



Best Practices in Implementing ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab

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Introduction

What is ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab? Why use it?

ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab is a blend of ACCUPLACER Diagnostics tests that provide data to deliver an individualized, online intervention curriculum through MyFoundationsLab to enhance student college readiness in preparation for placement into either developmental or college-level course work. Enhancing students' college readiness in order to reduce or eliminate developmental, non-credit courses in college has a major, positive impact on the issues of college affordability, retention, completion and graduation.

Possible Implementations of ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab

ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab is a flexible computer-based intervention solution that can be delivered to students in a variety of ways. The implementation process begins with students taking ACCUPLACER Diagnostics and then using those results to automatically create an individual learning path in MyFoundationsLab. Students can work at their own pace on assigned content that includes both instructional activities and assessments. As activities are completed, MyFoundationsLab is tracking each student's progress using metrics such as time-on-task, activity scores, number of attempts, and mastery of assessments. Teachers and administrators can review all of this data to monitor progress and provide just-in-time instruction as needed to supplement the courseware. At the end of the intervention period, scores from MyFoundationsLab can be used to evaluate college readiness in conjunction with ACCUPLACER testing. Diagnostics can be administered again as a posttest to determine growth in each domain, or placement tests can be used to determine if students meet the required cut scores for their intended colleges.

Because ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab is computer based, it can be used in any location that has appropriate hardware and Internet access. Possible scenarios include the following:

- Independent study can be beneficial, particularly for graduates who wish to use the summer after high school to prepare for placement testing before starting college. By taking ACCUPLACER Diagnostics at their high school or through their college, students can work at their own pace to enhance their skill level and potentially place into higher levels of course work immediately.
- Guided independent study is useful in both high schools and colleges in which scheduling intervention as part of a class is not possible. Students can work at their own pace with ongoing monitoring by faculty who can provide assistance and support as requested.
- Integrating ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab into classroom instruction blends online learning with the ongoing curriculum. Students can work on their own individual learning paths to build skills that support the ongoing curriculum; teachers can select topics that match their instructional goals; or a mix of both.
- A lab class provides time for students to work on their individual learning paths with an instructor available to monitor progress and provide assistance as required. Many colleges allow students to

register for a lab class, and then exit from the class with full credit once they have completed all content assigned in ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab.

ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab can be used to meet a variety of goals surrounding college readiness, and teachers can use data from ACCUPLACER Diagnostics to drive intervention and tailor instruction for programs, classes and/or individual students. The online content of MyFoundationsLab delivers an individual learning path for every student based on his or her needs. Possible uses of this powerful combination include the following:

- ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab can serve as an instructional component of college summer boot-camp experiences designed to prepare incoming students for placement testing.
- College developmental education courses benefit from ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab's ability to provide individualized instruction that speeds a student's progress through the course. Content can also integrate with ongoing instruction as an additional resource beyond a textbook.
- Colleges can offer ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab in area high schools as part of their outreach to prospective students to increase preparedness for placement testing and potentially reduce the amount of developmental education required.
- Individual high schools and/or school districts find ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab a powerful, flexible tool that can enhance their efforts to ensure students are considered college ready before graduation.
- Adult education programs that strive to prepare adults for college enrollment in credit-bearing courses.
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Implementation Planning

Successful implementations of ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab begin by creating a plan that defines the goals to be achieved, how success will be measured, the student population to be served, how testing will be accomplished, the means of providing access to the content and how access to technology will be provided.

Defining Goals

The beginning of the planning process is defining the goals to be met by the implementation of ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab. How will success be measured? Will it be by the number of students placing into college level courses? Will it be by reducing the number of developmental courses required? Will it be increased performance on content domains as measured by ACCUPLACER Diagnostics?

Identifying the Student Population

While serving all students would be ideal, due to limited resources such as staffing, schedule, and availability of technology, most campuses must make decisions about which students to target with ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab. Not only are students who plan to attend college candidates for intervention but also those who are heading into career or vocational programs in which meeting a placement score is required.

Students Planning to Attend a College Using Placement Testing

Upon matriculation most students, even those attending four-year institutions, will face a placement process with the potential to take remedial instruction before moving to college level, credit-bearing courses. Being prepared in advance through access to ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab can help all students reduce or eliminate the need for these courses, saving both time and money.

Students Not Meeting PSAT/NMSQT® or SAT® College-Readiness Benchmarks

As part of its suite of college readiness programs and assessments, the College Board has researched and defined benchmark numbers on both the PSAT/NMSQT (currently a composite of 133 for 10th-graders and 142 for 11th-graders) and SAT (currently a composite of 155) that indicate whether a student's performance is on track to be considered college ready. Targeting students who fall below those benchmark numbers will help them to close the gap in college readiness as they finish high school.

