ACHIEVING THE DREAM
Six New Policy Changes
Effective Fall 2014

Frequently Asked Questions
NOVA has implemented six policy changes that will take effect starting with the Fall 2014 Semester. These student success initiatives are intended to support students with the goal of increasing their academic success at NOVA.

Five of the policies affect first-time-to-college students (ages 17–24). Students in this group must:

1. Take placement tests.
2. Attend Student Orientation.
3. Meet with their advisor before registration.
4. Enroll in developmental courses during the first semester, if placed.
5. Complete a Student Development (SDV) course within the first year.

The sixth policy, On-Time Registration, impacts all NOVA students:

6. Register by 11:59 p.m. on the day before the session begins.

Please refer to this pamphlet to help answer questions you and your students may have about these important new policy changes.
All first-time-to-college students (ages 17–24) enrolling in Fall 2014 or later will be required to take placement tests.

Q: Which placement tests are required?
A: Students are required to complete two placement tests: one for English and one for mathematics. If English is the student’s native (first) language, the student must complete the Virginia Placement Test (VPT) for English. If English is not the student’s native (first) language, the student must complete the ACCUPLACER placement test. The placement test for mathematics is the VPT for Mathematics.

Q: If a program/major doesn’t require a math course, is the student still required to take the math placement test?
A: Yes. All students must complete the VPT for Mathematics. If a student decides to change to a program that has a math requirement, a placement test score will already be recorded in NOVA’s system.

Q: Where can students find information about the placement tests and the campus testing centers?
A: For information about the placement tests and testing center locations, policies and hours of operation, visit the Placement Tests web page at www.nvcc.edu/placementtests.
Q: Are there any study guides or other resources students can use to prepare for the placement tests?
A: Yes. Tips, resources, and sample questions are available on the Placement Tests web page at www.nvcc.edu/placementtests.

Q: Are students required to take placement tests if they have satisfactory AP, IB, SAT/ACT, CLEP, or Cambridge Advanced Level exam scores?
A: Students who have taken certain college-level examinations may qualify for placement test exemption and even college credit. Students should meet with their advisors to learn more. (Pathway to the Baccalaureate students should consult with their Pathway advisor.)

Q: Can students retake a placement test?
A: Yes, but there are some policies and limitations for each test. Visit the Placement Tests web page at www.nvcc.edu/placementtests for the current retest policies.

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**Student Orientation Requirement**

All first-time-to-college students (ages 17–24) enrolling in Fall 2014 or later will be required to attend Student Orientation.

Q: What is Student Orientation?
A: NOVA's Student Orientation is a three-hour introductory session designed to provide students with the knowledge, insight, and tools needed to register for courses and become familiar with NOVA's policies and resources. Orientations are offered on five of NOVA's campuses. Medical Education Campus students must attend Student Orientation on another campus. (Note: Student Orientation should not be confused with the information sessions required for admittance to allied health and nursing programs.) For more information, visit the Student Orientation web page at www.nvcc.edu/orientation.

Q: When are Student Orientations offered?
A: Student Orientations are offered throughout the year. For a current schedule, visit the Student Orientation web page at www.nvcc.edu/orientation.

Q: Should students register for Student Orientation before taking their placement tests?
A: No. Since academic advising and course registration guidance are
both important parts of Student Orientation, it is essential for students to take placement tests and receive test scores before registering for and attending Student Orientation.

**Q:** How can students register for Student Orientation?
**A:** When students have completed their placement tests, they may register for Student Orientation at [www.nvcc.edu/orientation/registration](http://www.nvcc.edu/orientation/registration).

**Q:** Do students need to sign up for an orientation session or can they simply show up?
**A:** Spaces are limited; therefore, students must sign up online at least 48 hours in advance. Students can go to [www.nvcc.edu/orientation/registration](http://www.nvcc.edu/orientation/registration) to sign up for the next available session.

**Q:** How long is Student Orientation?
**A:** Each session is scheduled to last three hours.

**Q:** If students don’t have time to go to Student Orientation, can they register for classes on their own?
**A:** No. Students will not be able to enroll in classes until they have attended Student Orientation. If students have extenuating circumstances that prevent them from attending a session, they should contact their advisor.

