

July 24, 2025

ESS 25-35 | Via Email

TO: Chief Executive Officers
Chief Instructional Officers
Chief Student Services Officers
Academic Senate Presidents
Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness Professionals
Articulation Officers

FROM: Dr. James Todd, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs

RE: Expiring English as a Second Language Assessment Instruments and a Supplemental Resource for Seeking Approval of Locally Managed Assessments

The California Community Colleges continue to effectively implement Assembly Bill 1705 (AB 1705). This memorandum provides updates on expiring English as a Second Language (ESL) placement tests and an additional resource on how to seek approval for locally managed assessments.

Background

Under the California Code of Regulations (CCR), 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. Students who have acquired a United States high school diploma or the equivalent should be placed according to [§55522](#) (CCR [§55522.5 \(b\)\(2\)](#)). Therefore, college and district adoption, planning, and implementation 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).

The local implementation of AB 1705 may include the use of ESL placement exams. The Chancellor is required to establish and update a list of the approved assessment instruments for use in placing students in credit English as a Second Language courses and guidelines for their use by community college districts (CCR [§55522.5\(c\)](#)). When using an ESL assessment instrument 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 follow the [Standards for Assessment Instrument Review: English as a Second Language guidelines](#) for the validation of all assessment instruments used for placement to ensure that they minimize or eliminate cultural or linguistic bias and that they are being used in a valid manner.

The Assessment Advisory Committee (AAC) conducts the review of assessment instruments submitted by colleges and test publishers to the Chancellor's Office for Board of Governors approval. The AAC works with psychometric experts from the Buros Center for Testing at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The psychometric review considers evidence of assessment

Approved ESL Assessment Instruments and a Supplemental Resource for Seeking Approval of Locally Managed Assessments

July 24, 2025

validity, reliability, and fairness. The AAC subsequently provides recommendations regarding those approvals and denials to the Board of Governors. The list of approved ESL assessment instruments is maintained by the Chancellor's Office and published to the Assessment Advisory Committee [webpage](#). Approval expiration dates are updated as assessments are re-reviewed. Earlier this year, the Board voted to provide Probationary Approval for both American River College's ESL Writing Assessment (in use since 2016) and Los Angeles Pierce College's ESL Writing Sample.

Expiring ESL Assessment Instruments

On January 14, 2025, the Board of Governors voted on the final approval of ESL assessments. and the following second party assessment instruments were not approved:

- CASAS English as a Second Language (ESL) Appraisal Tests for Reading (619R) and Listening (619L): Expired as of July 1, 2025
- ACCUPLACER ESL Tests: Expired as of July 1, 2025

Accuplacer and CASAS previously received a one-year conditional probationary approval and were required to resubmit in Fall 2024 to address the concerns. Accuplacer did not resubmit for an approval in Fall 2024, and thus their approval designation expires on July 1, 2025. CASAS did resubmit for an approval, which was reviewed by AAC but was not approved, and thus their approval designation expires on July 1, 2025.

Colleges may continue to use both the CASAS and ACCUPLACER as a locally managed assessment if they seek approval from the Board of Governors.

Memorandum [ESS 21-200-004](#) (February 3, 2021) provided the requirements of the Equitable Placement and Completion (AB 705) ESL Adoption Plans (due July 1, 2021), in which colleges detailed plans to innovate local practices to meet the ESL AB 705 requirements. To build upon those requirements and in accordance with existing policy, the Chancellor's Office, in partnership with the Multiple Measures Assessment Project, a collaborative effort led by The Research and Planning Group ("The RP Group") will distribute an AB 1705 validation of Equitable Placement, Support and Completion practices for ESL. Additional details will be forthcoming from the Chancellor's Office during the 2025-26 academic year.

