

**CSU First-time Freshman
Standardized Exams and
Admissions Recommendations**

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1.0 Executive Summary

Background

The California State University (CSU) suspended the use of standardized exams scores for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years for first-time freshman admission due to the COVID-19 pandemic and unavailability of examinations for prospective applicants. Preceding this temporary action, the CSU had been engaged in an ongoing discussion admission eligibility. In parallel, the University of California (UC) initiated a process to formally reconsider the use of standardized testing in its admission eligibility and selection processes. The UC reviewed the role of the ACT and SAT exams in UC, ultimately recommending a phased discontinuation of both exams and the creation of a new UC-specific admission examination. Following a lawsuit filed by school districts and community organizations and resulting injunction, the UC determined it would no longer utilize any standardized examinations in admission.

In spring 2021, the CSU's Admission Advisory Council (AAC), comprised of faculty, administrators and students, was formally asked to consider the future use of standardized testing in CSU first-year admission. In addition to consideration of hardships as a result of the pandemic and issues brought forth by social justice movements, the committee considered equity and fairness, academic preparation, Graduation Initiative 2025 goals and extensive research on the topic of standardized testing and college admission. The discussions underpin the following recommendation by the AAC.

Analysis

In March 2019, Kurlaender and Cohen published a study on the predictive value of high school GPA, Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC) and SAT for first-year outcomes of first-time freshmen enrolled at the CSU and UC. This report confirmed that high school GPA is a stronger predictor of first-year college GPA and second-year persistence than either the SBAC or SAT for CSU students who enrolled as first-time freshman in 2016-17.¹ In January 2020, the CSU Institutional Research and Analyses department used the same methodology and examined the incoming fall 2018 first-time freshman cohort. The 2018 cohort also took the revised SAT that was introduced in 2016. This report confirmed that neither SBAC nor the revised SAT add additional predictive value over high school GPA for first-year outcomes.

Recommendation

The CSU will discontinue the use of standardized examinations in first-year admission and develop a quantitative formula using data related to the following four categories to determine CSU minimum admission eligibility for applicants beginning in fall 2023:

- Primary Factor: High School Grade Point Average in College Preparatory Coursework (“a-g” GPA)
- Secondary Factor: Completion of College Preparatory Coursework beyond Minimums (“a-g” courses beyond 15 years/30 semesters)

¹ Kurlaender, M., & Cohen, K. (2019, March). Predicting college success: How do different high school assessments measure up? [Report]. Policy Analysis for California Education. <https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/predicting-college-success-how-do-different-high-school-assessments-measure-2019>

- Secondary Factor: School Context (high percentage USDA free/reduced-price meals or CSU local/partner school)
- Secondary Factor: Student Attributes and Activities Outside of the Classroom (first generation, family commitments, activities, leadership, employment or volunteering, community engagement)

Once the formula is established, it will be periodically adjusted to ensure the CSU is adhering to the goals established for the CSU by the California Master Plan for Higher Education and selecting students from the top third of the high school graduating class.

Process

The recommendation, to discontinue the use of standardized examinations in first-year admission, was considered by AAC and formally reviewed through the shared governance processes in December 2021. Based on positive feedback from stakeholders, the recommendation will be submitted to the Chancellor followed by consideration of proposed amendments to Title 5 by the CSU Board of Trustees in January and March 2022 meetings.

2.0 Background

The California State University has suspended the use of standardized test scores for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years for first-time freshman admission due to the COVID-19 pandemic and unavailability of examinations for prospective applicants. In March 2020, the rapid escalation of the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated schools across the country to move from in-person teaching and learning as a primary means of education to remote instruction. In addition, these school closures precipitated the suspension of standardized ACT and SAT exams. As a result, students were not fully able to access ACT or SAT exams as they were prior to the pandemic, both domestically and abroad. While most schools reopened with hybrid or in-person instruction in August 2021, students and families from low income and underrepresented backgrounds struggle to maintain their health and basic needs.

Coupled with the ongoing pandemic, the May 2020 killing of George Floyd brought to the forefront serious injustice for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) that impact student learning and achievement in California, nationwide and globally. As the pandemic evolves and the CSU maintains its commitment to equity and social justice, it has become clear that the re-implementation of a standardized test could put an extreme burden on students and families for underserved communities.

Prior to the pandemic a small number of colleges had moved forward with test optional admissions. The pandemic accelerated this to schools across the country and many colleges moved to test free admissions.

In spring 2021, the Admission Advisory Council (AAC), comprised of CSU faculty, administrators and students, was asked to consider the future use of standardized testing in first-time freshman admission in the CSU. In addition to consideration of the pandemic and social justice movements, the committee also considered equity and fairness, academic preparation, Graduation Initiative 2025 goals and extensive research on the topic of standardized testing and college admission. The discussions serve as the foundation for the background and set of recommendations put forth in this document.

2.1 Admission Advisory Council

The AAC met monthly between January and May 2021 to focus specifically on the topic of standardized test scores and the admission process. The Council meets regularly, advising the chancellor about admission issues and reviewing systemwide admission policy and practices to ensure compliance with CSU Board of Trustees policy and state statute. The council consists of:

- Two campus presidents;
- One provost/vice president for Academic Affairs;
- One vice president for Student Affairs;
- One assistant vice president/associate vice president for Enrollment Management;
- One director of Undergraduate Admissions;
- Five faculty members appointed by the ASCSU;
- Two representatives from the Office of the Chancellor; and
- One representative from the California State Student Association.

In addition to the representatives above, additional ad-hoc members were added to the council for this topic. These positions included:

- Chair of the CSU Statewide Academic Senate
- President of the California State Student Association
- Representative from the California Department of Education

Due to its subject matter expertise and representative membership, the Admission Advisory Council was tasked with developing a recommendation on the topic of standardized test scores in regards to first-year admission.

