



California Community Colleges

MEMORANDUM

December 7, 2018

AA 18-65 | Via Email

TO: Chief Executive Officers
Chief Instructional Officers
Chief Student Services Officers
Academic Senate Presidents

FROM: Laura Hope,
Executive Vice Chancellor, Educational Services and Support

John Stanskas,
President, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges

RE: Assembly Bill 705 Frequently Asked Questions 2.0

Over the last several months, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) and the Chancellor's Office have received numerous questions regarding the implementation of Assembly Bill (AB) 705. Here are some very straightforward answers to questions from the field. We encourage all colleges to review the primary source documents of the law, the guidance memorandum for English and quantitative reasoning/mathematics, and the original Frequently Asked Questions. This document is not intended to substitute previous guidance but to supplement previously answered questions.

1. Our college has been told that it is illegal to place students below transfer level in mathematics or English. Is this true?

No. Many students have goals other than transfer in our system, and some colleges may want to continue to offer a small number of these courses to serve their communities. Colleges are expected to serve their communities and populations of students. AB 705 requires that colleges maximize the probability that students will enter and complete

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transfer-level coursework in English and quantitative reasoning/mathematics within a one-year timeframe. If transfer is the students' goal, the research from the MMAP team indicates that throughput has historically been maximized when students are directly placed into transfer. If colleges intend to require students take courses below transfer, they must be able to validate that taking the prerequisite course improves the likelihood of success in the transfer course and demonstrate that students are highly unlikely to succeed in the transfer course. Both of these requirements must be met in order to enforce a pre-transfer prerequisite.

2. We have a Puente learning community that is a two-semester sequence to complete transfer level English. The data indicates we vastly outperform all throughput data in every demographic. Do we have to cut our Puente program because students are placed one level below transfer for this cohort?

No. If the college has data demonstrating a program is more successful than the default placement rules, the college should continue to offer that opportunity to its community. However, if it isn't out-performing the default placement rules, the college should work with the Puente Project leadership to reimagine the program requirements.

3. Should colleges remove basic skills or non-transfer level course prerequisites from transferrable English and mathematics courses?

Not necessarily. Colleges will place far fewer transfer students in those prerequisite courses if they are implementing AB 705 and should engage enrollment management processes accordingly; however, some students may need access to those courses. For instance, students majoring in BSTEM areas who have not completed Algebra 2 in high school may need to enroll in intermediate algebra. Whereas, non-STEM students who take transfer-level statistics will not. Additionally, a prerequisite change will trigger a re-articulation process, and so colleges should calculate that process into a curriculum planning cycle.

4. Should colleges remove basic skills or non-transfer level course prerequisites from courses in other disciplines?

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Not necessarily. Articulation of university level science to the UC system requires an intermediate algebra prerequisite. And student need the skills comparable to those acquired in intermediate algebra to succeed in the science course. That said, many students will have demonstrated their mastery of the skills in the prerequisite through the college placement process that focuses on high school preparation. The UC and CSU have confirmed that the analysis of any prerequisite skills rests firmly with the community colleges, and courses that specifically require a pre-requisite course for articulation should retain their prerequisites.

5. How many placements will a student who is not learning English as a Second Language receive?

Probably three. Students should expect a placement in English, and two placements in mathematics depending on the pathways the college has developed leading to fields requiring calculus and those that do not. Colleges are strongly urged to ensure that appropriate math pathways are available to students who are not pursuing a BSTEM (Business, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) majors. That will include transfer-level statistics, especially for students who intend to transfer to the UC system, and other transferable quantitative reasoning courses that will meet CSU Area B requirements as outlined in the Guiding Notes from the CSU.

6. How many units are too many units for a parent course and co-requisite support?

This is a local decision, but colleges are urged to consider what kind of activity the student needs to be successful as well as the caution in the law indicating that colleges may not create barriers for students. If the student needs an hour of additional contact with the instructor and two hours of additional homework per week, that would be one lecture unit of co-requisite support. If the student really needs three additional hours of contact with the instructor but no additional homework per week, that would be one laboratory unit of co-requisite support.

It's important to remember that the purpose of co-requisite support is to help students with what they need to know in order to be successful in the transfer course, not to truncate former curricular sequences into a single support course. Because students and

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the colleges will want to balance support with unit load, colleges are urged to assure that co-curricular models do not burden students with excessive unit loads so that they cannot enroll in other courses, which is why non-credit may also be a worthy option to consider.

It is also important to consider what options are available to the student in terms of time. Some models of five-unit parent courses and three-units of co-requisite support, all lecture based, translate to 24 hours per week the student is expected to dedicate to the class. Does this serve the college's student population? It might, depending on the community. Is this really necessary for success? If so, does the college have a significant part-time student cohort unable to dedicate that much time to the course? If not, is that student's throughput more likely in a stretch course or two course sequence? These are the questions discipline faculty, curriculum committees, and academic senates should wrestle with. There is no right answer for every student at every college.

Determining the unit value and/or instructional delivery mode are curricular matters affecting student learning, not working conditions decisions.

7. Can the course grade in a co-requisite be dependent on the grade earned in the parent course? For example, can the college issue a failing grade in the co-requisite if the student does not pass the parent course?

Colleges have the flexibility to develop corequisite courses in both credit and noncredit if the material being covered is below transfer level. If the college develops noncredit corequisites, the student is allowed to re-enroll per Section 55040. Whether the course is credit or noncredit, the course must have a course outline of record that includes content, assignments, and grading criteria, per 55002 (b)(3) for credit and (c)(2) for noncredit. The course can include a list of possible topics that might be covered, but it should have assessments that are separate from the parent course. Linking the grades together is not described anywhere in current regulations, would be questionable since the course was approved as a separate outline, and would not align with the expectations of our regional accreditor (II.A.9). If the college wants to require the student to enroll in the corequisite course and allow the student to re-enroll in that course if they are not successful in the parent course, then they would likely need to create a noncredit corequisite course.

