



ACCUPLACER

Coordinator's Guide

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Contents

Purpose of the ACCUPLACER Tests	1
Unique Features of ACCUPLACER	
OnLine™	1
Computer-Adaptive Testing.....	1
Timing	2
ACCUPLACER Tests	2
Scores.....	3
Retesting	3
Test Content	3
Reading Comprehension Test.....	3
Sentence Skills Test.....	3
Arithmetic Test.....	4
Elementary Algebra Test.....	4
College-Level Mathematics Test	4
Use of Calculators	5
ACCUPLACER ESL Tests	5
ACCUPLACER ESL Reading Skills.....	5
ACCUPLACER ESL Language Use	5
ACCUPLACER ESL Sentence Meaning	5
ACCUPLACER ESL Listening Test	5
WritePlacer® <i>Plus</i>	6
WritePlacer <i>Plus</i> Scoring	6
WritePlacer <i>Plus</i> Score Descriptors	7
Texas WritePlacer <i>Plus</i>	8
Texas WritePlacer <i>Plus</i> Score Descriptors	9
WritePlacer® ESL.....	10
WritePlacer—ESL Score Descriptions	11
Supplementary Skills Modules.....	12
Interpretation of Test Scores	12
Reading Comprehension Proficiency	
Statements	12
Sentence Skills Proficiency Statements.....	13
Arithmetic Proficiency Statements	13
Elementary Algebra Proficiency	
Statements	14
College-Level Mathematics Proficiency	
Statements	14
ACCUPLACER ESL Tests	15

ESL Language Use Proficiency	
Statements	15
ESL Sentence Meaning Proficiency	
Statements	16
ESL Reading Skills Proficiency	
Statements	16
ESL Listening Proficiency Statements	17
ACCUPLACER Background Questions.....	18
Approved to Show Ability to Benefit.....	19
ATB Testing Procedures	19
ATB Retesting Policy	19
Guidelines for a Suitable Testing	
Environment	20
Facilities, Comfort, and Environment	20
Accommodating Students with Special	
Needs	20
Checklist.....	21

Purpose of the ACCUPLACER Tests

The purpose of ACCUPLACER® tests is to assist with the determination of course placements that are appropriate for students. ACCUPLACER tests can also be used to monitor student course progress and to suggest whether remediation is still needed or if a change in course assignment is recommended. Because of the “adaptive” nature of the tests, the questions presented on successive tests will vary, thereby greatly reducing the effects of repeated practice on the tests.

Scores from ACCUPLACER tests are intended for use in making placement decisions. To assure fairness, placement decisions made with the aid of ACCUPLACER scores should be reviewed periodically and, if classroom performance indicates that students are capable of more advanced work or need further preparation, placement assignments should be changed. Also, it should be noted that placement decisions are most accurate when multiple measures are used. When possible, ACCUPLACER scores should be used in conjunction with other available data on student performance.

Unique Features of ACCUPLACER OnLine™

ACCUPLACER OnLine™ uses sophisticated technology to provide accurate and efficient measurement of students’ knowledge and skills. It uses *computer-adaptive testing* technology to select specific test questions that are best suited for each particular test-taker. This “tailoring” of the test for each student allows for accurate diagnosis of students’ knowledge and skills; the test uses fewer items than are typically required in traditional “paper-and-pencil” tests. The computerized nature of the assessment also allows for instantaneous score reporting. As soon as a student finishes testing, her or his scores are available and can be immediately exported into existing campus information systems. An extremely convenient feature of ACCUPLACER OnLine is that it is administered over the Internet, so schools can access the testing program whenever it is convenient for them without difficulties of installing and upgrading software.

Computer-Adaptive Testing

Computer-adaptive testing is a test administration system that uses the computer to select and deliver test items to examinees. These tests are called *adaptive* because the computer selects the items to be administered to a specific examinee based, in part, on the proficiency of the examinee. Unlike many traditional tests where all examinees take a single form of an exam, the computer adapts or “tailors” the exam to each examinee. This tailoring is done by keeping track of an examinee’s performance on each test item and then using this information to select the next item to be administered. The criteria for selecting the next item to be administered to an examinee are complex. However, the primary criterion is a desire to match the difficulty of the item to the examinee’s current estimated proficiency.

All ACCUPLACER tests, with the exception of WritePlacer® *Plus* and WritePlacer® *ESL*, are computer adaptive. Adaptive testing means that the sequence of test questions and the questions themselves will vary from student to student. The next question administered to an examinee is automatically chosen to yield the most information about the examinee based on the skill level indicated by answers to all prior questions.

ACCUPLACER tailors the test to each student using an item-selection algorithm. This algorithm initially administers an item of middle difficulty to each student, randomly selected from a group of very similar items. If the response was wrong, it branches to a randomly chosen item from a group of easier items; if the response was right, it branches to a randomly chosen one item from a group of more difficult items.

As illustrated in Figure 1-1, a student’s performance on one ACCUPLACER test question determines the difficulty level of the next question that will be delivered. Two things determine a student’s score on an ACCUPLACER test: how many questions were correctly answered and the difficulty level of the questions that were answered correctly.

Because students are tested at their individual ability levels, each student is likely to encounter a different test. This eliminates problems of students exchanging information about answers either before or during

the test. Adaptive testing provides very accurate measurement over the complete range of a particular skill. Students in institutions that offer multiple levels of developmental courses will benefit most from the accuracy of adaptive testing. These tests, by personalizing the choice of successive test questions, achieve their accuracy with substantially fewer questions than conventional tests.

Although few questions (12–20) are presented for each ACCUPLACER test, great accuracy is maintained. This process achieves several positive results. The difficulty of the questions is quickly and automatically adapted to the capability of the individual student. Thus, challenging tests corresponding to each student’s skill level are always provided. Because of the untimed nature of the tests, students may work at their own pace. Both students and administration can benefit since test results may be displayed immediately.

Timing

ACCUPLACER tests are untimed. The average time an examinee takes to complete a multiple-choice test is 30 minutes. Timing for writing essays is set by the test center administrator.

