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## **MEMORANDUM**

TO: CSU Presidents

FROM: Eric G. Forbes  
Assistant Vice Chancellor

SUBJECT: The Placement of Students Based on Their Academic Preparation

As an interim step following the issuance of Executive Order 1110, this memorandum begins to outline the set of uniform student-placement practices that will be followed by each California State University campus. CSU first-time freshmen will be placed in college-level courses that best align with their academic preparation. The fall 2018 entering freshman class placement in first year CSU General Education Breadth (GE) Area B4 Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning and Area A2 Written Communication will continue to use the long-established placement practices based on existing examinations (excluding EPT/ELM exams), which will be augmented with additional indicators reflecting the student's high school academic record.

Campus faculty shall be responsible for designing, developing, and refining appropriate courses. The availability of courses and the advising and placement of students shall be responsive to each student's major.

### **General Placement Recommendations**

Placement recommendations for Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning and Written Communications courses shall be subject to CSU system-level placement guidance and generally will fall into four categories reflecting completion of or readiness for GE courses in these disciplines. Campuses may make information-based exceptions to placement guidance for students near placement thresholds.

- ***Has fulfilled the general education requirement***
  - Student has met the CSU General Education Breadth requirement via AP or IB examination or transferable course.
- ***Recommend placement in a general education course***
  - Students meets examination academic preparation standards.
  - Students meets new multiple measures informed standards.

#### **CSU Campuses**

Bakersfield • Channel Islands • Chico • Dominguez Hills • East Bay • Fresno • Fullerton • Humboldt • Long Beach • Los Angeles • Maritime Academy • Monterey Bay  
Northridge • Pomona • Sacramento • San Bernardino • San Diego • San Francisco • San José • San Luis Obispo • San Marcos • Sonoma • Stanislaus

- ***Recommend placement in a supported general education course***
  - Traditional examination criteria not achieved.
  - Based on new multiple measures, students need additional academic support.
  - Depending on overall preparation and student major, a standard for required participation in the Early Start Program will be developed.
- ***Require placement in a supported general education course***
  - Based on new multiple measures, students need additional academic support.
  - Participation in the Early Start Program is required.

The attached document retains and references existing GE Area B4 Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning and area A2 Written Communication placement mechanisms that are used in advance of students enrolling in the CSU. Resulting from discussion with appropriate bodies and subject to recommendation by the Admissions Advisory Council during the fall 2017 term, this placement guidance will be augmented by additional multiple measures. Specific information on these practices will be communicated in a subsequent coded memorandum.

Quantitative Reasoning and Written Communications placement recommendations based on completion of senior year coursework shall be communicated to fall 2018 admitted students prior to summer 2018.

### **Advisement**

Campus advisement practices that inform appropriate course selection based on traditional examination criteria and multiple measures shall be in place at campuses. Advising materials shall be updated to reflect new models of academic preparation including guidance for students needing additional academic support to progress toward majors requiring mathematics courses beyond the basic skills GE threshold.

### **CMS Processes**

CSU campuses have historically tracked student developmental education needs by using the CMS-delivered process. Historically, this process has been predicated on test score data from the SAT, ACT, CAASPP EAP, AP, EPT and ELM (to assign an “EPT Status” and “ELM Status”) to identify the appropriate course placement for students.

For new students entering in fall 2018, campuses may continue to use the CMS process to track students’ course placement requirements. However, campuses will need to update the “Test Date To” to 9/30/2017 for the EPT and ELM in the Test Criteria set-up, for this process to remove these exams as a possible basis for a developmental education status. Pending future changes, the label for “EPT Status” and “ELM Status” fields will remain in place.

### **The CSU Early Start Program**

The CSU Early Start Program shall be required for students identified as ***“Require placement in a supported general education course”*** and developed for students identified as ***“Recommend placement in a supported general education course.”*** For summer 2018, campuses may continue to offer standard Early Start courses or may opt to augment Early Start offerings with courses meeting the Executive Order 1110 standard for summer 2019. Augmented courses for summer 2018, however, will need to be restricted to destination students only.

For summer 2018, the CSU Early Start program will operationally function as it does currently. Students who are required to participate in Early Start will be determined from the assigned statuses described above. Via the “Smart Page,” students will continue to identify the activity they will undertake to satisfy the Early Start Program requirement. Campuses will continue with the current Early Start enrollment and grading procedures.

Student Academic Services and CMS are conducting a review of the Early Start systems and technical needs to meet the requirements of EO 1110. As development moves forward, progress updates will be provided to user and affinity groups.

### **Pre-Requisite Checking**

Many campuses utilize specific EPT/ELM test score thresholds as prerequisites for enrollment in courses. A review of these prerequisites will be required to identify and codify alternate examination scores or other requirements. This effort should be managed before new students are able to enroll in fall 2018 classes.