**Q:** Are parents required to attend Student Orientation? Are other guests allowed?
**A:** Parents are not required to attend Student Orientation. Parents and guests are welcome to attend, space permitting.

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**Advisor Requirement**

All first-time-to-college students (ages 17–24) enrolling in Fall 2014 or later will be required to meet with their advisor before registration.

**Q:** How do students get an advisor?
**A:** After students have been accepted to NOVA, an academic advisor is assigned to them. Students can identify their advisor in several ways: check their NOVA student e-mail account for messages from their advisor, log in to myNOVA and look at the Student Center page, or visit their campus counseling/advising office.
Q: When should students meet with their advisor?
A: Advisors meet with students during Student Orientation. After orientation, students can contact their advisor to arrange an appointment anytime they have questions about courses, registration, degree programs, NOVA policies, or any other academic issue.

Q: Will advisors register students for their classes?
A: No. Advisors assist with class selection and show students how to use NOVAConnect to register for courses during Student Orientation. Students can then register for classes.

Q: Can advisors help students with transfer planning?
A: Absolutely. Students should set up an appointment for that purpose. Encourage students to visit NOVA’s Transfer web page at www.nvcc.edu/transfer to access important information and tools related to transfer planning so they will be prepared for the advising appointment.

Developmental Courses Requirement

All first-time-to-college students (ages 17–24) enrolling in Fall 2014 or later will be required to enroll in developmental courses (ENF and/or MTT) during the first semester, if placed.

Q: What are developmental courses? Why do students need to take them?
A: 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. After receiving their placement test scores, students and their advisor will identify any areas where their skills and knowledge are below college entry level. In some cases students must complete their developmental English or mathematics courses before enrolling in certain college-level courses or before being admitted to certain academic programs. In other cases, students can take college-level courses along with developmental courses. Credits earned in developmental courses do not apply toward associate degree, certificate or career studies certificate programs and do not transfer. For more information, visit the Developmental Studies web page at www.nvcc.edu/academics/developmental/index.html.

Q: How do students know if they need to enroll in developmental courses?
A: During Student Orientation, advisors will assist students in
determining whether or not they need to enroll in any developmental courses. Placement test scores will indicate which classes students are eligible to enroll in.

**Q:** If students are required to take developmental courses in both English and mathematics, do they have to take both courses in their first semester?

**A:** Yes. However, if students are limited in the number of credit hours they are able to take, the developmental English course should be taken before the developmental mathematics course. In that case, students must enroll in the developmental mathematics course the following semester.

**Q:** Some students don’t plan to stay at NOVA very long before they transfer to another school and they may have heard developmental courses do not transfer. Do they still have to take these courses? Are there other courses they can take that do transfer?

**A:** Students are still required to enroll in developmental courses, if placed. While developmental courses do not transfer, there may be some transferable courses they can take while completing their developmental coursework. Their advisor can help them explore their options.

**Q:** Are there any tutoring or support services available to help students with their developmental courses?

**A:** Yes. Tutoring and other academic support services are available for free on each of NOVA's campuses. For more information, visit www.nvcc.edu/current-students/services-to-students/tutoring.

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**Student Development (SDV) Course Requirement**

All first-time-to-college students (ages 17–24) enrolling in Fall 2014 or later will be required to complete a Student Development (SDV) course by the 16th credit.

**Q:** What is a Student Development (SDV) course? Are all of these courses the same?

**A:** Student Development 100 (SDV 100) is NOVA's one-credit student success course to help students start strong in college. SDV 100 helps students develop skills in time management, note taking and test preparation, academic planning, career decision making, financial literacy, and critical thinking. NOVA also offers specially designed Student
Development 101 (SDV 101) courses for students entering career fields such as business, education, healthcare, hospitality management, information technology, and veterinary technology.

Q: Do SDV courses transfer?
A: SDV 100 or 101 is required for all NOVA transfer degrees, and most universities will award credit for the course.

Q: Are the SDV courses available on every campus? What about online?
A: SDV 100 is offered at Alexandria, Annandale, Loudoun, Manassas, and Woodbridge Campuses, as well as online through NOVA’s Extended Learning Institute. The course is sometimes offered at NOVA Centers. The Medical Education Campus offers SDV 101 Orientation to Health Care. Other SDV 101 courses are offered at various campuses, depending on the program. Check the Schedule of Classes for options.

