequency: for public institutions, ACT tests were used by 37% and local tests by 45%; for private religious institutions, ACT tests were used by 52% and local tests by 55% (see Table C-10). However, for private nonreligious schools, the comparison of ACT test use and local test use yields very different results: 58% used local tests and 21% used ACT tests for placement in mathematics. Further, 43% of nonreligious private institutions used SAT test scores. Private religious institutions relied on high school grades more than did schools from the other two groups.

CHANGES IN PLACEMENT PRACTICES OVER PAST FIVE YEARS

Degree Level

Two-year schools reported making more changes in both English and mathematics placement practices over the past five years than did 4-year schools. Over thirty percent of 4-year schools reported making no changes in their placement practices in the past five years for both English (32%) and mathematics (30%), compared with 12% of 2-year schools (see Table C-11). Further, for all changes where the difference between 2- and 4-year schools was ten percentage points or more, the change was made by more 2-year than 4-year schools. Specifically, more 2-year than 4-year schools reported modifying cutoff scores (50% vs 32% for English, 50% vs 37% for mathematics), changing reporting procedures (28% vs 15% for English, 27% vs 17% for mathematics), or adding a standardized test score (33% vs 16% for English, 31% vs 14% for mathematics). Only for the response option "revised a local placement test" in mathematics did more 4-year than 2-year schools indicate changes, and the difference was small (25% vs 19%).

Clearly, 2-year colleges are in a greater state of flux regarding course placement practices than are 4-year colleges. This seems to be especially true for English placement.

Affiliation

Overall, more private religious institutions than private nonreligious or public institutions reported having made no changes over the past five years, although this difference was less apparent for mathematics than for English placement (see Table C-12). For English, 39% of private religious schools reported no changes, compared to 35% for mathematics. Thirty-one percent of private nonreligious schools reported no changes for English, compared with 24% for mathematics, and 18% of public schools reported no changes for English, compared with 19% for mathematics.

A greater percentage of public institutions (including virtually all of the sample's 2-year colleges) than private institutions reported that they modified cutoff scores (43% vs 32% for both private school categories), changed reporting procedures (25% vs 7% for private nonreligious, and 11% for private religious), and added a standardized test score (27% vs 19% and 12%) for English placement. For mathematics, the differences were in the same direction, but of lesser magnitude.

Enrollment

Table C-13 shows the placement changes made by institutions in six enrollment size groups. No interpretable patterns of changes appear to exist relative to enrollment size. However, a surprisingly high percentage (38%) of large schools reported having revised local placement tests, and modifying cutoff scores (37% for English and 58% for mathematics).

Region

As shown in Table C-14, a considerably smaller percentage of institutions in the Eastern and Western regions reported having made no changes in their English placement procedures over the past five years than did schools in the Midwest and Mountain/Plains regions (33% for Midwest, 31% for Mountain/Plains, 19% for the Western region, and 17% for the Eastern region). Almost one-third (31%) of the institutions in the Southwest region reported having added a local placement test, and 34% of these schools added a standardized test score. Over one-third (34%) of Eastern schools reported that they revised a local placement test.

For mathematics placement, regional differences were less pronounced. A considerably lower percentage of Western region schools reported making no changes than did schools from the other regions (i.e., Western region = 10%, compared with 28% for both the Midwestern and Southwestern regions).

Selectivity

Table C-15 reports changes made in English placement practices for institutions grouped by self-reported selectivity. The subgroup with the highest percentage of schools reporting "no changes made" was the selective group (41%). By contrast, only 15% of both the highly selective schools, and those with open admissions policies reported having made no changes in English placement practices. Schools with open admissions reported the greatest frequency of change: one-fourth of these schools added a local test, almost half (48%) modified their cutoff scores, 27% changed their reporting procedures, and almost one-third (31%) added a standardized test score. Almost one-third (30%) of schools with traditional admissions reported revising their local placement tests.

Again, for mathematics placement the pattern is somewhat less distinct (see Table C-15). While open admissions schools made more changes overall than did schools in the other four categories (16% made no changes, compared with 34% of selective schools), institutions in all categories made more changes in mathematics than in English placement.