3.0 Current Status of First-time Freshman Admission

With the suspension of standardized testing the CSU established criteria for CSU minimum eligibility and campus eligibility for impacted programs and campuses for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years. CSU Minimum Eligibility is currently based on “a-g” GPA (grade point average). For impacted campuses, programs and students with a lower GPA, admission criteria is based on a combination of academic and non-academic factors.

3.1 CSU Minimum Eligibility

For the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years first-year CSU minimum eligibility requires student to:

- Be a high school graduate or equivalent;
- Complete the 15-unit comprehensive “a-g” pattern of college preparatory course; and
- Earn a qualifying “a-g” grade point average as described below.
 - California residents and graduates of California high schools will be eligible for admission by earning a 2.50 or greater “a-g” GPA.
 - Any California high school graduate or resident of California earning a GPA between 2.00 and 2.49 may be evaluated for admission based upon supplemental factors such as number of courses exceeding minimum “a-g” requirements, household income, extracurricular involvement, and other available information that would inform the campus admission decision.

- Each CSU campus determines if it will review this population and the supplemental factors used with GPA to determine eligibility in these cases and it will communicate these criteria publicly for prospective students.
- Non-California residents may be eligible for admission to the CSU by earning a 3.00 or greater “a-g” GPA along with other supplemental factors utilized by the individual campus, including those outlined by impacted campuses and programs.
- Any non-California residents earning a GPA between 2.47 and 2.99 may be evaluated for admission based upon supplemental factors such as number of courses exceeding minimum “a-g” requirements, household income, extracurricular involvement, and other available information that would inform the campus admission decision.
 - Each CSU campus determines if it will review this population and the supplemental factors used with GPA to determine eligibility in these cases.

The 2.5 “a-g” GPA for California high school graduates or residents of California applicants was the empirically determined threshold based on a review of fall 2019 applicant data. It was also determined that the fall 2019 data are representative of other years, giving this analysis the power necessary to base the temporary admissions criteria used for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years for first-year admissions. The data revealed that nearly all applicants meeting the minimum eligibility index threshold of 2950 are identified by a minimum threshold of HSGPA = 2.50. In addition, the CSU Office of the Chancellor analyzed the data to ensure that any changes to criteria would not generate disparate educational outcomes for historically underserved communities.

Under the CSU admission Eligibility Index formula, a high ACT or SAT score could allow a student with a GPA lower than 2.5 to be CSU eligible. To ensure no students were unfairly excluded from admission consideration during the pandemic, the CSU was provided the ability to review applicants with an GPA lower than 2.5 using additional admission criteria.

3.1.1 Impacted Campuses and Programs Criteria

In lieu of an eligibility index, CSU campuses are now calculating a Multi-Factor Admission Score (MFAS) based on a number of factors. MFAS is being used for impacted campuses, programs and students with a lower GPA. CSU campuses continue to have autonomy and wide latitude in determining an admissions evaluation approach that is best suited to their enrollment management priorities and needs. Campuses ensure that “a-g” GPA and academic preparation are the most heavily weighed variables. Campuses determined their specific value scale so that each variable can be quantified, and an objective review of applicants can take place.

CSU campuses evaluated the admission factors that were available, based on admission application information, and chose a combination of factors that would work best for the campus. The factors that campuses are currently using are:

1. “a-g” GPA
2. Math/Quantitative reasoning GPA
3. English GPA
4. Laboratory science GPA
5. History GPA
6. Language other than English (LOTE) GPA
7. “a-g” courses beyond 15 years/30 semesters
8. Math/Quantitative reasoning courses

9. History courses
10. Language other than English (LOTE) courses
11. College Promise/Partnership programs
12. Free and Reduced Lunch School (66%+)
13. First generation student status
14. Qualification for an application fee waiver
15. Participation in college preparation educational programs
16. Foster youth student
17. Military status
18. Work experience
19. Extracurricular activities
20. Leadership roles
21. Local Admission Priority (if applicable)

Campuses are not using all factors but only a subset that best fit their requirements. The [2022-2023 Supplemental Admissions Factors Summary](#) provides the factors used by each campus.

3.2 Impaction and Local Priority

CSU campuses continue to use a combination of strategies to maximize student access to courses and student support, regardless of whether or not the campus is impacted. However, once these strategies are no longer sufficient for managing enrollment, a campus will declare impaction. Impaction is defined as when a major, program or campus receives applications from more eligible applicants than can be accommodated given the resources of a program or campus.

The California Master Plan, coupled with executive orders dating back to 1966, address capacity and the need to ensure that all students have access to higher education. Title 5, section 40650, reads in part, “admission to a campus shall be limited on the bases of authorized academic plans and programs, and the number of students for whom facilities and competent staff are available to provide opportunity for an adequate college education.”

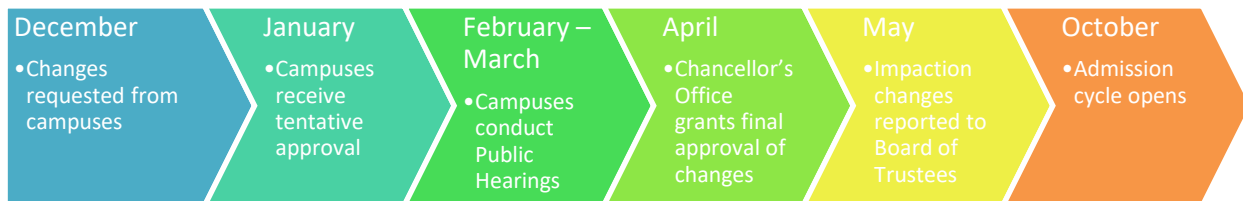
Impaction is not an ideal scenario; however it is a necessary enrollment management tool when demand outpaces resources. Without impaction, campuses would be in a situation where students would not have access to the classes needed to graduate. They would also lack access to timely advising, counseling, mentoring and tutoring due to high student-to-staff ratios.

