

## *AMATYC Position Paper on Time Limits for Course Prerequisites*

Math knowledge can decline when not used. Therefore, continuing students should be encouraged to take a mathematics course each term until their math requirements are completed. Institutions should establish policies and procedures that encourage incoming students to make informed choices concerning initial mathematics course enrollment and a plan for completion of mathematics course sequences. The proposed time limits for course prerequisites in this position paper include both mathematics and statistics courses. Among these policies and procedures are those dealing with time limits for a variety of course prerequisites (e.g. placement tests, college entrance tests, CLEP, AP, IB, course credit from other institutions, college readiness exams, and others). The primary goal of these policies and procedures is the students' successful and prompt completion of their mathematics and statistics requirements.

AMATYC recommends that each institution determine time limits for placement tests and prerequisite courses based upon their own mission and goals, unless otherwise mandated through a governing state. After establishing a process for initial placement into a mathematics course, the institution should develop systems that determine reasonable time periods for (1) acceptance of pre-requisite course completion and (2) acceptance of placement test scores.

Policies and procedures established by institutions should be systematic and all-inclusive by specifying a time limit for all means of satisfying a prerequisite including time limits, if necessary, on how long each of the following prerequisites is valid: (1) A math placement level determined by placement testing; (2) The successful completion of awarded credit (e.g., through CLEP or AP test score); (3) The successful completion of a prerequisite course; and (4) An appropriate ACT or SAT score.

In establishing a prerequisite time limit policy, consideration should be given to (1) historical data of performance in mathematics courses, (2) the appropriateness of a specific time limit, especially for courses in a mathematics sequence, (3) the challenges and implications for the college and students of implementing a specific time limit, (4) the possibility of an appropriate appeal process or waiver for students with special circumstances, and (5) a plan to communicate and prepare for the effective implementation of the time limit policy.

Colleges should recognize that it will take a significant amount of time to develop meaningful and valid recommendations concerning time limits. The group making these recommendations should include faculty, academic advisors or counselors, and administrators. Appropriate institutional support for collection and interpretation of data is important for success. Colleges might also get input from other colleges that have implemented

34 time limits. Once a recommendation is made and implemented, the data should be revisited  
35 periodically to assess their effectiveness.

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