
Tracing the Development of Multiple Measures for College Placement across States and Systems

Analysis of Three State Systems – Phase I Report

Prepared by Research for Action • March 2014



Authors

Mark Duffy

Adam Schott

Jessica K. Beaver, Ph.D.

Elizabeth Park

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Introduction and Summary of Findings

Research shows that between 24 and 33 percent of students are “misplaced” when entering college and therefore required to complete developmental education courses that hinder postsecondary completion.¹ More specifically, nearly 40 percent of community college students enrolled in developmental education fail to progress to credit-bearing coursework, let alone earn a degree or credential.²

There is growing recognition that assessing students once using a single, standardized measure may contribute to this misplacement, and that more accurate decisions can be achieved using multiple measures of student readiness.³ Such measures can include both academic⁴ and non-cognitive⁵ forms of assessment that offer a more complete picture of a student’s ability.

This report examines three states—California, North Carolina, and Wisconsin—that have adopted, or are in the process of adopting, multiple measures reform with the ultimate goal of increasing college completion rates. Understanding different approaches to multiple measures policy development and implementation can support successful reforms in other sites and contexts. For this reason, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation asked Research for Action (RFA) to:

- Reveal lessons learned by states and systems in reforming placement policies through multiple measures; and
- Provides context for understanding how these reforms are implemented at the campus level, which will be explored in Phase 2 of the project.

Based on document analysis and interviews with state postsecondary leaders between October and January 2013, this report provides background on the postsecondary landscape in the three study states and systems, provides a common framework for looking across these states, and then explores six key factors

¹ Scott-Clayton, J. (2012). *Do high-stakes placement exams predict college success?* (CCRC Working Paper No. 41). New York, NY: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center.

² Complete College America. (2012) *Remediation: Higher Education's Bridge to Nowhere*.

³ Belfied, C. and Crosta, P. (2012) *Predicting Success in College:*

The Importance of Placement Tests and High School Transcripts. (CCRC Working Paper No. 42) New York, NY: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center.

⁴ Academic measures are assessments that can generate a score or scores based on academic skills, such as standardized tests, grade point average or a writing sample with a scoring rubric.

⁵ Non-cognitive measures are instruments, such as student surveys or interviews, which show non-academic levels of interest and experience.

influencing multiple measures policies: 1) catalysts of reform; 2) policy development; 3) assessment measures; 4) assessment data use; 5) assessment cut scores; and, 6) lessons learned. Table 1 outlines the primary cross-state findings for each of these factors.

Table 1. Summary of Policy Factors and Findings

Policy Factors	Summary Findings
Catalysts of Reform: Factors supporting the development of multiple measures policy	
• Internal	Policy around multiple measures reform has come primarily through stakeholder groups and initiatives from <i>internal</i> state postsecondary structures.
• External	External influences have played a more limited role in two of the states, but have still been a factor in initiating policy development.
Policy Development: Processes and vehicles to develop and support multiple measures reform	
• Involvement in Policy Design	All systems included campus stakeholders in policy development.
• Policy Mechanisms	Only California has passed legislation or regulation around multiple measures; Wisconsin and North Carolina aligned reforms to curricular initiatives.
• Policy Implementation	California and Wisconsin provide support to campuses on multiple measures implementation, while North Carolina is just getting started. California has an accountability system in place.
Policy Characteristics: Elements of state or system approach to multiple measures placement	
• Policy Scope	California and North Carolina have developed mandatory multiple measures policies in math and English and across their systems. Wisconsin's policy is voluntary and applies only to English.
• Academic Measures	Academic assessment measures are required in all three states to varying degrees.
• Non-Cognitive Measures	Common in California and Wisconsin but not currently required in any of the three study states.
• Special Needs/Exemptions	The level of accommodations for special needs students, creation of ESL assessment versions, and multiple measures exemptions vary across the study states.
Assessment Data Use: Collection and use of multiple measures data for placement	
• Data Collection	All three states are in the process of developing data collection systems for multiple measures placement.
• Data Access	Data access and links are limited in all three states.
• Placement Process/Appeals	Placement and appeals processes are determined at the campus level in all three systems.
Assessment Cut Scores: Development of decisions around assessment cut scores for placement	
• Cut Scores	Policies vary across the systems.
• Score Development	The process for developing cut scores varies widely as well.

Overview of Public Postsecondary Environments in the Study States

For purposes of this research, we focus on the postsecondary systems implementing multiple assessment measures for placement, which include the California Community College System (CCCS), the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS), and the University of Wisconsin Colleges (UWC). However, before focusing on the specific systems implementing multiple measures policies in each of the study states, it is important to understand their larger postsecondary environments (see Table 2 below).

Table 2. Types of Postsecondary Systems in the Study States

State	Four-Year System	Two-Year System	Two- and Four-Year System
California	University of California California State University	California Community College System	
North Carolina	University of North Carolina	North Carolina Community College System	
Wisconsin		Wisconsin Technical College System	University of Wisconsin

The following points provide an overview of the postsecondary landscape:

- California** has the highest public postsecondary enrollment in the nation with 2.4 million students, two four-year systems (University of California and California State University) and the largest community college system (California Community College System) in the country. The University of California includes more than 220,000 students across 10 campuses, while California State University has 23 campuses and almost 437,000 students. California’s 112 community colleges are charged with preparing more than two million students to transfer to four-year institutions. Each system is governed by a separate state governing board.
- North Carolina** has one four-year system (University of North Carolina) and one two-year postsecondary system (North Carolina Community College System). The University of North Carolina includes 16 campuses across the state and provides undergraduate and graduate degrees, while the community college system is a 58-campus network that offers entry-level employment training through certificates and diplomas, as well as Associate’s degrees in multiple program areas.
- Wisconsin** does not have a system solely for four-year students, but instead includes two- and four-year institutions in the University of Wisconsin (UW) system. UW includes 13 public universities and 13 two-year colleges (UWC) for a total of about 181,000 students. In addition, the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) is divided into 16 technical college districts, operating 49 campuses that served over 81,000 students during the 2009-10 academic year.⁶

Because we focus on the two-year systems in each state implementing multiple measures, additional details on the characteristics of each two-year system that we examined are provided in Table 3.

⁶ The WTCS is not implementing multiple measures for placement and therefore is not included in this analysis.

Table 3. Characteristics of Two-Year College Systems Examined in this Analysis

System Size	Majority Full-Time or Part-Time Students	Ethnic Diversity	Students Reaching Milestones
System: California Community College System			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campuses: 112 • Total Headcount: 2,365,036 	Part-Time (69%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African-American: 8% • Asian-American: 13% • Hispanic: 36% • White: 32% • Other: 11% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer: 13% • Associate's Degree: 31% • Certificate: 3%
System: North Carolina Community College System			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campuses: 58 • Total Headcount: 364,911 	Part-Time (57%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African-American: 25% • Asian-American: 1% • Hispanic: 5% • White: 59% • Other: 10% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer: 13% • Associate's Degree: 18% • Certificate: 15%
System: University of Wisconsin Colleges			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campuses: 13 • Total Headcount: 18,975 	Full-Time (61%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African-American: 2% • Asian-American: 3% • Hispanic: 4% • White: 87% • Other: 4% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer: 38% • Associate's Degree: 32% • Certificate: Not Reported

(Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS))

The three systems vary significantly along a number of dimensions:

- The **California Community College System** is by far the largest of the three in terms of student population (2,365,036) and number of campuses (112). CCCS has the highest percentage of students who study part time (69%), the largest variation in ethnic diversity and has less than 50 percent of students transfer or receive a degree or a certificate.
- While still a large system, the **North Carolina Community College System** falls in the middle of the three states in terms of size (58 campuses and 364,911 students), the distribution of full- and part-time students and ethnic diversity. Like California, less than 50 percent of students transfer to another institution or earn a degree or certificate.
- **University of Wisconsin Colleges** are the smallest in terms of the total student population (18,975) and number of campuses (13). UWC has the most full time students (61%), the lowest level of ethnic diversity and the highest percentage of students reaching milestones (70%).

As the project moves into Phase 2 and focuses on campus-level implementation, this context may help to explain some of the successes and challenges experienced on the ground.

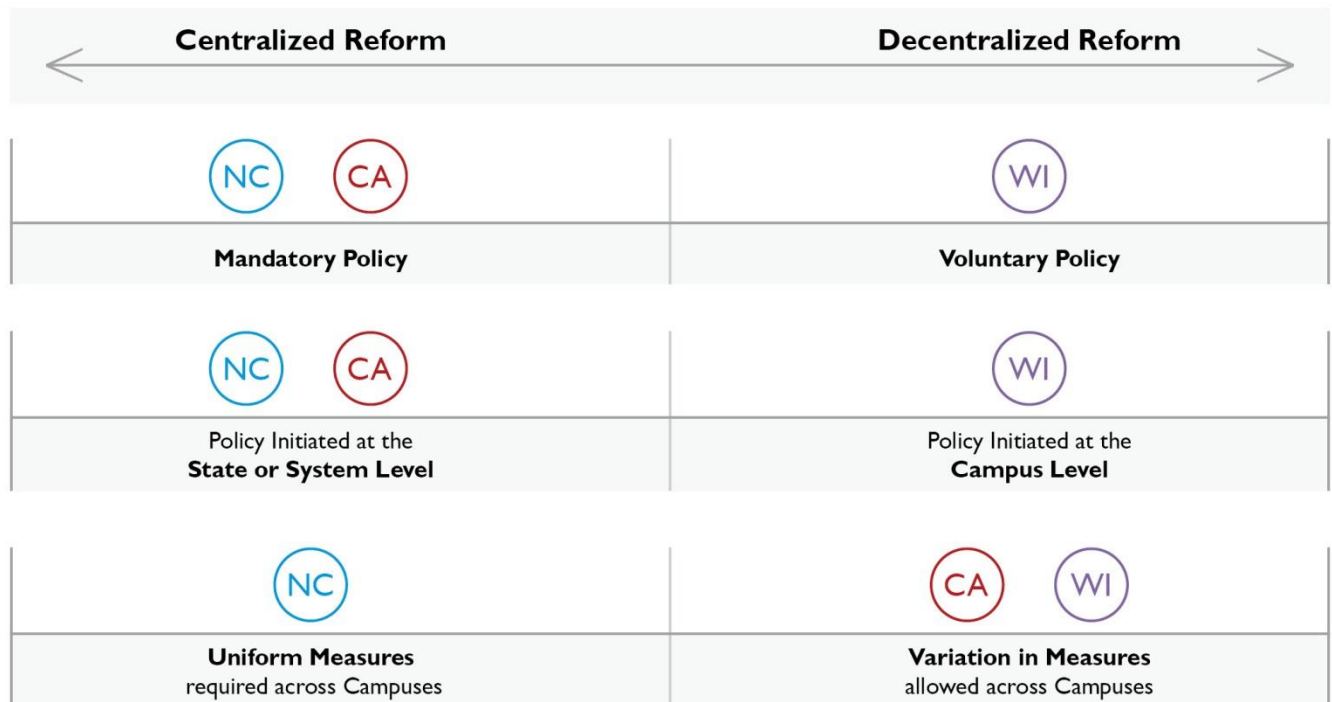
Multiple Measures Policy Framework

While each of the three study states have implemented multiple measures for placement, they have not all operationalized the reform in the same way. Instead, two multiple measures frameworks have developed (see System Definitions for Multiple Measures below).