Impaction can be declared at the student level, meaning it is impacted for freshmen and/or upper-division transfer students. It can also be declared at the program or major level. Even campuses that have not declared impaction at the freshman or upper-division transfer level may have at least one program impacted. Appendix 1 provides the details of each campus’ program impaction.

California Education Code 89030.5: Admission Procedural Requirements

For campuses to make any significant changes to their impaction status they must go through an annual process, part of which is required by California Education Code Section [89030.5](#). The process is meant to provide transparency in the impaction and admission process to the local stakeholders of each CSU campus.

Based on the requirements of section 89030.5 an annual impaction timeline has been established to ensure compliance. The timeline is as follows:



Supplemental Impaction Criteria

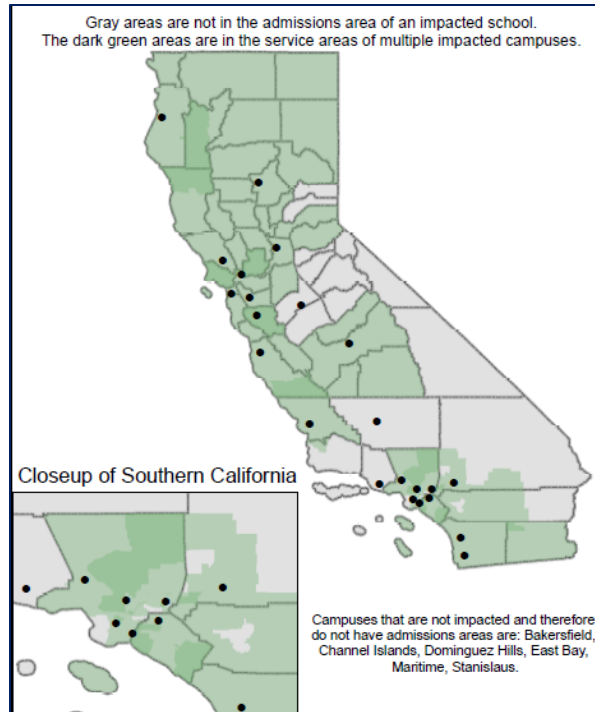
Each campus provides to the CSU Office of the Chancellor an annual plan of how enrollment will be managed, how impaction will be implemented on the campus and the program-specific supplemental criteria that will be required for incoming applicants. Impacted campuses may use additional criteria above and beyond the minimum CSU-eligibility requirements.

3.2.1 Local Admission and Outreach Areas

Local Admission Areas

Due to the volume of applications received by the CSU, local admission and service areas were established by the system in the early 1990s. When a campus has declared impaction, it establishes a local admission area that defines the high schools and community colleges that feed into that campus. These areas are used as one factor in admission decisions to ensure students have access to their local CSU campus.

Non-impacted campuses do not establish specific local admission areas, as the entire state serves as their local area. These campuses include Bakersfield, Channel Islands, Dominguez Hills, Maritime, San Francisco, Sonoma and Stanislaus. At the same time, not all areas of the state are included in a local admission area. The map below outlines the areas that are currently covered by a CSU local admission area:



Local admission areas can be a source for confusion. Applicants and their families sometimes are unclear about which CSU is local to their high school or community college. Some schools suggest they should be affiliated with CSU campuses that do not include them in the local admission area. And in some cases, an applicant or their high school may be closer to a particular CSU but they are not in the local admission area for that campus. Since local admission areas are based on the school this can also be problematic for students who attend schools away from their primary residence or attend on-line schools.

The CSU strives to be clear about campus impactation and local admission areas to ensure that students and their families have the necessary information. Information about impactation is included on both CSU and campus websites, shared during conferences that the CSU hosts for high school and community college counselors and featured in campus outreach efforts.

Local Service Areas

All campuses, regardless of impactation, have a defined local service area. These are regions where each CSU campus focuses its efforts on outreach, recruitment and providing local high school and community college support. Appendix 2 provides the local admission and service areas for each campus.

3.3 Local Admission Priority

The 2017-18 California state budget required the CSU Board of Trustees to adopt policies designed to mitigate against the effects of impactation by: requiring campuses to give priority to local CSU-eligible applicants seeking to enroll in impacted programs; and redirecting all CSU-eligible applicants to non-impacted programs on other campuses if not initially admitted.

Every impacted program at all CSU campuses is required to provide first priority to local applicants. *First priority* means a finite admission advantage for local applicants. At a minimum, this priority includes a meaningful

weighting of GPA or additional points in the Multi-Factor Admission Score that gives admission preference to local, CSU-eligible undergraduate applicants over non-local applicants.

Local applicants are subject to the same supplemental criteria imposed on other applicants to impacted campuses and programs, specifically major preparation for transfer students and high school preparation for first-time freshmen.

If a major or program is not offered, as part of the curriculum, at an applicant's local CSU campus, the applicant would be considered local at the CSU campus immediately adjacent if it offers that major or program.

Each campus is required to clearly publish this information on its website for both first-time freshmen and upper-division transfer students.

The first priority criteria are part of each campus' annual impaction plan. Any change to existing procedure is subject to the annual impaction process and will comply with Section 89030.5 of the California Education Code.

4.0 Evolution of Standardized Testing for First-time Freshman in the CSU

The CSU was originally established in 1960 as part of the California Master Plan for Higher Education along with the University of California and California Community College systems. In one of the first CSU executive orders the admission eligibility formula was established. This formula used a combination of GPA and ACT or SAT test scores as the basis for admission.

The Master Plan established the CSU's primary mission as undergraduate and graduate education (the latter, initially through the issuance of master's degrees, although subsequent legislation authorized the CSU to award specific doctorate degrees). The UC was designated the state's primary academic research institution to provide undergraduate, graduate and professional education. The CCC was to provide academic and vocational instruction and provide students the first two years of undergraduate education.