EF/bjc

Attachment

- c: Dr. Loren J. Blanchard, Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs
- CSU Provosts/Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs
- CSU Vice Presidents for Student Affairs
- Dr. Christine Miller, Academic Senate Chair
- Associate Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs
- Mr. Nathan Evans, Chief of Staff, Academic and Student Affairs

## **2017-18 Existing Placement Measures for First-Year GE Written Communication and Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning Courses**

Freshman skills assessment and placement for general education (GE) written communication and mathematics/quantitative reasoning shall be based on systemwide standards that include the Early Assessment Program/Smarter Balanced Achievement Levels, ACT scores and/or SAT scores.

Skills assessments are not a condition for admission to the CSU; they are a condition of enrollment.

These skills assessments are designed to inform entering freshmen of placement in appropriate baccalaureate-level courses.

First-time freshmen in need of additional academic development are supported in the Early Start Program and in enhanced baccalaureate credit-bearing general education written communication and mathematics/quantitative reasoning courses.

Students placed in developmental support courses in either written communication and/or mathematics/quantitative reasoning should complete all preparatory work in their first year of enrollment.

### **Existing Skills Assessments for General Education Written Communication**

These assessments are designed to identify the level of written communication skills of students entering the CSU. During the first academic year, unless the requirement has already been completed before admission, freshmen shall enroll in appropriate general education written communication courses. The following are the systemwide skills assessment standards for GE written communication.

#### **GE Requirement Fulfilled**

- A score of 3 or above on the College Board Advanced Placement (AP) Language and Composition test or International Baccalaureate (IB) test
- A score of 3 or above on the College Board AP Composition and Literature test or IB test
- Completion and transfer to CSU of a college course that satisfies the GE Area A2 requirement in written communication in the English language, provided such a course was completed with a grade of C- or better

#### **Ready**

- NEW SAT: A score of 550 or above on the evidence-based reading and writing section of the College Board SAT Reasoning Test
- OLD SAT: A score of 500 or above on the critical reading section
- A score of 22 or above on the ACT English Test
- A result of “Standard Exceeded: Ready for CSU or participating CCC college-level coursework in English” on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) Early Assessment Program (EAP) exam

#### **Conditionally Ready**

- NEW SAT: A score between 510-540 on the evidence-based reading and writing section
- OLD SAT: A score between 460-490 on the critical reading section
- A score of 19-21 on the English portion of the ACT test
- A result of “Standard Met: Conditionally Ready for CSU or participating CCC college-level coursework in English” on the CAASPP EAP exam

“Conditionally Ready” statuses require students to continue their preparation in the 12th grade by completing an approved English course with a grade of C- or better. Students who do not meet the conditional requirement will need to participate in the CSU Early Start Program, unless exemption was met through other pathways.

## **Existing Skills Assessments for General Education Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning**

These assessments are designed to identify the level of mathematics/quantitative reasoning skills of students entering the CSU. During the first academic year, unless the requirement has been completed, freshmen shall enroll in appropriate GE mathematics/quantitative reasoning courses. The following are the systemwide standards for GE mathematics/quantitative reasoning:

### **Requirement Fulfilled**

- A score of 3 or above on the College Board AP Calculus AB or Calculus BC test
- A score of 3 or above on the College Board AP Statistics test or IB test
- Completion and transfer to CSU of a college course that satisfies the GE Area B4 requirement in mathematics/quantitative reasoning, provided such a course was completed with a grade of C- or better

### **Ready**

- NEW SAT: A score of 570 or above on the mathematics section of the new SAT test
- OLD SAT: A score of 550 or above on the mathematics section of the old SAT Reasoning Test
- SAT SUBJECT TEST: A score of 550 or above on the SAT Subject Test in Mathematics (level 1 or level 2)
- A score of 23 or above on the ACT Mathematics Test
- A result of “Standard Exceeded: Ready for CSU or participating CCC college-level coursework in mathematics” on the CAASPP EAP exam

### **Conditionally Ready**

- NEW SAT: A score between 520-560 on the mathematics section of the SAT
- OLD SAT: A score between 490-540 on the mathematics portion of the SAT Reasoning Test
- A score between 20-22 on the mathematics portion of the ACT test
- A result of “Standard Met: Conditionally Ready for CSU or participating CCC college-level coursework in mathematics” on the CAASPP EAP exam

“Conditionally Ready” statuses require students to continue their preparation in the 12th grade by completing an approved math course with a grade of C- or better. Students who do not meet the conditional requirement will need to participate in the CSU’s Early Start Program, unless exemption was met through other pathways.