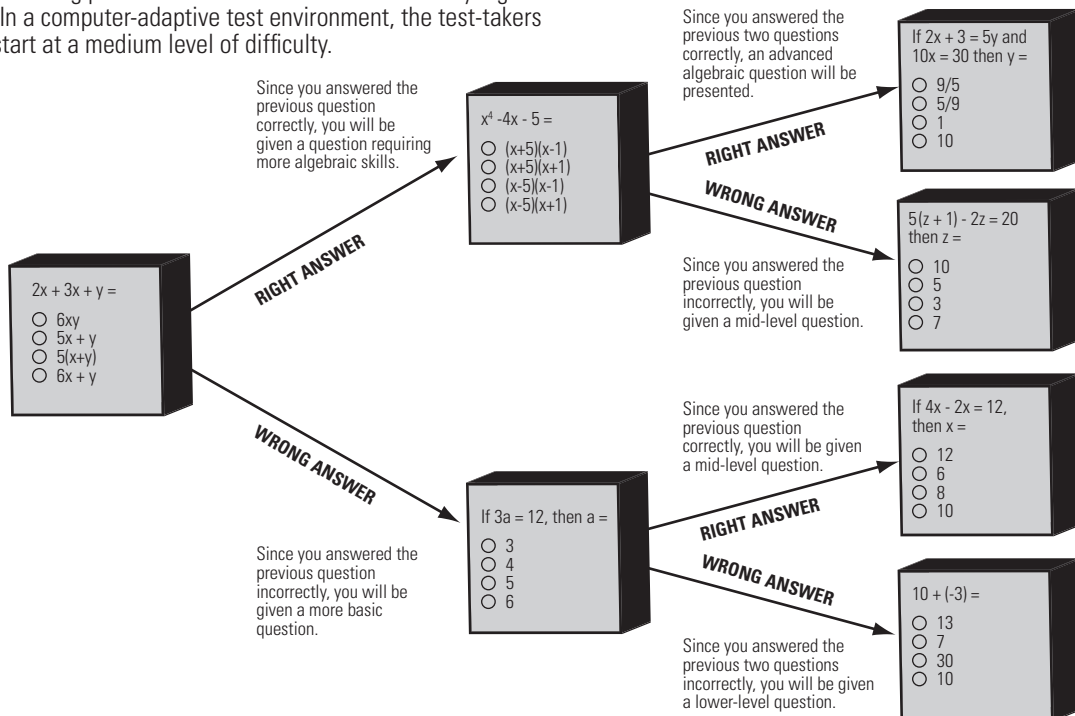
ACCUPLACER Tests

The ACCUPLACER system includes nine computer-adaptive, multiple-choice tests. The five core tests include Reading Comprehension, Sentence Skills, Arithmetic, Elementary Algebra, and College-Level Math. There are four tests of English as a second language designed to assess the English skills of students whose first language is not English. These tests include ACCUPLACER ESL Reading Skills, ACCUPLACER ESL Sentence Meaning, ACCUPLACER ESL Language Use, and ACCUPLACER ESL Listening.

In addition to these adaptive tests, there are two linear Supplementary Skills tests that can be used to gain diagnostic information on arithmetic and elementary algebra skills of low-performing students.

Figure 1-1 Illustration of Sample Computer-Adaptive Test

The following pool of items is based on an elementary algebra test. In a computer-adaptive test environment, the test-takers will start at a medium level of difficulty.



In addition to the ACCUPLACER multiple-choice tests are WritePlacer *Plus* and WritePlacer ESL that score student essays using the IntelliMetric artificial intelligence system. The essay score can be included in placement rules.

The Tests

ACCUPLACER TEST	# ITEMS ADMINISTERED
Reading Comprehension	20
Sentence Skills	20
Arithmetic	17
Elementary Algebra	12
College-Level Mathematics	20
ACCUPLACER ESL	
Reading Skills	20
Sentence Meaning	20
Language Use	20
Listening	20

Scores

Scores for the tests are reported on a 120-point scale. Scores are reported as whole numbers or as numbers with decimal places. Test center administrators have the option of having the Total Right Score reported as a whole number or as a number with decimal places. The Percentile Rank and the Standard Error of Measure may also be printed on Individual Student Score Reports if the test center administrator selects to have these scores reported under Testing Options.

The **Total Right Score** is calculated using a formula. This is the score that should be used in computing summary statistics, in correlating test performance with other information in a student's records, and in other statistical treatments of the test data.

The **Percentile Rank** indicates student performance in relation to a normative sample of test-takers. For the ACCUPLACER tests, the normative population was composed of college entry-level students at both two- and four-year colleges.

The **Standard Error of Measure (SEM)** corresponding to a particular score shows the accuracy of the test in assessing a student's skills and reflects the accuracy of the measurement. Statistically, two-thirds of the examinees will have true levels within the + or – one SEM.

Retesting

The College Board encourages each college to develop its own retest policy and to publish it with other information about placement testing. It is recommended that students be allowed to retest only after they have done a thorough review of the subject matter being tested.

Test Content

Reading Comprehension Test

Each student taking this test will be presented with a series of 20 questions of two primary types. The first type consists of a reading passage followed by a question based on the text. Both short and long narratives are provided. The reading passages can also be classified according to the kind of information processing required, including explicit statements related to the main idea, explicit statements related to a secondary idea, application, and inference.

The second type of question, sentence relationships, presents two sentences followed by a question about the relationship between these two sentences. The question may ask, for example, if the statement in the second sentence supports that in the first, if it contradicts it, or if it repeats the same information.

Both reading passages and sentence relationship questions are varied according to content categories to help prevent bias because of a student's particular knowledge. These categories include social sciences, natural and physical sciences, human relations and practical affairs, and the arts.

Sentence Skills Test

Each student receives 20 Sentence Skills questions of two types. The first type is sentence correction, which requires an understanding of sentence structure. These questions ask students to choose the most appropriate word or phrase to substitute for the underlined portion of the sentence.

The second type of question is construction shift. It asks that a sentence be rewritten according to the

criteria shown while maintaining essentially the same meaning as the original sentence.

Within these two primary categories, the questions are also classified according to the skills being tested. Some questions deal with the logic of the sentence, others with whether or not the answer is a complete sentence, and still others with the relationship between coordination and subordination. In a manner similar to Reading Comprehension questions, these questions are varied according to categories to prevent bias because of a student's particular knowledge. These categories include social sciences, natural and physical sciences, human relations and practical affairs, and the arts.

Arithmetic Test

The 17 arithmetic questions administered by the ACCUPLACER tests are divided into three types.

- Operations with whole numbers and fractions: topics included in this category are addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, recognizing equivalent fractions and mixed numbers, and estimating.
- Operations with decimals and percents: topics include addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division with decimals. Percent problems, recognition of decimals, fraction and percent equivalencies, and problems involving estimation are also given.
- Applications and problem solving: topics include rate, percent, and measurement problems, distribution of a quantity into its fractional parts, and graphs and tables.

Questions from all three categories are always presented to the student, although the number of questions from each category varies with the student's skill level.

