

Six Guidelines for using MDTP to Inform Next-Course Enrollment Options



MDTP suggests that the following six guidelines be used to assist with determining student's appropriate next-course options.

Guideline 1: *Use MDTP as one of multiple measures.*

Multiple measures of student achievement, such as course grades, teacher recommendations, and end-of-course exam scores can be combined with MDTP diagnostic results. This method can be implemented in the following two ways: 1) by determining an algorithm that combines the multiple measures to derive scores associated to next-course options or 2) by applying the different measures independently.

Guideline 2: *Use content experts to establish eligibility scores (cut scores) or score ranges.*

Districts and schools should consider several factors when establishing eligibility scores, including support classes and intervention programs that are available to help students who need additional support. Successful support programs allow districts to set lower enrollment criteria and place more students into higher-level courses. Teams of teachers and other content experts who are familiar with the range of courses should determine the eligibility criteria. The ETS publication, [A Primer on Setting Cut Scores on Tests of Educational Achievement](#), is a resource that provides guidance when setting enrollment criteria.

Guideline 3: *Consider both the MDTP overall raw score and the topic scores to determine eligibility.*

MDTP results for each student include a raw score and a total score for each topic. MDTP topic scores are helpful in understanding students' strengths related to important course topics. While two students might receive the same raw score, their topic scores can differ significantly. Some districts use total scores for topics that have higher significance, in combination with an overall raw score, as indicators of student readiness for the promoting course. These topics should be predetermined by content experts (see Guideline 2).

Guideline 4: *Provide students with diagnostic feedback about their preparation for a course.*

Providing diagnostic feedback to the student should be a significant part of any placement process. Targeted feedback informs students of the topics where they show mathematical strength and the topics where they may have areas of weakness. This enables students to review any necessary content prior to the start of the course.

Guideline 5: *Allow students enrollment options when they score near a qualifying eligibility criterion.*

For students scoring at or near a qualifying criterion, consider recommending that students enroll in the lower-level course, with the intent of gaining a stronger foundation in the prerequisite content. However, provide a pathway for students to enroll in the higher course when supports are available. Students who enroll in the higher course may be successful in the higher course with content support, such as Supplemental Instruction (SI), peer-tutoring, or similar support programs.

Guideline 6: *Evaluate the efficacy of the measures used in your placement program and adjust the protocols when needed.* The ETS publication, [A Primer on Setting Cut Scores on Tests of Educational Achievement](#), emphasizes that eligibility criteria must be regularly validated. Practitioners should be prepared to make changes to their placement protocols if data shows that the policy is not meeting the intended purpose. Continued use of test results for helping to inform enrollment options must be based on the relationship between those results and students' subsequent course performance. Ongoing analysis must be undertaken at each school and for each course to determine appropriate eligibility criteria during the period for which the assessment is in use.