Students in Academic Difficulty

Schools have a wealth of data about student performance including course grades and state test scores. Utilizing ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab with students of average and below-average achievement can make a significant difference not only in their college readiness but also in their success in the high school curriculum by filling gaps in their knowledge and providing additional practice on core academic skills.

Students Not Necessarily Planning to Attend College

Many students do not plan or expect to attend college yet make last-minute decisions to enroll, particularly at community colleges. Using ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab can ensure that all students have the academic preparation to move into college-level course work more quickly.

Students in Early or Middle-College High School Programs

Many high school students plan to participate in dual-enrollment programs that allow them to earn high school and college credit concurrently, yet they may not have completed prerequisite course work or met a college's placement requirement. Using ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab can build the knowledge and skills required for successful placement and qualification for college level course work offered through dual enrollment.

Measures of Success

Identifying measures of success based on objective data is important to the implementation of ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab because it provides guidance on which strategies work to improve student achievement and which strategies need fine-tuning for the next iteration of the intervention. In addition, some measures of success, such as comparing pre- to posttest scores, require scheduling of additional assessment that must be considered in the intervention timeline. Success can be measured in many ways:

- One measure of success is to evaluate the performance data generated by ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab of students as they work through their assigned learning path. Each topic assigned contains not only instructional activities but also an assessment that can be used to determine whether a student has mastered an entire topic. This metric includes the final score and whether the topic is considered to be mastered.
- Because ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab requires pretesting with ACCUPLACER Diagnostics, administering Diagnostics at the end of the intervention period allows a pre- to posttest comparison of score domains for individual students as well as the entire cohort. Because of the computer-adaptive nature of ACCUPLACER, students will likely receive different test items of higher difficulty on the posttest that will measure the gains they have made.
- Because one of the main purposes of ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab is to increase placement levels, one measure of success is to compare pre- to posttest placement scores. Growth can be defined as either the point gains made on each test by individual students and the cohort as a whole or as the initial course placement as compared to the final course placement. Use of pre- to post-placement scores would require administration of ACCUPLACER placement tests in addition to Diagnostics.
- In high schools that can establish a data-sharing agreement with their local colleges, comparing the percentage of students placing into each level of course work before and after use of ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab can provide insight into the success of an intervention. An advantage to this approach is that students do not experience additional testing but instead go through the placement process at the colleges as normal.

Defining Instructional Strategies

A key consideration for implementing ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab is the instructional strategy or strategies to be employed. These can be based on many factors including students targeted, purpose or timeline of the intervention, building or campus schedule, instructional staff available and technology available.

Independent Study

This instructional model allows students to work completely on their own in the ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab online intervention curriculum. No provision is made for dedicated class time or access to hardware; students must provide their own computer and must manage their own learning without access to a teacher.

Independent Study with Guidance

This instructional model allows students to work on their own in the ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab online intervention curriculum while also receiving some monitoring and guidance from a teacher. No provision is made for dedicated class time or access to hardware; students must provide their own computer and must manage their own learning with minimal support.

Lab

This instructional model allows students to work on their own on the ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab online intervention curriculum while receiving ongoing monitoring and guidance from a teacher. Access to

technology is provided on a regular basis as part of a scheduled class or a required lab time outside of class.

Blended Learning

This instructional model allows the teacher to manage the pace of the intervention program and assignment of MyFoundationsLab content so that it integrates with ongoing instruction in a course. Access to technology can be provided in class or be required outside of class. A teacher provides ongoing guidance and monitoring of student achievement.

Roles and Responsibilities

As with any project, various roles and responsibilities must be performed in order to have a successful implementation. Depending on the personnel available, these tasks may be accomplished by different individuals or may be made with just one or two people.

Role of the Institution Administrator or Site Manager

Within ACCUPLACER, the roles of institution administrator and site manager are crucial to setup of the account for testing, including user creation, customization of test setup and overseeing the testing process. This individual may be in a college testing center or could be a lead individual in a high school or school district.

Role of the Proctor

In ACCUPLACER, the proctor is a professional staff member responsible for administering and monitoring testing. Proctors may be part of a college's test center staff or be high school teachers, counselors and/or administrators.

