

CSU Executive Order 1110

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Updated: May 10, 2019

Note: This FAQ is an iterative document that will be updated frequently based on questions and feedback received in consultation with CSU constituents across the system.

GENERAL

Overview

1. What changes is the California State University (CSU) making to its approach to academic preparation?

At the March 2017 Board of Trustees meeting, the Chancellor's Office highlighted four areas of academic preparation where improvements are needed to support student success, facilitate degree completion and eliminate persistent equity and achievement gaps:

- Working to improve mathematics and quantitative reasoning skills among high school students
- Re-examining the CSU assessment and placement protocols for determining college readiness and course placement
- Strengthening the CSU Early Start Program
- Restructuring the CSU approach to developmental education

On August 2, 2017, the CSU issued [Executive Order 1110](#), which revises the policy for first-year student placement in English and mathematics/quantitative reasoning courses. It retires the CSU assessment exams (Entry-Level Mathematics Test and English Placement Test) currently used for course placement. It strengthens the Early Start Program by giving students an opportunity to earn college credit in the summer before their first term. Finally, it eliminates the use of stand-alone developmental education prerequisites and calls for alternative instructional models to support students in credit-bearing courses.

2. Will these changes result in lower quality learning experiences for CSU students?

No. These policy changes are not intended to “dumb down” the learning experience or the quality of a CSU degree. The changes will improve the way the CSU helps students meet existing rigorous course outcomes, not lower them. These policy changes are intended to

provide more innovative and targeted academic support to help students achieve existing rigorous course outcomes. The changes are not a mechanism for merely accelerating graduation rates. Compromising academic rigor is not in the best interest of students or the increasing value of their CSU degree.

3. What precipitated the changes to the CSU's approach to academic preparation?

While the CSU has made steady progress improving college readiness, nearly 40 percent of first-time students (approximately 25,000 each fall) are informed that they are admitted but are not ready for college-level coursework. Students from historically underserved communities are far more likely to be required to complete developmental education courses. For example, 59 percent of African American students and 47 percent of Latino students are informed that they are not prepared for college coursework after being admitted.

Historically, the overwhelming majority of these students were assigned to developmental education courses that did not count toward a degree. Being assigned to these courses had a negative impact on a student's credit accumulation in the first year. It also inadvertently sent the message that the student does not belong in college and decreased the likelihood that the student earns a degree. One-in-four students assigned to developmental education courses did not return for their second year. Only 10 percent earned a degree in four years and fewer than half graduated within six years.

The [CSU Graduation Initiative 2025](#) goals seek to significantly improve student success, increase degree completion and close persistent equity gaps. In pursuit of these goals, the CSU established six priorities, including improving academic preparation. The CSU is working to ensure that all students, including those who arrive in need of additional academic support, have the opportunity to earn 30 college-level semester units (or 45 quarter units) before their second academic year. This required a change in how the CSU serves students in their first year.

Many CSU campuses are already leading the way on improving academic preparation, whether by restructuring developmental education or through implementation of a more robust Early Start Program. Our goal is to build on this momentum, improving systemwide policies and procedures to better serve all CSU students.

For additional information and research on developmental education reforms nationally, please visit the [academic preparation resource page](#).

4. How was the new CSU approach to academic preparation – including Executive Order 1110 – developed?

The Chancellor's Office engaged in significant consultation with faculty, students, campus administrators and other educational partners on the new approach to academic preparation and the development of Executive Order 1110. A draft executive order was circulated for feedback from campus constituents. The final policy reflects the collective advice and guidance of experts from around the system.

5. How can interested parties stay updated on these policy changes?

This FAQ is a living document and will be updated on the [Graduation Initiative 2025 website](#) as new information becomes available. Additionally, Chancellor's Office staff will provide regular updates at a number of CSU affinity group meetings.

Developmental Education

1. Under the new executive order, what will be the CSU policy on developmental education?

Beginning in fall 2018, the CSU will no longer require students to take stand-alone prerequisite developmental education courses that do not count for college credit before moving on to college-level courses that do.