System Definitions for Multiple Measures	
<p>WI</p> <p>CA</p>	<p>In Wisconsin and California, the term implies that colleges are utilizing a number of measures to create an aggregate student profile to inform placement decisions on a campus by campus basis, which commonly include both academic and non-cognitive measures.</p>
<p>NC</p>	<p>In North Carolina, the policy refers to a hierarchy of measures that institutions use when determining placement. First, students may be placed directly into college-level courses if they have an un-weighted high school GPA of 2.6 or above. Students who do not meet the GPA cutoff can submit their ACT/SAT scores to demonstrate readiness for college-level courses. Students unable to be placed in college level coursework based on those measures or who graduated from high school more than five years ago must take a placement test. Therefore, although multiple measures of ability are included in the policy, it is possible that many students will place out of developmental education classes with only one measure.</p>

In looking across the three state systems, multiple measures policies can also be placed along a continuum from centralized to decentralized reform (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Continuum of Multiple Measures Policy Structures



- **The North Carolina Community College System has implemented multiple measures reform in a highly centralized way.** The initiative is required by the system office and was championed by the NCCCS President; the policy provides limited opportunities for campuses to customize implementation.
- **The California Community College system’s approach is under a uniform, state-level policy but implementation is decentralized.** While state law and regulation require the use of multiple measures across all colleges, individual institutions have wide latitude in determining which measures to use.
- **Wisconsin’s reform was initiated by a single University of Wisconsin College.** Based on the success of the pilot project at one college, the reform has spread to other campuses in the system, each determining whether to adopt recommendations for implementation in English placement supported by the UWC English Department.

A Summary of Multiple Measures Policy Across Three State Systems



California: While state law mandates that community colleges use multiple measures in making placement decisions, local colleges have considerable discretion over which types of assessments to include. However, the policy has undergone a number of changes since it was first established in 1986. Most recently, the state approved the development of common placement assessments in English, mathematics, and ESL along with the use of multiple measures, but the test has yet to be developed



North Carolina: The multiple measures policy applies to all community colleges and establishes a hierarchy of measures that colleges can use to determine student placement in math and English courses: 1) students may be placed directly into college-level courses if they have an un-weighted high school GPA of 2.6 or above, as well as a record of four high school math classes (one of which is Algebra II); 2) students who do not meet the GPA cutoff can submit their ACT/SAT scores to demonstrate readiness for college-level courses; and, 3) students who graduated from high school more than five years ago or who do not meet the GPA or ACT/SAT cutoff must take a placement test. The policy is required to be implemented by 2015 across the system.



Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Placement Test (WEPT) is used on all campuses. The use of multiple measures beyond the WEPT is voluntary and only applies to decisions around placement in English courses. The University of Wisconsin Colleges English Department has recommended a standard set of multiple measures, but they can vary by campus. Campuses that decide to use multiple measures for placement also look at a writing sample and the following college readiness indicators: ACT English and reading scores, high school grades in English courses, and high school curriculum. Campuses develop their own student questionnaires as well; for the fall 2014 semester, campuses will be using the same questionnaire and writing prompt. A variety of other non-cognitive measures have also been used.

Catalysts for Reform

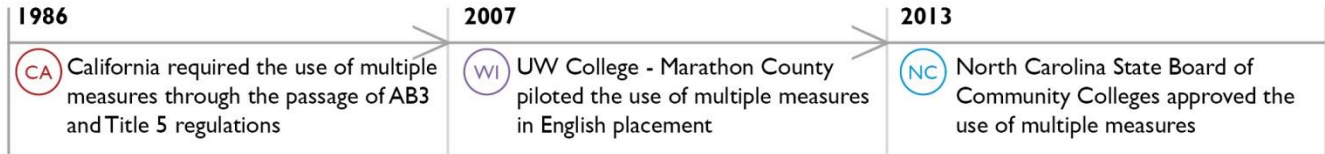
The development and implementation of reform is not a linear process. Multiple stakeholders and contextual factors influence the process. Multiple measures reforms were influenced by both *internal* state-level factors and forces *external* to state government that likely influence multiple states. Several of the most notable catalysts are as follows:

- **Internal state postsecondary structures and stakeholders have the most direct effect on multiple measures policy.** In California and North Carolina, an array of state- and system-level policymakers and groups have had a strong role in driving multiple measures policy over the life of the reform. In California, four workgroups and committees (Student Success Task Force, Student Success and Support Program Advisory Committee [SSSPAC], Statewide Assessment Workgroup and Common Assessment Steering Committee) have been involved in shaping matriculation policies, which include the role of multiple measures in placement decisions. In North Carolina, NCCCS President Dr. Scott Ralls began his term in 2008 by stating that reforms to developmental education and coursework placement would be components of his agenda. NCCCS then established an internal Multiple Measures Working Group, comprised of system-level administrators, state policymakers, institution presidents, and administrators, to develop the multiple measures policy. In Wisconsin, the development of a multiple measures pilot project at UW-Marathon County was the most important catalyst for the state's reform, and was driven almost entirely by local faculty members.
- **External influences have played a more limited role, but have still been a factor in policy development.** Only North Carolina interview respondents identified external influences as central to the reform effort, where research by the Community College Research Center (CCRC) and initiatives led by Jobs for the Future and Completion by Design focused on the need for higher completion rates. In California and Wisconsin, while some external forces facilitated the need for reform, they played a more minor role. In 1991, the CCCS settled a lawsuit brought by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) over concerns that placement assessment policies disproportionately tracked Latino students into low-level courses and prevented access to courses in which they might succeed. As part of the settlement, the chancellor outlined revisions to Title 5 regulations regarding validation of prerequisites and assessments, the use of multiple measures, and students' right to placement appeals. Wisconsin policymakers cited research on the importance of student writing in placement decisions as supporting the reform; however, the research has not been a primary driver in the development of recommendations.

Policy Development

As reflected in the framework above (Figure 1), policy development across the three study states has taken place in very different ways, as well as over different timespans. As seen in Figure 2, a span of 27 years has separated actions by the three states regarding multiple measures.

Figure 2. Timeline of Multiple Measures Reform



- **California** adopted its policy in the late 1980s with the passage of the Seymour-Campbell Matriculation Act of 1986 (AB 3), which established formal matriculation procedures and led to Title 5 regulations that require the use of validated multiple assessment measures for placement in the wake of the MALDEF lawsuit settlement in 1991.
- The first college in **Wisconsin** to adopt a multiple measures policy did so in 2007 via a pilot at UW – Marathon County in English placement. The policy had spread to more than half (8) of the 13 campuses in the system by the 2012-13 academic year, but the use of multiple measures has not expanded outside the UWC English Department.
- In **North Carolina**, the state released its policy in February 2013, although colleges are not mandated to implement until fall 2015. Multiple measures policies continue to be developed and refined in preparation for that deadline.

There are also important differences in each state’s approach to developing a multiple measures policy. Specific distinguishing dimensions include:

- **Involvement in Policy Design:** The degree of involvement from various stakeholders in the college system, and the bodies (taskforces, committees, etc.) that convened to help develop and implement the policy.
- **Policy Mechanisms:** The degree to which multiple measures reform is supported by formal policy structures such as state statute and regulation or aligned with academic standards.
- **Policy Implementation:** The amount of support and technical assistance provided to colleges around implementation, and the degree to which policymakers built monitoring and other accountability measures into the policy.

A summary of these variations is provided in Table 4.

Key for Tables 4 through 7	
YES	NO

Table 4. Multiple Measures Policy Development Indicators

Involvement in Policy Design	CA	NC	WI
Key difference: Role of commission or task force in addressing use of multiple measures	Y	Y	N
Policy Mechanisms			
Was regulation approved to support multiple measures for college placement?	Y	N	N
Was legislation passed to support multiple measures for college placement?	Y	N	N
Is the multiple measures policy designed to support state-based developmental education or career and college readiness standards?	N	Y	Y
Policy Implementation			
Has the state/system developed a strategic plan or report regarding the use of multiple measures for placement?	Y	N	N
Has the state or system provided support or training on the implementation of the policy?	Y	N	Y
Does the state or system hold institutions accountable for the implementation of the policy?	Y	N	N

Below we summarize the central findings in each of the dimensions of policy development identified in Table 4.

Involvement in Policy Design

- **A broad range of stakeholders were involved in policy development in each state**, with both faculty members and institutional administrators involved in the process. In California, the Student Success and Support Program Advisory Committee (SSSPAC) serves in an advisory capacity to the Chancellor’s Office. It is comprised of local community college staff, faculty, and administrators, and provides input on matriculation policy, programs, and services including the use of placement tests and multiple measures. North Carolina’s Multiple Measures Working Group involved college presidents, vice presidents, chief academic officers and faculty members. In Wisconsin, the use of multiple measures has been driven primarily by campus-level personnel.
- **Both California and North Carolina established multiple measures task forces or commissions.** In California, several taskforces played a role in designing and implementing the policy, including the Student Success Task Force and the Student Success and Support Program Advisory Committee. In North Carolina, the NCCCS established a subgroup of the DEI State Policy Team to focus on multiple measures reform, which included representatives from state government, research organizations, and institutions.

Policy Mechanisms

- **California is the only state to pass legislation or approve regulations around multiple measures.** The Seymour-Campbell Matriculation Act of 1986 (AB 3) established formal

matriculation procedures that led to Title 5 regulations, including requirements around the use of validated multiple measures for placement. Wisconsin and North Carolina did not pursue regulatory or legislative action. In North Carolina, policy was driven by the State Board of Community Colleges; in Wisconsin, the reforms began at an individual college and spread with support from the UWC English Department.

