



TO: Chief Executive Officers
Chief Instructional Officers
Chief Student Services Officers
Academic Senate Presidents

FROM: Marty Alvarado,
Executive Vice Chancellor, Educational Services & Support

John Stanskas,
President, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges

RE: Credit English as a Second Language Guidance

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidance to colleges regarding compliance with the credit English as a Second Language (ESL) relative to Assembly Bill 705 (2017) and Assembly Bill 1805 (2018). We intend to clarify the obligations of the colleges to help ESL departments implement AB 705 and AB 1805 and achieve the Vision for Success goals of increasing degrees and transfer.

AB 705 Related to Credit ESL

ESL students take credit ESL to achieve various personal, educational, and professional goals. AB 705 pertains to degree/transfer-seeking English language learners in a credit ESL program.

Per the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) memorandum AA 19-20 released April 2019:

- English as a second language (ESL) is not basic skills or remedial instruction; it is foreign language acquisition.
- Colleges are advised to integrate credit ESL curricular options to maximize the probability that students will be able to complete transfer-level composition within three years (or less).
- AB 705 does not require colleges to:
 - place all English language learners (ELLs) into transfer-level composition
 - eliminate credit ESL offerings
 - shift all credit ESL offerings into noncredit
 - eliminate credit ESL courses that are not designed to lead to transfer-level composition
 - eliminate elective, support courses focused on specific language skills which are not part of the credit ESL sequence leading to transfer-level composition.

Compliance with AB 1805’s Mandate to Inform Students of the Right to Access Transfer-level Coursework and Credit ESL

Under Education Code section 78221.5(a)(1), “colleges must inform students of their rights to access transfer-level coursework and academic credit English as a Second Language (ESL) coursework....” Colleges should review their communications and processes to ensure the following requirements of AB 1805 are met:

- Students must be informed of their right to access transfer-level English composition and credit ESL.
- Students must be informed of the college’s multiple measures placement policies.
- Information provided to students must be easily understandable, prominently featured in the community college catalog and orientation materials, in information relating to student assessment on the community college’s Internet Web site, and in any written communications from college counselors to students regarding placement options.
- This information may be provided in videos, outreach materials, and promotional information.
- College administration should ensure faculty and staff in departments, including but not limited to Counseling, Outreach, Marketing, Assessment, Admissions, and Academics, comply with AB 1805 as it relates to credit ESL.
- Colleges shall include in their AB 705 adoption plans examples of how they are complying with AB 1805. This should include evidence of how students are informed of the option to access credit ESL when being placed in an English course.

Status of Placement Instruments

Credit ESL is permitted to use assessment instruments approved by the Board of Governors through Fall 2020 (see CCCC Memorandum AA 18-41 released July 2018). The CCCC recognizes that credit ESL is distinct from instruction in remedial English; ESL, like foreign language, relies on assessment for placement as an essential component for student success. AB 705 recognizes the necessity of a reliable means to accurately assess and place language learners into ESL classes. To this end:

- The AB 705 ESL Advisory Committee will work with the Chancellor’s Office to examine placement options for ESL programs, including the use of assessment instruments as a multiple measure.
- The AB 705 ESL Advisory Committee is engaged in the collection of a bank of sample multiple measures for placement, including guided placement or self-placement tools, as samples for wide distribution to guide ESL departments statewide.
- Colleges should engage their credit ESL departments in discussions about the best form of evidence-based multiple measures placement to use for their unique populations and collect data on the implementation of these measures.

Language Assessment for Placement into Credit ESL under AB 705

As language programs, ESL departments have reasons to assess students’ language proficiency in all skill areas (reading, writing, grammar, and listening). For those degree/transfer-seeking students placed into credit ESL coursework, placement should maximize the probability that they will complete a degree and transfer requirements in English within three years. Colleges need to

maintain assessment resources to allow ESL departments to conduct language assessment; any changes to assessment services must not affect the college's ability to place students within a credit ESL sequence.

In AB 705 and AB 1805, the Legislature recognized that credit ESL provides necessary language proficiency for degree/transfer-seeking students. The University of California (UC) system and California State University (CSU) system both require language assessment to demonstrate proficiency for students who have had fewer than three years of high school in an English-speaking country, and foreign language programs in the University of California and the California State University systems administer placement exams to determine appropriate course placement. Administering assessments to establish language proficiency for placement is a well-established practice.

As colleges move forward to implement AB 705, many have raised concerns that efforts to implement portions of AB 705 related to English are having a negative impact on English Language Learners (ELLs) by conflating the assessment of native speakers for placement into remedial English and math with the assessment of language learners for placement into a foreign language program (credit ESL).

The Chancellor's Office Default Placement Rules for English are not appropriate for all students seeking ESL instruction. Per CCCCCO memorandum AA 19-20 (April 2019):

The Default Placement Rules for English are only required for students who have four complete years of high school data. The Default Placement Rules for English are not appropriate for international students who are English language learners and are best served by being directed to the ESL placement process.