Effective fall 2018, the CSU will place students needing additional academic support in credit-bearing college-level courses that also strengthen skills. Supportive course models may include, among others, co-requisite approaches, coordinated supplemental instruction modules or “stretch” formats that could extend a course beyond one academic term. Additional academic support will now be embedded or attached to college-level courses for students who need it. Any instructional content considered pre-baccalaureate during the regular term will be limited to one unit and must be attached to a college-level course and offered concurrently.

2. How will these policy changes to developmental education benefit students?

CSU students will no longer be required to take courses that do not apply toward a degree. Instead, students will be able to earn college credit beginning day one, while receiving the academic support they need. These changes will potentially save students thousands of dollars. For many CSU students, these changes will also reduce the time required to earn their degree, allowing them to move into the workforce or a graduate program more efficiently.

3. Shouldn't these decisions be left to campuses?

Course development, curricular modifications and innovative instructional approaches will be at the direction of faculty leaders from campus English and mathematics/quantitative reasoning programs in concert with campus academic leadership. The Chancellor's Office will provide resources, technical assistance and professional development opportunities where appropriate, but will not prescribe specific implementation models.

Assessment and Placement of First-Year Students

1. Under the new executive order, what will be the CSU policy on the assessment and placement of first-year students?

Executive Order 1110 calls for the broadest utilization of multiple measures in assessing academic readiness and determining course placement for first-year students. Measures may include high school English and mathematics/quantitative reasoning courses completed and grades earned; high school grade point averages (GPA); grades in collegiate courses; ACT, SAT and/or SAT subject test scores; Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) scores; or Smarter Balanced Assessment/Early Assessment Program (EAP) scores.

2. How will the Entry-Level Mathematics (ELM) and English Placement Test (EPT) change and why?

As part of this new policy, these two tests were retired in August 2017. In addition to other measures, the CSU will move toward a greater incorporation of high school grades and coursework. High school grades, when used as one of multiple measures, are shown to be a

stronger predictor of how likely students are to achieve course outcomes over an academic term if given the opportunity. Placing a greater emphasis on previous classroom performance is expected to improve student assessment and help customize academic support. For more information about the use of multiple measures to inform course placement, please view the CSU [Coded Memorandum ASA-2017-27](#).

Early Start Program

1. Under the new executive order, what parts of the Early Start Program will change and why?

Effective summer 2019, students required to attend the CSU Early Start Program will have an opportunity to earn college credit the summer before beginning their first term. The Early Start Program will offer credit-bearing courses in written communication and mathematics/quantitative reasoning systemwide. Instructional content considered pre-baccalaureate will carry a maximum of two units and shall be offered concurrently with a college-level, baccalaureate credit-bearing course as described below in the "Implementation" section.

2. How will these changes impact low-income students and those who need to work in the summer?

Many CSU students need to work during the summer and throughout the academic year to afford college. The CSU provides financial support to cover tuition for students based on standard financial aid practices (i.e. the estimated family contribution). The Chancellor's Office continues to seek all possible forms of aid for Early Start Program participants including traditional forms of funding, micro-grants, the utilization of low-cost textbooks, etc

3. Will the Early Start Program go away or be optional for campuses during summer 2019 and beyond?

No. Campuses will be expected to administer Early Start programs consistent with Executive Order 1110 beginning summer 2019. The Office of the Chancellor has agreed to examine Early Start Program student outcomes for summer 2019 and 2020. Findings will be used as the basis for engagement with campus leaders, faculty and other CSU constituents regarding the future of the program.

Improving High School Quantitative Reasoning Skills

1. Why are changes to high school quantitative reasoning requirements not included in Executive Order 1110?

Any changes to high school requirements for admission consideration call for coordination with the University of California and the California Department of Education and would culminate in a change to California Administrative Code (Title 5). Therefore, it would be presumptive and not appropriate to include it in the executive order.