ANTICIPATED CHANGES IN PLACEMENT IN NEXT FIVE YEARS

Degree Level

Generally, more 2-year schools than 4-year schools anticipated that they would make changes in their English and mathematics placement procedures in the next five years (see Table C-16). It should be noted that 2-year schools also made more changes than did 4-year schools over the past five years. The difference in anticipated changes between 2- and 4-year schools is most apparent in cutoff scores used for both English and mathematics, and in reporting procedures used. Fully one-third of 2-year schools expected to modify their cutoff scores for both English and mathematics, compared with 14% (English) and 16% (mathematics) for 4-year schools. Over 20% of 2-year schools compared with less than 6% of 4-year schools expected to change their reporting procedures.

Affiliation

A higher percentage of public schools reported that they expect to make changes in both their English and mathematics placement programs than did private schools, either religious or nonreligious (see Table C-17). Almost two-thirds of the sample's private schools (61% of nonreligious and 60% of religious schools) expected to make no changes in English placement over the next five years. Similar percentages were reported for mathematics (57% for nonreligious and 61% for religious schools). By comparison, approximately 40% of public schools expected to make no changes in English and mathematics

placement. For English placement, the difference between public and private schools appears to be primarily in cutoff scores and reporting procedures used. For mathematics placement, only for "cutoff scores used" is the difference more than ten percentage points (29% for public schools vs 17% for private nonreligious and 11% for private religious). The pattern described above is similar to the one described for 2- and 4-year colleges. Since virtually all of the sample's 2-year schools are public, the results for affiliation subgroups are consistent with those for degree level.

Enrollment

Approximately one-third of the institutions with enrollments of 4,000-10,000 anticipated that they would make a change in the tests they use for both English and mathematics placement in the next five years (see Table C-18).

Region

A smaller percentage of institutions in the Eastern and Western regions than schools in the other four regions anticipated no changes in their English and mathematics placement systems (see Table C-19). Again, the interregional difference was more pronounced for English than for mathematics. For English placement, the percentage of Western schools anticipating changes in all three procedures was among the highest of all of the regional groups: tests used = 28%, cutoff scores used = 34%, reporting procedures = 21%. A similar proportion of Eastern schools (28%) reported that they expected to make changes in their English placement practices. It is interesting to note that these regional differences do not exist for mathematics placement.

Selectivity

The pattern of responses regarding anticipated changes in placement practices for schools grouped by self-reported selectivity was very similar

for English and mathematics (see Table C-20). Schools with open admissions policies expected to make more changes than do schools in the other four categories: a high percentage of schools in the two most selective categories expected to make no changes in English and mathematics placement (for English, highly selective = 63%, selective = 70%; for mathematics, highly selective = 58%, selective = 61%). More schools in the three less selective categories expected to change the tests they used for both English and mathematics than did schools in the two more selective categories. Open admissions schools reported the greatest percentage of schools expecting to change cutoff scores and reporting procedures for both English and mathematics.

Table C-1

Percentage of Schools Placing Students in Various Types of Courses, by College Type

Type of Course	Degree level		Total
	2 Year	4 Year	
Developmental English	96	80	86
Freshman (standard) English	92	85	88
Advanced English	27	55	44
Other	7	9	8
Developmental mathematics	92	73	81
Freshman (standard) mathematics	88	78	82
Advanced mathematics	57	68	63
Other	5	4	4
Developmental science	12	10	11
Freshman (standard) science	30	35	33
Advanced science	8	17	13
Other	5	2	3
Developmental reading	87	50	65
Other	19	6	12
Other subjects	5	8	7

Note: Column percentages are reported. For example, 96% of all 2-year schools made placements in Developmental English, as compared to 80% of 4-year schools.

Table C-2

Percentage of Schools Placing Students in Various Courses, by Selectivity of College

Type of course	Selectivity					
	Highly selective	Selective	Traditional	Liberal	Open	Total
Developmental English	55	64	86	88	95	86
Freshman (standard) English	98	83	85	81	92	88
Advanced English	48	60	57	52	30	44
Other	2	10	7	14	7	8
Developmental mathematics	36	60	78	79	93	81
Freshman (standard) mathematics	69	66	85	80	87	82
Advanced mathematics	79	77	68	54	56	63
Other	10	8	1	3	5	4
Developmental science	10	11	13	7	11	11
Freshman (standard) science	71	47	30	20	31	33
Advanced science	29	33	15	1	8	13
Other	0	4	1	1	5	3
Developmental reading	26	34	48	65	86	65
Other	0	8	6	5	19	12
Other subjects	7	15	4	6	6	7

Note: Column percentages are reported. For example, 55% of highly selective schools made placements in Developmental English, compared with 64% of selective schools.