- **Multiple measures policy is aligned to other curricular initiatives in North Carolina and Wisconsin.** North Carolina's policy was linked with the NCCCS's overhaul of developmental education curriculum. In Wisconsin, there has been alignment between the recommended assessments and the Composition Learning Outcomes for first-year students.

Policy Implementation

- **California and Wisconsin have provided support or training on the implementation of multiple measures policy.** In California, the Chancellor's Office released guidance to support multiple measures policy implementation. The 1998 document recommended that colleges consider a variety of issues when choosing assessment measures, including course expectations and rigor, past educational achievement, student aptitude, prerequisites, and study habits.⁷ In Wisconsin, UWC staff members provide training each spring on the multiple measures placement process. North Carolina does not provide training or formal resources for colleges around multiple measures yet; this may change as the state approaches the 2015 implementation deadline.
- **California has set clear accountability directives for policy implementation.** The Community College Assessment Workgroup evaluates the implementation of multiple measures as part of a larger matriculation process twice a year. When instruments are locally developed or managed, research studies must be conducted and submitted to the Chancellor's Office as well. Further, community colleges must validate test cut scores and submit these to the system office to ensure alignment with the college's curriculum. In North Carolina, accountability for multiple measures falls broadly within the general audit process for community colleges; there are no specific accountability provisions for multiple measures. Wisconsin's voluntary policy precludes formal state accountability measures.

Policy Characteristics

Table 5 outlines specific Multiple Measures policy characteristics in each system, including whether the use of multiple measures is or will be mandatory or voluntary, types of measures included, coverage of the policy by subject area, and how the policy addresses students with special needs.

⁷ "Multiple Measures and Other Sorrows: A guide for using student assessment information with or instead of test scores" at <http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/SSSP/Matriculation/Assessment/MultipleMeasuresAndOtherSorrowsMarch1998.pdf>

Table 5. Multiple Measures Policy Characteristics

Policy Characteristics	CA	NC	WI
Is the use of multiple measures for placement mandatory or voluntary across the system?	Mandatory	Mandatory	Voluntary
Is the use of academic measures ⁸ required?	Y	Y	Y
Are specific academic measures required?	N	Y	Y
Is the use of non-cognitive measures ⁹ required?	N	N	N
Is the use of non-cognitive measures common?	Y	N	Y
What subjects use multiple measures for placement?	English, Math, ESL	English and Math	English
Do the multiple measures used vary by institution?	Y	N	Y
Are multiple measures assessments available for ESL students?	Y	N	N
Are there accommodations for special education included in the multiple measures policy?	Y	N	Y
Are there exemptions for students included in the multiple measures policy?	Y	N	N

A number of central findings are notable from the data summarized in Table 4 above:

- Academic measures are required in all three states.** In California, colleges currently use either an off-the-shelf or locally-developed academic assessment. However, the system is currently developing statewide common assessments that colleges will be required to use to receive matriculation funding. In North Carolina, multiple academic measures are included in policy (i.e., high school GPA, the SAT/ACT and the North Carolina Assessment and Placement (NCDAP) test); in Wisconsin the WEPT is required, regardless of whether institutions use additional measures.
- While non-academic measures are common in two states, they are not required in any state.** Both California and Wisconsin colleges commonly use non-academic measures, such as student surveys, to inform placement. WestEd’s survey of measures used in California, for instance, found that a majority of colleges use written questionnaires to obtain information regarding the highest math course completed, grade received in last class completed, etc. Student surveys are also common in the UWC system to determine student perceptions of college readiness in English.
- Only California’s policy addresses both accommodations and exemptions for specific student populations.** While accommodations and assessments vary, California requires colleges to provide accommodations such as extended time, assistive devices, or modification of an existing

⁸ Academic measures are assessments that can generate a score or scores based on academic skills, such as standardized tests, grade point average or a writing sample with a scoring rubric.

⁹ Non-cognitive measures are instruments, such as student surveys or interviews, which show non-academic levels of interest and ability.

instrument for ESL students. The state also requires accommodations for special education students and allows colleges to apply exemptions to multiple measures placement. In the UWC system, accommodations are available for special education students; in instances where a student with a disability did not receive accommodations, the placement team is urged to contact the campus disability services specialist before making a final decision. The English Department’s recommendations for multiple measures implementation do not include specific exemptions, though campuses have wide flexibility. North Carolina has not included any accommodations or exemptions in its policy to date.

Use of Multiple Measures Assessment Data

Results of multiple assessment measures help inform student placement decisions. The level of data access and reporting, as well as the placement processes based on that data, varies by system (see Table 6).

Table 6. Multiple Measures Data Use

Data Systems Characteristics	CA	NC	WI
Is there a data collection system for all multiple measures placement results?	N	Y	N
Is the multiple measures assessment data accessible to:			
• State policymakers?	N	Y	N
• System officials?	N	Y	N
• Campus administrators?	Y	Varies	Y
• Faculty members?	Y	Varies	Y
At what level is multiple measures assessment data available:			
• Individual student level (i.e., ability to view individual student data)?	Y	Y	Y
• Aggregate student level (i.e., ability to view student cohort data)?	Y	Y	N
Is the multiple measures assessment data linked to other data systems:			
• Within the state (e.g., state longitudinal database)?	N	N	N
• Within the system? (e.g., system-wide data system on student outcomes)	N	N	N
• Within the institution (e.g., college-level student database)?	Varies	Varies	N
• Is the state in the process of developing data systems to link high school transcripts with multiple measures data?	Y	Y	N
Is there a standardized process across the system for using the data to place students based on multiple measures results?	N	N	N
Is there a process for the review or appeal of multiple measures placement decisions?	Y	Varies	Y

Looking across the data collection and use categories, the following findings become clear:

- Data collection and reporting systems are being developed or refined in each of the systems.** In California, data access and availability varies by college, but the system envisions a central assessment database as part of the development of the common assessment. North Carolina currently uses a data warehousing system that allows colleges to see student-level multiple measures data, but is also working to streamline the accessibility of high school level data. In Wisconsin, WEPT and ACT scores are easily accessible through the PeopleSoft Student Information System (SIS); however, the format used to store other student assessment files varies by campus. A uniform data collection system is in development for fall 2014.
- Data links are limited.** Links between multiple measures and other student assessment and data systems have not been made at the state or system levels in any state, and vary by institution in California and North Carolina. California is in the process of developing a data warehouse to support in implementation of multiple measures placement by including both high school transcript and community college placement test data. In North Carolina, efforts are underway at the system level to link high school transcripts to the multiple measures data system as well, with full roll-out planned for 2014.
- Placement and appeals processes are determined at the campus level.** The specifics of multiple measures placement processes and appeals vary by college and are not determined at the system level in any of the states. California requires an appeals process be in place at each community college. Appeals to placement decisions in North Carolina are also made at the college level. In Wisconsin, recommended guidelines for placement appeals have been developed by the UWC English Department, but local campuses determine the process of how a student initiates an appeal. A representative from the English Department and campus placement team coordinators work with the Student Services Office to develop an effective appeals process.

Assessment Cut Scores

Determination and use of cuts scores vary significantly by state, as can be seen in see Table 7.

Table 7. Characteristics of Multiple Measures Assessment Cut Scores

Characteristics of Cut Scores	CA	NC	WI
Are there required, system-level cut scores ¹⁰ for multiple measures assessments?	N	Y	Y
Do the cut scores vary by major or subject pathway (e.g., nursing program vs. drama program)?	Y	N	N
Do the cut scores vary by college or campus?	Y	N	N
Were institutional faculty members involved in the development of cut scores?	N/A	Y	Y
Were institutional administrators involved in the development of cut scores?	N/A	Y	Y

¹⁰ Cut scores refer to any performance standard on an academic measure that is required in order to be placed in a particular course, such as specific test scores or minimum GPA.

Important findings include:

- **Cut score policies vary across the systems.** California community colleges set their own cut scores, but are required to document the method, rationale, and appropriateness for setting those scores for the Chancellor’s Office. North Carolina’s system office sets the cut scores for all campuses. In Wisconsin, while the cut scores are set by the UWC English Department for the Wisconsin English Placement Test (WEPT) and ACT, they are only considered “starting points” for placement decisions, as multiple other indicators are weighed in placement decisions.
- **The process for developing cut scores varies widely.** In California, just as the cut scores vary by college, the process for developing the cut scores also depends on the college. In North Carolina, interview respondents reported that research from the CCRC was used by the Multiple Measures Working Group to determine that a high school GPA of 2.6 was a reasonable bar for college readiness. For the SAT and ACT, the Working Group used the national benchmarks set forth by the College Board and ACT to set the statewide cut scores; cut scores for the NC DAP Test are still in development. In Wisconsin, cut score recommendations were developed by the UWC English Department and are normed on the cut scores used by other UW institutions.

Lessons Learned

Despite the variation in state and system contexts, a number of common successes and challenges have been identified across the study states that may be useful to other states embarking on similar reforms.

Successes

- **Using research and data to inform placement reform.** State and system officials in both North Carolina and Wisconsin reported that research informed their placement policies and provided evidence that the use of multiple measures can improve outcomes for students. In 2010, CCRC presented the NCCCS with data on college completion at the four North Carolina colleges participating in the Achieving the Dream initiative. NCCCS staff members reported that this data built awareness in the state about the need to reform the system’s placement policies. In Wisconsin, research on the successes of the multiple measures pilot project provided evidence that the reforms could improve outcomes for students and has been a driver for other institutions to become involved in the process.
- **Piloting the initiative prior to expansion.** In Wisconsin, state respondents stated that piloting in one college with a small subgroup of students allowed for gradual adjustments and refinements prior to expanding to other colleges in the System. Similarly, in North Carolina, the colleges involved in the Multiple Measures Working Group were the “early adopters;” the lessons learned from these colleges may help to inform new adopters in the future.

Challenges

- **Gaining college buy-in.** Respondents in multiple states said that getting colleges on-board with adopting the multiple measures policy was a difficult process. In North Carolina where the reform is required and there is little opportunity for customization, some faculty members accustomed to using one measure for placement decisions expressed some concerns about a new multiple

measures policy. Similarly, in Wisconsin, despite the ground-up approach taken by colleges, the use of multiple measures requires additional work on the part of English faculty and coordination with student services staff. In such cases, system administrators indicated that successful buy-in requires faculty members to believe that the potential benefits to student placement outweigh the additional burden.