The CSU admission criteria have not changed. Although the CSU encourages high school students to take four years of mathematics/quantitative reasoning, the a-g eligibility requirements also remain unchanged.

IMPLEMENTATION

Resources

1. What funding supports the implementation of Executive Order 1110?

During the 2017-2018 academic year, approximately \$10 million was provided to campuses to develop new courses, enhance advising and more effectively use campus data to support student success. These funds were outlined in [Coded Memo B 2017-04](#) and supplemented with [foundation grant dollars](#). During the 2018-2019 academic year, in addition to the \$75 million allocated to campuses in recurring base-budget funds for Graduation Initiative 2025, the Office of the Chancellor provided \$5.6 million outlined in [Coded Memorandum ASA-2018-10](#) for:

- Continuous development of newly-designed supported courses;
- Support for high-quality instruction in redesigned courses and professional development opportunities for lecturers, graduate teaching assistants and tenured-track faculty;
- On-going development and alignment of co-requisite and/or learning support associated with credit-bearing courses; and
- Campus coordination and administrative support.

2. How will faculty be supported during the implementation of these new policies?

In addition to the allocated funds, the Office of the Chancellor continues to provide multiple opportunities for faculty development and technical assistance. These opportunities are available to tenure-track faculty, lecturers and graduate teaching associates. Examples of faculty support and professional development in mathematics/quantitative reasoning can be found at the following links:

- [Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning Course Re-Design Webcasts](#)
- [Upcoming Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning Faculty Professional Development](#)

In addition, the CSU is actively working with local and national foundations to support faculty innovation and campus implementation efforts.

Early Start Program

1. Will each campus be expected to offer Early Start in 2019, according to Executive Order 1110?

Yes.

2. Can 2019 Early Start programs consist of baccalaureate courses other than general education (GE) courses that meet the Subarea A2 or B4 requirements?

Yes. The following course types are approved for Early Start Programs:

- GE courses in Subareas A2 or B4
- Part one of a stretch course leading to Subarea A2 or B4 courses the following term
- Baccalaureate mathematics/quantitative reasoning and/or written communication

courses that prepare students for fall Subarea A2 or B4 courses. These courses could be (one or more unit) baccalaureate level non-GE courses and may be offered with up to two units of concurrent pre-baccalaureate-support.

Under no circumstance shall a sequence of courses (including those completed in the Early Start Program) leading to and satisfying the GE Subarea A2 or B4 requirement result in earning more than eight semester units of baccalaureate credit.

3. If campuses offer credit-bearing and graded course in the Early Start Program, how do they block the academic standing procedure that would ordinarily be applied to summer enrollment from those enrolled in the pilot courses?

The academic standing procedure should not be applied to students participating in the Early Start Program regardless of whether they are enrolled in a credit-bearing course. It would not be appropriate for first-time freshmen entering their initial fall term to be under the cloud of academic probation. Rather, when the academic standing procedure is run at the end of the fall term, the units completed and grades earned in the Early Start Program will be naturally included in the review.

It is important that both credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing courses offered in the Early Start Program be assigned to a different PeopleSoft Academic Program than the PeopleSoft Academic Program assigned to the standard set of summer session courses. This PeopleSoft Academic Program differentiation will provide campuses the ability to limit the run of the academic standing procedure to the standard set of summer session courses only.

4. May campuses require students to participate in more than one subject area for the Early Start Program? If a student needs the Early Start Program in both written communication and mathematics/quantitative reasoning, may a campus determine which subject the student will take?

Effective summer 2019, students placed in Category IV for both mathematics/quantitative reasoning and written communication shall not be required to participate in courses for both subject areas during the Early Start Program. A student may elect to enroll in both courses. The student will determine which course(s) to attempt for baccalaureate credit.

5. May a non-GE Early Start Program course in 2019 be fewer than three units?

Yes. To prepare students for fall GE Subarea A2 or B4 courses, an elective (one or more units) baccalaureate level non-GE course may be offered in the Early Start Program. These Early Start Program baccalaureate courses may be offered concurrently with pre-baccalaureate-support units (two unit maximum).

