

Why Transitional Courses?

Transitional courses give students the background to succeed in college. That's why they're offered across the state of Kentucky. Our Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) *requires* colleges and universities to be sure that students have the preparation needed to complete their work and graduate. It's in the Kentucky Administrative Regulations (13 KAR 2:020).

That's why BCTC students must have certain scores on the ACT or on the COMPASS placement test before beginning most college-level courses. If the placement test shows a need for more preparation, our advisors make sure that students register for the right transitional courses.

What do our students need to know when they're advised to take transitional courses?

1. They're in **good company**. Almost half of our students need to take a transitional class. In smaller classes they catch up on the skills they need for college work.
2. KCTCS expects students to enroll in transitional coursework **right away**. Starting Fall 2010, KCTCS will monitor transitional students to be sure they're starting in the right courses.
3. Students who take transitional courses are more likely to **stay in college**. BCTC research proves they're more likely to return the next semester.
4. Completing transitional course work is a strong predictor of **success**. Students who finish these courses persist, graduate, and transfer at a greater rate than other average students, and this success holds true no matter what their age, ethnicity, or gender may be (*League of Innovations*, Community College of Denver).
5. A grade point average of at least 2.0 is required for students **to graduate or to transfer** to another college. So it's very important for students to be completely ready for college courses so that they can earn the needed GPA.
6. Transitional courses help get students start from the same point and **keep moving forward**.
7. Transitional courses actually **save time and tuition money**. COMPASS test scores predict where a student is likely to run into trouble. In the past students who didn't follow advice about placement wasted time and tuition money re-taking courses they could not pass. It took longer and cost more to graduate.
8. BCTC must report its graduates each year. **We want our students to graduate**.

Example of how to explain the significance of following Mandatory Placement:

Since so much of the work in college is done on your own, you don't want to jump into a class unprepared. You don't want to fall behind at the very beginning of the course. If you aren't actually ready, it will seem as though the instructor is going much too quickly. That's frustrating. An example is Math 109. If you don't already know the concepts the course is built on, you'll be trying to figure those out while the class keeps advancing ahead of you through more complex material. The class can't slow down because many students have additional math classes to take after Math 109, and they need to have learned all the skills necessary by the end of the course.

Before mandatory placement, some students would take a course and fail it or withdraw from it over and over. They could have been more successful in fewer semesters if they had taken the transitional course they needed.