Table C-3

Percentage of Schools Placing Students in Various Types of Courses, by Enrollment Size

Type of course	Enrollment: Under 1000	1000–2000	2001–4000	4001–6000	6001–10,000	Over 10,000	Total
Developmental English	89	82	90	85	88	83	86
Freshman (standard) English	90	83	89	90	85	93	88
Advanced English	35	37	43	54	61	72	44
Other	5	8	10	8	9	13	8
Developmental mathematics	84	75	85	81	85	76	81
Freshman (standard) mathematics	81	82	83	81	81	90	82
Advanced mathematics	54	59	66	67	73	89	63
Other	0	4	6	13	6	3	4
Developmental science	5	12	5	20	13	28	11
Freshman (standard) science	17	41	31	39	40	47	33
Advanced science	6	15	11	16	16	27	13
Other	2	2	2	3	9	9	3
Developmental reading	67	62	71	69	60	51	65
Other	8	13	14	14	15	7	12
Other subjects	5	6	11	2	10	7	7

Note: Column percentages are reported. For example, 89% of schools with under 1000 students made placements in Developmental English.

Table C-4

Percentage of Schools Placing Students in Various Types of Courses, by Region

Type of course	Region						
	East	Midwest	Mountains/ Plains	Southeast	Southwest	West	Total
Developmental English	84	84	86	91	89	88	86
Freshman (standard) English	87	90	85	85	81	96	88
Advanced English	46	48	32	37	44	50	44
Other	9	4	8	8	9	14	8
Developmental mathematics	77	82	88	89	81	68	81
Freshman (standard) mathematics	77	87	78	87	71	82	82
Advanced mathematics	61	71	64	54	56	68	63
Other	7	3	6	2	3	5	4
Developmental science	18	9	8	9	9	8	11
Freshman (standard) science	34	32	33	32	35	32	33
Advanced science	16	12	11	10	18	11	13
Other	3	4	3	3	2	4	3
Developmental reading	67	61	58	71	66	62	65
Other	7	8	8	14	14	25	12
Other subjects	10	8	6	3	7	4	7

Note: Column percentages are reported. For example, 84% of schools in the East made placements in Developmental English.

Table C-5

Percentage of Schools Placing Students in Various Types of Courses, by Affiliation

Type of course	Affiliation			Total
	Public	Private nonreligious	Private religious	
Developmental English	93	68	76	87
Freshman (standard) English	90	85	82	88
Advanced English	38	55	55	44
Other	8	16	5	8
Developmental mathematics	90	55	68	81
Freshman (standard) mathematics	86	71	78	82
Advanced mathematics	61	59	72	63
Other	5	8	1	4
Developmental science	13	10	7	11
Freshman (standard) science	30	39	37	33
Advanced science	9	25	17	13
Other	5	0	1	3
Developmental reading	77	36	45	65
Other	14	7	6	12
Other subjects	6	11	7	7

Note: Column percentages are reported. For example, 93% of public schools made placements in Developmental English.

Table C-6

Percentage of Schools Using 15 Data Sources for Placement in English and Mathematics, by College Type

		Degree level					
		2-Year		4-Year		Total	
	Source	English	Math.	English	Math.	English	Math.
1.	ACT Assessment Composite	24	21	30	23	28	22
2.	ACT subject area tests	33	29	49	44	43	38
3.	ACT probability values	2	2	5	4	4	3
4.	ASSET/CPP	24	22	1	1	10	9
5.	SAT Total	14	12	23	22	19	18
6.	SAT subtest	20	21	44	40	34	33
7.	TSWE	9	2	21	4	16	4
8.	CB Ach. Tests	8	5	15	16	12	12
9.	Other commercial tests	41	35	23	20	30	25
10.	Local placement tests	44	40	50	54	48	49
11.	HS GPA	21	21	22	22	22	22
12.	HS subject GPA	19	21	19	24	19	23
13.	HS rank	10	10	16	15	14	13
14.	HS courses	23	34	20	43	21	40
15.	Other	16	12	13	14	14	14

Note: Column percentages are reported. For example, 24% of 2 year schools use ACT Assessment Composite scores for English placement.

