

Understanding TSI-mandation and CCA (formerly known as NCBR)

All developmental mathematics instructors are required by state law to withdraw TSI-mandated students from their developmental mathematics courses for excessive absences. This document gives some general guidelines to help understand the issues. For other questions, see the campus CCA/CCE Coordinator for developmental mathematics.

1. What is a TSI-mandated student?

A TSI-mandated student is one who

- (a) is enrolled in a developmental class, because they failed that portion of the state approved test, and
- (b) is concurrently enrolled in college credit courses in any subject.

This is a bare bones definition and there are some exceptions to this definition created by the “Developmental Plan”. Therefore, it is not always easy to determine whether a student is TSI-mandated, so the best course of action is to withdraw all developmental students with excessive absences.

2. What does “excessive absences” mean?

The recommended departmental policy is four unexcused absences. However, four absences spread out over ten weeks is different from four consecutive absences. Also, four absences in the eight-week session are completely different from four absences in the sixteen-week session. In addition, an instructor should take into consideration whether a student is passing the course despite four absences. Many instructors do not withdraw students if they are maintaining at least a high C average despite more than four absences. Therefore, an instructor should use their best judgment in determining if a student has “excessive absences”. If an instructor has established a firm attendance policy in their first day handouts, then they should use that policy to determine if a student has excessive absences.

3. If an instructor has determined that a student has excessive absences, what needs to be done?

The student should be withdrawn. Your campus CCA/CCE Coordinator may send instructions early in the semester about how they prefer you to proceed. If no instructions are sent, then you should submit the withdrawal form to the Admissions and Records office.

It is up to the instructor to define “excessive absences” and every instructor should have as part of their first-day handout that they “may withdraw the student for excessive absences but makes no commitment to do this for the student.” Nevertheless, because this is a developmental class and also must have the TSI warning as a part of the first-day handout, a student has some reason to expect that if they quit attending and participating in class they will be withdrawn rather than getting an F. Such a student would be able to make a good case that the instructor did not follow the course policies and should have withdrawn the student.

4. If a student is in MATD 0390 and is having trouble continuing in the class, is there any special advice?

It is quite likely that such a student can pass the COMPASS (TCOMP) or THEA at this point (since the cut-off scores are at about the level for **entering** Intermediate Algebra) and you should encourage them to do so in order to not be withdrawn from their college-level courses if they cannot maintain their work in this math course. Emphasize to such a student that passing a state approved TSI test will end their being mandated into remediation and would allow them to enroll in College Mathematics, Elementary Statistics or Math for Measurement, but in order to take College Algebra or Math for Business and Economics later, they **MUST** reenroll in and complete Intermediate Algebra first.

The COMPASS and THEA test are structured differently, so different students may have a better chance of passing different ones. Our advisors typically advise students to take the COMPASS, for several different reasons. The COMPASS test is designed as a placement test into one of several algebra courses while the THEA has some algebra and quite a lot of practical geometry and math reasoning problems. The COMPASS takes the student less time to complete, but, because it is a computerized adaptive test, if they miss a couple of easy problems at the beginning, they may not be presented with enough problems afterward at a high enough level to pass. Students can complete the test with as few as about 8 problems, and, depending on the “luck of the draw” may get problems on only one or two algebra topics. The required score to satisfy the TSI requirement on the COMPASS is 39. In terms of placement, that is not high enough to even place the student **into** Intermediate Algebra.

The THEA is not a computerized adaptive test and so it is fairly easy for a student and his tutor/instructor to determine whether he is ready to pass the THEA from his performance on the practice test in the *Official Study Guide for the THEA*. The student may purchase this in any bookstore for under \$20. Advise the student that a score of about 70% is at least 230, which satisfies the TSI requirement. (In fact, our experience is that somewhat less than 70% is adequate to pass.) Students who will take MATH 1332, 1333, and 1342 should be encouraged to take the THEA because

- (a) the skills tested on it are more relevant to success in those courses
- (b) such students usually have an easier time passing the THEA than the COMPASS
- (c) students can predict more easily whether they are likely to pass it than whether they are likely to pass the COMPASS
- (d) students who meet the TSI requirement by testing (on either test) can go directly into MATH 1332, 1333, or 1342 without taking MATD 0390.

