



TO: Chief Executive Officers
Chief Instructional Officers
Chief Student Services Officers
Academic Senate Presidents
Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness Professionals
ESL Department Chairs and Faculty
Articulation Officers
Curriculum Chairs

FROM: Dr. Aisha Lowe, Vice Chancellor, Educational Services and Support
Equitable Student Learning, Experience, and Impact Office (ESLEI)

RE: Local English as a Second Language (ESL) Placement Assessments
Assessment Advisory Committee Review

In June 2022, the Chancellor's Office disseminated guidance memorandum [ESS 22-200-013](#) providing updates on the work of the Assessment Advisory Committee and the review of English as a Second Language (ESL) placement assessments. The Assessment Advisory Committee (AAC) conducts the review of assessment instruments submitted by colleges and test publishers for Chancellor's Office review and provides recommendations regarding those approvals. Given the passage and implementation of Assembly Bill 705 (AB 705), the current work of the AAC is focused on ESL assessments. This academic year, the work of the AAC is focused on locally developed ESL assessments ([currently approved assessments can be found here](#)). Further details on the AAC and its work can be [found here](#).

As a reminder, under title 5, §55522.5 *English as a Second Language Placement and Assessment*, ESL students with a goal of transfer to a four-year institution or an associate degree should enter and complete a transfer-level English composition course or an ESL course equivalent to transfer-level English composition within a three-year timeframe of declaring a transfer- or degree-seeking goal. Per title 5, §55522.5 (b)(2), students who have acquired a United States high school diploma or the equivalent should be placed according to §55522. Therefore, colleges'/districts' use of ESL placement assessments should **only** focus on ESL students without a U.S. high school diploma or U.S. high school data (e.g., international students, adult immigrants, refugees, and F1 Visa students).

This memorandum provides:

- a reminder of the requested action;
- clarifying guidance on the review process;

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- an AAC decision to allow a temporary conditional probationary approval of local ESL placement assessments; and
- submission instructions.

Requested Action

An email entitled “Assessment Advisory Committee Local Colleges ESL Assessment Training” was disseminated October 11, 2022, announcing an Assessment Advisory Committee training for local colleges to review the standards and requirements for the review of local ESL placement assessments **due February 1, 2023**. This training, conducted by the psychometric experts helping to lead this work, went over the 2022 Chancellor’s Office [ESL Assessment Standards](#) which the AAC updated in spring 2022.

Colleges’ ESL implementation of AB 705 may include the use of ESL placement exams. Board of Governors’ approval of any local ESL placement assessments used by colleges is mandated by Education Code. Under title 5, §55522.5(c), the Chancellor shall establish and update a list of the approved assessment tests and instruments for use in placing students in **credit** English as a Second Language courses and guidelines for their use by community college districts. When using an ESL assessment test for placement into credit ESL coursework, the assessment must be used with one or more other measures to comprise multiple measures. Districts and colleges are required to use the Chancellor’s guidelines for the validation of all assessment tests used for placement to ensure that they minimize or eliminate cultural or linguistic bias and are being used in a valid manner (the [ESL Assessment Standards](#)).

If your college uses **any local ESL placement assessments** your college must compile the data, information, and research study plans required per the ESL Assessment Standards and submit your written report, organized into one pdf document, **by February 1, 2023** using this link: [Link to Submission Form](#). This current review **does not include guided or self-placement processes**, but rather ESL placement tests ([currently approved assessments can be found here](#)). All currently approved tests must be resubmitted for review and any new tests colleges would like to use that are not presently approved for use must also be submitted for review. Resubmissions of currently approved tests should follow the guidelines for new submissions (given the time that has elapsed since the last approvals).

Please ensure the appropriate ESL faculty and chairs, as well as those who administer these assessments, are engaged to lead this important assessment work. Colleges should also provide the support and resources of institutional research offices/leaders to collaborate with faculty on data collection and study designs.

If you missed the October 19 and 20, 2022 training, you can find the slides and recordings on [the AAC website](#).

The Assessment Advisory Committee Review Process

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English as a Second Language (ESL) placement assessments are reviewed by the Assessment Advisory Committee (AAC), which makes recommendations concerning all placement assessment instruments used by districts and colleges. Those recommendations are then provided to the Board of Governors for review and approval.

