



RESEARCH BRIEF

OIR

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Mandatory Developmental Course Enrollment – Student Survey Results: Fall 2014

This Research Brief presents an overview of the results of the student survey on mandatory enrollment in developmental courses (if placed). As part of NOVA's efforts to increase student success outcomes, NOVA enacted six policy changes in Fall 2014, one of which requires that all first-time in college (FTIC) students enroll in developmental courses during their first semester, if placed.¹ A survey was conducted to ascertain the effect the new policy had on students and to gather feedback.

Developmental courses are designed to provide the basic skills and knowledge necessary for success in college-level courses. Courses are offered in English and mathematics. Based on placement test policy, FTIC students are required to take placement tests before they begin classes at NOVA. After receiving their placement test scores, students and their advisor then identify any areas where the student's skills and knowledge are below college entry-level. If students are placed into a developmental education course or courses, they are required to enroll in the course(s) during their first semester at NOVA.

NOVA emailed the survey to 1,081 FTIC students and 66 responded, resulting in a 6 percent response rate. However, the number of respondents varies by question as not all participants answered every question in the survey. For several items, respondents were given the opportunity to provide multiple responses. The total number of responses is divided by the number of respondents to calculate the percentage of respondents. Therefore, percentages do not always add up to 100 percent.

Table 1 and Figure 1 (both next page) present results from the questions, "Are you aware that first-time in college students are required to enroll in developmental courses (ENF and MTT) during their first semester, if placed into them?" and "Do you agree that a first-time in college student should be required to enroll in developmental courses, if placed, during their first semester?" The majority of respondents (50 respondents, 77 percent) were aware of the mandatory policy and 65 percent (40 respondents) agreed that developmental education should be required, if placed.

¹ All first-time to college students, namely recent high school graduates or GED recipients, between the ages of 17 and 24 who have never previously attended college (not counting dual enrollment during high school).

Table 1. Awareness of and Agreement with Developmental Course Enrollment Policy

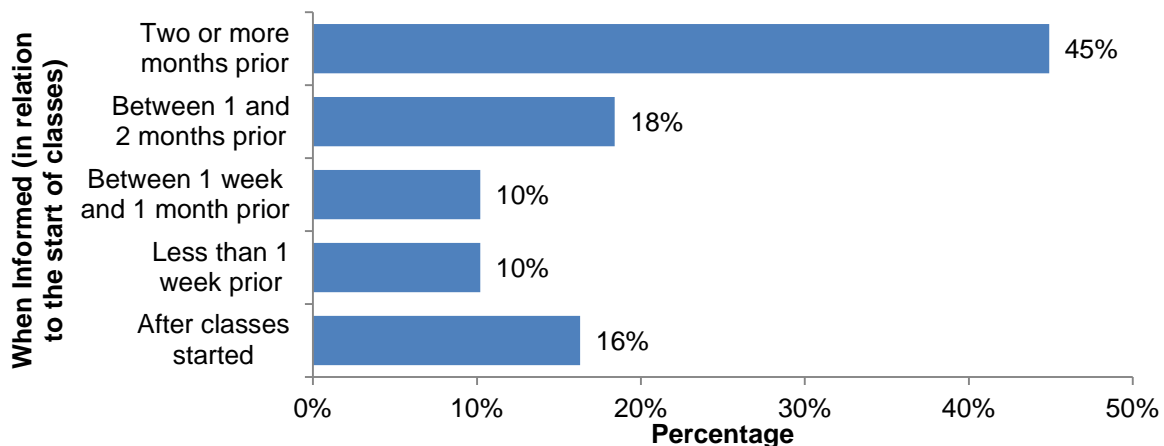
Responses	Aware of Developmental Course Enrollment Policy?		Agree with Developmental Course Enrollment Policy?	
	#	%	#	%
Yes	50	76.9	40	64.5
No	15	23.1	22	35.5
Total Respondents	65	100.0	62	100.0

Respondents were asked to indicate when they had been informed of the policy (Table 2 and Figure 1). Of those survey respondents who stated they were aware of the developmental course enrollment policy, nearly half were informed two or more months before the start of classes (22 respondents, 45 percent). The second most frequently indicated responses was “between one and two months before the start of classes” (9 respondents, 18 percent) followed by “after classes started” (8 respondents, 16 percent).