Elementary Algebra Test

A total of 12 questions, divided into three types, are administered in this test. The first type involves operations with integers and rational numbers, and includes computation with integers and negative rationals, the use of absolute values, and ordering. These questions test minimal skill levels of the student.

A second type involves operations with algebraic expressions, evaluation of simple formulas and expressions, and adding and subtracting monomials and polynomials. At all skill levels, questions involving multiplying and dividing monomials and polynomials, the evaluation of positive rational roots and exponents, simplifying algebraic fractions, and factoring are provided.

The third type of question involves the solution of equations, inequalities, and word problems.

College-Level Mathematics Test

A total of 20 questions are administered in the College-Level Mathematics Test (CLM). CLM assesses proficiency in intermediate algebra through precalculus. This test therefore assists institutions with placement of students into intermediate algebra, college algebra, precalculus, and introductory calculus courses.

Questions administered in this test, representing six general categories, are as follows:

- Algebraic Operations, including simplifying rational algebraic expressions, factoring and expanding polynomials, and manipulating roots and exponents.
- Solutions of Equations and Inequalities, including the solution of linear and quadratic equations and inequalities, systems of equations, and other algebraic equations.
- Coordinate Geometry involving plane geometry, the coordinate plane, straight lines, conics, sets of points in the plane, and graphs of algebraic functions.
- Applications and Other Algebra Topics, including complex numbers, series and sequences, determinants, permutations and combinations, factorials, and word problems.
- Functions including questions involving polynomial, algebraic, exponential, and logarithmic functions.
- Trigonometry including trigonometric functions.

For a complete description of test specifications see chapters 4–9 of the ACCUPLACER Technical manual.

Use of Calculators

Some of the mathematics items have pop-up calculators for students to use when answering the question. The items were written so that the use of a calculator will not help the student answer the question, it is simply provided as a tool for the student to use. For example, if a student is asked to calculate the area of a rectangle, (s) he must know the formula (length times width) for calculating the area. The calculator is available in this case as a tool for multiplying the length times the width. It will not help the student who does not know the formula.

Calculators are not available for all items. For example, if a student is asked to estimate the value of 9.755 times 5.688, the calculator is not available, because the question is asking the student to round 9.755 to 10, and 5.688 to 6 and multiple 10 times 6 in their head. The use of the calculator would “help” the student answer this type of question; therefore, it is not available.

In Setup ACCUPLACER, it is possible to turn the pop-up calculator off. It is recommended that students be provided with the pop-up calculator because item difficulty levels were calculated from data where students were using the pop-up calculator.

ACCUPLACER ESL Tests

The ACCUPLACER ESL (English As a Second Language) Tests assess the English skills of students who have learned English as a second language or who are native English speakers with limited proficiency.

Performance is expressed on the 120-point scale as is used for other tests in the ACCUPLACER battery.

ACCUPLACER ESL Reading Skills

The ACCUPLACER ESL Reading Skills test measures the students' comprehension of short passages. The test contains brief passages of 50 words or less and moderate length passages of 50 to 90 words. There is a variety of passage content such as the arts, human relationships, physical science, history/social sciences, and prac-

tical situations. Half of the Reading Skills test contains straightforward comprehension items (paraphrase, locating information, vocabulary on a phrase level, and pronoun reference). The other half assesses inference skills (main idea, fact versus opinion, cause/effect logic, identifying irrelevant information, author's point of view, and applying the author's logic to another situation).

ACCUPLACER ESL Language Use

The ACCUPLACER ESL Language Use test measures grammar and usage. It contains questions in two formats: completing a sentence by filling in a blank with the word or phrase from the choices given, and choosing a sentence that best combines two discrete sentences that are given. The skills covered are subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, forms of irregular verbs, appropriate verb forms in structures, noun-noun agreement, noun forms, pronouns, modifiers, comparatives, prepositions, connectives, parallelism, and sentence fragments/run-ons.

ACCUPLACER ESL Sentence Meaning

The ACCUPLACER ESL Sentence Meaning test assesses the understanding of word meanings in one- or two-sentence contexts. The sentences are drawn from the content areas of natural science, history/social studies, arts/humanities, psychology/human relations, and practical situations. The areas tested are particle verbs (or phrasal verbs), basic and important idioms, adverb/adjective phrases, basic nouns, verbs and adjectives (particularly terms of beauty, age, greatness, size), adverbs of frequency, sequence of adverbs (before, after, during), prepositions of direction and place (from, to, at, for, etc.), comparatives, connectives, and commands.

ACCUPLACER ESL Listening Test

The ACCUPLACER ESL Listening test contains 20 questions and is a direct measure of the listening skills of nonnative English speaking students. The test measures the ability to listen to and understand one or more persons speaking in English. The conversations

take place in academic environments such as lecture halls, study sessions, a computer lab, the library, the gymnasium, and so forth; and in everyday environments such as at home, at a store, at a restaurant, at a dentist's office, listening to the radio, reading the newspaper, and performing tasks at work.

First the student listens to the conversation or lecture and the question that follows, while looking at pictures of the speakers. Below this are four answer choices, either written on the screen or with a drawing next to each choice. The student chooses the best answer to the question that was asked, and clicks on the button next to his or her choice. The student can click on the appropriate PLAY button if he or she wants to listen again to the conversation, the question, or any of the choices. Each of these can be heard only two more times after the initial reading.

A committee of college faculty and other educators defined the listening skills considered important for entry-level college students. Both literal comprehension and implied meaning were included, and seven listening skills were identified. Multiple-choice items were developed to measure the listening skills.

WritePlacer[®] Plus

WritePlacer *Plus* is a direct measure of student writing skills offered as part of the College Board's ACCUPLACER program. Examinees are asked to provide a writing sample in response to a specific prompt. This assessment measures writing skill at the level expected of an entry-level college student.

WritePlacer *Plus* Scoring

Writing samples for WritePlacer *Plus* are scored using a modified holistic scoring, a procedure used to evaluate the overall quality of writing based on the features of writing identified below. Holistic scoring is used to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the writing sample as evidenced by how well a piece of writing communicates a whole message. Each writing sample is evaluated based on its overall impression, not on the basis of the individual writing characteristics in isolation.

Each response is evaluated based on the following features of writing:

- Focus
- Organization
- Development and Support
- Sentence Structure and Usage
- Mechanical Conventions

Scores are reported on a scale from 2 to 12, reflecting the sum of two readers' scores or the IntelliMetric model powered by Vantage Technologies of the two readers' scores. If the two readers disagree by more than one point, a third reader evaluates the writing. A score of zero indicates that the essay was off topic, in a language other than English, too short to be evaluated, or in some other way not able to be scored. Descriptions of each score are shown in the table on the facing page.

