

# Dramatic overhaul of college remedial education is needed, says report from national coalition

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An immediate and dramatic transformation in remedial education is needed at the college level, says a report just issued by a national coalition of education researchers and advocates, including the Charles A. Dana Center at The University of Texas at Austin.

Citing groundbreaking research on both the causes of failure and proven successful practices, the "Core Principles for Transforming Remedial Education" recommends that most remedial [courses](#) be scrapped. Instead, the majority of students needing remedial support should be placed in standard full-credit [college](#) courses that are supplemented with mandatory tutoring, facilitated computer labs, more classroom time and other such measures.

The report was jointly issued by the Dana Center, Complete College America, Education Commission of the States, and Jobs for the Future.

"Many more unprepared students can succeed when they receive needed academic and other supports in the context of college-level courses, not as a prerequisite to them," said Richard Kazis, [senior vice president](#) of Jobs for the Future.

The multiple research studies that serve as the basis for the organizations' joint statement conclude that far too many college students are referred to remedial education courses and few ever

complete their assigned remedial sequences. The resulting attrition is severe: For every 10 students assigned to three or more semesters of remedial English, fewer than three ever complete the associated college-level gateway English course for which they were preparing.

The numbers are worse for those assigned to three or more semesters of remedial math, with only 1 in 10 successfully passing their first-year college-level math course.

The report also calls for better alignment between the content of required first-year gateway courses and students' chosen programs of study or majors. When gateway courses contain material that is unnecessary or irrelevant to success in selected careers, the result is that many students are tripped up in their pursuit of a credential while studying content that they do not need.

"This is especially important in math, which is the most significant barrier to college success for remedial students," said Uri Treisman, director of the Charles A. Dana Center at The University of Texas at Austin. "Too many students today are required to pass college-level algebra when statistics or quantitative literacy would be much more appropriate preparation."

The organizations sum up their joint statement with a call for urgent action to transform remediation.

"Research and best practice make it crystal clear that immediate, large-scale changes are needed and can be accomplished to successfully transform remediation into a gateway to college graduation for millions of [students](#)," said Jeremy Anderson, president of Education Commission of the States. "Governors, legislators and higher education leaders should embrace these core principles to significantly boost college completion and secure their states' economic future."

**More information:** A full copy of "Core Principles for Transforming Remedial Education: A Joint Statement" can be downloaded at [www.completecollege.org/docs/R ... tatement-Embargo.pdf](http://www.completecollege.org/docs/R...tatement-Embargo.pdf)

Provided by University of Texas at Austin

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