Role of the Instructor

Use of ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab shifts the role of the instructor from a lecturer responsible for presenting content to a coach who assists students with questions, monitors student achievement, provides motivation and celebrates success. This role is critical to students' success particularly for those who lack the motivation and discipline to perform independently. Suggested instructional activities include:

- Reviewing data from ACCUPLACER at the conclusion of Diagnostics testing to understand the needs of individual students as well as the entire cohort.
- Monitoring data in the MyFoundationsLab gradebook to see that students are making sufficient progress and identifying topics that are difficult for individual students or the entire group. Data available includes time on task, dates and times activities are completed, activity scores, number of attempts, mastery of topics based on end-of-topic mastery tests, individual student averages and class averages. Tools in the grade book allow instructors to review individual answers to questions from activities in the same way they can grade a paper-based test; this is useful in understanding where a student may be having difficulty with a topic.

- Conferencing with students on an ongoing basis. This is a strong strategy that engages students in discussion of their achievement to provide suggestions for improvement and opportunities to celebrate success.
- Assisting students on an as-needed basis when they encounter difficulty with content presented through MyFoundationsLab. Frequently, clarifying an instruction on the screen or answering a question just-in-time can allow students to continue working successfully on their learning path.
- Ongoing review of student achievement data. Doing so can help identify topics that a group or even an entire class is having trouble understanding. The teacher can provide a mini lesson to clarify the concept for those students then let them return to MyFoundationsLab with a better understanding.

Role of Leadership

As with all instructional programs, leadership at the building, program or campus level is critical to successful implementation of ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab. Several different areas are important:

- Advocating for college readiness on behalf of students is essential, particularly at the high school level. Students, teachers and parents are typically focused on high school graduation, meeting state-testing requirements, etc., and may not understand the ramifications of underperforming on college placement testing or the value of the opportunity to prepare in advance.
- Setting goals and making decisions about the various options available to implement ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab is important to providing a successful intervention experience that will enhance student achievement.
- Assembling the necessary resources for successful implementation includes providing adequate staffing, adequate technology in sufficient quantity to serve the number of students participating and funding required for access to ACCUPLACER and MyFoundationsLab.
- Monitoring the implementation as it progresses is essential and can be accomplished through conversations between faculty and students. In addition, reviewing data from ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab platforms can provide insights beneficial to the overall instructional program and curriculum in addition to understanding the status of individual students and the cohort as a whole.

Role of Counselors and Academic Advisors

- Advocating for college readiness on behalf of students is essential, particularly at the high school level. Students, teachers and parents are typically focused on high school graduation, meeting state-testing requirements, etc., and may not understand the ramifications of underperforming on college placement testing or the value of the opportunity to prepare in advance.
- Communicating with parents and students about the requirement for placement testing at the colleges students hope to attend is essential. Frequently they do not know about these requirements and are not aware of the potential for students to place into multiple levels of developmental course work that slows degree completion and raises the cost of a higher education.

- Monitoring the implementation as it progresses is essential and can be accomplished through conversations with faculty and students as well as reviewing data available from both ACCUPLACER and MyFoundationsLab.

Role of Information/Educational Technology Specialists

Technology specialists play a critical role in ensuring that ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab, as an Internet-based solution, operates smoothly. Depending upon the requirements of a particular implementation, they may also act as institution administrators or site managers for ACCUPLACER.

Technical Considerations

ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab is a blended solution that relies on two independent Web-based platforms: ACCUPLACER, which assesses students through Diagnostics, and MyFoundationsLab, which delivers online content. Both run via Web browsers running on industry-standard hardware. Specific hardware requirements for ACCUPLACER can be found here:

www.accuplacer.org/cat/SystemRequirements.do and for MyFoundationsLab here: accumfl.pearsoncmg.com/system-requirements.

Overall technical considerations include:

- ACCUPLACER Diagnostics must be given in a proctored environment and, therefore, must be administered on campus in a testing center or a computer lab or on classroom computers.
- MyFoundationsLab does not need to be proctored, so while instructor monitoring is critical to success, it can be used anywhere including in computer labs, on classroom computers or off campus at home or in libraries.
- Adequate access to appropriate technology to meet the demand is necessary. The number of students should be considered as well as the type of access: lab, classroom, individual laptop, etc. Depending upon the time frame selected for access to MyFoundationsLab (10 weeks or 12 months), students may need significant time in the courseware to make the progress desired.
- Hardware should be configured properly with appropriate versions of required plug-ins. A browser check for each platform is available from the links above.