The Master Plan established differentiation of the admissions pool for the segments:

- The UC was to select among the top one-eighth (12.5%) of the high school graduating class
- The CSU was to select among the top one-third (33.3%) of the high school graduating class
- The CCC was to admit any student capable of benefitting from instruction

In addition, the Master Plan established that the ability for students to transfer is an essential component of access. The Master Plan—and California Education Code section 66201.5—state that the UC and CSU shall seek to maintain an undergraduate student population composed of a ratio of lower division to upper division students of 40 to 60 percent.

The CSU Eligibility Index (EI) has been used in the CSU as the main criteria for freshman admission eligibility for over 50 years. The first reference to the Eligibility Index is in Executive Order 6 dated March 19, 1965. The Eligibility Index formula is purely quantitative.

The CSU EI formula is calculated by using either the SAT or ACT as follows:

- SAT (mathematics and evidence-based reading and writing scores) + (800 x GPA)
- ACT (10 x ACT composite score without the writing score) + (200 x GPA)

Graduates of California high schools or residents of California, as defined for tuition purposes, must have a minimum eligibility index of 2,950 using the SAT or 694 using the ACT. Non-residents of California, as defined for tuition purposes, must have a minimum index of 3,570 using the SAT or 842 using the ACT. The current CSU EI formula weights GPA higher than test scores.

The Eligibility Index formula weights the “a-g” GPA higher than test scores. For example:

- A student with a 3.0 GPA would have 2400 of 2950 points or 81% of their eligibility derived from the GPA.
- A student with a 2.0 GPA would have 2000 of 2950 points or 68% of the eligibility derived from the GPA.

As the GPA lowers the ACT or SAT test score becomes weighted more heavily. The data show that some underrepresented students are assisted by their tests scores in achieving an EI high enough to be admitted to the CSU and impacted campuses or programs.

The CSU has a long standing, established policy where any state resident, for tuition purposes, with a 3.0 or above GPA would be eligible for CSU admission. As more campuses became impacted and added additional admission criteria for selection, this drove the need for CSU freshman applicants to submit ACT or SAT test scores. Prior to the pandemic approximately 98% of the freshman applicants submitted an SAT or ACT test score.

5.0 Educational Research and Practice

5.1 Standardized Testing

Standardized testing for college admissions started in 1901 with the first “College Boards” and fewer than 1000 students sitting for the first exam. Over the past century admissions testing has seen significant growth. In 1926, the “Scholastic Aptitude Test” (SAT) was first administered as an alternative to the “College Boards”. The SAT was designed to be a multiple-choice test for measuring students’ general aptitude for learning. This grew out of experiences with IQ tests during World War I. Both the SAT and IQ tests shared assumptions that intelligence is inherited and not subject to change over one’s life. In the years after World War II the idea of the SAT and that intelligence could be measured in a single number began to resonate in college admissions. The SAT became a standard in admissions and could be administered to large numbers of students economically. The SAT also provided a way to predict who would do well in college and may have the aptitude for learning but come from underserved communities and schools².

In 1990, the College Board changed the name of the test to “Scholastic Assessment Test” and then in 1996 dropped the name entirely. This was an effort to separate the perception of the test’s relationship with the older IQ tests. The College Board also moved the description of the tests from one that measured aptitude, to generalized reasoning ability, to critical thinking. The SAT was consistently described as a way to gauge students’ analytic ability and able to predict students’ ability to perform in college. Both the CSU and UC started using standardized test scores for admissions in the 1960s.

But as the 20th century was ending, the SAT started to come under more scrutiny. After affirmative action was ended by California voters, the UC started to review their admission policies. They were concerned with the alarming low numbers of LatinX and African American students enrolling. The UC found standardized testing had

² Atkinson, R. & Geiser, S. (2009). Reflections on a Century of College Admissions Tests.

an adverse effect on minority and low-income students. After further review they also found that the SAT had poor predictive power as compared to high school grades or curriculum-based tests such as Advanced Placement exams¹. In many studies over the years, high school GPA has been shown to be a stronger predictor of outcomes³

The impact of standardized testing on students over the past several years has also become clearer. The emphasis and amount of time spent on testing has led to test anxiety and stress for many students. This stress can reveal itself as physical ailments⁴. The COVID-19 pandemic has also added to student stress and mental health issues.

5.2 Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC)

Several states, including California, implemented the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in the 2010s. These standards were created to articulate what students were expected to know in English and mathematics when they graduated high school and to ensure student were prepared for college and beyond. CCSS was adopted by the California Legislature in 2010 and replaced the California State Standards.

Along with the CCSS in 2011, California and several other states joined an effort to create a new assessment that more accurately reflected the standards of college and career readiness. The result was called the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). To facilitate the move to the new standards California eliminated the State Standards Test for most subjects and grade levels in 2013. In 2014-2015, it replaced the standards tests with the Smarter Balanced Assessments for English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics⁵. The test has two components, a computer adaptive section and a performance task. The adaptive test is designed to match the ability of the test taker and adapts the difficulty of questions based on the answers to previous test questions. The performance task is not adaptive and involves interaction with materials or engagement in a problem solution.

In California, the Smarter Balanced Assessment is a component of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). With some exceptions, the assessment is administered to students in grades 3 - 8 and 11th grade. The CSU also uses the 11th grade assessment results as part of the Early Assessment Program (EAP) to gauge student readiness for college-level English and math. The results are also one factor used in the multiple measures placement criteria used by the CSU to properly place students in college-level English and math courses.

As noted in the University of California Feasibility Study Work Group report, "...the original purpose of the Smarter Balanced Assessment was to provide *aggregate*-level data for local education agency (LEAs; such as schools and districts) accountability and improvement purposes at the school level".