WritePlacer *Plus* Score Descriptors

Score	Description
2	This writing sample shows little evidence of mastery of organization, development, focus, sentence structure, usage, and conventions.
3	This writing sample is largely unsuccessful at communicating a main idea or point of view, and there is little evidence of an organizational structure. Ideas lack focus and development, and there are many errors in mechanical conventions of usage, sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
4	This writing sample addresses the topic with little success. There is often no clear statement of a main idea or point of view, and there is confusion found in the writer's efforts in presenting supporting detail. Any organization that is present fails to present an effective sequence of ideas. There are many errors in mechanical conventions of usage, sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
5	This writing sample addresses the topic with limited success. There is some evidence of a main idea or point of view, but there is difficulty in articulation. An attempt at organization is made with limited success. There are significant errors in mechanical conventions of usage, sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
6	This is a limited writing sample in which the characteristics of effective written communication are only partially formed. The statement of purpose is not totally clear, and although a main idea or point of view may be stated, continued focus on the main idea is not evident. Development of ideas by the use of specific supporting detail and sequencing of ideas may be present but is incomplete or unclear. The response may exhibit distracting errors or poor precision in the use of grammatical conventions, including poor sentence structure, poor word choice, poor usage, poor spelling, and poor punctuation.
7	This is a restricted writing sample that only partially communicates a message to the specified audience. The purpose may be evident, but it is only partially formed. Focus on the main idea is only partially evident. The main idea is only partially developed, with limited supporting details. While there is some evidence of control in the use of mechanical conventions such as sentence structure, usage, spelling, and punctuation, some distracting errors may be present.
8	This is an adequate writing sample that competently communicates a message to a specified audience. Though the purpose of the writing sample may be clear, the development of supporting details may not be fully realized. The writer's organization of ideas is evident but may lack specificity, be incomplete, or not developed in effective sequence. There is evidence of control in the use of mechanical conventions such as sentence structure, usage, spelling, and punctuation, though minor errors in the use of conventions may be present.
9	This is a very good writing sample that substantially communicates a whole message to a specified audience. A purpose and focus are established but are only partially developed. An organizational pattern is evident but is only partially fulfilled. The writer competently handles mechanical conventions such as sentence structure, usage, spelling, and punctuation, though very minor errors in the use of conventions may be present.
10	This is a strong writing sample that effectively communicates a whole message to a specified audience. The writer establishes a purpose and maintains focus throughout the writing sample. The writer exhibits strong control in the development of ideas and clearly specifies the supporting details. There is evidence of mastery of mechanical conventions such as sentence structure, usage, spelling, and punctuation.
11	This is an excellent writing sample that is very effective at communicating a whole message to a specified audience. The writer establishes a clear purpose, and a focus is effectively maintained throughout the writing sample. Ideas are well developed and well supported. The writer clearly demonstrates mastery of sentence structure, usage, spelling, and punctuation.
12	This is an outstanding writing sample that is very effective at communicating a whole message to a specified audience. The response is well organized and maintains a clear central focus with a clearly stated purpose. The writer exhibits superior control in the development and support of ideas. The writer demonstrates superior facility with mechanical conventions such as sentence structure, usage, spelling, and punctuation.

Texas WritePlacer *Plus*

Writing samples for Texas WritePlacer *Plus* are scored on an 8-point scale using a modified holistic scoring method, a procedure used to evaluate the overall quality of writing based on the features of writing identified below. Holistic scoring is used to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the writing sample as evidenced by how well a piece of writing communicates a whole message. Each writing sample is evaluated based on its overall impression, not on the basis of the individual writing characteristics in isolation.

Each response is evaluated based on the following features of writing:

- Focus
- Organization
- Development and Support
- Sentence Structure and Usage
- Mechanical Conventions

A score of zero indicates that the essay was off topic, in a language other than English, too short to be evaluated, or in some other way not able to be scored. Descriptions of each score are shown in the table on the facing page.

Texas WritePlacer *Plus* Score Descriptors

Score	Score Point Description
2	The writer attempts to address the topic, but language and style are inappropriate for the given audience, purpose, and/or occasion. There is often no clear statement of a main idea or point of view, and there is confusion in the writer's efforts in presenting supporting details. Any organization that is present fails to present an effective sequence of ideas. The sentence structure, when presented in paragraph form, is ineffective, and few sentences are free of errors. Adding to the confusion is the writer's inability or lack of care in making word choices. There are many errors in mechanical conventions of grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
3	The writer is largely unsuccessful at communicating a main idea or point of view, and there is little evidence of an organizational structure. Ideas lack focus and development, and there are many errors in mechanical conventions of usage, sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
4	This is a partially developed writing sample in which the characteristics of effective written communication are only partially formed. Statement of purpose is not totally clear, and although a main idea or point of view may be announced, continued focus on the main idea is not evident. Development of ideas by the use of specific supporting detail and sequencing of ideas may be present but is incomplete or unclear. Paragraphs are composed of sentences poorly structured with noticeable and distracting errors. The writer also exhibits poor precision in the use of grammatical conventions, including poor word choice, poor usage, poor spelling, and poor punctuation.
5	This writing sample only partially communicates a message to the specified audience. The purpose may be evident but is only partially formed. Focus on the main idea is only partially evident. The main idea is only partially developed, with limited supporting details. While there is some evidence of control in the use of mechanical conventions such as sentence structure, usage, spelling, and punctuation, some distracting errors may be present.
6	This is an adequately formed writing sample that attempts to communicate a message to a specified audience. Though the purpose of the writing sample may be clear, the writer's attempts to develop details may not be fully realized. The writer's organization of ideas may be characterized by a lack of specificity and/or incomplete development of ideas in effective sequence. Sentence structure within paragraphs is adequate, though minor errors in sentence structure, usage, and word choice are evident. There are also errors found in the use of mechanical conventions such as spelling and punctuation.
7	This is a very good writing sample that substantially communicates a whole message to a specified audience. Purpose and focus are established but may only be partially developed. An organizational pattern is evident but is only partially fulfilled. The writer competently handles mechanical conventions such as sentence structure, usage, spelling, and punctuation, though very minor errors in the use of conventions may be present.
8	This is a well-formed writing sample that effectively communicates a whole message to a specified audience. The writer maintains unity of a developed topic throughout the writing sample, and the writer establishes a focus by clearly stating a purpose. The writer exhibits control in the development of ideas and clearly specifies the supporting details. The sentence structure is effective and free of errors. There is precision and care reflected in usage and choice of words as well as evidence of mastery of mechanical conventions such as spelling and punctuation.