Time Requirements

- Each of the four ACCUPLACER Diagnostics is composed of 40 questions. Although untimed, each test takes approximately an hour to complete. Students typically perform better when testing is divided across two to three days, especially if they are taking all four tests. In each test, the **Save and Finish Later** link is available, which allows students to save their place and return later.
- Students will be most successful if they work on the content assigned through their MyFoundationsLab learning paths on a consistent, ongoing basis. Each topic assigned requires approximately an hour to complete so students with more topics suggested may need substantial time to make measurable

progress.

- Mathematics has 77 possible topics based on the Arithmetic and Elementary Algebra Diagnostics.
- Reading has 20 possible topics based on the Reading Comprehension Diagnostics.
- Writing has 20 possible topics based on the Sentence Skills Diagnostics.
- Study Skills has 20 topics available for supplemental instruction.

Educator Professional Development

Professional Development to ensure that the staff understands the goals of the implementation of ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab as well as the operation of each component is essential to success. Depending upon the roles and responsibilities, some individuals may need training in just a few or in all of the areas listed below:

- Design and Uses of ACCUPLACER
 - Preparation for Testing
 - Account Setup
 - System Requirements Check
 - Testing with ACCUPLACER Diagnostics
 - Proctoring Testing
 - Reporting
 - Understanding MyFoundationsLab
 - Design of MyFoundationsLab
 - Operation of Student Courseware
 - Use of Gradebook
 - Monitoring Student Progress
 - Using ACCUPLACER Diagnostics data to refine instruction
 - Using MyFoundationsLab data to refine instruction
 - Best Practices

Implementation Workflow

The timeline required to implement ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab can vary depending on a number of factors including the number of students to be served, the amount of technology available for testing and intervention and even whether an institution already has access to ACCUPLACER and MyFoundationsLab. The following example can serve as a guide and should be modified based on the actual implementation:

1. **Implementation Planning:** Making decisions about the design and goals of the implementation, roles and responsibilities of personnel, administering ACCUPLACER Diagnostics, student access to MyFoundationsLab, teacher/instructor monitoring of student work and testing to be performed at the conclusion of the implementation. This step involves collaboration between leadership, instructional staff and the technology team.

2. Request an ACCUPLACER account if required: Institutions must have an account to test. High schools may request their own account or test through a college account if available. The key contact requesting access will be designated as the institution administrator.
3. Request activation of MyFoundationsLab if required: Access to MyFoundationsLab must be added to an ACCUPLACER account so that proper data (access codes, course IDs, and locator codes) are generated at the conclusion of ACCUPLACER Diagnostics testing. This is the responsibility of the designated institution administrator.
4. ACCUPLACER account setup: Decisions made regarding the selection of tests and other settings must be built in ACCUPLACER as a branching profile. This is the responsibility of the institution administrator and/or site manager.
5. Purchase of ACCUPLACER test units: In order to test, test units must be added to the ACCUPLACER account. An order form is available under the **Order Tests** tab. Please allow sufficient time for an order to be sent from the institution and processed by the College Board. This is usually the responsibility of institution administrator in conjunction with institution leadership and/or purchasing.
6. Testing students with ACCUPLACER Diagnostics: Depending upon the number of students to be tested and institution schedules, this process may take several days. Responsibility for testing may rest with a college testing center, developmental education instructors, and/or high school teachers/counselors.
7. Activation of MyFoundationsLab student accounts based on data from Individual Score Report: At the conclusion of ACCUPLACER Diagnostics testing, students must register on the MyFoundationsLab site by creating an account with login credentials and then entering data from the Individual Score Report. At that point, students' learning paths are created based on their individual needs and their readiness to begin working. This is students' responsibility but depending upon the implementation, teachers and/or testing staff may choose to register for students to streamline the process.
8. Students work on assigned learning paths in MyFoundationsLab: Students work on their learning path as either independent study or as part of a class. Depending on the time length purchased for implementation, the time frame may be as short as 10 weeks or can be extended for a full 12 months.
9. Teachers/instructors monitor student achievement via MyFoundationsLab gradebook based on the instructional setting: As students work, they are generating data that should be monitored to inform the teacher of progress, difficulties encountered by students and overall trends in achievement.
10. Posttest students with either ACCUPLACER Diagnostics or placement tests: Depending upon the implementation design, students may be post-tested with ACCUPLACER placement tests to determine placement into college courses, or they can be tested with Diagnostics to determine individual and group progress on all domains tested. As with pretesting, responsibility may rest with a college testing center, developmental education instructors and/or high school teachers/counselors.

11. Evaluate effectiveness of the intervention: At the conclusion of the implementation process, data should be reviewed to determine the impact and develop recommendations for improvement for the next iteration. This is the joint responsibility of the entire implementation team.