Q: If a student starts in the Fall Semester, can they take this course next Spring or Summer?
A: Because the SDV course focuses heavily on study skills needed to succeed in college, we strongly recommend taking this course during the first semester. SDV 100 or 101 must be taken in the first year, no later than the 16th credit. Research has shown that student success courses help students earn higher GPAs and increase the likelihood of continuing their educations from semester to semester.

Q: Can students take a test to get out of this course?
A: Some students enter NOVA with high-level study skills, knowledge of college processes, and personal success experience. If a student is...
interested in testing out of the SDV requirement, he/she may take the SDV 100 ABLE exam available through any campus Testing Center. The exam has 50 multiple choice and true/false questions; credit is awarded for a score of 38 or higher. The test may only be taken once. Students should contact a campus Testing Center for more information.

### On-Time Registration Requirement

Starting with the Fall 2014 Semester, all students enrolling at NOVA will be required to register by 11:59 p.m. the day before the session begins to meet the On-Time Registration requirement.

**Q: What is the difference between a semester and a session at NOVA?**

**A:** At NOVA, a semester refers to an academic term. Each year we have three semesters: Fall, Spring, and Summer. A session refers to the number of weeks within a semester during which a course is scheduled to meet. NOVA offers several different sessions each semester to provide a variety of course and scheduling options. For example, in addition to the standard 16- and 8-week sessions, sessions might be taught in 12 or 14 weeks. Students should consult the Schedule of Classes and their academic advisor for more information about scheduling options.

**Q: Does the new On-Time Registration policy impact when payment is due after registering for classes?**

**A:** No. The payment deadline policy remains the same as in previous semesters. Payment deadlines for the current and upcoming semester can be found on the NOVA website or by contacting a campus business office.

**Q: If students register for courses on the last day before a session begins, do they have to pay by 11:59 p.m. that night?**

**A:** No. Anyone registering for courses on the last day before a session begins has until 5:00 p.m. the next business day to pay for classes. Failure to pay by that deadline will result in the courses being dropped for non-payment and the on-time registration requirement will prevent re-registration for that same course.

**Q: If a student has computer trouble and isn’t able to register before the deadline, can someone add that person to a class?**

**A:** No. Once the deadline has passed, registration for that session is closed. However, students may be able to register for courses offered in an upcoming session or an online course with a later start date.
Q: The session started on Monday, but the class doesn’t meet until Thursday. It’s Wednesday afternoon. Can students still register?
A: No. Registration for that session has closed. However, students may be able to register for courses offered in an upcoming session or an online course with a later start date.

Q: If a student is dropped from a course for non-payment but didn’t realize it, can he/she get back into the class?
A: Students will only be able to re-enroll if they were dropped as the result of a NOVA error. The student will need to complete a Registration with Permission Form (Form 125–077) and obtain supporting documentation from the financial aid or business office to submit to the appropriate academic division dean for approval. The form and supporting documentation must be submitted during the limited schedule adjustment period during the first week of classes. Consult the College Catalog for more information on schedule adjustments.

Q: What options are available for students who are unable to register for courses before the deadline but want to start taking classes as soon as possible?
A: Students may still be able to register for courses in a session that has not yet started. NOVA offers several different sessions each semester to provide them with a variety of course and scheduling options. For example, in addition to the standard 16- and 8-week sessions, they may find sessions taught in 12 or 14 weeks. Students should consult the Schedule of Classes and their academic advisor for more information about scheduling options.

Q: Can students add, drop, or swap classes after On-Time Registration closes?
A: After the deadline has passed, the ability to add a class is restricted. There is a limited schedule adjustment period during the first week of classes if students have documented mitigating circumstances that impacted their ability to register on time. The student will need to complete a Registration with Permission Form (Form 125–077) and submit supporting documentation to the appropriate academic division dean for approval. Students are permitted to drop courses at any time in accordance with NOVA’s Academic Calendar. Students may swap a course they are currently enrolled in for another course in a future session that has not yet started. Consult the College Catalog for more information on schedule adjustments.

Q: Does the On-Time Registration policy apply to all students?
A: Yes. This policy applies to all NOVA students.