WritePlacer ESL

WritePlacer ESL is offered with the ESL tests. Using a 6-point scale, it provides a direct measure of the writing skills of students who are not native speakers of English. Because Vocabulary and Sentence Structure are skill areas that nonnative speakers need to develop, those dimensions of writing are included in addition to three rhetorical dimensions of writing that apply to both native and nonnative writers.

In this test, a specific prompt is provided, and examinees are asked to provide a writing sample that responds to the prompt. The test measures whether a student needs to be placed in an ESL class before beginning regular college work and what level of ESL class the student should be placed in.

WritePlacer ESL Score Descriptions

Score	Description
0	No holistic score—This essay has not been given a holistic score or the five dimensional scores because it is either a blank page, incoherent, insufficient (too short to assess), in a foreign language, or off topic.
1	This writing sample attempts to address the topic but is not effective. There appears to be no pattern of organization of the essay. There is little or no evidence of a main idea, and therefore not enough development and support. While the essay may contain familiar words written correctly, as a whole it contains a limited vocabulary with many errors in usage. The writing sample may be confusing due to errors in sentence structure, word usage, grammar, and mechanics.
2	Although this writing sample responds to the topic, the main idea is incomplete or hard to understand. The organization contains errors in logic and may not present an effective sequence of ideas. There are few or no details provided to support or develop the topic. The vocabulary used in the essay is simple, familiar, and may be inappropriate. The writing sample typically contains simple sentences, possibly with short, familiar phrases. The sentences contain frequent errors in structure, word forms, and syntax. There are generally frequent errors in mechanics.
3	This writing sample may respond to the topic by stating the main idea, and the main idea may be partially developed using lists and generalizations. Some organization is present, although there are occasional errors in logic and little relationship within and between paragraphs. The vocabulary used in the essay is simple and familiar but may be inappropriate. Typically the writing sample will contain some original simple sentences; however, there are significant errors in sentence structure, word usage, syntax, and mechanics.
4	This writing sample is adequate. A main idea is evident, and there is some evidence of development of this idea. The organization of ideas is adequate. The writer's vocabulary is adequate, even though the vocabulary used may be simple and sometimes inappropriate. There is evidence of some control of word usage and grammar as well as sentence structure. The writing sample typically shows reasonably accurate spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, although there may be some errors in mechanics.
5	This is a strong writing sample. The writing sample states a main idea and provides some specific details and examples to support the main idea. Typically the organization is clear and logical and contains relationships within and between paragraphs that are usually clearly signaled. The choice of vocabulary is sometimes inappropriate. The essay generally shows clarity of expression and provides evidence that the writer can write original sentences and can control most kinds of sentence structures and word forms. Spelling and punctuation are usually correct, although there are occasional errors in mechanics.
6	This is a very strong writing sample. The topic is effectively addressed, and the main idea is apparent. The writing sample maintains a central focus. The essay is effectively organized with a logical sequence of ideas that is typically sustained within and across paragraphs. The writing sample provides specific details and examples to develop the main idea. The vocabulary used is generally well suited to what is expressed, and any errors in choice of words do not confuse the reader. The essay typically contains a variety of sentence structures, correct word usage, and correct grammatical forms. The writing sample is generally free of mechanical errors.

Supplementary Skills Modules

There are two Supplementary Skills modules designed to provide additional information on students who score low on either the Arithmetic or Elementary Algebra tests. These modules consist of 18 items that are delivered in a linear (nonadaptive) sequence.

The Supplementary Skills modules augment the ACCUPLACER tests. The student's report shows the question topic, the student's response, and whether that response was correct. The results of the Supplementary Skills modules are displayed as the number correct for each skill assessed. There are three questions asked about each of the six skill areas listed below.

Arithmetic Supplementary Skills

Multiplication/Division—Whole Numbers

Addition/Subtraction—Decimals

Multiplication/Division—Decimals

Addition/Subtraction—Fractions

Multiplication—Fractions

Division—Fractions

Elementary Algebra Supplementary Skills

Ordering of Signed Numbers

Addition/Subtraction—Signed Numbers

Multiplication/Division—Signed Numbers

Simplification of Complex Fractions

Concept of a Variable

Operations—Algebraic Expressions

Interpretation of Test Scores

The interpretation of test scores is one of several factors to consider in placing students into regular or remedial courses. Since placement criteria for your institution are unique, it is not possible for the College Board to provide you with definitive rules to use in your interpretation of scores and placement of students.

The Proficiency Statements (see below) for all ACCUPLACER tests provide useful information for understanding students' skill levels. Actual placement decisions should include other variables that may contribute to an accurate assessment of a student's ability such as high school grades, background information, etc.

Reading Comprehension Proficiency Statements

Total Right Score of About 51

Students at this level are able to comprehend short passages that are characterized by uncomplicated ideas, straightforward presentation and, for the most part, subject matter that reflects everyday experiences. These students are able to:

- recognize the main idea and less central ideas
- recognize the tone of the passage when questions do not require fine distinctions
- recognize relationships between sentences, such as the use of one sentence to illustrate another

Total Right Score of About 80

Students at this level are able to comprehend short passages that are characterized by moderately uncomplicated ideas and organization and to employ moderately sophisticated vocabulary. These students are able to:

- answer questions that require them to synthesize information, including gauging point of view and intended audience
- recognize organizing principles in a paragraph or passage
- identify contradictory or contrasting statements

Total Right Score of About 103

Students at this level are able to comprehend passages that, although short, are somewhat complex in terms of the ideas conveyed and that deal with academic subject matter, often in a theoretical framework. These students are able to:

- extract points that are merely implied
- follow moderately complex arguments or speculation
- recognize tone
- analyze the logic employed by the author in making an argument

Sentence Skills Proficiency Statements

Total Right Score of About 53

Students at this level can:

- solve problems in simple subordination and coordination
- correct sentence fragments

Total Right Score of About 86

Students at this level can:

- solve problems of faulty coordination and subordination in a sentence with one or two clauses
- manipulate complex verb tenses
- correct misplaced modifiers
- solve problems that combine grammar and logic

Total Right Score of About 110

Students at this level can:

- manipulate complex sentences with two or more subordinate clauses
- correct problems of syntax and repetitive diction
- recognize correct and incorrect linkages of clauses, including problems involving semicolons

Arithmetic Proficiency Statements

Total Right Score of About 31

Students at this level have minimal arithmetic skills. These students can:

- perform simple operations with whole numbers and decimals (addition, subtraction, and multiplication)
- calculate an average, given integer values
- solve simple word problems
- identify data represented by simple graphs

Total Right Score of About 57

Students at this level have basic arithmetic skills. These students can:

- perform the basic arithmetic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division using whole numbers, fractions, decimals, and mixed numbers
- make conversions among fractions, decimals, and percents

Total Right Score of About 90

Students at this level have adequate arithmetic skills. These students can:

- estimate products and squares of decimals and square roots of whole numbers and decimals
- solve simple percent problems of the form $p\%$ of $q = ?$ and $?\%$ of $q = r$
- divide whole numbers by decimals and fractions
- solve simple word problems involving fractions, ratio, percent increase and decrease, and area

Total Right Score of About 112

Students at this level have substantial arithmetic skills. These students can:

- find equivalent forms of fractions
- estimate computations involving fractions
- solve simple percent problems of the form $p\%$ of $? = r$
- solve word problems involving the manipulation of units of measurement
- solve complex word problems involving percent, average, and proportional reasoning

- find the square root of decimal numbers
- solve simple number sentences involving a variable

Elementary Algebra Proficiency Statements

Total Right Score of About 25

Students at this level have minimal prealgebra skills. These students demonstrate:

- a sense of order relationships and the relative size of signed numbers
- the ability to multiply a whole number by a binomial

Total Right Score of About 57

Students scoring at this level have minimal elementary algebra skills. These students can:

- perform operations with signed numbers
- combine like terms
- multiply binomials
- evaluate algebraic expressions

Total Right Score of About 76

Students at this level have sufficient elementary algebra skills. By this level, the skills that were beginning to emerge at a Total Right Score of 57 have been developed. Students at this level can:

- add radicals, add algebraic fractions, and evaluate algebraic expressions
- factor quadratic expressions in the form $ax^2 + bx + c$, where $a = 1$
- factor the difference of squares
- square binomials
- solve linear equations with integer coefficients

Total Right Score of About 108

Students at this level have substantial elementary algebra skills. These students can:

- simplify algebraic expressions
- factor quadratic expressions where $a = 1$
- solve quadratic equations

- solve linear equations with fractional and literal coefficients and linear inequalities with integer coefficients
- solve systems of equations
- identify graphical properties of equations and inequalities

College-Level Mathematics Proficiency Statements

Total Right Score of About 40 or Less

These students should take the Elementary Algebra test before any placement decisions are finalized.

Total Right Score of About 40

Students scoring at this level can:

- identify common factors
- factor binomials and trinomials
- manipulate factors to simplify complex fractions

These students should be considered for placement into intermediate algebra. For further guidance in placement, have these students take the Elementary Algebra test.

Total Right Score of About 63

Students scoring at this level can demonstrate the following additional skills:

- work with algebraic expressions involving real number exponents
- factor polynomial expressions
- simplify and perform arithmetic operations with rational expressions, including complex fractions
- solve and graph linear equations and inequalities
- solve absolute value equations
- solve quadratic equations by factoring
- graph simple parabolas
- understand function notation, such as determining the value of a function for a specific number in the domain
- have a limited understanding of the concept of function on a more sophisticated level, such as determining the value of the composition of two functions

- have a rudimentary understanding of coordinate geometry and trigonometry

These students should be considered for placement into college algebra or a credit-bearing course immediately preceding calculus.

Total Right Score of About 86

Students scoring at this level can demonstrate the following additional skills:

- understand polynomial functions
- evaluate and simplify expressions involving functional notation, including composition of functions
- solve simple equations involving:
 - trigonometric functions
 - logarithmic functions
 - exponential functions

These students can be considered for a precalculus course or a nonrigorous course in beginning calculus.

Total Right Score of About 103

Students scoring at this level can demonstrate the following additional skills:

- perform algebraic operations and solve equations with complex numbers
- understand the relationship between exponents and logarithms and the rules that govern the manipulation of logarithms and exponents
- understand trigonometric functions and their inverses
- solve trigonometric equations
- manipulate trigonometric identities
- solve right-triangle problems
- recognize graphic properties of functions such as absolute value, quadratic, and logarithmic

These students should be considered for placement into calculus.

ACCUPLACER ESL Tests

The ACCUPLACER ESL Proficiency Tests assess the English skills of students who have learned English as

a second language or who are native English speakers with limited proficiency.

ESL Language Use Proficiency Statements

The ACCUPLACER Language Use test contains two types of questions: sentence completions, in which students fill in a blank with a word or phrase from the choices given; and questions for which students select the sentence that best combines two discrete given sentences.

Total Right Score of About 55

Students scoring at this level can choose correct grammatical forms when they are controlled by the basic rules of grammar. For example, in simple sentences, they can recognize basic grammatical structures such as subject-verb agreement, pronoun case and form, noun forms (including recognizing subject, case, and number), and verb forms. They can handle questions involving word order, prepositional phrases, and simple clauses

Total Right Score of About 82

Students scoring at this level can handle a variety of complex structures such as comparatives at the phrase level such as “so tall that,” relative clauses, structures at the clause level such as “not only...but also,” simple subordination, and function at the whole-sentence level.

Total Right Score of About 100

Students scoring at this level can demonstrate the following additional skills:

- recognize the following: irregular verb forms such as “draw/drawn,” fairly unusual idioms such as “couldn’t get over it,” and indirect object structures such as “gave her one”
- handle questions involving transformations of declarative sentences into questions, the conditional mood, and parallelism
- choose appropriate structures to state complex ideas, often in complex sentences using subordination or coordination

ESL Sentence Meaning Proficiency Statements

The Sentence Meaning test assesses English vocabulary knowledge within the context of sentences drawn from the content areas of natural science, history/social studies, arts/humanities, psychology/human relations, and practical situations. Areas tested include particle verbs, basic and important idioms, adverb/adjective phrases, basic nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs of frequency, sequence of adverbs, prepositions of direction and place, comparatives, connectives, and commands.