As colleges prepare for the February 1, 2023 submission of local ESL placement assessment validation, the Chancellor's Office has received a few inquiries we will clarify here:

Types of ESL: This validation of ESL placement assessments is specific to credit ESL and credit ESL placement assessments.

Types of Assessments: This validation of ESL placement assessments is specific to tests and exams. Although assessment is broadly defined in the Education Code (see below), the ESL Assessment Standards focus largely on tests specifically, and this present validation of local ESL placement assessments will as well. The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing define a test as "an evaluative device or procedure in which a sample of an examinee's behavior in a specified domain is obtained and subsequently evaluated and scored using a standardized process." See the [ESL Assessment Standards](#) for further details on what constitutes an assessment/test/exam for these purposes.

Guided/Self-Placement: This current review does not include guided or self-placement processes, as guided and self-placement processes should not include tests/exams. Per Education Code, §78213, subd. (c)(7)(C) and subd. (c)(7)(D):

(C) A community college may use guided placement or self-placement to direct English language learners who are not United States high school graduates into credit ESL programs and shall maximize the probability that students in credit ESL programs enter and complete transfer-level English within a timeframe of three years.

(D) District placement methods based upon guided placement, including self-placement, shall not do either of the following:

(i) Incorporate sample problems, assignments, assessment instruments, or tests, including those designed for skill assessment.

(ii) Request students to solve problems, answer curricular questions, present demonstrations and examples of coursework designed to show knowledge or mastery of prerequisite skills, or demonstrate skills through tests or surveys.

Given the broad definition of assessment in Education Code, much of what colleges include in a guided or self-placement process will be validated at a later time. The Chancellor's Office will work with the Assessment Advisory Committee to design a review and validation process.

Education Code §78213, subd. (n)(1): "Assessment' means the process of gathering information about a student regarding the student's study skills, English language proficiency, computational skills, aptitudes, goals, learning skills, career aspirations, academic performance, and need for special services. Assessment methods may include, but not necessarily be limited to, interviews,

standardized tests, attitude surveys, vocational or career aptitude and interest inventories, high school or postsecondary transcripts, specialized certificates or licenses, educational histories, and other measures of performance”.

Temporary Conditional Probationary Approval of Assessments

The Chancellor’s Office understands that many colleges have not retained assessment centers, and some have not maintained processes for evaluating ESL placement assessments. Given those realities, and the revised assessment standards, the Assessment Advisory Committee voted to allow a one-time conditional probationary approval for the spring 2023 validation of local ESL placement assessments. This means that if your college’s submission does not meet the standards for the lowest level of approval (probationary), the AAC will consider a possible one-time conditional probationary approval, which would give your college an additional year to address the committee’s feedback.

If that is potentially the case for your college, do your best to meet the requirements of a probationary approval, and provide as much detail as possible on how the college intends to close the gaps in your submission (the more detail provided, the better the feedback that can be given to improve the submission). A conditional probationary approval is not guaranteed but will be considered by the committee at their April 17 and 18, 2023 meeting.

Submission Instructions

California community colleges that use test/exam assessments for the placement of students into credit ESL courses are to submit the required data, information and research study plans as detailed in the [ESL Assessment Standards](#) by February 1, 2023 using this form: [Link to Submission Form](#). While submitting the required data and information via the [link](#) above, please also electronically sign and upload (to the designated area within the submission [form](#)) the Certification Form that is enclosed within the submission form (see instructions at the top of the form).

If you have any questions, please email AssessmentAdvisory@cccco.edu.

cc: Dr. Daisy Gonzales, Interim Chancellor
Dr. Lizette Navarette, Interim Deputy Chancellor
Marty Alvarado, Executive Vice Chancellor, Equitable Student Learning, Experience, and Impact (ESLEI) Office
Dr. John Hetts, Executive Vice Chancellor, Innovation, Data, Evidence, and Analytics (IDEA) Office
All Chancellor’s Office Staff

Attachments:

- Assessment Advisory Committee Local Colleges ESL Assessment Training Email_10.11.22

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- ESS 22-200-013 ESL Assessments & AAC Updates_June 2022 (included as a link within this document)