



**TO:** Chief Executive Officers  
Chief Instructional Officers  
Chief Student Services Officers  
Academic Senate Presidents  
Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness Professionals  
English as Second Language (ESL) Department Chairs and Faculty  
Articulation Officers  
Curriculum Chairs

**FROM:** John Stanskas, PhD, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, 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

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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 to the Board of Governors regarding those approvals. In 2024 - 2025, the work of the AAC will focus on ESL assessment submissions from both second-party test publishers and local colleges who have developed or manage their own ESL assessment instruments. [A timeline for the 2024-2025 review process can be found here](#). All submissions of ESL Placement Assessments are due August 12, 2024. All currently approved ESL assessments that are expiring or any ESL assessment that has not been reviewed must be submitted for review. In addition, any new ESL assessments colleges would like to use that are not presently approved for use must also be submitted for review ([currently approved assessments can be found here](#)). Further details on the AAC and its work can be [found on the Assessment Advisory Committee webpage](#).

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;
- 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. This training, conducted by the psychometric experts helping to lead this work, reviewed the 2022 Chancellor’s Office [ESL Assessment Standards](#) which the AAC updated in spring 2022. [The CCCCO Assessment training can be reviewed here on the Assessment Advisory webpage.](#)

The 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 August 12, 2024**, via email the required material to [assessmentadvisory@cccco.edu](mailto:assessmentadvisory@cccco.edu). This current review **does not include guided or self-placement processes**, but rather ESL placement tests. 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.

***Please ensure the appropriate content experts, ESL faculty and chairs, and those who administer these assessments, are engaged in college processes related to ESL placement. 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 here](#).

## The Assessment Advisory Committee Review Process

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 August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 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:** Per 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.”

This review and validation of ESL placement assessments is specific to tests and exams. Although assessment is broadly defined in the Education Code, the ESL Assessment Standards focus largely on tests specifically, and this present review and 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 is currently working with the Assessment Advisory Committee to design a review and validation process for guided and self-placement measures. Colleges will receive more information about that review and validation process of guided or self-placement in 2024-2025.

## **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 August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024, via email to [AssessmentAdvisory@cccoco.edu](mailto:AssessmentAdvisory@cccoco.edu).

If you have any questions, please email [AssessmentAdvisory@cccoco.edu](mailto:AssessmentAdvisory@cccoco.edu).

**Local ESL Placement Assessments Review**

April 25, 2024

cc: Sonia Christian, PhD, Chancellor  
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