- **Developing a data collection system.** In all three states, multiple measures data systems have yet to be fully developed. North Carolina is relying on a data expert at NCCCS to shepherd the creation of a centralized data system process. Both Wisconsin and California are in the process of developing similar systems now.
- **Ensuring Placement Equity.** In California and Wisconsin, there is considerable variation in student assessment and placement processes. Flexibility in the measures used and the processes involved in these systems has led to concerns about consistency and reliability in placement decisions across campuses and students.
- **Securing Funding for Reform.** In California, funding at the state and system levels to support these reforms has been obtained only recently and the lack of funding halted the matriculation reform process, particularly around developing common assessments to be used along with multiple measures. In Wisconsin, individual institutions must find the funding to support the additional work, staff and faculty time involved in multiple measures implementation on each campus.

Next Steps in the Research: Phase 2 and Beyond

Using this research as the basis for understanding each of the study states and systems, Phase 2 of the project will explore the implementation of multiple measures policies at the campus level and determine how faculty members, administrators and students are responding to the movement towards multiple measures, as well as how implementation differs across sites.

While the results of this research will be an important first step in understanding the status of multiple measures reform efforts, there is a need for continuing research as the study sites work to develop and scale their policies. In California, the development of common assessments for placement is only in the initial stages, and it will be important to see how the implementation of this new assessment system is integrated with the established multiple measures requirements. North Carolina's policy will not become a requirement until 2015, and for now the policy is being implemented in only a handful of "early adopter" colleges in the system. The English Department of the UWC continues to work to expand the number of campuses involved in multiple measures implementation, standardize the multiple measures assessments, and create data systems. Tracking the continued development of these policies and understanding how they play out at the campus level over time will provide additional lessons on multiple measures reform.

Multiple Measures for Postsecondary Placement Assessment

State Profile: California

This document provides an overview of the policy context regarding the use of multiple measures of assessment for college placement decisions in the California Community Colleges (CCCs) system. The profile was developed using online research, document reviews and system-level interviews, and was verified by state interview respondents. The profile is intended to serve as a stand-alone summary of California's multiple measures policy; it will also contribute to a cross-state analysis.

The profile begins with an overview of California's postsecondary environment and its current multiple measures placement policy. It then describes six policy and practice areas central to the state's use of multiple measures: 1) catalysts in the development of multiple measures policies, 2) policy development, 3) assessment measures, 4) assessment data use, 5) assessment cut scores and 6) lessons learned.

1. State Postsecondary Environment

California has the highest public postsecondary enrollment in the nation, with 2.4 million students in a variety of certificate and degree programs across the state. The University of California includes more than 220,000 students and more than 170,000 faculty and staff across ten campuses. The California State University has 23 campuses, almost 437,000 students, and 44,000 faculty and staff. California's 112 community colleges are charged with preparing their over 2 million students to transfer into these public four-year systems. All three systems are governed by separate boards.^{i,ii}

2. Multiple Measures Policy Overview

The California Community Colleges (CCCs) has been at the forefront of multiple measures placement policy reform for more than two decades. The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO), along with key state- and system-level policymakers and groups, have been involved in setting and revising California's matriculation policies which address the use of placement tests and have required the use of multiple measures. Matriculation policies have undergone a number of changes since they were first established in 1986.ⁱⁱⁱ Most recently, those policies were updated in 2012 to clarify that colleges must implement *common placement assessments* to place community college students in English, mathematics, and ESL in order to receive matriculation funds.^{iv} The common assessments will also include a database of a variety of multiple measures to assist colleges in placement decisions. While the state has passed legislation requiring the implementation of common assessments, funding restraints have slowed progress in their actual development. There is no single list of state approved multiple measures, and local colleges have considerable discretion in selecting which measures to use.

Table I. CCCS Fast Facts (Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS))

State-level Coordinating and/or Governing Agency				
Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges				
Number of Colleges/Campuses				
112 campuses				
Number of Students Served				
Full-Time Equivalent: 959,539			Total Headcount: 2,365,036	
Percentage of Full and Part Time Students				
Full-Time: 31%			Part-Time: 69%	
Student Demographics				
White: 32%	African American: 8%	Hispanic: 36%	Asian American: 13%	Other: 11%
Percentage of Students completing the following milestones				
Transfer: 13%	Associate's Degree: 31%	Certificate: 3%	Other*: 61%	

*Other is the sum of the non-completers who are still enrolled in the institution plus those who are no longer enrolled.

3. Catalysts for Multiple Measures Reform

Multiple Measures reform in California has been an iterative process, with various workgroups and reports contributing to and informing the process. In the late 1980s, the state’s matriculation policies were revised to include multiple assessment measures as a way to fairly place students of all ethnic groups. Since then, key state- and system-level policymakers and workgroups—including the Student Success Task Force, the Student Success and Support Program Advisory Committee and the Statewide Assessment Workgroup — have been involved in setting and implementing multiple measures policies with the Chancellor’s Office oversight. Below are the key external and internal influences on the reform.

External Influences

- Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF): In 1991, the CCCS settled a lawsuit brought by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) against the CCCS over concerns that placement assessment policies disproportionately tracked Latino students into low level courses and prevented access to courses in which they might succeed. As part of the out of court settlement, the chancellor outlined revisions to Title 5 regulations regarding the validation of prerequisites and assessments, the use of multiple measures and students’ right to placement appeals.^v

Internal Influences

- WestEd Reports: In 2010, the Chancellor’s Office convened a workgroup to survey community colleges in the state concerning use of multiple measures. WestEd was contracted to develop a framework for evaluating existing multiple measures. Released in 2012, WestEd’s *Framework for Evaluating the Technical Quality of Multiple Measures Used in California Community College Placement* outlined commonly-used measures, and specified how to evaluate each based on previous research.
- The Student Success and Support Program Advisory Committee (SSSPAC) (formerly known as the Matriculation Advisory Committee): The committee serves in an advisory capacity to the Chancellor’s Office and is comprised of local community college staff, faculty and administrators, and provides input on matriculation policy, programs and services, including the use of placement tests and multiple measures. The SSSPAC is advising the Chancellor's Office on aligning new matriculation policies requirements with California Title 5 regulations and the Student Success Act of 2012 provisions (SB 1456).^{vi}
- The Statewide Assessment Workgroup, a sub-committee of the MAC, conducts a biannual review of assessment instruments submitted by second-party publishers or by local colleges for Chancellor’s Office approval. The group is also responsible for reviewing and updating the document, *Standards, Policies, and Procedures for the Evaluation of Assessment Instruments Used in California Community Colleges*, which describes requirements for placement assessments to be approved for use in the CCCs.^{vii}
- The Common Assessment Steering Committee: With the approval of new funding for common assessments in 2014, the Common Assessment Steering Committee will focus on developing the statewide common placement assessments for English, math, and ESL that will be used along with multiple measures.
- The California Community Colleges Board of Governors established the Student Success Task Force to find new and better ways to increase student outcomes. In 2012, it presented the System’s Board of Governors with 22 recommendations, including the “*develop[ment] and use of a common assessment for course placement while allowing districts to supplement common assessment with other validated multiple measures.*”

4. Policy Development

For over two decades, use of multiple measures has been driven by state statute and regulation, with involvement by state, system, and local level stakeholders (see Table 2).

Table 2. Policy in Support of Multiple Measures Assessment Reforms

When was the multiple measures for college placement policy first enacted?	1986
Was legislation passed to support multiple measures for college placement?	Y

Was regulation approved to support multiple measures for college placement?	Y
Is the multiple measures policy designed to support state-based developmental education or career and college readiness standards?	N
Is the multiple measures policy designed to support developmental curricular reforms?	N
Has the state/system established a commission or task force to address the use of multiple measures for college placement?	Y
Has the state/system developed a strategic plan or report regarding the use of multiple measures for college placement?	Y
Were institutional administrators involved in the development of the multiple measures policy?	Y
Were faculty members involved in the development of the multiple measures policy?	Y
Did the state or system provide support or training on the implementation of the policy?	Y
Does the state or system hold institutions accountable for the implementation of the policy?	Y

The following points provide further background on the multiple measures policy development process in the state:

- **Several key pieces of legislation and regulation have driven multiple measures reforms.** Guiding statute and regulations on student matriculation and multiple measures are listed chronologically below:
 - The **Seymour-Campbell Matriculation Act of 1986** established the matriculation process for the CCCs. The act defined the services community colleges are required to provide, such as placement assessment and counseling upon enrollment.
 - **CA Title 5 Regulations:** Shortly after the MALDEF settlement in 1991, Title 5 regulations were revised to address community college policies and practices addressed in the lawsuit. Title 5 now mandates a “holistic assessment” for placing non-exempt students in which *multiple measures* are a required component of the placement assessment system. These regulations were recently revised by the Board of Governors to better align them with the recommendations by the Student Success Task Force and S.B. 1456.
 - **AB 743 (2011):** Required the Board of Governors to “*establish a common assessment system with specified objectives, including selection of an existing commercially-available and centrally-delivered system of student assessment, to be used as one of multiple measures.*” However, it did not mandate college participation. The use of common tests would allow students to take results with them if they enroll at multiple campuses or want to transfer to a different college.

