DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION PLACEMENT
AVERAGE NUMBER OF DEVELOPMENTAL COURSES TAKEN: UNITED STATES

Average number of developmental courses taken by United States community college students who took them, by demographic and enrollment characteristics

OVERALL

GENDER

AGE WHEN FIRST ENROLLED
What Is Measured?
Average number of developmental courses taken within six years

Who Is Counted?
First-time college students who first enrolled in U.S. community colleges in the 2003-04 academic year and who enrolled in developmental education courses as of spring 2009

What It Tells Us
On average, U.S. community college students who enrolled in developmental education courses took about three courses within six years. Students taking developmental math enrolled in a larger number of courses than students taking reading and English (2.2 courses vs. 1.4 and 1.5 courses, respectively). Students in the lowest-income group took an average of 3.5 developmental courses in total, a larger number than students in the middle-income group (2.6 courses) and highest-income group (2.7 courses).

Why It’s Important
For students in need of developmental education, enrolling in specific courses mandated by the placement test is the first step toward advancement to a college-level program. Many students never enroll in developmental courses at the level at which they are assessed, however (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010). Because placements are not always binding, many students enroll in higher- or lower-level courses. Some may skip courses in the remedial sequence or skip developmental education altogether (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010). As a result, the rates at which students enroll in developmental courses provide an incomplete picture of the need for remediation. Placement information, however, is rarely available, leaving enrollment rates as the only measure for gauging students’ college readiness.

ABOUT THE DATA
Race/ethnicity: Other includes Native American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and individuals who indicated Other or Two or more races. Race categories exclude Hispanic/Latino origin unless specified.

Income percentile rank: calculated separately for dependent and independent students and then combined. Each ranking thus compares the respondent only with other respondents of the same dependency status. Uses parents’ income if respondent is dependent and uses respondent’s own income if respondent is independent.

Social sciences and humanities: includes cultural and gender studies; visual and performing arts; English language and literature; family and consumer sciences; philosophy, theology, and religious studies; psychology; social sciences and history; and liberal arts, general studies, and humanities.

STEM: includes agricultural and natural resource studies; biological and biomedical sciences; computer and information sciences and support; engineering; mathematics and statistics; physical sciences; science technologies and technicians; and engineering technologies and related fields.

Full-time/part-time enrollment: indicates student’s cumulative enrollment through 2009. Full-time is defined as 12 or more credit hours per semester.

DATA SOURCE