Table 2. When Were You Informed of This Policy?

When Informed of Student Orientation Policy	Responses	
	#	%
Two or more months before the start of classes	22	44.9
Between one and two months before the start of classes	9	18.4
Between one week to one month before the start of classes	5	10.2
Less than a week before the start of classes	5	10.2
After classes started	8	16.3
Total Respondents	49	100.0

Figure 1. When Were You Informed of This Policy?



Students were asked how they learned about the policy. Table 3 and Figure 2 (both next page) show the sources from which respondents received developmental course enrollment policy information. Over half of the survey respondents learned about the developmental course enrollment policy at student orientation (26 respondents, 53 percent). Speaking with an advisor (20 respondents, 41 percent), via the NOVA website (15 respondents, 31 percent), and by email (13 respondents, 27 percent) were also among the most frequently selected methods through which respondents were notified of the policy.

Table 3. How Did You Learn About This Policy? Select All That Apply.

Method of Notification	Responses	
	#	%
Student Orientation	26	53.1
Advisor	20	40.8
NOVA website	15	30.6
Email	13	26.5
NOVA faculty/staff	7	14.3
Posters/Flyers	6	12.2
Friend	3	6.1
NOVA high school outreach representative	3	6.1
Total Respondents	49	

Note: As respondents could choose more than one option, totals will not equal 100 percent.

Figure 2. How Did You Learn About This Policy? Select All That Apply.

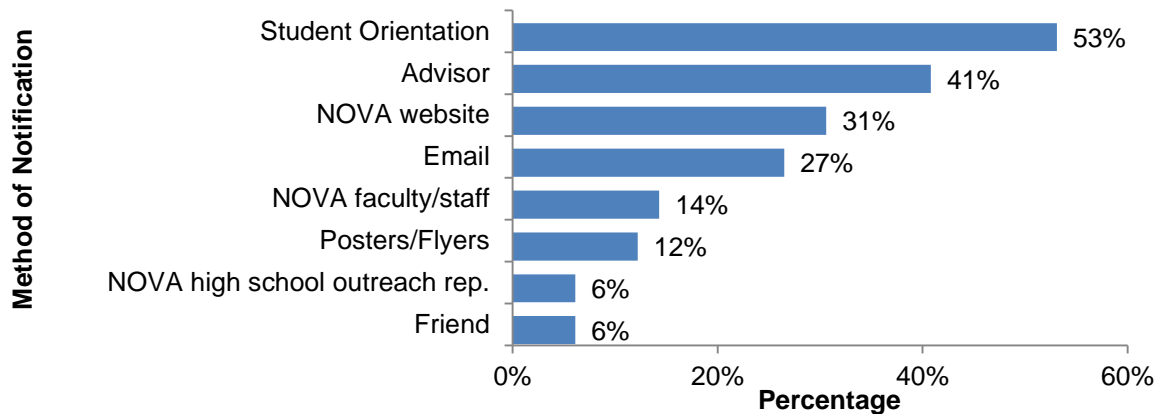


Table 4 and Figure 3 (next page) present the rate of enrollment and placement in developmental courses. In an almost even split, 48 percent of respondents (31 respondents) stated they were not placed in developmental math while 52 percent (33 respondents) stated that they had been placed in developmental math. All 31 of the survey respondents who placed into developmental math enrolled in the course during their first semester (100 percent). Over three-quarters of the respondents indicated that they were not placed into developmental English (50 respondents, 77 percent), while nearly a quarter had been placed (15 respondents, 23 percent). All of the respondents who indicated that they placed into developmental English enrolled in the course during their first semester (15 respondents, 100 percent).

Table 4. Placement into and Enrollment in Development Education Courses

Responses	Placed Into Developmental Math		Enrolled in Developmental Math in First Semester		Placed Into Developmental English		Enrolled in Developmental English in First Semester	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	31	48.4	31	100.0	15	23.1	15	100.0
No	33	51.6	0	0.0	50	76.9	0	0.0
Total Respondents	64	100.0	31	100.0	65	100.0	15	100.0

Figure 3. Placement into and Enrollment in Development Education Courses

