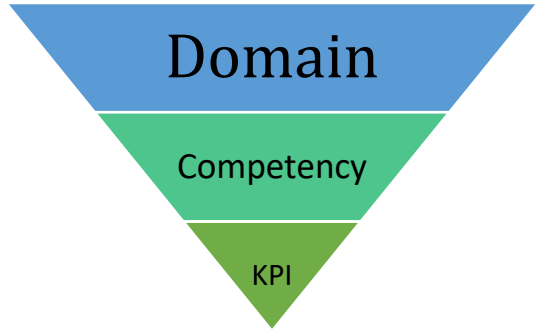


FAQ

PWR Act Transitional Math Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a competency and how is it different from a standard?

In the PWR transitional math courses, competencies are broad learning goals that illustrate how a student can integrate and apply skills in authentic situations for a given mathematical content area, called a domain. Standards are finer grain in the skills they describe and are closer to the key performance indicators (KPI) within each competency.



2. Who is eligible to take a transitional math course*?

Any high school senior who has satisfied their math graduation requirements. While transitional math courses are intended for students that do not meet the college and career readiness benchmarks, other students may take transitional math courses after consulting with a counselor.

3. Why should a high school senior take a transitional math course?

Passing a transitional math course gives a student guaranteed placement into certain college-level math courses, removing the need for a math placement test when a student starts college. These courses will significantly reduce the likelihood of a student needing remedial math courses at college, saving time and money and increasing the chances of college completion. Transitional math courses will also provide students with opportunities to engage in authentic math problems with connections to real life and careers.

4. Does guaranteed placement apply to Illinois universities as well as community colleges?

Under the law (HB 5729; Public Act 99-0674), only Illinois community colleges are required to accept the transitional math placement. However, universities must openly state if they will or will not accept the placement, and many universities are considering accepting placement. Some university faculty and IBHE directors have been part of the development of the competencies as well as part of the policy conversations to ensure the creation of courses that will be acceptable to both community colleges and universities.

5. How long does the guaranteed placement last after a student receives it?

Guaranteed placement lasts for 18 months after a student receives it.

6. Does a student have to take a placement test at the end of the transitional math course?

No. Students receive guaranteed placement into college-level math courses in their path if they earn a C or better. Students are only required to show that they have met the competencies through a traditional grading system or a competency-based grading system.

7. Are these courses repeats of current high school courses or traditional remedial college courses?

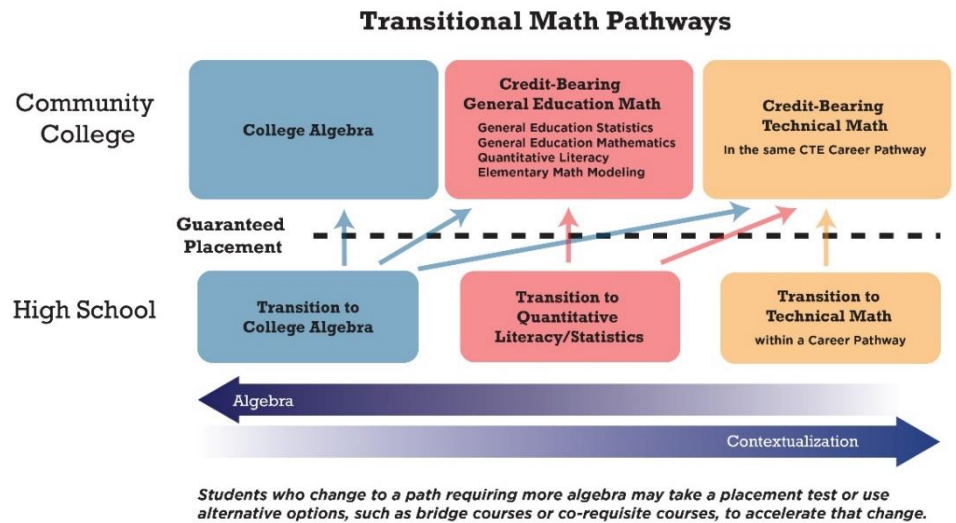
No. Transitional math courses will have topics from math courses students have taken in 9th – 11th grade, but the experience and expectations are different. Also, the courses will not be the traditional remedial college courses prealgebra, beginning algebra, or intermediate algebra. Transitional math courses are not skill based, but instead focus on the integration and application of skills in larger problems.

8. How is transitional math course content connected to the Illinois Learning Standards for math and in what ways will instructional delivery be different?

In transitional math, students are expected to connect and apply many concepts continually on large problems and projects. The ILS are still about learning a large collection of skills, albeit with meaning and understanding. Content is sometimes developed with large problems and projects, but not necessarily. This course is about reducing the list of skills to an essential set, putting those skills together often, and reducing any deficits in them. The end goal for the student is to apply their knowledge to larger problems relevant to them as a future employee, community member, and college student. Also, transitional courses won't repeat every skill that students have seen before, but instead just the ones they need for the outcome math course they will take.

*While this document refers to standalone courses, the transitional math competencies may also be met in other courses, such as a capstone course or a technical course with embedded technical math content, or in a competency-based program.

9. **What happens if a student changes paths?**
The paths have been designed to allow students to receive guaranteed placement for the path they are in or one that requires less algebra. Students who change to a path requiring more algebra may be subject to a college's placement procedures. This may include options such as placement tests, bridge courses, or co-requisite courses.



10. **Are there materials available?**
Schools will need to choose and/or create content to satisfy the competencies as well as meet local goals. Some materials exist including open education resources, but they will be expanded with problems, projects, lessons, and assessments from Illinois high school and college math teachers.
11. **How will teachers be ready to teach transitional math courses?**
Useful, timely, and ongoing professional development will be provided in person and online for teachers.
12. **Who owns the course, high schools or colleges?**
The transitional courses are developed and administered through partnerships between high schools and colleges. Teachers, administrators, and student services personnel from each level will work together to create the course(s) in a collegial way that is respectful of the skill sets and perspectives each brings. Professional trust is essential to develop, implement, and improve the courses.
13. **How will rigor be ensured so that students are ready for the college math course(s) in their pathway?**
A set of policies was created by a statewide panel comprised of administrators, faculty, agency personnel, and policy leaders at both the K-12 and postsecondary levels. The policies state the expectations that must be met for a course to be designated portable at the state level in a similar way that articulated college courses are approved by Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) panels. Ongoing evaluation of the courses will continue to ensure standards are being met.
14. **What happens if a student does not pass a transitional math course?**
Students who do not pass will be subject to a college's placement procedures.
15. **Will existing transitional math pilots need to be modified once the final state criteria are finalized?**
ISBE, ICCB, and IBHE are working with the statewide panel to adopt all final policies and competencies for transitional math courses by June 30, 2018. After that, the state agencies will adopt a multi-year statewide implementation plan. While high schools and colleges will need to adhere to these policies and competencies to ensure statewide portability, the statewide implementation timeline will provide adequate opportunity for existing pilots to modify their delivery models as needed. Many high school and college partnerships have found a small-scale pilot to be an invaluable step for creating professional trust and a shared understanding for delivery of these courses. The state agencies encourage all high schools and colleges to commence the piloting of transitional math approaches even as the statewide criteria are finalized.
16. **Are high schools required to offer PWR transitional math? Do they have to offer all 3 pathways?**
Under the law, all public high schools are opted into transitional math by default. A school board may opt out a high school provided the law's requirements for opting out are met. Each public high school needs to offer at least one transitional math course; all three pathways are not required.