³ Kurlaender, M., & Cohen, K. (2019, March). Predicting college success: How do different high school assessments measure up? [Report]. Policy Analysis for California Education. <https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/predicting-college-success-how-do-different-high-school-assessments-measure-2019>

⁴ Simpson, C. (2016). Effects of standardized testing on students' well-being. Retrieved from the Harvard University website at https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/eap/files/c._simpson_effects_of_testing_on_well_being_5_16.pdf

⁵ Kurlaender, M., Hurtt, A. & Reed, S. K-12 Content Standards, Assessment and Accountability in California: A Short Primer for Higher Education. Policy Analysis for California Education.

The report goes on further to explain that the Smarter Balanced Assessment was not designed to be a high-stakes, college admissions test. In addition, the assessment in grade 11 shows persistent disparities between students in different racial or ethnic categories, often presumed to reflect inequities in K–12 schooling. Making the Smarter Balanced Assessment a high-stakes test could lead to the same stresses on students and families as ACT or SAT exams did prior to the pandemic. This could also lead to the creation of a new marketplace of test preparation. The test is also not currently available in all states, and not provided to private schools in California.⁶

6.0 Case for Changes to CSU Admission Policy

Even as the California State University System, much like all of higher education across the US, is being called to adapt and pivot in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to remain focused and unwaveringly committed to its core values and strategic priorities remains as strong as ever. Graduation Initiative 2025, including its commitments to both enhance and increase student access and success, as well as eliminate educational equity gaps, remains at the forefront of CSU decisions.

In March 2019, Kurlaender and Cohen published a study that reviewed how well high school GPA, Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC) and SAT predict first year outcomes of first-time freshman enrolled at the CSU and UC. This report confirmed that high school GPA is a stronger predictor of first year college GPA and second year persistence than either the Smarter Balanced Assessment or SAT for CSU students who enrolled as first-time freshman in 2016-17.⁷

In January 2020, the CSU Institutional Research and Analyses department used the same methodology and studied the incoming fall 2018 first-time freshman cohort. The 2018 cohort also took the revised SAT that was introduced in 2016. This report confirmed, neither SBAC nor the revised SAT add predictive value over high school GPA for first year outcomes. Below is a high-level summary of the findings:

- For First-Year GPA
 - High school GPA is much stronger predictor relative to either the revised SAT or SBAC alone.
 - SBAC alone predicts marginally better than SAT alone overall and for several subgroups.
 - The combination of HSGPA / SAT and HSGPA / SBAC does a little better than HSGPA alone.
 - Including all three scores does not improve predicted outcomes.
- For First-Year Retention
 - Consistent with other analyses, the overall predictive power of HSGPA and test scores on retention is much lower than GPA
 - SBAC alone is slightly more correlated than SAT alone for low-income students.
 - There is no improvement in prediction by using HSGPA with additional test scores overall.
- For First-Year Term Units Attempted
 - Test scores are as predictive as HS_GPA alone for most groups.

⁶ Comeaux, E & Horwitz, R. (2020, December 4). Feasibility of a New UC Admission Test [Memorandum]. University of California. <https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/regmeet/jan21/b2attach5.pdf>

⁷ Kurlaender, M., & Cohen, K. (2019, March). Predicting college success: How do different high school assessments measure up? [Report]. Policy Analysis for California Education. <https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/predicting-college-success-how-do-different-high-school-assessments-measure-2019>

- The CSU campus the student has enrolled has a large effect on the correlation (even after adjusting quarter campuses to semester units)
- SAT and SBAC perform similarly.
- Inclusion of both scores with HSGPA does not improve the prediction.

Although standardized test scores have a long tradition in higher education, dating back to 1901, standardized exams currently provide no additional value to the CSU admission process. The negative impacts of stress on students, families and high schools as well as the consistent disparate outcomes of exams results between students in well-served communities versus underserved communities cannot be ignored.

7.0 Proposed First-time Freshman Admission Policy

Section 66205 of the Education Code outlines the intent of the legislature to ensure that the CSU and UC develop standards and criteria for undergraduate and graduate admission, including:

- Develop processes which strive to be fair and easily understandable.
- Consider the use of criteria and procedures that allow students to enroll who are otherwise fully eligible and admissible but who have course deficiencies due to circumstances beyond their control, and when appropriate, provide that the admission requires the student to make up the deficiency.
- Consult broadly with California’s diverse ethnic and cultural communities.

This section also reiterates the legislature’s intent that the CSU enroll a student body that meets the high academic standards and reflects the cultural, racial, geographic, economic and social diversity of California.

The CSU needs to implement admission criteria that meets the above goals and addresses the future needs of the state of California and its students. The proposed admission criteria will use academic qualifications as the basis, but also will ensure that other experiences that are pertinent are included. Although GPA is a strong predictor of students’ ability to be successful in college there can be differences in overall opportunities across schools and districts. For example, the availability of honors and Advanced Placement courses can differ. This can impact the ability for students to earn a higher “a-g” GPA. Utilizing additional factors in the calculation of a CSU Minimum Eligibility will provide for a more well-rounded set of variables for admission evaluation.

