Placement Exam Information

Included in this note is information on the placement exams that should be completed before arriving on campus this fall. These exams will be useful to you and your pre-major advisor when you meet to talk about courses to register for in the fall. All of the exams will be available in Blackboard, Bowdoin’s course management tool. Some of the placement exams are online and others are pdf files that you will need to print out, take, and mail back to us in the enclosed manila envelope. If you do not have access to a computer or printer over the summer, I’m sorry you can’t use that as an excuse for failing to take your placement tests! All you need to do is call or email Kate Emerson at kemerson@bowdoin.edu or 207-798-7024. She will be happy to send you paper copies of whatever exams you need.

To access the exams go to Blackboard (http://blackboard.bowdoin.edu) and click on the Placement Exams, Summer 2009 link. From there, you will enter the Placement Exams course and select the exams that you wish to take. The list of exams will be on the left-hand menu. The only exam you are REQUIRED to take is the Quantitative Skills Assessment. We use this test to help identify students whose quantitative skills may need strengthening so that they can be successful in courses at Bowdoin that require quantitative reasoning. Your pre-major advisor will talk to you about your Q-skills score and, based on the score, may recommend certain courses for you to consider. There are also placement exams for biology, chemistry, physics, music, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish. If you are interested in taking a language for which there is no placement exam—i.e., Arabic, Greek, Latin, or Russian—you will have an opportunity to meet with faculty in these languages during Orientation. In fact for all languages, and for music and math, there will be time set aside during Orientation for departmental open houses/consultations for you to meet the faculty and talk to them about your experiences and placement test results. At these open houses, faculty will explain the curriculum and help you decide which course is the best entry point for you. Please consult the Blackboard placement site to determine which exams you should take in addition to the Q Skills Assessment.

Instructions for each exam are included on the exam. When you are taking the exams, remember that they are designed to help you and your pre-major advisor decide which courses are best for you. Given this, we strongly urge you to take these exams only once and in the spirit that they are intended, which is to accurately reflect your skills and abilities in the subjects. “Cheating” or “gaming” the exams will only make it more difficult for you to find appropriate courses (and would also constitute a violation of Bowdoin’s Honor Code which you will read and sign during Orientation).
Please complete and mail back all of the placement exams you decide to take no later than Monday, August 3rd, using the enclosed manila self-addressed envelope. In case the envelope somehow gets lost in the shuffle of papers you are receiving from Bowdoin this summer, you can mail back the exams in any envelope to the address below:

Placement Exams
Dean of Student Affairs Office
Bowdoin College
4600 College Station
Brunswick, ME 04011

And once again, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Kate Emerson at kemerson@bowdoin.edu or 207-798-7024.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and we look forward to seeing you in August……

Sincerely,

Janet K. Lohmann          Suzanne Lovett
Dean of First-Year Students  Faculty Liaison for Advising