6. May an Early Start Program course in 2019 be a stand-alone pre-baccalaureate course?

No. Instructional content considered pre-baccalaureate as part of the Early Start Program course may carry a maximum of two units and **must** be offered concurrently with a college-level, baccalaureate credit-bearing course.

7. What will happen to students who attend an Early Start Program at a CSU campus different than where they intend to enroll?

As is currently the case, a student's destination campus will be sent the results of the academic work completed at the service campus during the Early Start Program. Any baccalaureate or general education credit earned during the Early Start Program under the new policy will be transferred and accepted by the receiving CSU campus.

8. May students be required to participate in the Early Start Program at their destination campus?

No; however they may be encouraged to do so. Students in Category IV must be given the option of completing Early Start Program requirements at a service-area CSU campus.

9. May students be required to participate in the Early Start Program at their destination campus if the course is online?

No. Students in Category IV must be given the option of completing Early Start Program requirements face-to-face at a service-area campus. Students electing to enroll in an online Early Start course should enroll at the destination campus if offered.

10. Are campuses required to provide the Early Start Program for both service area and destination students in summer 2019?

Yes. Campuses must provide an Early Start Program for both "service" and "destination" students in summer 2019.

11. May campuses grade the first part of a stretch course as "Report in Progress" (RP) or "In Progress," delaying course credit until after the second semester course is completed?

No. "Stretch" courses will require an evaluation at the end of each term. Campuses may elect to offer the first course in a stretch sequence on a Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) basis or assign traditional grades. Traditional grades or CR/NC grading should be used for the A2 or B4 course offered during subsequent semester(s) or quarter(s) in the stretch sequence.

12. A student's placement requires them to participate in Early Start but may change as final high school transcripts are reviewed. How should campuses avoid last-minute adding or withdrawing students from Early Start courses if placements change?

Campuses are directed to use the placement of record as of three weeks before Early Start Program sessions begin to determine if a student is required to participate in an Early Start Program. Any categorical changes within three weeks prior to the Early Start Program session should not change the Early Start Program participation requirement.

13. What are the guidelines for articulating Early Start courses?

Any baccalaureate units earned during a CSU Early Start Program, including those earned at a hosted/service campus, shall articulate as a similar course at the home/destination campus. If the home/destination campus does not have a similar course, students shall receive elective credit for all college-level work.

CSU Multiple Measures and Supplemental Placement Assessments

1. Can you explain the difference between “eligibility” criteria and “placement” criteria?

The terms “eligibility” and “admission” criteria are often conflated. [CSU admission criteria](#) have not changed. These criteria determine the minimum requirements to be eligible for CSU admission. The “placement” criteria weigh available academic information for admitted students to determine assignment to mathematics/quantitative reasoning and written communication courses in the first year.

2. How is the term “recommended” used in Category III and what latitude do campuses have in placement?

Students placed in Category III should enroll in courses with supported instruction in the regular term. The Early Start Program is recommended for students in Category III, but it is not required. Students may elect to enroll in the Early Start Program. Campuses cannot mandate or arbitrarily assign students in Category III to the Early Start Program using supplemental assessments.

3. May campuses use voluntary assessment activities to determine that students in Category III do not need supported instruction?

Yes. Voluntary supplemental assessment activities may be used to inform course placement. Students shall not be charged for voluntary supplemental assessments and these assessments may not be used to mandate course assignments different from the CSU multiple measures – for example, moving a student from Category III to Category IV.

4. If a student, through informed (or directed) self-placement, is permitted to take a course higher or lower than that indicated by the multiple measures, does this change his/her category?

A student, based on additional information from a voluntary assessment, may elect to enroll in a course different from the one indicated by the multiple measures placement with campus permission. Allowable course placement exceptions made based on voluntary supplemental assessments would not change CSU multiple measures placement categories for reporting.