Total Right Score of About 61

Students at this level can demonstrate the following skills:

- handle sentences with simple structures characterized by everyday subjects and simple vocabulary, including common nouns, adjectives, and verbs
- select the appropriate vocabulary in sentences that provide multiple contextual clues

Total Right Score of About 88

Students at this level can demonstrate the following additional skills:

- handle vocabulary in sentences that have compound or complex structures or that present more complex situations than the sentences at the 20th percentile level
- handle the following kinds of vocabulary:
 - two-word verbs
 - adverbs of comparison
 - more extended idiomatic expressions
 - longer descriptions
- select appropriate vocabulary in sentences that provide a single contextual clue

Total Right Score of About 106

Students at this level can demonstrate the following additional skills:

- handle vocabulary in sentences with complex structures that are characterized by abstract statements or idiomatic expressions
- demonstrate knowledge of idioms that are two-word verbs or the use of idioms to express the appropriate meaning
- deduce the appropriate vocabulary from an entire sentence rather than from specific contextual clues, often in situations where grammar and vocabulary intersect

ESL Reading Skills Proficiency Statements

The Reading Skills test measures comprehension of short passages. The subtest contains brief passages of 50 words or less and moderate length passages of 50 to 90 words.

Total Right Score of About 57

Students at this level can demonstrate the following skills:

- locate information in a passage by answering literal comprehension questions on even the longest passages, if the question posed and the answer to that question are in the same sentence or in close proximity to each other
- answer questions in which the wording in the answer is very similar to the wording in the passage or uses minimal paraphrasing
- answer some questions requiring small inferences (including questions asking for the main idea of the passage) if the options do not require fine distinctions
- answer questions based on maps and charts

Total Right Score of About 82

Students at this level can demonstrate the following additional skills:

- answer questions that require:
 - drawing conclusions on the basis of the information presented in the passage
 - making inferences from the information presented

- recognize the main idea of a passage even when presented with wrong answer choices mentioned in the passage as supporting information

Total Right Score of About 102

Students at this level can demonstrate the following additional skills:

- answer questions that require dealing with a passage as a whole or manipulating the information presented in the passage
- make generalizations on the basis of the information in the passage, recognize what was implied, and answer questions about the author’s tone and purpose

ESL Listening Proficiency Statements

ESL Listening is a direct measure of the listening skills of nonnative English speaking students. The test measures the ability to listen to and understand one or more people speaking in English. The conversations take place in academic environments such as lecture halls, study sessions, a computer lab, the library, the gymnasium, and the like; and in everyday environments such as at home, at a store, at a restaurant, at a dentist’s office, listening to the radio, reading the newspaper, and performing tasks at work.

Total Right Score of About 50–69

Students at this level may show reasonable proficiency in literal comprehension but are likely to encounter difficulty following instructions and may find it difficult to draw inferences. While they may show proficiency in understanding common everyday situations and simple academic situations, they are likely to have difficulty comprehending more complex life situations and many academic situations. Students at this level have a relatively small vocabulary of basic words but may have difficulty beyond that level.

Total Right Score of About 70–89

Students at this level typically are skilled in literal comprehension and can make the more direct inferences but may lack the ability to make more complex inferences and to follow instructions. While

they may show proficiency in understanding most everyday situations and common academic situations, they may have difficulty comprehending more complex academic situations, including lectures. Students at this level have a working vocabulary to handle many everyday situations but will have difficulty with more complex or infrequently used words.

Total Right Score of About 90 or Higher

Students at this level are able to comprehend both literal and inferential meaning of spoken material. They typically show proficiency in understanding everyday situations and all types of academic situations. Students at this level can understand a large number of words and can handle more complex vocabulary.

ACCUPLACER

Background Questions

Shown below are the ACCUPLACER background questions. Titles in bold are used on score reports if answers to background questions are selected.

Sex

What is your sex?

- Female
- Male
- I choose not to answer

Self-Description

How do you describe yourself?

- Native American, American Indian, or Alaskan Native
- Black or African American
- Mexican American
- Puerto Rican
- Other Hispanic, Latino, Central American, or South American
- Asian or Pacific American
- White (Non-Hispanic) or Caucasian
- Other
- I choose not to answer

Major Field of Study

Select your major from the list below. If you are undecided or are unsure of your major, choose Omitted. (Colleges must add their own list of majors using the codes.)

Disabling Condition

What documented disabling condition do you have, if any, that might affect the usefulness of your test scores as measures of your skills?

- None
- Hearing Impairment
- Speech Impairment
- Visual Impairment
- Emotional (Psychological) Impairment
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Learning Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Omit

English First Language

Is English the first language you learned?

- Yes
- No
- Omit

Years Studied Mathematics in High School

What is the total number of years you studied mathematics in high school (grades 9–12)? Count less than a full year of mathematics as a full year but do not count a repeated year of the same course as an additional year of study.

- 1 year
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 4 years
- More than 4 years
- None
- Omit

Studied Algebra in High School

Did you study algebra for at least one semester in high school?

- Yes
- No
- Omit

Years Since Last Mathematics Course

How long has it been since you have taken a mathematics course or other formal mathematics training?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 3 years
- 4 to 6 years
- 7 or more years
- Omit

Years Studied English in High School

What is the total number of years you studied English in high school (grades 9–12)? Count less than a full year of English as a full year, but do not count a repeated year of the same course as an additional year of study.

- 1 year
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 4 years
- More than 4 years
- None
- Omit

Father's Education

What is the highest level of education completed by your father or male guardian?

- Grade school or less
- Some high school
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Business or trade school
- Some college
- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Some graduate or professional school
- Completed graduate or professional school
- Omit

Mother's Education

What is the highest level of education completed by your mother or female guardian?

- Grade school or less
- Some high school
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Business or trade school
- Some college
- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Some graduate or professional school
- Completed graduate or professional school
- Omit

GED Certificate

Are you a high school graduate or do you hold a GED certificate?

- Yes
- No
- I am still in high school
- I choose not to answer

Federal Financial Aid

Do you intend to apply for federal financial aid?

- Yes
- No
- I choose not to answer

Approved to Show Ability to Benefit

The ACCUPLACER tests have been approved for use as a measure of a student's "ability to benefit." Ability to Benefit (ATB) legislation regulates the approval and administration of tests that may be used to determine a student's eligibility for assistance under the student financial assistance programs authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (Title IV, HEA programs), if the student does not have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent. The regulations also propose a passing score for each approved test.

ATB Testing Procedures

For assessment in the verbal area, institutions should administer the Reading Comprehension and Sentence Skills tests, and the Arithmetic test for mathematics. Shown below are the required passing scores.

ACCUPLACER Tests	Approved Scores*
Reading Comprehension	55
Sentence Skills	60
Arithmetic	34

*Federal Register/Vol.67, No. 76/ Friday, April 19, 2002 / Notices

For ease in identifying the candidates for ATB determination, institutions should turn on the two background questions that ask if the test-taker is a high school graduate or holds a GED and if the test-taker intends to apply for federal financial assistance. The addition of these questions will make it easy to find ATB candidates within the database.