7.1 CSU Minimum Eligibility

The CSU will create a quantitative formula using data related to the four categories below to determine CSU Minimum Eligibility:

- Primary Factor: High School Grade Point Average in College Preparatory Coursework (“a-g” GPA)
- Secondary Factor: Completion of College Preparatory Coursework beyond Minimums (“a-g” GPA courses beyond 15 years/30 semesters)
- Secondary Factor: High School Context
 - School context variable currently being used in MFAS is a school with 66% or more students receiving free and reduced lunch. The CSU is currently researching a more comprehensive variable.
 - Designated local district or partner school
- Secondary Factor: Student Attributes and activities Outside of the Classroom

- Communicates an emphasis on activities and responsibilities outside the classroom and the need for prepared and well-rounded students. Activities outside the classroom will become part of the CSU admission formula.
 - Activities would include:
 - First in family to enroll in college
 - Arts or music
 - Clubs
 - Community engagement
 - Family responsibilities
 - Caring for children
 - Supervising younger siblings
 - Regularly assisting a grandparent or older adult relative
 - Regularly taking care of household tasks
 - Working to provide family income
 - Athletic participation
 - Employment or volunteering
 - Other experiences that have been meaningful
- (This information is currently collected on the Common App)

7.2 Impacted Campuses and Programs

Campuses will continue to utilize a Multi-Factor Admission Score for impacted campuses and programs as is currently in place for the 2021-2022 and 2022 – 2023 academic year. The current set of variables should be evaluated and in order to determine if they should be reduced to ensure clear and transparent admission criteria to the students and families of California.

Campuses or programs that currently are using admission review models that do not rely on standardized test scores may continue to utilize their existing models.

Campuses may continue to require additional admission materials, such as auditions, recording, drawings or portfolios. Campuses will need to determine the admission process for these programs and the points that will be assigned to these items in their overall admission criteria.

Campuses will also continue to follow all impaction requirements including the submission of annual enrollment management reports and all requirement outlined in California Education Code Section [89030.5](#).

7.3 Local Admission Priority

Every impacted program at all CSU campuses is required to provide first priority to local applicants. *First priority* means a finite admission advantage for local applicants. At a minimum, this priority includes a meaningful weighting of GPA or additional points in the Multi-Factor Admission Score that gives admission preference to local, CSU-eligible undergraduate applicants over non-local applicants. Campuses will continue to provide first priority to impacted programs to their local applicants.

8.0 Implications for Other CSU Admission Policies and Practices

8.1 Transfer Admissions

With the proposed changes to freshman eligibility and the current practices of graduate admission, including using additional professional and academic factors, leaving transfer admission in its current state would create an imbalance in admission practices.

While minimum admission eligibility provides a bar for prospective transfer students to strive for, it does not consider non-academic factors or other variables for campus and program eligibility. Aligning transfer admission policy with freshman admission requirements is recommended.

8.2 Impaction and Local Admission Areas

The CSU has a long-standing and proud history of providing regional access to a CSU education and this will always be a cornerstone to CSU admission policy. The concepts of Local Admission Areas and impaction has long been confusing to both internal and external stakeholders. Local Admission Areas are increasingly a point of confusion when the education system is changing, and students may be living in one place and attending school in another. As the CSU reviews and updates admission criteria, the concept of impaction and local area needs to be re-evaluated.

Further discussion and recommendations should also be made around the definition of local area and impaction. As demand for higher education increases, providing more campus flexibility to conduct admissions at the program level could equate to more capacity and the potential ability to properly allocate resources.

9.0 Recommendations

Use of Standardized Test Scores: Based on the background and factors outlined in the document the Admissions Advisory Council recommends the discontinuation of the use of standardized test scores in CSU first-year admission.

ACT and SAT scores submitted by admitted students may continue to be used for college level English and mathematics course placement as part of CSU Multiple Measures.

Smarter Balanced Assessment: Smarter Balanced Assessment 11th grade assessments will continue to be used for college level English and mathematics course placement as part of CSU Multiple Measures.

CSU Minimum Eligibility and Multi-Factor Admission Score (MFAS): The AAC will continue to provide council on first-time freshman CSU Minimum Eligibility and Multi-Factor Admission Score categories. Establishing and maintaining a CSU minimum eligibility formula for freshman admissions ensures students, families and educational partners understand the academic and non-academic preparation and background required to be considered for admission to any CSU campus. It also ensures the CSU can continue to offer systemwide programs such as redirection.

Continue to Partner with PK-12. The CSU should continue to support programs and services for public schools to support the completion of “a-g” college preparation coursework and college access. This would include continuing a comprehensive partnership and outreach plan to PK-14 schools.