5. What do the changes to assessment and placement mean for campus testing centers?

With the discontinuation of the EPT and ELM tests, campuses will be invited to develop new opportunities for campus testing centers. This may include more support as needed in the delivery of curriculum, monitoring performance on electronic assessments such as ALEKS, or a new focus on the administration of ACT, SAT and possibly College-Level Examination Program exams.

6. On some campuses, there is a commitment to use directed self-placement (DSP) to determine course placement for all students. May campuses continue to offer DSP as a separate assessment and not offer Early Start Program courses in written communication?

No. DSP does not replace Early Start Program requirements for students in Category IV. Campuses may continue to offer voluntary DSP assessments to all students; however, DSP may not be used to require enrollment in the Early Start Program. Students who elect not to

take DSP may enroll in written communication courses aligned with their CSU multiple measures-determined placement.

7. May DSP be offered as a pre-baccalaureate, stand-alone course in the Early Start Program?

No. DSP allows students to engage in guided self-reflection to provide additional information about course placement. DSP is not a course. Voluntary DSP assessments may be used to inform instruction in an Early Start Program course.

8. Could DSP be conducted as a part of the Early Start Program?

Yes. Voluntary DSP assessments may be used to inform instruction in an ESP course.

9. What is the relationship between the local use of DSP and systemwide multiple measures placement categories? Can a student's choice override the recommendations or requirements of CSU multiple measures categories?

CSU course placement is guided by multiple measures. DSP and other alternative placement assessments are voluntary and may not be mandated. Campuses may choose how and when to offer DSP activities to help ensure informed course placement. Students may consider voluntary alternative assessments including DSP. Supplemental assessments may not be used for requiring the Early Start Program or course placements different from those assigned by multiple measures. With campus permission, students may use information from supplemental assessments to select courses other than those associated with the multiple measures category. **All voluntary assessments must be free of charge for students.**

10. What support and processes are available to assess international students for placement, especially given that most international students arrive shortly before the term begins?

As outlined in [Coded Memorandum ASA-2017-27](#), new first-year students for whom comparable academic records (high school GPA, a-g coursework) and/or examinations (standardized test scores) are not available should be assessed utilizing all available academic information that was used to determine admission.

Campus-based assessments may be used to inform placement in written communication and mathematics/quantitative reasoning courses as well as placement in higher-level or major preparation courses for all students.

11. Are there specific requirements for placement of international students?

The written communication course placement for first-year international students (those on student visas (F-visa) whose language of secondary instruction was not English) are made by the delivered placement tool. International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores are considered for written communication but placement is made by high school GPA as the primary indicator. International students whose written communication placement would be category II by high school GPA, but whose IELTS or TOEFL scores fall below the score thresholds, shall be placed into Category III and should enroll in a supported baccalaureate written communication course in their first year. International students whose written communication placement would be Category II by high school GPA and whose IELTS or TOEFL scores are above the score thresholds shall remain with a Category II placement.

12. Who defines what is considered a STEM major?

Any major requiring differential and integral calculus is generally categorized as a STEM major. However, campuses – using configuration tables delivered in PeopleSoft CMS – can reclassify majors based on unique degree requirements.

13. May campuses require entering students wishing to enroll in a calculus course to take a placement exam? May the campus charge fees to recover the cost for administering the exam?

Students who have not completed course pre-requisites for calculus may voluntarily complete an advanced placement assessment (such as ALEKS) as an alternative means for meeting the course pre-requisite. All voluntary assessments must be free of charge for students.

14. May campuses offer some baccalaureate-level courses or general education courses only to Category I and II students without offering versions of the same courses with additional support for Category III and IV students?

Yes.

Communications

1. How will these changes be communicated to our PK-12 and community college partners?

The Chancellor's Office is regularly meeting directly with PK-12 and community college partners to communicate the changes to the CSU academic preparation policy.

2. How will a student's CSU multiple measures placement category be communicated? How will information about course placements and participation in the Early Start Program be communicated to a student?

Admitted students will receive placement information through admission portals in late-March/early-April. Students in Category IV will be guided to the Early Start Program website for additional information and registration. Communication templates will be available to assist campuses in developing communications for new students.