- o **SB 1456 (Student Success Act of 2012):** Required the community college system to: 1) target existing student services resources to support orientation, assessment, and education planning; 2) utilize a statewide system of common assessment once available *as a condition of receiving funding*; and 3) participate in the statewide Student Success Scorecard to report progress in improving success rates.
- **In California, assessments are not currently tied to basic skills curriculum standards.** Since 2006, the Chancellor’s Office has funded the Basic Skills Initiative (BSI) to increase minimum graduation requirements in English and mathematics across all community colleges. However, no statewide curriculum or course standards apply to all colleges.^{viii} The CCCs are actively engaged in statewide discussions on implementing the national common core standards and is currently studying the implications for placement assessment.
- **The CCCs has multiple layers of accountability for multiple measures.** The Community College Assessment Workgroup performs twice-annual evaluations of measures used at each community college as part of the assessment validation process. Second party test publishers or local colleges who submit assessment instruments for validation must conduct and submit research for the test to be approved for use in the CCCs. Further, community colleges must validate test cut scores and submit them to the Chancellor's Office to ensure the appropriateness with the college’s curriculum.^{ix} Community colleges are mandated to report whether or not a student is assessed, and which assessment instruments are used, but actual assessment scores and placement recommendations are not reported on a system-wide basis.¹¹ This will change however, once a common assessment system is in place.
- **Materials have been developed to support the use of multiple measures.** [*Multiple Measures and Other Sorrows: A guide for using student assessment information with or instead of test scores*](#) was released in 1998 by the Chancellor’s Office to provide a “discussion of what part companion measures to a test can play” in the placement process. This material recommends considering a variety of issues when choosing assessment measures, including course expectations and rigor, past educational achievement, student aptitude, prerequisites, and study habits. As mentioned previously, in 2012, the Chancellor’s Office commissioned a study by WestEd, *A Framework for Evaluating the Technical Quality of Multiple Measures Used in California Community College Placement* which outlined commonly-used measures, and specified how to evaluate each based on previous research. Currently, the CCCCO has commissioned the CalPASS Plus Partnership for Achieving Student Success project to conduct a study on multiple measures as part of the development of common assessment.^x

5. Assessment Measures

Table 3 provides an outline of the basic structure for multiple assessment measures in California. While use of multiple measures is mandatory and has been implemented across subjects (math, reading, writing, ESL), the specific measures used vary widely by institution. Each college has flexibility in choosing multiple

¹¹ A.B. 194, chapter 489

measures for placement, and students themselves have considerable leeway in appealing the suggested placement.¹²

Table 3. Multiple Assessment Measures

Is the use of multiple measures for placement mandatory or voluntary across the system?	Mandatory
Is the use of academic measures ¹³ required?	Y
Are specific academic measures required?	N
Is the use of non-cognitive measures ¹⁴ required?	N
Is the use of non-cognitive measures common?	Y
What subjects use multiple measures to determine placement?	English, Math, ESL
Do the multiple measures used vary by institution?	Y
Are there versions of the assessments included as multiple measures for ELL students?	Y
Are there accommodations for special education included in the multiple measures policy?	Y
Are there exemptions for students included in the multiple measures policy?	Y

The following points are notable regarding the use of multiple assessment measures:

- **A variety of academic and non-cognitive measures are used across the system.** While the state has passed legislation for a common assessment, funding restraints have slowed progress on their implementation. While the state requires colleges to use multiple measures, the state does not dictate the use of any one particular measure and allows colleges flexibility in the measures they use for placement. In 2011, the Chancellor’s Office asked WestEd to survey all California community colleges concerning which multiple measures are in use.¹⁵ They found:
 - ACCUPLACER, CELSA (ESL), and Mathematics Diagnostic Testing Project (MDTP), along with locally developed tests, were commonly-used academic measures. Also, under SB 490, Chapter 482, the California Standards Test (CST) “*may* be used by community college districts to provide diagnostic advice to, or for the placement of, prospective community college students participating in the Early Assessment Program.”¹⁶
 - A number of non-cognitive measures, such as student surveys and interviews, are also used across the System. According to WestEd, “a vast majority [of colleges] reported using written questionnaires to obtain information; of the measures listed, respondents commonly

¹² Every college determines their own appeals process. Students can challenge pre-requisites, co-requisites, and limitations on enrollment as specified in 55201(3) of Title 5.

¹³ Academic measures are assessments that can generate a score or scores based on academic skills, such as standardized tests, grade point average or a writing sample with a scoring rubric.

¹⁴ Non-cognitive measures are instruments, such as student surveys or interviews, which show non-academic levels of interest and ability.

¹⁵ According to the report methodology, 59 community colleges responded out of the 112 that received the survey, for a response rate of 53%.

¹⁶ SB 490 amends the Early Assessment Program (EAP) to encourage community college districts participating in the EAP to sequence their pre-collegiate level courses and transfer-level courses in English and mathematics to the Common Core academic content standards for language arts and math.

reported using the following: highest math course completed; grade in last class completed; and grade in last English class completed.”^{xi}

- **ESL versions, accommodations for special education students and exemptions vary by campus.** While accommodations and assessments for ESL students vary, the state requires that colleges provide “appropriate accommodations,” such as extended time, assistive devices, or modification of an existing instrument.^{xii} Exemptions to taking multiple assessment measures are also determined on each campus; dual enrollment programs or “students enrolled in credential course or who have already completed a college degree” were common examples of exemptions.^{xiii}

6. Assessment Data Use

Similar to the selection of assessments instruments and multiple measures, data collection and use is also determined at the campus level. However, a centralized data collection system is anticipated as the system moves towards instituting a statewide common assessment. Table 4 outlines current characteristics and structures.

Table 4. Multiple Measures Assessment Data Use

Is there a data collection system for multiple measures placement results?	(N)
Is the multiple measures assessment data accessible to:	
• State policymakers?	(N)
• System officials?	(N)
• Campus administrators?	(Y)
• Faculty members?	(Y)
At what level is multiple measures assessment data available:	
• Individual student level (i.e. ability to view data at the individual student level)?	(Y)
• Aggregate student level (i.e. ability to view data across cohorts of students)?	(Y)
Is the multiple measures assessment data linked to other data systems:	
• Within the state (e.g. state longitudinal database)?	(N)
• Within the system? (e.g. system-wide data system on student outcomes)	(N)
• Within the institution (e.g. college-level student database)?	Varies
Is there a required multiple measures placement process used across the system?	(N)
Is there a process for the review or appeal of multiple measures placement decisions?	(Y)

The following outline the central points addressed in the data above:

- **The state does not have a centralized data collection system.** This limits test score portability and results in colleges reassessing transfer students upon entry.
- **Data access and availability varies by college.** Assessment data is stored at the campus level which limits data access and availability to the system office as well as to college officials and students. However, the system envisions the development of a central assessment database with the eventual administration of the common assessment, making data access easier for multiple audiences.

7. Assessment Cut Scores

As seen in Table 5, cut scores, similar to the multiple measures themselves, vary by campus.

Table 5. Assessment Cut Scores

Are there required, system-level cut scores ¹⁷ for multiple measures assessments?	Ⓝ
Do the cut scores vary by major or subject pathway (e.g. nursing program vs. drama program)?	Varies
Do the cut scores vary by college or campus?	Ⓨ
Were institutional faculty members involved in the development of cut scores?	N/A
Were institutional administrators involved in the development of cut scores?	N/A

Community colleges set their own cut scores. The standard-setting process also varies by college. Colleges are required to document the method, rationale, and appropriateness for setting that cut score and report to the Chancellor’s Office.

8. Lessons Learned

Interview respondents identified the following successes and challenges as key for other systems and colleges as they work to implement multiple measures processes:

Successes

- **Passage of legislation in support of common assessment reform:** Along with AB 3, S.B. 1456 and A.B. 743 have continued to support multiple measures policy while working to standardize the assessments used once funding is available.
- **Increased funding to support assessment reform:** The latest budget bill authorized a new funding stream to develop a statewide common assessment for placement and a centralized assessment data collection system.

¹⁷ Cut scores refer to any performance standard on an academic measure that is required in order to be placed in a particular course, such as specific test scores or minimum GPA.

Challenges

- **Equitable placement:** As one respondent stated, “the biggest challenge is the variation in the ways that multiple measures are implemented so students might not have the same experiences in the assessment of what they know. It is a concern that the process may not be equitable. That is why there is this interest in the statewide algorithm – to make student experiences more consistent.”^{xiv}
- **Finding measures for all student populations:** As community colleges serve both traditional and nontraditional students, finding appropriate quantifiable as well as non-quantifiable measures for all student populations – particularly for students who have been out of school for some time – was identified as a challenge.
- **Balancing local control while standardizing assessment:** Even though development of a common assessment system is nearing, college curricula will remain locally determined, as will actual placement policies. As a result, there may be variations in how students are placed from one college to the next.

Multiple Measures for Postsecondary Placement Assessment

State Profile: North Carolina

This document provides an overview of the policy context regarding the use of multiple measures of assessment for college placement decisions in the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS). The profile was developed using online research, document reviews and system-level interviews, and was verified by state interview respondents. The profile is intended to serve as a stand-alone summary of North Carolina's multiple measures policy; it will also contribute to a cross-state analysis.

The profile begins with an overview of North Carolina's postsecondary environment and its current multiple measures placement policy. It then describes six policy and practice areas central to the state's use of multiple measures: 1) catalysts in the development of multiple measures policies, 2) policy development, 3) assessment measures, 4) assessment data use, 5) assessment cut scores and 6) lessons learned.

1. State Postsecondary Environment

The public postsecondary landscape in North Carolina encompasses the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) and the University of North Carolina System (UNC System). The NCCCS is a 58-campus network that, based on the number of colleges, is the third largest community college system in the country.^{xv} NCCCS offers entry-level employment training through certificates and diplomas, as well as Associate's degrees in Applied Science, Associate's in Arts, Associate's in Fine Arts, Associate's in Science and Associate's in General Education programs. The UNC System includes 16 campuses across the state, providing both undergraduate and graduate level degrees and enrolling over 221,000 students.^{xvi}

2. Multiple Measures Policy Overview

The North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges approved the state's multiple measures policy on February 15, 2013. The multiple measures policy applies to all colleges in the NCCCS and establishes a hierarchy of measures that colleges can use to determine placement in college-level courses:

1. Students may be placed directly into college-level courses if they have an un-weighted high school GPA of 2.6 or above *and* can demonstrate that they have taken four math classes in high school, one of which is Algebra II.¹⁸
2. Students who do not meet the GPA requirement can submit their ACT/SAT scores to demonstrate readiness for college-level courses.
3. Students who graduated from high school more than five years ago or who do not meet the GPA or ACT/SAT cutoff must take a placement test.

Following approval of the policy, colleges were allowed to voluntarily adopt the policy for the 2013-14 academic year. A handful of colleges became "early adopters" of the policy, although the NCCCS does not formally track these colleges or their progress with regard to implementation as the policy is not yet

¹⁸ In February 2014, NCCCS submitted [a technical correction](#) to the Multiple Measures policy that specifies the eligible math courses for multiple measures placement. Additionally, NCCCS is currently working to include a 4th math enrollment indicator in the high school electronic transcript data download.

required. The multiple measures policy becomes mandatory for all community colleges in the state in the fall of 2015.