Table C-7

Percentage of Schools Using 15 Data Sources for Placement in English and Mathematics, by Self-Reported Selectivity

		Selectivity											
		Highly selective		Selective		Traditional		Liberal		Open		Total	
	Source	Eng.	Math.	Eng.	Math.	Eng.	Math.	Eng.	Math.	Eng.	Math.	Eng.	Math.
1.	ACT Assessment Composite	26	14	21	16	33	25	26	19	28	26	28	23
2.	ACT subject area tests	22	12	38	35	51	43	48	46	40	38	43	39
3.	ACT probability values	0	0	1	2	6	6	4	3	4	3	4	3
4.	ASSET/CPP	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	3	21	19	10	9
5.	SAT Total	13	15	23	18	25	24	27	24	14	13	19	18
6.	SAT subtests	52	40	46	42	44	41	46	37	20	24	34	33
7.	TSWE	17	6	31	4	22	6	13	0	10	3	16	4
8.	CB Ach. Tests	44	27	30	24	8	14	7	9	8	5	12	12
9.	Other commercial tests	0	14	30	23	22	15	22	33	39	31	30	25
10.	Local placement tests	35	50	50	61	57	59	45	34	45	44	48	49
11.	HS GPA	2	2	16	16	31	32	22	22	21	20	22	22
12.	HS subject GPA	9	2	21	21	21	31	14	19	21	24	19	23
13.	HS rank	9	2	11	14	21	20	13	8	12	12	14	13
14.	HS courses	2	17	15	31	28	62	12	32	24	35	21	40
15.	Other	26	25	16	18	11	13	15	17	14	11	14	14

Note: Column percentages are reported. For example, 26% of highly selective schools use ACT Assessment Composite scores for English placement.

Table C-8

Percentage of Schools Using 15 Data Sources for Placement in English and Mathematics, by Enrollment

Source	Enrollment: Under 1000 Eng.	Under 1000 Math.	1000-2000 Eng.	1000-2000 Math.	2001-4000 Eng.	2001-4000 Math.	4001-6000 Eng.	4001-6000 Math.	6001-10,000 Eng.	6001-10,000 Math.	Over 10,000 Eng.	Over 10,000 Math.	Total Eng.	Total Math.
1. ACT Assessement Composite	33	23	30	23	20	23	24	23	24	15	30	24	28	22
2. ACT subject area tests	43	41	41	38	34	30	50	43	50	32	54	46	43	38
3. ACT probability values	5	3	4	5	2	2	2	1	5	3	5	8	4	3
4. ASSET/CPP	16	14	11	10	8	6	4	1	10	9	0	1	10	9
5. SAT Total	20	16	21	19	18	19	16	17	17	17	22	20	19	18
6. SAT tests	28	29	35	35	30	26	44	48	43	32	41	35	34	33
7. TSWE	11	1	22	5	13	4	23	4	17	4	14	5	16	4
8. CB Ach. Tests	9	10	14	13	8	8	19	10	16	17	19	16	12	12
9. Other commercial tests	41	26	27	30	24	26	21	18	31	26	24	16	30	26
10. Local placement tests	51	47	42	45	45	46	49	42	46	59	64	76	48	49
11. HS GPA	30	24	29	28	11	15	9	12	17	19	14	22	22	22
12. HS subject GPA	25	26	27	29	15	20	3	11	13	15	11	22	19	23
13. HS rank	17	15	18	17	10	3	3	5	17	14	7	8	14	13
14. HS courses	24	41	26	40	17	39	12	30	17	39	16	49	21	40
15. Other	12	15	13	11	14	11	28	23	9	10	14	12	14	13

Note: Column percentages are reported. For example, 33% of schools with under 1,000 students use ACT Assessment Composite scores for English placement.