3. How will information about CSU multiple measures placement categories be communicated to high schools, admitted students and parents?

The CSU, in collaboration with [campus outreach and EAP coordinators](#), has developed and delivered communications to various constituents. The information made available to students, parents, high schools and high school counselors is co-developed with campus representatives and is sent to all campuses to ensure clear and consistent messaging.

Information on the CSU's assessment and placement policies were also incorporated into the annual CSU Counselor Conferences and CSU publications.

Implementation Study Project

1. How will the implementation of Executive Order 1110 be studied?

The Office of the Chancellor has partnered with WestEd, a nonprofit research, development and services agency that works with education and other communities to promote excellence, improve learning and achieve equity for all learners. Consultation with CSU stakeholders about the study began in 2017 to inform the design of the Implementation Studies Project (ISP).

The current ISP framework covers a three-year period. It consists of formative and summative studies that will inform the CSU system about the pathways students take and the progress they make immediately after the implementation of EO 1110. To the extent possible, the implementation studies will explore why these trends have occurred. Equally important, the studies will examine the variation of the models and instructional approaches adopted by campuses and analyze how they perform for various student populations, including historically underrepresented students, first generation students, etc.

Focus groups and interviews with students, faculty, and campus administrative leaders will be the primary data collected to examine questions around 1) course redesign (including instructional modifications to the Early Start Program) and 2) student placement. The ISP will examine the variation of the models and instructional approaches adopted by campuses. Focus groups and interviews can only be conducted on a subset of campuses and so those results will be illustrative but may not be generalizable to all campuses. Where possible and available, documents and qualitative data will be analyzed for all 23 campuses.

The series of summative studies will be developed to build a base of knowledge that allows the CSU to understand: 1) how and if credit accumulation has increased, in what setting, for which students and why; 2) the impact of the Early Start Program; and 3) the validity of the multiple measures placement approach.

The implementation study is not evaluative; WestEd is not evaluating individual campuses, departments, courses or faculty. The implementation studies are an attempt to understand how implementation has evolved on different campuses, with lessons learned for the system moving forward. While the summative studies will examine how well students are progressing with the new placement system and new courses, the timeframe of the study neither attempts to, nor allows for, a long-term outcome evaluation of the executive order.

Implications for First-Time Students Entering Fall 2017 or Earlier

1. Will fall 2017 first-time students who fail to demonstrate proficiency in mathematics and/or written communication be allowed to continue their enrollment in fall 2018?

Consistent with Executive Order 1110, fall 2017 first-time students not completing remedial coursework in English and mathematics/quantitative reasoning in the first year of enrollment but who are otherwise eligible for re-enrollment shall be allowed to re-enroll in the subsequent fall term and shall be placed in a supported A2 and/or B4 GE course, as appropriate.

Similarly, first-time students matriculating prior to 2017-18 who were disenrolled from the CSU for not completing remedial coursework in English and mathematics/quantitative reasoning in the first year of enrollment shall be allowed to rematriculate at the CSU if they are otherwise in good academic standing (at the CSU and in subsequent work elsewhere). If the student has

not met GE Area A2 or B4 requirements, the student shall be placed in a supported A2 and/or B4 course.

Other

1. If a student passes the credit-bearing course but does not pass the non-credit support course offered concurrently, may the student be required to repeat both courses again?

If a student completes a college level credit-bearing course with a C- or better, the student shall not be required to repeat the accompanying non-credit support course.

2. If a student does not pass a college-level credit-bearing course but passes the accompanying non-credit support course, may the student be required to repeat both courses?

If a student does not earn a C- or better in a college-level credit-bearing course, the student may enroll again in the same course without the supporting non-credit portion of the course (or co-requisite). A student may elect to enroll in both concurrently, but shall not be required.

More information on Graduation Initiative 2025 can be found on the [website](#). If you have additional questions not covered in this document, please contact [James T. Minor](#) or [Edward Sullivan](#).