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8. How will students demonstrate they have met the competency requirement in mathematics of a course at the level and rigor of intermediate algebra to earn an Associate Degree?

Competencies require that students demonstrate the skill. This can be done through the completion of a course, but can also be done through the assessment process or other means established by the college. A student who placed into pre-calculus has demonstrated mastery of the skill through the assessment process and should not be required to complete a course in intermediate algebra to fulfill the competency requirement. Completing higher level transfer degree requirements satisfies the lower level competency.

9. What if our college decides to use the default placement rules in Fall 2019 and then decides to change to some other placement process aligned with a curricular innovation in Fall 2020? Is that allowed?

Of course. Every college should evaluate its decisions and its effectiveness in serving its community regularly, particularly after a major change in policy or design. However, validation of any new practice will be required by Fall of 2021. Ongoing reflection and evaluation are encouraged as colleges innovate and experiment. Colleges should not wait two years to establish research protocols regarding effectiveness evaluations of new practices. Those efforts should be designed now and used in an ongoing formative reflection of overall effectiveness and impact on students' success and equity.

10. Is it expected that all California community college students will complete transfer level math and English?

No, AB 705 specifically speaks to students whose goal is transfer. Students who are seeking a degree or certificate should receive a placement that is also consistent with their previous preparation and meets their goals. However, skills builders and some certificate earners may not require an English or quantitative reasoning/mathematics course at all.

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11. Why does the funding formula incentivize the completion of transfer-level quantitative reasoning/mathematics and English in the first year of enrollment, and AB 705 require completion in one year but not necessarily the first year?

AB 705 is a minimum standard of the law, and colleges are required to create the structural opportunity for students to complete transfer-level in one year. However, the student-centered funding formula creates incentives for colleges when students complete in their first year of enrollment. For funding and educational reasons, colleges will want to try to ensure as many students as possible complete in the first year; however, AB 705 does not require it.

12. How can colleges' research efforts be supported as they determine the ways that the default placement rules locally apply?

The MMAP research team is offering a series of webinars and workshops. The team is also available to support local research efforts and data modeling. Consult the Chancellor's Office website on AB 705 for up to date information about support opportunities.

13. How does AB 705 affect the use of tests for "placement" into courses other than quantitative reasoning/mathematics or English?

Some college courses outside of English or quantitative reasoning/mathematics may use instruments as part of a challenge process (for instance, chemistry or some languages). However, these instruments are not intended for placement but for measuring the completion of foundational competencies. Students may also be able to use high school performance as part of a pre-requisite challenge, per the locally determined college policy. As previously addressed in other documents, colleges may not use test instruments in any aspect of the placement process.

14. How does AB 705 affect placement into courses beyond college algebra or transfer-level statistics?

Colleges are encouraged to use high school performance indicators, as appropriate, to place students as high as possible. For instance, students who have completed Algebra 2 in high school and are pursuing a BSTEM pathway may be better served by higher

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placement. Those are local decisions that should be determined with the principles that balance access and preparation.

15. When will title 5 reflect changes related to AB 705?

The Chancellor's Office and Academic Senate for California Community Colleges are currently working on draft regulatory language that will be vetted through the governance process in the winter of 2019 and go into effect in spring of 2019. Reading for fall 2019 implementation.

16. How can colleges fund support needs or professional development in service of students and AB 705?

Colleges can use a variety of funding sources to support the work of implementing AB 705. The colleges' Student Equity and Achievement Program (SEA) funding, which encompasses what was formerly known as Basic Skills, can support this work, as can Guided Pathways funding in addition to general fund dollars. Colleges should examine the use of SEA funding to ensure that planning and activities are not solely housed in either student services or academic affairs but instead address the needs of the colleges and students holistically.

17. What should colleges be doing with their assessment centers in light of AB 705?

Assessment will still be an important part of the work of the colleges. Despite the shift in placing many more students into transfer courses based on high school experience, the colleges will still serve many students who will benefit from a deeper assessment and placement experience with trained professionals. Students without an extensive high school record, international students, some returning students, and others will require a guided self-placement experience that the assessment center can be poised to deliver. Some colleges are considering creative ways to utilize the time previously spent on testing to provide information about educational and career planning and support resources. This emphasis will increase as colleges implement guided pathways and amplify the connection between students' starting points with their goals.

18. What opportunities will colleges have to collect apportionment for tutoring in the future, especially in light of its importance with AB 705?

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The Chancellor's Office is currently working to revise previous guidance and review title 5 regulations to make it possible for colleges to collect apportionment on tutoring that supports the following skills: critical thinking, literacy skills, and quantitative reasoning.

19. What is AB 1805, and how are colleges affected by it?

AB 1805 was passed in July of 2018 and requires colleges to publish the following:

- Inform students of their rights to access transfer-level coursework and of the multiple measures placement policies adopted by the community college system
- Communicate this information in language that is easily understandable and featured prominently in the college catalog, orientation materials, information relating to student assessment on the college's website, or any other written communication by a college counselor to a student about the student's course placement options.
- Annually report both of the following to the Chancellor's Office in a manner and form described by the Chancellor's Office: the college's placement policies, the college's placement results (the number of students assessed and the number of students placed into the colleges curricular offerings in English, mathematics/quantitative reasoning, and English as a Second Language, and whether concurrent support was recommended, disaggregated by race and ethnicity

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