Table I. NCCCS Fast Facts (Source: **Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)**)

State-level Coordinating and/or Governing Agency				
North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges				
Number of Colleges/Campuses				
58 campuses				
Number of Students Served				
Full-Time Equivalent: 214,656			Total Headcount: 364,911	
Percentage of Full and Part Time Students				
Full-Time: 43%			Part-Time: 57%	
Student Demographics				
White: 59%	African American: 25%	Hispanic: 5%	Asian American: 1%	Other: 10%
Percentage of Students completing the following milestones				
Transfer: 13%	Associate's Degree: 18%	Certificate: 15%	Other*: 67%	

*Other is the sum of the non-completers who are still enrolled in the institution plus those who are no longer enrolled.

3. Catalysts for Multiple Measures Reform

In identifying the need for and determining the specifics of the multiple measures placement policy, the NCCCS relied on research by the Community College Research Center (CCRC) and information from organizations working at the national level to raise college completion rates.

External Influences

- Community College Research Center (CCRC) data on college completion: In 2010, the CCRC presented the NCCCS with data on college completion at the four North Carolina colleges participating in the Achieving the Dream initiative.^{xvii} NCCCS staff members reported that this data served as a “wake up call” about the need for a reform in the state’s placement policies for community colleges.^{xviii} At the request of NCCCS, the CCRC also made available a large amount of research and data specific to North Carolina during the development of the multiple measures policy.
- Developmental Education Initiative: Launched by Jobs for the Future (JFF) in 2009, in conjunction with college-level support from North Carolina-based company MDC, Inc. and financial support from the Gates Foundation, this work sought to “focus more intently on policies to support dramatic improvements for students whose assessment scores indicate the need for developmental education.”^{xix} In 2010, the NCCCS established a DEI State Policy Team, and, in 2012, a subgroup

called the Multiple Measures Working Group, which was tasked with creating a new multiple measures policy.

- **Completion by Design:** This second Gates Foundation initiative, in which JFF is a lead partner, focused on promoting policies that support higher completion rates, with particular attention to North Carolina’s community colleges. Five institutions participated, and the presidents from those colleges became active members of the state’s Multiple Measures Working Group.

Internal Influences:

- **Leadership of the NCCCS President:** When NCCCS President Dr. Scott Ralls began his term in 2008, he stated that reforms to developmental education—including establishing multiple measures for placement—would be components of his agenda.
- **SuccessNC:** Launched in 2010, the State Board of Community Colleges endorsed this strategic planning framework to support the goal of increasing the percentage of students who transfer, complete credentials or remain continuously enrolled from a six-year baseline of 45 percent for the fall 2004 cohort to a six-year success rate of 59 percent for the fall 2014 cohort.^{xx}

4. Policy Development

The creation of a multiple measures policy was a system-level, and system-led, initiative, especially in aligning the policy with college and career readiness standards and developmental education curricula. A Multiple Measures Working Group, which involved college presidents, vice presidents, chief academic officers, and faculty members, was tasked with developing the specifics of the policy structure (see Table 2).









Key for Table 2 through Table 5	
 YES	 NO

Table 2. Policy in Support of Multiple Measures Assessment Reforms

When was the multiple measures for college placement policy first enacted?	Feb.2013
Was legislation passed to support multiple measures for college placement?	
Was regulation approved to support multiple measures for college placement?	
Is the multiple measures policy designed to support state-based developmental education or career and college readiness standards?	
Is the multiple measures policy designed to support developmental curricular reforms?	
Has the state/system established a commission or task force to address the use of multiple measures for college placement?	
Has the state/system developed a strategic plan or report regarding the use of multiple measures for college placement?	

Were institutional administrators involved in the development of the multiple measures policy?	Y
Were faculty members involved in the development of the multiple measures policy?	Y
Did the state or system provide support or training on the implementation of the policy?	N
Does the state or system hold institutions accountable for the implementation of the policy?	N

- **The NCCCS sponsored workgroups that took the lead in policy development without legislation or regulation.** The NCCCS participated in the Developmental Education Initiative (DEI) and created a State Policy Team to examine the system’s placement policies. Out of this work, the state developed a smaller group - the Multiple Measures Working Group - which involved college presidents, vice presidents, chief academic officers, and faculty members. The Working Group presented the proposed policy at regular intervals to other institutional stakeholders. The multiple measures policy received approval from the State Board of Community Colleges in February 2013; no statutory or regulatory change was required.
- **The multiple measures policy is aligned to other educational reforms:** Efforts to create a multiple measures policy and improve the developmental education curriculum both began in 2010. The two policies were meant to go hand-in-hand in improving community college completion rates. When designing the multiple measures policy, the Multiple Measures Working Group also took into account the Common Core State Standards by requiring a level of rigor in high school math course completion. The math requirement is that students must have completed at least four eligible math courses, one of which was Algebra II.
- **Implementation of the multiple measures policy remains a work in progress.** Because implementation is not required until fall 2015, the state has yet to fully roll out support services around the multiple measures policy:

 - NCCCS has not yet provided formal training and support to institutions around implementation of the multiple measures policies.
 - NCCCS continues to work towards enabling colleges to access high school GPA data through automatic uploads of this information from high school transcripts.
 - The CCRC is currently conducting a mixed-methods study (funded by the Gates Foundation) of developmental education reforms, which includes the multiple measures policy. Results from this study will not be available until the 2015-16 academic year at the earliest.
 - There is currently no specific state accountability policy related to multiple measures implementation.

5. Assessment Measures

The system-wide use of multiple measures for college placement will become mandatory in fall 2015; the assessments will become standardized across colleges at that point (see Table 3).

Table 3. Multiple Assessment Measures

Is the use of multiple measures for placement mandatory or voluntary across the system?	Mandatory
Is the use of academic measures ¹⁹ required?	Y
Are specific academic measures required?	Y
Is the use of non-cognitive measures ²⁰ required?	N
Is the use of non-cognitive measures common?	N
What subjects use multiple measures to determine placement?	Math, Reading, & Writing
Do the multiple measures used vary by institution?	N
Are there versions of the assessments included as multiple measures for ELL students?	N
Are there accommodations for special education included in the multiple measures policy?	N
Are there exemptions for students included in the multiple measures policy?	N

- North Carolina’s policy establishes a hierarchy of measures for placement.** The multiple measures policy applies to placement in college-level math, reading, and writing courses and establishes a hierarchy of placement measures. The first measure is a student’s high school GPA and demonstration of a 4th math. The second is a student’s ACT/SAT scores. Finally, students who graduated from high school more than five years ago or who do not meet the GPA or ACT/SAT threshold must take a placement test. Colleges will continue to use Accuplacer, Asset or COMPASS for English/Reading until the NC DAP English/Reading diagnostic assessment is implemented in 2014.
- Non-cognitive measures are not included in the multiple measures policy.** Members of the Multiple Measures Working Group considered adding non-cognitive measures of ability into the multiple measures policy, but they ultimately decided against it because they believed it would be too easy for students to “game” assessments of perseverance or other similar measures.^{xxi} However, system officials indicated that they would be open to including non-cognitive measures in the future, and also described GPA as akin to a non-cognitive measure that accounts for perseverance during high school.

¹⁹ Academic measures are assessments that can generate a score or scores based on academic skills, such as standardized tests, grade point average or a writing sample with a scoring rubric.

²⁰ Non-cognitive measures are instruments, such as student surveys or interviews, which show non-academic levels of interest and ability.

- **There are no accommodations or exemptions included in the policy.** The College Board, which is the contractor for the system’s diagnostic assessments, complies with ADA regulations around accommodations for special education students. There are no additional accommodations or exemptions in the multiple measures policy itself. The only instances of flexibility for colleges in making placement decisions relate to student transcripts from before 2013 or out-of-state students who would not have transcripts with FRC codes.

6. Assessment Data Use

As shown in Table 4, while the measures themselves are standardized across the system, but campuses maintain some flexibility in determining how to use them for placement. Additionally, because these reforms were only implemented in 2013, and will not be required until 2015, certain aspects of the policy are still to be determined (*i.e.*, data reporting to faculty and students).

Table 4. Multiple Measures Data Use

Is there a data collection system for multiple measures placement results?	Y
Is the multiple measures assessment data accessible to:	
• State policymakers?	Upon Request
• System officials?	Y
• Campus administrators?	Varies
• Faculty members?	Varies
At what level is multiple measures assessment data available:	
• Individual student level (<i>i.e.</i> ability to view data at the individual student level)?	Y
• Aggregate student level (<i>i.e.</i> ability to view data across cohorts of students)?	Y
Is the multiple measures assessment data linked to other data systems:	
• Within the state (e.g. state longitudinal database)?	N
• Within the system? (e.g. system-wide data system on student outcomes)	N
• Within the institution (e.g. college-level student database)?	Varies
Is there a required multiple measures placement process used across the system?	N
Is there a process for the review or appeal of multiple measures placement decisions?	Varies

- **The NCCCS is working to streamline multiple measures data accessibility.** The state uses a data warehousing system, Colleague Performance Analytics, which allows colleges to see student-level multiple measures data, and the NCCCS and other state-level personnel to see aggregate data related to multiple measures placement. Specific access provisions are at the discretion of the institution; other individuals, including students and state policymakers, can access the individual and aggregate data upon request. The NCCCS is also currently working to streamline accessibility of GPAs by automatically populating this category from a statewide repository of high school transcripts. This new system is scheduled for release in the spring of 2014.

- **There are no multiple measures data reporting or data linking requirements.** Although the State Board reports that it is committed to maintaining the accessibility of the data it collects, there are no specific policies at this time around data reporting to the NCCCS, the State Board of Community Colleges, or other entities. Although it is possible that the multiple measures data may be linked to the state’s longitudinal data system (SLDS), this link is not yet in place as the SLDS itself has not been completed. There are no additional direct links with other data systems.
- **Placement decisions around placement occur at the college level.** The multiple measures policy dictates that the institutions use student-level data, follow the hierarchy of measures for placement into college level courses, and adhere to the cut score guidelines put forth by the NCCCS. There remains flexibility at the college level, however, to interpret the state policy and make case-by-case decisions. One example of institutional flexibility is how to account for out-of-state students who do may meet the GPA requirement but may not have FRC codes. Additionally, appeals to placement decisions based on student-level data are made at the level of the college, and the process around appeals varies by college.

7. Assessment Cut Scores

Cut scores in North Carolina, like the measures themselves, have been standardized across the system. Both faculty members and institutional administrators were involved in setting the cut score (see Table 5).