Table C-9

Percentage of Schools Using 15 Data Sources for Placement in English and Mathematics, by Region

Source	Region													
	East		Midwest		Mountain Plains		Southeast		Southwest		West		Total	
	Eng.	Math.	Eng.	Math.	Eng.	Math.	Eng.	Math.	Eng.	Math.	Eng.	Math.	Eng.	Math.
1. ACT Assessment Composite	16	12	33	24	40	34	29	25	38	33	19	18	28	22
2. ACT subject area tests	17	15	53	49	52	56	45	39	76	63	34	22	43	38
3. ACT probability values	0	0	6	5	10	10	3	2	7	4	2	3	4	3
4. ASSET/CPP	3	2	17	15	17	17	8	10	5	3	11	6	10	9
5. SAT Total	24	19	15	12	13	14	27	26	19	21	13	13	19	18
6. SAT tests	41	35	30	25	21	14	41	47	39	42	25	25	34	33
7. TSWE	26	8	10	1	7	3	18	6	15	0	18	0	16	4
8. CH Ach. Tests	13	11	9	6	5	0	12	15	18	22	19	23	12	12
9. Other commercial tests	30	30	28	18	16	17	35	33	32	28	34	23	30	25
10. Local placement tests	56	50	42	52	52	48	49	43	44	42	42	60	48	49
11. HS GPA	19	18	24	25	31	34	23	17	24	29	11	11	22	22
12. HS subject GPA	22	21	20	27	31	43	19	17	21	25	4	8	19	23
13. HS rank	11	8	23	22	22	20	11	10	9	12	1	1	14	13
14. HS courses	17	32	27	50	31	51	19	33	19	42	15	32	21	40
15. Other	24	16	11	14	10	6	13	16	9	6	13	15	14	14

Note: Column percentages are reported. For example, 16% of schools from the East use ACT Assessment Composite Scores for English placement.

Table C-10

Percentage of Schools Using 15 Data Sources for Placement in English and Mathematics, by Affiliation

Source	Affiliation						Total	
	Public		Private nonreligious		Private religious			
	Eng.	Math.	Eng.	Math.	Eng.	Math.	Eng.	Math.
1. ACT Assessment Composite	25	22	23	18	40	25	28	22
2. ACT subject area tests	42	37	21	21	58	52	43	38
3. ACT probability values	3	3	2	1	7	6	4	3
4. ASSET/CPP	15	14	0	0	1	0	10	9
5. SAT Total	15	13	26	24	27	26	19	18
6. SAT tests	27	27	46	43	47	41	34	33
7. TSWE	11	2	21	8	28	4	16	4
8. CB Ach. Tests	9	7	31	21	12	17	12	12
9. Other commercial tests	33	28	22	22	27	21	30	25
10. Local placement tests	46	45	53	58	49	55	48	49
11. HS GPA	18	20	22	20	34	29	22	22
12. HS subject GPA	16	21	19	19	30	32	19	23
13. HS rank	11	11	8	11	26	20	14	13
14. HS courses	20	38	16	32	26	49	21	40
15. Other	15	13	17	15	10	14	14	14

Note: Column percentages are reported. For example, 25% of public schools use ACT Assessment Composite scores for English placement.

Table C-11

Percentage of Institutions Making 12 Types of Changes in English and Mathematics Placement Practices Over Past 5 Years, by Degree Level

Change	English			Mathematics		
	2-Year	4-Year	Total	2-Year	4-Year	Total
1. No changes made	12	32	24	12	30	23
2. Added local test	22	18	20	19	23	22
3. Dropped local test	13	7	10	14	7	10
4. Revised local test	20	23	22	19	25	23
5. Modified cutoff scores	50	32	39	50	37	42
6. Modified prediction equation	9	6	7	8	9	8
7. Changed reporting procedures	28	15	20	27	17	21
8. Added standardized test score	33	16	22	31	14	20
9. Dropped standardized test score	10	5	7	11	3	6
10. Changed standardized test score use	11	9	10	12	8	10
11. Changed evaluation procedures	3	5	8	13	7	9
12. Other	3	12	12	11	11	11

Table C-12

Percentage of Institutions Making 12 Types of Changes in English and Mathematics Placement Practices Over Past 5 Years, by Affiliation*