ATB Retesting Policy

Because ACCUPLACER is a computer-adaptive test, the number of different forms (i.e., sequences of test items in a session) is very large. The College Board recommends that within any three-month period, ATB candidates be permitted an initial test and one retest. The retest should occur after a two-week waiting period. Students should be encouraged to review test material before retesting.

If the candidate petitions the institution for a third (and or subsequent) attempt(s), it should be permitted only if the candidate can provide evidence of some instructional intervention that would suggest that score improvement would be possible. Documentation of such evidence would be at the institution's discretion.

For more information concerning Ability to Benefit Testing, see *Federal Register*/Vol. 60, December 1, 1995 (60 FR 61830-8184) and *Federal Register*/Vol. 61, Friday, October 25, 1996 (61 FR 55542-55543).

Guidelines for a Suitable Testing Environment

Before administering ACCUPLACER, you will want to plan your facilities and procedures to ensure a comfortable, positive, and efficient testing environment. Your plans should include provisions for accommodating students with disabilities. Uniform procedures are essential in a standardized testing program. The scores of all students tested are comparable only if all test administrators follow the same testing procedures.

Facilities, Comfort, and Environment

The success of any test administration depends on the suitability of the test site. Students cannot do their best if distracted by conditions such as noise, poor lighting, inadequate writing surfaces, or extreme temperatures. Although some adverse conditions may be beyond your control, you should make every effort to minimize the possibility of such distractions through careful planning.

Guidelines are presented below:

- The testing room should be appropriately heated or cooled, adequately ventilated, and free from distractions.
- Lighting should enable all examinees to read the computer screen in comfort. It should not produce shadows or glare on the computer screen or writing surface.

- The testing room should not contain maps, periodic tables, posters, charts, or any other materials related to the subject matter of the test.
- The testing room should comfortably accommodate the number of testing stations placed in it. It is recommended that each computer workstation be approximately five feet apart, or sound- and light-absorbing privacy dividers should be installed. Place computer stations in a formation that restricts the visibility of other computer screens.
- At each test station, position the computer monitor, keyboard, and mouse properly for ease of use without strain. Provide a comfortable chair with a back.
- Testing rooms must be quiet throughout all test administrations. When testing is scheduled, or is in progress, other activities that would disrupt the standardized testing environment should not be conducted.
- The building, testing rooms, and restrooms should be accessible to people with disabilities, including wheelchair access.
- Restrooms should be located near the testing room and should be easy to find. Post directional signs if necessary.

Accommodating Students with Special Needs

According to the 1992 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) legislation, any private entity that offers examinations or courses related to applications or credentials for secondary or postsecondary education is required to offer examinations in a place or manner accessible to persons with disabilities, *or* offer alternative accessible arrangements comparable to those provided for nondisabled individuals, including testing at an individual's home with a proctor, *and* offer examinations at equally convenient locations as often and in as timely a manner as other examinations are offered.

It is recommended that institutions have an overall plan for testing people with disabilities or document reasons why such a plan would be inappropriate because of significant difficulties, undue burden, or expense.

The College Board encourages institutions to offer nonstandard test administrations to students who have emotional, hearing, learning, and physical or visual disabilities and who cannot perform to the best of their abilities under standard testing conditions.

According to the ADA, modifications of standard testing environments and auxiliary aids may include the following:

Interpreters, qualified readers, or transcribers

Screen display enlargement

Use of a calculator

Other effective methods of making orally delivered materials available to individuals with hearing impairments

Note: Test agencies must bear the costs of these modifications or aids unless these aids or modifications alter the measurement of the skills or knowledge that the test purports to measure or results in an undue burden for those responsible for administering or overseeing the testing.

Students with disabilities may be required by the test center to provide advance notice and/or appropriate documentation of their disability and/or any modifications or aids that would be required during testing.

Note: Deadlines for documentation of disabilities and/or requests for modifications and aids should be the same as the deadlines for all other students, *and* requests for documentation of disabilities, although permissible, must be reasonable and limited to the need for the modification or aid requested.

Checklist

The following checklist is for test administrators testing students with disabilities who need special accommodations. It will help you identify things you may need to consider and discuss with the student before the test is administered.

- 1. Is there a map showing the location of the test center that includes the room number?
- 2. Do the arrivals and departures for the bus, cab, or train accommodate the test center schedule?
- 3. Is adequate handicapped parking readily available?
- 4. Are buildings clearly marked? Once inside the building, is the test center easy to find?
- 5. Are there weather conditions (e.g., ice or snow) that may make the designated entrance hazardous or inaccessible?
- 6. Are the entrances well lighted?
- 7. Will the entrance doors be unlocked if the student arranges to arrive early?
- 8. Are personnel available to meet and help the student (e.g., enter the building, hold open heavy doors, find the elevator, find the restroom, find the test room) as is needed?
- 9. Will the student be able to find the elevator, the restroom, and the test room if assistance is not available?
- 10. Will the student be able to operate the elevator without assistance?
- 11. Are the restrooms and water fountains located near the test room?
- 12. Are the restrooms accessible to students in wheelchairs?
- 13. Is there an accessible telephone available?
- 14. If there is an emergency, is there a plan for assisting handicapped students in exiting the building safely?

Special Accommodations

- 1. If there is a separate testing room, does it have proper lighting? Is it free of unnecessary noise? Are desks or tables of adequate size?
- 2. Has the student had a chance to communicate with the recorder, reader, or signer prior to the test administration on how to work best together?
- 3. Before the test begins, has anyone discussed with the student the need to take periodic breaks, the total test time, arrangements for lunch, and any special problems or arrangements?

Students with physical, visual, perceptual, emotional, or learning disabilities may require special aids and services. Students with special needs may request the following aids or modifications:

- Taped tests
- Calculators
- Interpreters, qualified readers, or transcribers
- Other methods of making orally or visually delivered materials available to individuals with hearing or visual impairments

ACCUPLACER COMPANION™ tests are available in large print, Braille, and cassette formats for students with visual disabilities. A conversion chart is available to convert COMPANION raw scores to ACCUPLACER scores. For more information about COMPANION tests, please call 800 486-8497.

If a student with a temporary physical disability (e.g., broken leg, eye injury, etc.) unexpectedly reports to a test room with a valid reason for being tested immediately, you may do so at your discretion using the following guidelines:

- A student who is able to be tested without special assistance, but because of the nature of the disability needs more seating space, should be seated in a special section of the test room and should follow routine procedures.
- A student whose disability prevents him or her from using the keyboard may be tested in a separate room with the assistance of an amanuensis.
- A student with an eye injury may be tested in a separate room with the use of a reader/amanuensis.