10.0 Appendix 1 – 2022-2023 Undergraduate Impacted Program Matrix

	Bakersfield	Channel Islands	Chico	Dominguez Hills	East Bay	Fresno*	Fullerton*	Humboldt	Long Beach*	Los Angeles*	Maritime Academy N	Monterey Bay	Northridge	Pomona	Sacramento	San Bernardino	San Diego*	San Francisco	San Jose*	San Luis Obispo*	San Marcos	Sonoma	Stanislaus
Apparel Design & Merchandising														O	O			O					
Architecture														I							I		
Art	O	O	O	O	O	I	I	O	I	I		O	O	O	O	O	I	N	I	I	O	O	O
Biological Sciences**	O	O	O	O	O	I	I	O	I	I		N	I	I	O	O	I	O	I	I	I	O	O
Business	O	O	O	O	O	I	I	O	I	I	O	N	N	N	I	O	I	N	I	I	I	O	O
Chemistry/Biochemistry	O	O	O	O	O	I	I	O	I	I			O	I	O	O	I	O	I	I	O	O	O
Child/Human Development	O	O	O	O	O	I	I	O	I	I		O	O		O	O	I	O	I	I	O	I	O
Communication	O	O	O	O	O	I	I	O	I	I			O	I	O	O	I	O	I	I	I	O	O
Computer Science	O	O	O	O	O	I	I	O	I	I		I	O	I	O	O	I	O	I	I	O	O	O
Criminology/Criminal Justice	O		O	O	O	I	I	O	I	I			I		I	I	I	O	I	I	O	I	O
Economics	O	O	O	O	O	I	I	O	I	I		O	O	O	O	O	I	O	I	I	O	O	O
Engineering	O	I	O	O	O	I	I	O	I	I	I		O	N	O	O	I	O	I	I	I	O	O
English	O	O	O	O	O	I	I	O	I	I		O	O	O	O	O	I	O	I	I	O	O	O
Environmental Studies/Sciences	O	O	O	O	O	I		O	I			N		N	O	O	I	O	I	I	O	O	O
Family & Consumer Sciences						I			I				O		O				O				
Film & Electronic Arts/Cinema							I	O	I	I		O	I		O			O					
Food & Nutrition/Dietetics			O			I			I	I			O	O	O	O	I	I	I	I			
Graphic Design			O	O	O	I	I		I	I		O	O	O	I	O	I	N	I	I			
Health Science/Education	O	O	O	O	O	I	I		I	I			I	O	I	O	I	O	I				
History	O	O	O	O	O	I	I	O	I	I		O	O	O	O	O	I	O	I	I	O	O	O
Hospitality & Tourism			O	O	O	I			I			O	O	O		O	I	O	I	I			
Information Systems	O		O	O	O	I	I		I	I		O	O	O	O	O	O	I	O	I	I	O	O
Interior Design			O			I			I						O		I	O	I				
International Business (B.A.)				O		I	I			I		N		N	I	O	I	N	I				
Journalism/Mass Communications			O	O	O	I	I	O	I			O	O	O	O		I	O	I	I	I		
Kinesiology/Physical Education	O		O	O	O	I	I	O	I	I		N	I	I	O	N	N	I	I	I	I	I	O
Liberal Studies	O	O	O	O	O	I	I	O	I	I		O	O	O	O	O	I	O	I	I	O	O	O
Marine Transportation											I												
Mathematics	O	O	O	O	O	I	I	O	I	I		N	O	O	O	O	I	O	I	I	O	O	O
Music	O		N	O	O	I	I	O	I	I		O	I	O	O	O	I	O	I	I		O	O
Nursing, Basic	I	I	I			I			I	I					I	I	I	I	I		I	I	I
Nursing, RN to BSN	I	O	O	O	O	I	I		I	I			O		O	O	I	O	I		O	I	O
Occupational Therapy/Health							I						O						I				
Oceanography								O			I												
Physics	O	O	O	O	O	O	I	O	I	I		O	O	I	O	O	I	O	I	I	O	O	O
Political Science	O	O	O	O	O	I	I	O	I	I		O	O	O	O	O	I	O	I	I	O	O	O
Psychology	O	O	O	O	O	I	I	O	I	I		N	O	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	O	I	O
Public Administration	O		O	O	O	I	I		I	I			O			O	I		I			O	O
Radio-Television & Film			O	O	O	I	I			I		O	O				I	O	I				
Social Science			O				I	O		I		O		O	O	O	I		I	I	O		O
Social Work			I			I		O	I	I		O		O	O	N	I	I	I				
Sociology	O	O	O	O	O	I	I	O	I	I		O	O	N	O	O	I	O	I	I	O	I	O
Spanish	O	O	O	O	O	I	I	O	I	I		O	O	O	O	O	I	O	I	I	O	O	O
Theater/Performing Arts	O	O	O	O	O	I	I	O	I	I		O	O	O	O	O	I	O	I	I	O	O	O
Undeclared						I	I		I	I		I					I	N	I				

Codes: * = All programs are impacted I = Programs Impacted at the campus N = See notes for the campus on the next page
 O = Programs offered at the campus but not impacted [] = A blank cell indicates that the program is not offered at this campus
 **Biological Sciences should include Biology, Biotechnology, Microbiology, and Medical Technology

11.0 Appendix 2 – CSU Local Admission and Service Areas

CAMPUS	LOCAL ADMISSION AREA		SERVICE AREA
	First-Time Freshman Admission	Upper-Division Transfer Admission	Outreach, Recruitment, EAP
Bakersfield	Not Impacted: State of California	Not Impacted: State of California	Antelope Valley, Lancaster, Palmdale and the counties of Inyo, Kern, Mono, Tulare (south of Tulare & Lindsay)
Channel Islands	Not Impacted: State of California	Not Impacted: State of California	Malibu, Santa Barbara County (Channel Islands to San Luis Obispo south of Gaviota, and Ventura County)
Chico	All high schools in the counties of Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama, Yuba; and 4 school districts in Trinity: Mountain Valley, Southern Trinity, Trinity Alps, and Trinity High School	30 units of coursework from one or more of the community colleges in Butte, Lassen, Shasta, Plumas, Siskiyou, and Yuba Counties	Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sutter, Eastern Trinity, Tehama, and Yuba Counties
Dominguez Hills	Not Impacted: State of California	Not Impacted: State of California	Los Angeles County (see Attachment B/C)
East Bay	All high schools in the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Solano	All community colleges in the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Solano	Alameda and Contra Costa Counties
Fresno	Each program is impacted. Applicants from high schools in Fresno, Kings Madera, Tulare Counties and partner high school with a historic relation with Fresno State in other counties	Each program is impacted. Majority of transferable coursework from Allan Hancock College, Clovis Community College, College of the Sequoia, Fresno City College, Hartnell Community College, Merced College, Modesto Junior College, Porterville College, Reedley College, and West Hills College including Lemoore campus	The counties of Fresno, Kings, Madera, Tulare (Fresno to Bakersfield), north of Tulare and Lindsay
Fullerton	Each program is impacted. All high schools in Orange County, Chino, Corona/Norco, Walnut, Whittier, and Alford School District	Majority of courses from or in combination with each of the community colleges in Orange County	Orange County (see Attachment B and C)
Humboldt	All high schools in Del Norte, Humboldt, Northern Mendocino, and Western Trinity	Not Impacted: State of California	Del Norte, Humboldt, Northern Mendocino (north of Ukiah), and Western Trinity County