5. When should I begin withdrawing students?

Faculty withdrawals are not processed until after the last day to receive a refund. This date can be found in the published Course Schedule. If a student has excessive absences before that date, then the instructor can refer them to the campus CCA/CCE Coordinator.

6. When is the latest I can withdraw students?

This date can also be found in the published Course Schedule. However, **waiting until the last day to withdraw students is strongly discouraged**. Students who are not in compliance with the TSI law need to be identified as soon as possible. The responsibility of the campus CCA/CCE Coordinator is to work with the student within the constraints of the TSI rules. It is very difficult to accomplish this task late in the semester. **Please**

take care of your withdrawals in a timely fashion to make it easier for everyone, especially the student. If you drop students on the last day to withdraw, it is possible that the notification process will not get the student to a CCA/CCE Coordinator until it is too late to do anything and thus the student will lose all their courses.

7. What are the consequences for a TSI-mandated student of being withdrawn from your course?

Some TSI-mandated students are required to remain in mathematics remediation in order to remain enrolled in their college-level courses and others are not. Students who are required to remain in mathematics remediation in order to remain enrolled in their college-level classes will receive a letter from ACC's TSI office. They will have a week in which to contact a campus CCA/CCE Coordinator or they will be withdrawn from all their courses. If it is early enough in the semester, they may be able to enroll in a later short-session course. Some of them will be unable to find such a course in which to enroll. For those students, we also have the CCA (NCBR) option.

It is not your responsibility to determine which of your students need to remain in mathematics remediation. You should withdraw all developmental students with excessive absences. If you know a student is contemplating withdrawing from your course, please encourage them to consult an advisor or counselor before they take such a drastic step.

8. What is CCA (formerly known as NCBR)?

In 2001 the name changed from NCBR, Non-Course Based Remediation, to CCA, Course Credit Alternative. It was originally created to deal with students who were unaware of the state law and the consequences of being withdrawn from their developmental mathematics class. However, over the years it has been useful in dealing with many different scenarios. It shows up on the transcript as Developmental Mathematics. We have a one-hour and a three-hour option. The one-hour option is used to deal with students who either withdrew themselves or were withdrawn by their instructor for excessive absences. The student typically pays for the one-hour option. The three-hour option is used to deal with students who are referred by their instructor to the campus CCA/CCE Coordinator. In this option the student typically does not pay for the course; they are removed from their MATD course and placed into CCA. With both options, the campus CCA/CCE Coordinator decides the appropriate assignment to receive credit. The assignments range from placing the student in an alternative MATD class (with the instructor's permission) to completing weekly homework assignments, independently. Receiving credit in either course only means that the student has done sufficient remedial work that semester to satisfy the TSI rules. The student must register the next semester for the appropriate developmental class or pass one of the state approved tests. CCA can only be offered to a student one time.

9. Under what circumstances should I refer a student to the campus CCA/CCE Coordinator for CCA while the student is still enrolled in my course?

There are several circumstances in which it is appropriate to refer a student to the campus CCA/CCE Coordinator. In all cases, it is necessary for the student to be in contact with the instructor. Students who just quit coming to class without any contact should be

withdrawn. However, if a student is attending regularly and is just not getting it, then a referral to a CCA/CCE Coordinator maybe appropriate. Another scenario would be that a student was doing well, and then got sick for two weeks and couldn't catch up. As an instructor you should use your best judgment in determining whether the best thing for the student is to stay in your course and earn an IP grade or whether the student would be better off being referred to a campus CCA/CCE Coordinator. Remember CCA can only be offered to a student one time. If you are not sure, then ask your campus CCA/CCE Coordinator.

Students who need an informal transfer due to work schedule changes or sudden timeframe problems should be referred to the Assistant Dean for Math and Science at the campus.