Application Deadline for Locally Developed and/or Managed ESL Assessment Instruments

Pursuant to Education Code statute [78213](#) (a), "A community college district or community college shall not use any assessment instrument for the purposes of this article without the authorization of the board of governors. The board of governors may adopt a list of authorized assessment instruments". The Assessment Advisory Committee (AAC), in partnership with contracted psychometric experts, conducts the review of assessment instruments submitted by colleges and test publishers to the Chancellor's Office for Board of Governors approval.

A locally developed and/or managed ESL assessment instrument that is **not** presently approved for use on the [Chancellor's Office List of BOG-Approved ESL Assessment Instruments](#) (June 2025) must be submitted to the Chancellor's Office for review and approval prior to use. **The application submission deadline is August 11, 2025.** To submit a locally developed and/or managed ESL assessment instrument application to the Chancellor's Office for review, please submit a written report, organized into one document (as a "PDF" file), by the submission deadline of August 11, 2025, and email it to the Chancellor's Office Assessment Advisory Committee (assessmentadvisory@ccc.co.edu). For information on the ESL assessment instrument

Approved ESL Assessment Instruments and a Supplemental Resource for Seeking Approval of Locally Managed Assessments

July 24, 2025

approval process and application components please refer to the [*Standards for Assessment Instrument Review: English as a Second Language Guidelines*](#) and Attachment 1: Supplemental Resource for Colleges Seeking Approval of a Locally Managed ESL Placement Instrument.

If you have questions about this memo, please email AssessmentAdvisory@cccco.edu.

cc: Dr. Sonya Christian, Chancellor
Dr. John Hetts, Executive Vice Chancellor, Research Analytics and Data Office
All Chancellor's Office staff

Attachment:

Supplemental Resource for Approval of Locally Managed ESL Placement Instruments

Supplemental Resource for Colleges Seeking Approval of a Locally Managed ESL Assessment Instrument

This supplemental resource is intended for use by California community colleges and briefly outlines the information a college will gather and share to address criterion in the *California Community Colleges Standards for Assessment Review: English as a Second Language (CCC ESL Standards)* and seek an approval of a locally managed ESL assessment instrument.

A California community college interested in using an existing ESL assessment instrument that is commercially available or developed by another community college can apply for California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (Chancellor's Office) approval to use the assessment instrument in its ESL placement process. This is referred to as a locally managed application in the [CCC ESL Standards](#) (2022). Examples of locally managed applications may include:

- Use of an ESL assessment instrument published by a commercial vendor that is not currently approved for use by the Chancellor's Office. For example, the *ACCUPLACER ESL Tests*, published by the College Board, or the *Benchmark English Test*, published by Pearson.
- Use of an ESL assessment instrument developed by another California community college, such as an ESL writing sample. NOTE: If colleges within the same district use the same version of an assessment instrument, they can submit one application if they have a similar ESL curriculum and placement strategy. This includes similar course content and instructional delivery. Colleges can aggregate data when conducting studies to ensure representation of the ESL student populations served by each college.
- Use of an ESL assessment instrument developed by another community college outside of California.

The *CCC ESL Standards* outline application requirements when seeking approval to use an ESL assessment instrument. This resource is to supplement instead of replacing the *CCC ESL Standards* when seeking approval to use a locally managed assessment instrument.

A new application for a locally managed assessment instrument can receive the minimum level of *Probationary Approval* without collecting data from ESL students. *Probationary Approval* allows the college to use an ESL assessment instrument for decision-making while collecting the data needed for *Full Approval*. For new locally managed applications, the college will either need to acquire and share applicable information from the developer (test publisher or another college) or provide plans for future studies. In the following table, the information a college needs to gather and share to address each criterion in the *CCC ESL Standards* is outlined.

