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The Quantitative Reasoning requirement at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

In the late 1990s a Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning requirement was introduced at the University of Massachusetts Boston, stipulating that all students must demonstrate a quantitative reasoning ability early in their university career. Most students meet the requirement by taking a newly developed course called Quantitative Reasoning, offered by the Mathematic Department. The curriculum covers fairly traditional topics, but the course structure is very non-traditional. It follows an investigations pedagogy, with a strong emphasis on technology and cooperative learning. On a daily basis, students connect mathematics to real world applications and practice reading, analyzing, and writing about quantitative information.

One of the goals of the requirement is to improve students' abilities to use quantitative reasoning skills throughout their personal, academic, and professional lives. Approximately 50% of entering students have mathematics placement test scores at the level of College Algebra or below, and before the new requirement was in place students could graduate without taking a Mathematics course. In this talk, we describe the issues surrounding this requirement, the structure of our QR course, and some of the challenges that we have faced. (Received September 28, 2005)