Table 5. Assessment Cut Scores

Are there required, system-level cut scores ²¹ for multiple measures assessments?	Y
Do the cut scores vary by major or subject pathway (e.g. nursing program vs. drama program)?	N
Do the cut scores vary by college or campus?	N
Were institutional faculty members involved in the development of cut scores?	Y
Were institutional administrators involved in the development of cut scores?	Y

- **Cut scores are based on research and national benchmarks.** Cut scores are uniform across all colleges, majors, and subject pathways:
 - **High School GPA:** 2.6 (for un-weighted GPA) and the high school Future Ready Code of 1, 2, 3, or 4.
Process: Research from CCRC^{xxii} showed that a high school GPA is highly predictive of a college GPA of approximately 6/10 of a point lower. The members of the Multiple Measures Working Group determined that a grade of a C or higher – i.e. a college GPA of a 2.0 – was acceptable, and therefore they worked backwards to set the high school GPA cut score at 2.6.

²¹ Cut scores refer to any performance standard on an academic measure that is required in order to be placed in a particular course, such as specific test scores or minimum GPA.

- o SAT/ACT:
 - English: ACT Reading 20 OR ACT English 18; SAT Writing 500 OR SAT Critical Reading 500.
 - Math: ACT Math 22; SAT Math 500
 - *Process:* The Multiple Measures Working Group used the national benchmarks set forth by the College Board and ACT to set the statewide cut scores for the ACT and SAT.

- o NC DAP Test: Official determinations are due in the spring of 2014.
Process: The Multiple Measures Working Group is no longer active as a taskforce, but the larger DEI initiative continues. Groups are currently working to develop the cut scores for the diagnostic assessments. The recommendation for the math assessment will be a 7 out of a possible 12 points. The English scores have yet to be determined.

8. Lessons Learned

Interview respondents identified the following as key successes and challenges:^{xxiii}

Successes

- **Providing a long window for implementation:** Policymakers believed that allowing a longer window for implementation was a good idea, in that it allowed institutions to naturally separate into two groups – the “early adopters” and the “wait-and-see institutions.” As of the spring 2014 semester, early adopters were primarily colleges whose presidents were involved in the Multiple Measures Working Group and therefore were supporters of the policy. “Wait-and-see institutions” were those who were waiting to learn from the successes and challenges of implementation experienced by the early adopters.

- **Using state-level research and data:** Research informed the policy at every step along the way, including: a) informing the problem; b) determining the components of the multiple measures system; c) setting the cut scores for each of the multiple measures; and d) explaining to stakeholders the value of the new policy. Policymakers reported that it was very helpful to have a wealth of data on college completion, GPA, and other indicators specific to students in North Carolina.

Challenges

- **Gaining buy-in from faculty:** Members of the Multiple Measures Working Group referenced difficulty in securing buy-in from faculty, particularly those in math departments who were accustomed to using diagnostic tests as the sole method of placement. As a remedy, the Multiple Measures Working Group met on multiple occasions with faculty to explain the research (based on data collected by the CCRC) around placement issues. They spent the majority of this time explaining that GPAs could serve as a more valid and reliable way to determine placement than the preexisting placement tests.

- **Avoiding technology/IT barriers:** The NCCCS encountered a number of legal and technical challenges as it attempted to pull GPAs from high school transcripts and make that data available in

a central location for all institutions. To address this challenge, the system relied on a data expert on their team to shepherd this process and navigate the many necessary data agreements.

- **Assessing the impact of the reforms:** The Multiple Measures policy was released at roughly the same time the NCCCS was reforming the developmental education curriculum. Although policymakers expressed their desire to tackle the developmental education problem in a holistic way, they also acknowledged that doing everything at the same time would make it more difficult to understand the impact of each individual policy on community college completion rates.

Multiple Measures for Postsecondary Placement Assessment

State Profile: Wisconsin

This document provides an overview of the policy context regarding the use of multiple measures of assessment for college placement decisions in the University of Wisconsin Colleges—public freshman/sophomore campuses that primarily serve as transfer institutions to the University of Wisconsin system. The profile was developed using online research, document reviews and system-level interviews, and was verified by state interview respondents. The profile is intended to serve as a stand-alone summary of Wisconsin’s multiple measures policy; it will also contribute to a cross-state analysis.

The profile begins with an overview of Wisconsin’s postsecondary environment and its current multiple measures placement policy. It then describes six policy and practice areas central to the state’s use of multiple measures: 1) catalysts in the development of multiple measures policies, 2) policy development, 3) assessment measures, 4) assessment data use, 5) assessment cut scores and 6) lessons learned.

1. State Postsecondary Environment

Wisconsin has two public higher education systems: the University of Wisconsin (UW) System and the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS). UW includes 13 public 4-year universities and 13 2-year colleges (UWC) for a total of about 181,000 students.^{xxiv} The Wisconsin Technical College System is divided into 16 technical colleges with 49 campuses that deliver career and technical education to 84,000 students.^{xxv} The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System serves as the statutory governing agency for all institutions in the system. The Wisconsin Technical College System Board has statutory responsibility for program planning, coordinating, approval and evaluation, and accountability for the use of state and federal funds.^{xxvi}

2. Multiple Measures Policy Overview

This brief focuses on the use of multiple measures for placement decisions in the University of Wisconsin Colleges (UWC) English Department’s reading and writing courses; the use of multiple measures is not in place in the WTCS. The reform began as a pilot project at one UW College and has expanded to several more since 2007 as a voluntary initiative. The Wisconsin English Placement Test (WEPT) must be included as one of the measures, but the use of multiple measures is not a requirement and the selection of other measures is at the discretion of the local campus. Table 1 provides an overview of the colleges included in the UW system.

Table I. UWC Fast Facts (Source: **Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)**)

State-level Coordinating and/or Governing Agency				
The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System				
Number of Colleges/Campuses				
13 campuses				
Number of Students Served				
Full-Time Equivalent: 10,568			Total Headcount: 18,975	
Percentage of Full and Part Time Students				
Full-Time: 61%			Part-Time: 39%	
Student Demographics				
White: 87%	African American: 2%	Hispanic: 4%	Asian American: 3%	Other: 4%
Percentage of Students completing the following milestones				
Transfer: 38%	Associate's Degree: 32%	Certificate: Not reported	Other*: 41%	

* Other is the sum of the non-completers who are still enrolled in the institution plus those who are no longer enrolled.

3. Catalysts for Multiple Measures Reform

The development of a multiple measure system of placement in University of Wisconsin Colleges (UWC) has been an organic process driven by local campuses, particularly the University of Wisconsin – Marathon County. Two English professors, Joanne Giordano and Holly Hassel, piloted a new process for using multiple assessment measures to determine student placement from 2007 to 2010; multiple measures continue to be used on the campus.

External Influences:

- Similar policies from other states and systems were not reported as influencing the use of multiple measures for college placement. However, research reports on placement policies in composition courses in two-year, open admission institutions were mentioned by interview respondents as important influences in the development of UWC's policy. Specifically, works by Huot; Issacs and Malloy; Moore, O'Neill and Huot; Peckham; and White argue that standardized tests such as the ACT, Accuplacer or COMPASS do not measure composition skills in ways that are always useful for placement decisions.^{xxvii} Instead, they argue that it is essential to review a student's writing in order to determine proper placement based on the locally-determined learning standards and curricula.^{xxviii}

Internal Influences:

- Awareness of Inaccurate Placement: English faculty at UW-Marathon County cited improper placement in first-year English courses based solely on the WEPT.^{xxix} Retake rates in the required credit-bearing English courses at the college ranged from 20% to 35%, suggesting that many

students had not been ready for the course when they first enrolled. Similar concerns have been a driver on other UWC campuses within English Departments.^{xxx}

- Multiple Measures Placement Pilot at UW-Marathon County: As mentioned, the work of Giordano and Hassel has been the driver of this initiative. In 2007, they began to phase-in a multiple measures approach to assessing student readiness by incorporating a short writing sample in addition to the required, system-wide Wisconsin English Placement Test (WEPT).^{xxx} During this pilot phase, the process was first used with “at-risk” students and then expanded to a larger pool. Over time, a student self-assessment of college readiness was also added.^{xxxii}
- Internal research on the Impact of Multiple Measures: During 2009 and 2010, Giordano and Hassel conducted research on the impact of multiple measures placement at UW – Marathon County and found that the number of at-risk students who remained in good standing at the end of their fall semester increased from 59% in 2006 to 73% in 2009.^{xxxiii} Based on the success of the initiative, other UWC campuses were encouraged by Giordano and Hassel to become involved and have determined campus by campus whether to use multiple measures for English placement.^{xxxiv}

4. Policy Development

Development of the multiple measures placement process in Wisconsin was not driven by the legislature, a state board or the executive branch, but rather by local institutions; see Table 2.









Key for Table 2 through Table 5	
 YES	 NO

Table 2. Policy in Support of Multiple Measures Assessment Reforms

When was the multiple measures for college policy first enacted?	2007 ²²
Was legislation passed to support multiple measures for college placement?	
Was regulation approved to support multiple measures for college placement?	
Is the multiple measures policy designed to support state-based developmental education or career and college readiness standards?	
Is the multiple measures policy designed to support developmental curricular reforms?	
Has the state/system established a commission or task force to address the use of multiple measures for college placement?	
Has the state/system developed a strategic plan or report regarding the use multiple measures for college placement?	

²² The UW College system has not established the use of multiple measures as policy, but it was first started at UW – Marathon County in 2007 and has expanded from there to other campuses.

Were institutional administrators involved in the development of the multiple measures policy?	Y
Were faculty members involved in the development of the multiple measures policy?	Y
Did the state or system provide support or training on the implementation of the policy?	Y
Does the state or system hold institutions accountable for the implementation of the policy?	N

The following points related to multiple measures policy development are notable:

- Formal state and system policy levers have not played a role in multiple measures reform.** The University of Wisconsin Board of Regents and the state legislature have not become involved in this reform to date.^{xxxv} Further, no task force or commission preceded UWC’s adoption of multiple measures. While the process was endorsed by the system-wide UWC English Department in 2010, individual colleges, in coordination with their Student Service offices, have determined whether to adopt the practice.^{xxxvi} At least four campuses have adopted multiple measures policies to date.
- The measures used align with student learning outcomes and have informed curricular revisions.** Writing prompts used for multiple measures assessments are developed and the student responses scored based on the First-Year Composition Learning Outcomes used across the UWC English Department. The English Department’s placement work also played a role in curricular revisions to both the writing program and the developmental program. Placement assessment data and research from the multiple measures placement process have given the English Department a more detailed understanding of student learning needs and informed curricular revisions, professional development training and the development of new teaching resources.
- Training and Support is provided to colleges involved in the reform.** The UWC Developmental Reading and Writing Coordinator and the Writing Program Administrator both provide training each spring on multiple measures placement. Each campus selects members of the English faculty and Student Services Office to serve as members of the team who will review incoming student assessment results and determine placement. All placement team members are required to be retrained annually; those who have experience in the process can serve as resources for members who are new to the process.^{xxxvii}
- Accountability measures are not in place.** The system office does not require the use of multiple measures and therefore does not hold campuses accountable for their use.