Change	English				Mathematics			
	Pub	P-NR	P-R	Total	Pub	P-NR	P-R	Total
1. No changes made	18	31	39	24	19	24	35	23
2. Added local test	21	17	20	20	22	21	22	22
3. Dropped local test	12	9	4	10	10	11	7	10
4. Revised local test	22	23	22	22	22	26	23	23
5. Modified cutoff scores	43	32	32	39	48	37	29	42
6. Modified prediction equation	8	2	6	7	8	6	11	8
7. Changed reporting procedures	25	7	11	20	24	19	13	21
8. Added standardized test score	27	19	12	22	24	20	11	20
9. Dropped standardized test score	9	2	1	7	7	8	2	6
10. Changed standardized test score use	11	5	10	10	12	4	7	10
11. Changed evaluation procedures	10	4	4	8	11	3	9	9
12. Other	15	6	8	12	11	12	10	11

*Pub = Public institution
P-NR = Private nonreligious institution
P-R = Private religious institution

Table C-13

Percentage of Institutions Making 12 Types of Changes in English and Mathematics Placement Practices Over Past 5 Years, by Enrollment

	Change	English							Mathematics						
		Under 1000	1000-2000	2001-4000	4001-6000	6001-10,000	Over 10,000	Total	Under 1000	1000-2000	2001-4000	4001-6000	6001-10,000	Over 10,000	Total
1.	No changes made	25	32	17	16	25	19	24	22	29	20	21	15	22	23
2.	Added local test	21	17	25	11	30	20	20	21	15	24	17	39	34	22
3.	Dropped local test	9	12	9	11	9	3	10	12	11	8	8	6	3	10
4.	Revised local test	21	14	25	26	29	38	22	18	22	21	20	39	38	23
5.	Modified cutoff scores	38	39	48	37	30	37	39	40	33	51	47	42	58	42
6.	Modified prediction equation	3	5	11	15	12	6	7	3	12	10	9	8	15	8
7.	Changed reporting procedures	20	17	29	17	25	10	20	23	20	20	19	19	24	21
8.	Added standardized test score	27	22	18	21	23	19	23	27	17	17	15	24	18	20
9.	Dropped standardized test score	4	4	11	9	13	10	7	7	5	6	5	12	4	6
10.	Changed standardized test score use	9	11	6	14	5	14	10	13	5	5	22	9	7	10
11.	Changed evaluation procedures	8	6	9	14	4	7	8	11	10	7	5	9	14	9
12.	Other	17	6	14	12	13	15	12	12	11	14	9	6	10	11

Table C-14

Percentage of Institutions Making 12 Types of Changes
in English and Mathematics Placement Practices
Over Past 5 Years, by Region

	English							Mathematics						
Change	East	MW	Mtn Plns	SE	SW	West	Total	East	MW	Mtn Plns	SE	SW	West	Total
No changes made	17	33	31	24	21	19	24	21	29	22	22	28	10	23
Added local test	19	21	23	19	31	11	20	23	23	23	17	22	24	22
Dropped local test	3	14	2	12	19	7	10	5	14	8	12	8	5	10
Revised local test	34	20	20	16	23	15	22	24	27	27	15	17	28	23
Modified cutoff scores	37	32	42	48	47	38	39	41	32	53	51	43	46	42
Modified prediction equation	9	7	5	6	8	6	7	5	8	14	11	4	13	8
Changed reporting procedures	19	20	22	19	21	21	20	19	19	30	23	18	23	21
Added standardized test score	16	20	13	27	34	31	22	12	18	26	27	32	21	20
Dropped standardized test score	7	8	12	12	9	15	10	4	5	0	11	6	10	6
Changed standardized test score use	7	8	12	12	9	15	10	7	5	10	19	7	12	10
Changed evaluation procedures	10	10	7	7	5	3	8	11	10	7	5	9	14	9
Other	17	12	11	16	2	8	12	17	10	12	9	3	9	11

Table C-15

Percentage of Institutions Making 12 Types of Changes in English and Mathematics Placement Practices Over Past 5 Years, by Selectivity