Assessment and Placement for ESL: Two Different Stages

Colleges must make an assessment process available for the credit ESL sequence at the college. There are two stages to assessment for English Language Learners (ELLs):

Stage 1: Consistent with the initial guidance of CCCCCO memorandum AA 19-20 (April 2019), colleges must advise students who have four years of U.S. high school information that they have the right to direct access to transfer-level coursework and academic credit ESL. In addition, students who have fewer than four years of U.S. high school information must be advised that they have the right to access academic credit English as a Second Language (ESL) coursework or be directed to the college's English multiple measures prerequisite challenge process. This process is a local determination.

Stage 2: Determine placement into the appropriate level of the college credit English as a Second Language (ESL) coursework. AB 705 allows students to be placed into credit ESL sequences using multiple measures which may include a variety of assessment tools.

"...assessment" means the process of gathering information about a student regarding the student's study skills, English language proficiency, computational skills, aptitudes, goals, learning skills, career aspirations, academic performance, and need for special services. Assessment methods may include, but not necessarily be limited to, interviews, standardized tests, attitude surveys, vocational or career aptitude and interest inventories, high school or postsecondary transcripts, specialized certificates or licenses, educational histories, and other measures of performance.

(Ed. Code, § 78213(e).)

To further accomplish the goals of success for ESL students, all colleges are hereby urged to do the following:

- provide appropriate training for counselors, ESL faculty, and onboarding staff so they can best guide ESL students in using their assessment results to make decisions for their unique academic pathways;
- include credit ESL as part of their Guided Pathways structure.

Curriculum Evaluation and District AB 705 Adoption Plan Submission

CCCCO memorandum AA 19-20 (April 2019) advises credit ESL departments should engage in the evaluation of sequences and curriculum to maximize the probability that degree/transfer-seeking ELLs will complete transfer-level composition within the three-year timeline set by the Legislature. Data shall be gathered to analyze the effectiveness of the multiple-measures placement and inform the creation of the Adoption Plans for credit ESL to be submitted in 2020. The AB 705 ESL Advisory Committee will be recommending guidelines to assist the creation of Adoption Plans.

Colleges whose data reviews show high rates of successful transition into and through transfer-level composition (throughput) in conjunction with the use of placement tests should be able to retain those tools to continue successful placement into their sequences. Under AB 705,

“(B) Colleges shall use evidence-based multiple measures for placing students into English-as-a-second-language (ESL) coursework. For those students placed into credit ESL coursework, their placement should maximize the probability that they will complete degree and transfer requirements in English within three years.”

Therefore, existing placement practices for credit ESL resulting in high throughput may and should be retained, and colleges should collect data to analyze the effectiveness, and make adjustments to processes as needed.

Prerequisites and Guided Placement (Including Self-Placement) as They Relate to Credit ESL

Guided placement (including self-placement) has shown promise in guiding students to the pathway of English or credit ESL. Upon determination of the ESL pathway, students should engage in the college ESL placement process, which may include a language assessment as one of the evidence-based multiple measures. Once a student is in the sequence, the local credit ESL prerequisite policy governs the student’s progress through the credit ESL sequence. Colleges are advised of the following:

- At the time of this communication, title 5 regulations regarding placement for ESL have not been finalized; current regulations apply solely to the English and math pathways. A two-year viability study is under way to analyze placement data.
- Students who enter the credit ESL sequence will follow that sequence with the option of challenging prerequisites in accordance with the college’s policies.
- Students who receive an unsatisfactory grade in a credit ESL course will follow the ESL sequence in accordance with the college’s course repetition policies. A student cannot

enroll in a course for which they have not met the prerequisite, whether the prerequisite is initial placement via multiple measures or a satisfactory grade in the prerequisite course.

- Compliance with AB 705 does not eliminate prerequisites for transfer-level composition or credit ESL leading to transfer-level composition.
- Colleges should review and update their ESL policies and practices as appropriate. They should ensure these policies are implemented and advertised for ESL students in the same manner as policies for English and mathematics.

Guidelines for Successful Approval of Credit ESL AB 705 District Adoption Plans

Guidance for Adoption Plans will be forthcoming to prepare for the due date of July 2020. Until such guidance is issued, credit ESL departments should do the following:

- Inform students of their rights to access academic credit ESL coursework or transfer-level composition per AB 1805
- Give incoming students adequate information upon initial placement to decide on the pathway they wish to take
- Employ multiple measures, which may include approved assessment instruments, in assessing students for placement into a credit ESL sequence
- Maximize the probability that degree/transfer-seeking students can enter and complete transfer-level composition within three years
- Collect data on goals of credit ESL students as a unique population to ensure the placement into the academic credit ESL sequence maximizes the probability of completion of transfer-level English in three years for degree/transfer-seeking students
- Demonstrate with data that the placement process and design of ESL sequence maximizes probability for success
- Implement within the credit ESL sequence a core integrated strand which transitions directly to transfer-level composition.

Conclusion

Resources to support colleges in implementing AB 705 continue to be developed and the AB 705 ESL Advisory Committee invites colleges to contribute, for the collection and sharing at the CCCCCO, the following:

- Successful credit ESL sequence design and innovative and effective restructuring of credit ESL programs
- Promising practices for assessment and placement in credit ESL
- Collaboration across disciplines to enhance student success in credit ESL

If you have questions, please contact Dean Raul Arambula via email at rarambula@cccco.edu.

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