Table 1. Information to Address Each Criterion in the CCC ESL Standards

Criterion	Information to gather from test developer	Information local college needs to submit
<p>Fairness:</p> <p>Panel Reviews</p> <p>CCC ESL Standards requirements</p> <p>Section 3.1.a (pp. 15-17)</p>	<p>If a panel has reviewed test content for fairness issues, obtain the needed documentation.</p>	<p>Ensure panelists represent the linguistic and demographic background of ESL students at the local college. Ensure ESL students were included on the panel. Provide documentation from any relevant studies. Address any potential fairness concerns. If the panel was not representative or did not include ESL students, conduct a local fairness review to supplement the evidence obtained from the developer.</p>
	<p>If a fairness review has not been conducted, obtain a copy of test items/prompts/tasks, administration, and scoring instructions.</p>	<p>Conduct a fairness review with a linguistically and demographically representative panel of ESL students and faculty. Provide documentation of these studies.</p>
<p>Fairness:</p> <p>Empirical Study</p> <p>CCC ESL Standards requirements</p> <p>Section 3.1.b (pp. 17-19)</p>	<p>If an empirical fairness study has been conducted, obtain the needed documentation.</p>	<p>Ensure the study sample is representative of the linguistic and demographic background of the local ESL student population. Provide documentation from any relevant studies.</p> <p>If the study sample is not representative or there are fairness concerns, provide a plan for conducting a disproportionate impact study.</p>
	<p>If no empirical fairness study has been conducted.</p>	<p>Provide a plan for conducting a disproportionate impact study.</p>

Approved ESL Assessment Instruments and a Supplemental Resource for Seeking Approval of Locally Managed Assessments

July 24, 2025

<p>Validation: Content</p> <p>CCC ESL Standards requirements</p> <p>Section 3.1.c (pp. 19-20)</p>	<p>Obtain information about the purpose and intended use of the test.</p>	<p>Ensure the intended purpose and use of the test is to make ESL credit course placement recommendations. This is particularly important for commercially available tests.</p>
	<p>Obtain information about the test content needed to conduct an alignment study (test form, tables of specification/test blueprint)</p>	<p>Convene an ESL faculty panel to review alignment between test content and entry-level skills for courses in the ESL curriculum. Provide documentation of that study.</p>
<p>Validation: Criterion</p> <p>CCC ESL Standards requirements</p> <p>Section 3.1.d (pp.21-22)</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>	<p>Provide a plan for conducting criterion validation studies at the time of testing and after initial enrollment.</p>
<p>Validation: Consequential</p> <p>CCC ESL Standards requirements</p> <p>Section 3.1.e (pp. 22-24)</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>	<p>Provide a plan for conducting a consequential validation study.</p>
<p>Reliability</p> <p>CCC ESL Standards requirements</p> <p>Section 3.1.f (pp. 24-26)</p>	<p>If one or more reliability studies have been conducted, obtain the needed documentation.</p>	<p>Ensure that the study sample is representative of the local ESL student population. Provide documentation from any relevant studies.</p> <p>If the study sample is not representative or the results are insufficient, provide a plan for conducting a new study.</p>

Approved ESL Assessment Instruments and a Supplemental Resource for Seeking Approval of Locally Managed Assessments

July 24, 2025

	If reliability studies for any relevant sources of error have not been conducted.	Provide a plan for conducting those reliability studies. If a test involves human scoring, provide a plan for conducting an inter-scorer reliability study.
Accommodations CCC ESL Standards requirements Section 3.1.g (pp. 26-27)	If the test has been reviewed for accessibility or availability of accommodations, obtain that information.	Share documentation of accessibility reviews or instructions for offering accommodations.
	If an accessibility review or accommodation document does not exist	Have the test reviewed for accessibility and develop a protocol for accommodations.
Administration & Scoring CCC ESL Standards requirements Section 3.1.h (pp. 27-29)	Obtain documentation of administration and scoring requirements.	Share documentation of how the test is administered and scored. Indicate if that is how the local college will administer and score the test.
	Not applicable (cut-score setting is a local matter).	Conduct a local study for setting cut scores. Provide documentation of that study.

Please direct questions to AssessmentAdvisory@cccoco.edu