	Change	English						Mathematics					
		Highly Select	Select	Traditional	Liberal	Open	Total	Highly Select	Select	Traditional	Liberal	Open	Total
1.	No changes made	15	41	31	31	15	24	2.	34	30	23	16	23
2.	Added local test	11	18	19	12	24	20	14	18	28	13	23	22
3.	Dropped local test	13	7	5	5	13	9	6	13	3	6	14	10
4.	Revised local test	20	20	30	16	20	22	14	28	29	14	21	23
5.	Modified cutoff scores	28	35	32	31	48	39	31	38	38	43	46	42
6.	Modified prediction equation	7	6	5	11	8	7	0	13	9	12	7	8
7.	Changed reporting procedures	13	16	13	14	27	20	10	17	17	17	27	21
8.	Added standardized test score	7	15	15	18	31	22	6	14	12	21	29	20
9.	Dropped standardized test score	7	8	4	5	8	7	6	6	2	7	8	6
10.	Changed standardized test score use	11	8	7	14	10	10	10	2	6	19	12	10
11.	Changed evaluation procedures	4	3	5	10	11	8	4	4	8	12	11	9
12.	Other	7	5	15	11	13	12	6	9	12	15	11	11

Table C-16

Percentage of Institutions Anticipating Changes in English and Mathematics Placement Practices in the Next 5 Years, by Degree Level

Change	English			Mathematics		
	2-year	4-year	Total	2-year	4-year	Total
No changes	37.0	53.4	46.8	37.0	52.6	46.6
Tests used	24.8	12.6	22.9	25.6	22.2	23.5
Cutoff scores or prediction equations	33.5	14.0	21.7	33.5	16.2	22.8
Reporting procedures	20.6	4.2	10.7	20.2	5.3	11.0
Other	16.6	13.1	14.5	19.0	17.1	17.8

Table C-17

Percentage of Institutions Anticipating Changes in English and Mathematics Placement Practices in the Next 5 Years, by Affiliation*

Change	English				Mathematics			
	Pub	P-NR	P-R	Total	Pub	P-NR	P-R	Total
No changes	40	61	60	47	39	57	61	47
Tests used	42	23	19	23	26	21	18	24
Cutoff scores or prediction equations	29	9	10	22	29	17	11	23
Reporting procedures	15	6	2	11	13	11	6	11
Other	16	18	9	15	18	23	13	18

*Pub = Public institution
P-NR = Private nonreligious institution
P-R = Private religious institution

Table C-18

Percentage of Institutions Anticipating Changes in English and Mathematics Placement Practices in the Next 5 Years, by Enrollment

Change	English							Mathematics						
	Under 1000	1000-2000	2001-4000	4001-6000	6001-10,000	Over 10,000	Total	Under 1000	1000-2000	2001-4000	4001-6000	6001-10,000	Over 10,000	Total
No changes	49	57	32	54	36	41	47	50	58	34	46	39	34	47
Tests used	23	17	25	31	32	19	23	24	18	24	30	33	22	24
Cutoff scores or prediction equations	17	18	29	26	36	16	22	20	18	28	24	33	30	23
Reporting procedures	10	9	12	12	17	7	11	15	11	5	10	10	11	11
Other	14	10	23	11	12	15	15	14	18	27	15	10	22	18

Table C-19

Percentage of Institutions Anticipating Changes in English and Mathematics Placement Practices in the Next 5 Years, by Region

	English							Mathematics						
Change	East	MW	Mtn Plns	SE	SW	West	Total	East	MW	Mtn Plns	SE	SW	West	Total
No change	40	49	44	59	48	36	47	40	46	35	57	45	36	47
Tests used	28	20	15	23	20	28	23	23	24	18	27	23	20	24
Cutoff scores or prediction equations	19	22	24	21	13	34	22	22	24	26	23	13	32	23
Reporting procedures	10	13	14	6	0	21	11	14	11	13	7	7	13	11
Other	26	13	15	4	14	14	15	29	17	13	4	15	31	18

Table C-20

Percentage of Institutions Anticipating Changes in English and Mathematics Placement Practices in the Next 5 Years, by Self-Reported Selectivity

Change	English						Mathematics					
	Highly Select	Select	Traditional	Liberal	Open	Total	Highly Select	Select	Traditional	Liberal	Open	Total
No changes	63	70	45	48	40	47	58	61	50	40	41	47
Tests used	13	11	28	27	23	23	12	17	25	32	24	24
Cutoff scores or prediction equations	22	12	13	21	29	22	19	8	20	28	28	23
Reporting procedures	0	5	3	9	19	11	0	6	6	9	17	11
Other	4	4	19	13	16	15	12	15	16	27	18	18