CAMPUS	LOCAL ADMISSION AREA		SERVICE AREA
	First-Time Freshman Admission	Upper-Division Transfer Admission	Outreach, Recruitment, EAP
Long Beach	Each program is impacted. The following school districts: ABC, Anaheim (Cypress and Oxford only), Bellflower, Compton, Downey, Huntington Beach, Long Beach, Los Alamitos, Norwalk-La Mirada, and Paramount	Each program is impacted. Transfer applicants will receive "Local Preference" for admission consideration based on their high school of graduation. The same geographic boundaries used to determine local area high schools for freshmen will now be used to determine local preference for incoming transfers as well. As part of our commitment to provide access to veterans, CSULB will give "Local Preference" to all military veterans regardless of their school of origin.	Los Angeles County (see Attachment B and C)
Los Angeles	All high schools located east to the 605 freeway and the Los Angeles County Line, north to the LA County Line, south to Highway 42 (Firestone Blvd), west to the intersection of the 405 freeway and Culver, north on Culver to La Cienega, north on La Cienega to Sunset-Hollywood Blvd, east of Hollywood Blvd to Los Feliz, east on Los Feliz to the 5 freeway to Sunland Blvd, east on Sunland Blvd to Highway 14	Majority of coursework, or last school attended, or ADT from the following community colleges: Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD), Glendale Community College, Pasadena City College, Rio Hondo College, Santa Monica College	Los Angeles County (see Attachment B and C)
Maritime	Not Impacted: State of California	Not Impacted: State of California	Solano County
Monterey Bay	Impacted for non-local area only - applicants outside of Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties	Majority of courses from Monterey Peninsula Community College, Hartnell Community College, Gavilan Community College, or Cabrillo Community College	Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties

CAMPUS	LOCAL ADMISSION AREA		SERVICE AREA
	First-Time Freshman Admission	Upper-Division Transfer Admission	Outreach, Recruitment, EAP
Northridge	Most of the Los Angeles Unified School District (excluding the East Educational Service Center), Acton-Agua Dulce Unified School District, Antelope Valley Union, Beverly Hills Unified School District, Burbank Unified School District, Compton Unified School District, Culver City Unified School District, Glendale Unified School District, Gorman Elementary School District, Inglewood Unified School District, La Canada Unified School District, Las Virgenes Unified School District, Lennox Elementary School District, Lynwood Unified School District, Pasadena Unified School District, San Gabriel Unified School District, San Marino Unified School District, Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District, and William S. Hart Union High School District	Antelope Valley College, College of the Canyons, East Los Angeles College, Glendale Community College, Los Angeles City College, Los Angeles Harbor College, Los Angeles Mission College, Los Angeles Pierce College, Los Angeles Trade Technical College, Los Angeles Valley College, Moorpark College, Oxnard College, Pasadena City College, Santa Monica College, Southwest Los Angeles College, Ventura College, and West Los Angeles College	Los Angeles County (see Attachment B and C)
Pomona	All high schools west of the 15 freeway, north of the 60 freeway, east of the 605 freeway and south of the 210 freeway	Majority of courses from Mt. San Antonio College or Citrus College or both	Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties (see Attachment B and C)
Sacramento	All high schools in El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, and Yolo Counties	Majority of coursework from either American River, Cosumnes River, Folsom Lake, Lake Tahoe Community, Sacramento City, San Joaquin Delta, Sierra, Solano or Woodland College	Alpine, Amador, Colusa, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sierra, Solano, Sutter, San Joaquin, and Yolo Counties
San Bernardino	The following school districts in San Bernardino County: Apple Valley, Chaffey, Colton, Fontana, Hesperia, Morongo, Redlands, Rialto, Rim of the World, San Bernardino City, Victor Valley, and Yucaipa. Riverside County: Banning, Beaumont, Coachella Valley, Desert Sands, Jurupa Valley, Moreno Valley, Palm Springs, and Riverside	Majority of coursework from or in combination with the community colleges in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties	Riverside and San Bernardino Counties (see Attachment B and C)

CAMPUS	LOCAL ADMISSION AREA		SERVICE AREA
	First-Time Freshman Admission	Upper-Division Transfer Admission	Outreach, Recruitment, EAP
San Diego	Each program is impacted. Students from all high schools in San Diego County south of State Hwy 56 and Imperial County	Each program is impacted. Students transferring from or earning an ADT from Cuyamaca College, Grossmont College, Imperial Valley College, San Diego City College, San Diego Mesa College, San Diego Miramar College, and Southwestern College. Students transferring from MiraCosta College and Palomar College in majors not offered at CSU San Marcos	South of State Hwy 56 in San Diego County and Imperial County
San Francisco	Not Impacted: State of California	Not Impacted: State of California	San Francisco and San Mateo Counties
San José	Graduates from high schools in Santa Clara County	At the time of application, majority of coursework from community colleges in Santa Clara and Santa Cruz Counties	Santa Clara County
San Luis Obispo	Each program is impacted. Students applying from high schools in San Luis Obispo, southern Monterey, and northern Santa Barbara Counties may be assigned additional points in the multi-valued selection criteria.	Each program is impacted. Students whose home domicile is within San Luis Obispo, southern Monterey, and northern Santa Barbara Counties may be assigned additional points in the multi-valued selection criteria.	San Luis Obispo County and region north of Gaviota in Santa Barbara County
San Marcos	Those high schools that are north of Hwy 56 in San Diego County plus Capistrano and Saddleback Valley, Hemet, Lake Elsinore, Murrieta Valley, San Jacinto, Temecula, and Val Verde districts	Last school attended was Mount San Jacinto, Palomar, and/or Mira Costa community colleges	San Diego County north of Hwy 56, Southwest Riverside County
Sonoma	Not Impacted: State of California	Not Impacted: State of California	Lake, Marin, Napa, Sonoma, and southern Mendocino Counties (including Ukiah)
Stanislaus	Not Impacted: State of California	Not Impacted: State of California	Calaveras, Mariposa, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Tuolumne Counties