5. Assessment Measures

Prior to 2007, students in the UWC system were placed in first-year writing courses based only on the Wisconsin English Placement Test (WEPT). This test is still required across colleges in the system, but can be augmented by additional measures that vary by college (see Table 3).

Table 3. Multiple Assessment Measures

Is the use of multiple measures for placement mandatory or voluntary across the system?	Voluntary
Is the use of academic measures ²³ required?	Y
Are specific academic measures required?	Y
Is the use of non-cognitive measures ²⁴ required?	N
Is the use of non-cognitive measures common?	Y
What subjects use multiple measures to determine placement?	Reading & Writing
Do the multiple measures vary by institution?	Y
Are there versions of the assessments included as multiple measures for ELL students?	N
Are there accommodations for special education included in the multiple measures policy?	Y
Are there exemptions for students included in the multiple measures policy?	N

There are several important points to emphasize based on this data on assessment measures:

- **Multiple measures use is voluntary.** The use of multiple measures is voluntary across the UWC. Where multiple measures are used, they apply only to English Departments. Once a campus decides to use multiple measures, opportunities for customization exist.
- **The measures used for student placement are based on a set of standard set of assessments but also vary by campus.** The Wisconsin Placement Test (WEPT) is the only assessment measure used on all campuses. However, the campuses that use multiple measures for placement look at a writing sample and the following college readiness indicators: ACT English and reading scores, high school grades in English courses, and high school curriculum (e.g. advanced placement and International Baccalaureate). Campuses develop their own student questionnaires as well; however, for the fall 2014 semester, campuses will be using the same questionnaire, writing prompt, and recordkeeping system. Additional non-cognitive measures that have been used in placement decisions include a student’s home language and TRIO²⁵ eligibility.
- **Special education accommodations are available but ESL issues have received less attention.** As with all other measures, the availability of ESL assessment versions varies by campus,²⁶ but has received limited attention due to the low percentage of international and ESL students traditionally served by these campuses. Accommodations are available for special education students. UWC English Department recommendations specify that if a student with a disability did not receive accommodations for the placement test, then the placement team should contact the campus disability services specialist before making a final placement decision.

²³ Academic measures are assessments that can generate a score or scores based on academic skills, such as standardized tests, grade point average or a writing sample with a scoring rubric.

²⁴ Non-cognitive measures are instruments, such as student surveys or interviews, which show non-academic levels of interest and experience.

²⁵ TRIO refers to a number of federal programs aimed at increasing access to higher education for economically disadvantaged students.

²⁶ Placement assessment tools for international multilingual students will be available for the 2014 fall placement process.

- **Multiple measures exemptions have not been specified.** The English Department’s recommendations for multiple measures implementation do not include specific exemptions; however, campuses “try to do the best [they] can with students to get where they belong,” with the process “adjusted as needed.”^{xxxviii}

6. Assessment Data Use

Similar to the selection of assessments, the use of multiple assessment measures are customized by campus, based on the recommendations of the English Department. Table 4 outlines characteristics and structures for assessment data.

Table 4. Multiple Measures Data Use Structures and Policies

Is there a data collection system for multiple measures placement results?	N ²⁷
Is the multiple measures assessment data accessible to:	
• State policymakers?	N
• System officials?	N
• Campus administrators?	Y
• Faculty members?	Y
At what level is multiple measures assessment data available:	
• Individual student level (i.e. ability to view data at the individual student level)?	Y
• Aggregate student level (i.e. ability to view data across cohorts of students)?	N
Is the multiple measures assessment data linked to other data systems:	
• Within the state (e.g. state longitudinal database)?	N
• Within the system? (e.g. system-wide data system on student outcomes)	N
• Within the institution (e.g. college-level student database)?	N
Is there a required multiple measures placement process used across the system?	N
Is there a process for the review or appeal of multiple measures placement decisions?	Y

The following points are central to understanding the use of multiple measures results and the process of student placement:

- **Data collection and reporting mechanisms vary by assessment measure and campus:** While WEPT and ACT scores are easily accessible through the PeopleSoft Student Information

²⁷ While the WEPT and ACT scores are stored in the PeopleSoft Student Information System (SIS) and is accessible across the system, the results of other measures are not stored in that system.

System (SIS), the format used to store other student assessment files vary by campus (i.e. electronic or paper); a uniform data collection system is in development for multiple measures.²⁸ However, English faculty, campus student services staff and campus administrators have access as needed to multiple measures assessment results used in placing students.

- **Standardized multiple measures data reporting systems have not been developed.** Formal data reporting practices outside of the WEPT scores are not in place. Campuses use their own systems for organizing placement data and creating a report that students use at registration, based on a model provided by the UWC English Department.²⁹ Faculty members are not provided with assessment data when they receive class rosters.
- **The multiple measures placement process is team-based and considers each student individually.** A team of English faculty and student services staff review assessment results in each student's file and determine, based on a variety of criteria, what courses to recommend for each student. This process allows the team to look at measures such as standardized test results, high school grades, and non-cognitive data to get a more complete picture of a student's ability. Recommendations may include: Developmental English, ESL, College English 101 or 102, and possibly academic support courses and services in reading, study skills, learning skills, and/or conversation classes for non-native English speakers. It is recommended that placement review teams include two or more English Department members who have background in multiple measures placement.^{xxxix}
- **Guidelines for placement appeals have been developed by the UWC English Department.** While formal guidelines on placement appeals have been developed, local campuses determine the process of how a student initiates an appeal. A representative from the English Department and campus placement team coordinators work with the Student Services Office to develop an effective appeals process.^{xl}

7. Assessment Cut Scores

UWC cut scores for reading and writing placement measures were determined by the English Department, as can be seen in Table 5.

²⁸ The English Department will use a uniform placement recordkeeping system beginning with the Fall 2014 placement cycle. Campuses will submit an electronic placement record to the Writing Program Administrator and Developmental Reading and Writing Coordinator for an annual institutional assessment of the placement process.

²⁹ Beginning with the fall 2014 placement process, the UWC English Department will use a standardized data collection record sheet for the placement process and student registration.

Table 5. Assessment Cut Scores

Are there required cut scores ³⁰ used system-wide for multiple measures assessments?	Y
Do the cut scores vary by major or subject pathway (e.g. nursing program vs. drama program)?	N
Do the cut scores vary by college or campus?	N
Were institutional faculty members involved in the determination of cut scores?	Y
Were institutional administrators involved in the determination of cut scores?	Y

The UWC English Department has set cut scores for both the WEPT and the ACT, but they can be applied with flexibility on campuses. The multiple measures placement process allows campus placement teams flexibility in applying standard cut scores after assessing a writing sample and other information in a student’s placement file. The cut scores for these assessments are the same on all campuses, but are considered a starting point for placement decisions as placement teams factor in other indicators of college readiness. Cut scores do not vary by major or subject pathway; placement decisions have only to do with required reading and writing courses during a student’s first semester, regardless of a student’s overall program of study. To determine cut scores for the WEPT, the UWC English Department’s Composition Committee looked at WEPT cut scores for other University of Wisconsin System schools, along with institutional data about our students’ academic needs and composition success rates, and used this information to revise the WEPT cut scores. The UWC English Department then voted on the cut scores. Administrators in the UWC Office of Academic Affairs also reviewed and approved the cut score changes. A similar process was used to adopt guidelines for using the ACT as part of placement.

8. Lessons Learned

Based on the reflections of interview respondents, the following successes and challenges have been identified as potential lessons learned for other systems and colleges:

Successes

- **Research on improved outcomes at UW-Marathon County:** As noted above, Giordano and Hassel have published considerable research on their reforms to the placement process at UW-Marathon County. This has provided evidence that the multiple measures placement policies can improve outcomes for students and has been a driver for other institutions to become involved in the process.
- **Small scale piloting, and gradual expansion:** UW-Marathon County’s experience with multiple measures began with at-risk students, and then expanded. Similarly, the process was piloted at one college before reaching others in the UW College system. This piloting allowed for gradual adjustments and refinement.

³⁰ Cut scores refer to any performance standard on an academic measure that is required in order to be placed in a particular course, such as specific test scores or minimum GPA.

- **Bottom-up reform with institutional buy-in:** Wisconsin has a strong history of faculty governance and the fact that multiple measures has been a “bottom-up” reform that allows for campus customization has been important. The system has allowed campuses to make choices that reflect local context and institutional history; this in turn has allowed colleges to “stumble the first year” and make adjustments as necessary.^{xii}

Challenges

- **Scaling the adoption of Multiple Measures use:** Each campus determines whether or not to use multiple measures and which measures to use, which requires additional work from the English faculty, coordination with the Student Services Office, and funding to pay members of placement teams. The process is more involved than simply determining placement based solely on the WEPT, and so institutions have to decide whether the potential benefits to student placement outweigh the additional burden.
- **Establishing the Multiple Measures process at each institution:** While there are guidelines for the creation of a multiple measures process, each college must determine for itself exactly how that process will work, what measures will be used, which faculty will be involved, and what the appeals process will include. Establishing that practice on each campus takes time and resources.
- **Determining placement for each student without specific decision rules:** Placement teams on each campus look at each student individually and have to balance data from multiple sources in placing students. While a student’s WEPT score may place them in a credit-bearing course, their ACT score may not. In the same way, standardized test scores may be strong but a response to a writing prompt may be weak, and the team has to determine on a case-by-case basis how a student should be placed. The lack of standardization raises issues of assessment consistency and reliability.
- **Record keeping across campuses:** Without a standardized system across campuses to keep the results of multiple assessments measures outside of the WEPT and ACT, there have been challenges in using student paper files to make placement decisions.

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