

**TO:** Chief Instructional Officers  
Chief Student Services Officers  
Academic Senate Presidents  
AB 705 ESL Advisory Committee

**FROM:** Alice Perez,  
Vice Chancellor, Educational Services & Support

**RE:** Assembly Bill 705 and 1805 Spring 2019 Guidance Language for Credit English as a Second Language (ESL)

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The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidance language regarding Assembly Bill (AB) 705 and 1805 for Credit English as a Second Language (ESL).

#### **INTENT OF AB 705 AND 1805 FOR CREDIT ESL**

- AB 705 and 1805 both recognize that English as a second language (ESL) is not basic skills or remedial instruction. Rather, it is foreign language acquisition for students who already know one or more languages:  

Instruction ESL is distinct from remediation in English. Students enrolled in ESL credit coursework are foreign language learners who require additional language training in English, require support to successfully complete degree and transfer requirements in English, or require both of the above (Section 1.(a) (7)).
- AB 705 strongly urges colleges to integrate ESL curricular options to maximize the probability that students will be able to complete transfer-level composition within three years (or less).
- AB 705 is not intended to place all English language learners (ELLs) into transfer-level composition, to eliminate credit ESL offerings, to shift all credit ESL offerings into noncredit, to eliminate credit ESL courses that are not designed to lead to transfer composition, or to eliminate elective, support courses focused on specific language skills which are not part of the credit ESL sequence leading to transfer-level composition.

#### **COLLEGE OBLIGATIONS UNDER AB 705 FOR CREDIT ESL**

*Placement obligations for credit ESL:* The law requires colleges to use evidence-based measures to place students into credit ESL courses. Per the text of the law,

“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. (Section 2.(e))

Colleges should collect and review ESL throughput data via their campus research offices and make the data available to ESL departments for the purpose of determining the best placement options for credit ESL.

*AB 705 Statement on Placement:* The law does not require the elimination of placement tests for ESL at this time, nor does the law disallow the use of placement tests for students. Placement tests for credit ESL are not discriminatory under AB 705 or California Education Code.

*Default Placement Rules:* The use of the “Default Placement Rules” for English are not appropriate for the majority of students seeking ESL instruction (approximately 75-80% statewide) as these students do not have four complete years of high school information. The Default Placement Rules for English are only required for students who have four complete years of high school data. The Default Placement Rules for English are not appropriate for international students who are English language learners and are best served by being directed to the ESL placement process.

*Multiple Measures:* Per AB 705, “Colleges are also required to use multiple measures in determining course placement pursuant to Section 55522 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations” (Section 1.(a)(10)).

## **STATUS OF PLACEMENT TESTS FOR CREDIT ESL**

- **Accuplacer:** Colleges using Accuplacer for ESL are permitted to continue using Accuplacer for ESL through Fall 2019 for placement into Spring 2020. Approval for Accuplacer for ESL will not be renewed after Spring 2020. However, colleges may continue to use the listening portion of the ESL exam until July 2021.
- **CELSA:** The approval for the CELSA test has been extended through the end of Spring 2020 for placement into Summer and Fall 2020. Therefore, colleges may continue, or opt in, to use the CELSA through that time period.
- **Placement services:** Colleges will need to retain access to placement services to place students accurately within credit ESL levels.

## **COLLEGE OBLIGATIONS UNDER AB 1805 FOR CREDIT ESL**

Per AB 1805, as a condition for receiving Student Equity and Achievement Program funding, colleges are required to:

- “inform students of their rights to access transfer-level coursework and academic credit English as a Second Language (ESL) coursework” (AB 1805 Section 1.78221.5 (a) (1)
- inform students of the benefits of both English and ESL pathways “in language that is easily understandable, and shall be prominently featured in the community college catalog, orientation materials, information related to students assessment on the community college’s Internet Web site, and any written communication by a college counselor to a student about the student’s course placement options.” (AB 1805 Section 1.78221.5 (a) (2).

## **GUIDED PLACEMENT (GP) FOR ESL**

The process of Guided Placement (GP) for ESL involves two distinct stages.

*Stage 1:* GP for placement into transfer-level composition versus credit ESL

Colleges should establish a clear informative process (decision tree or placement logic) to accurately and appropriately advise English language learners of their options to access transfer-level composition or academic credit ESL coursework.

Per the July 2018 Initial Guidance for Credit ESL (AA 18-41), “Colleges should be mindful that while some high school senior English language learners (ELLs) may indeed be ready for mainstreaming into transfer-level English, credit ESL at the community college is designed to enhance proficiency in English at a level of academic rigor that can better serve many ELLs who may have completed three or four years of high school English but whose language proficiency may still require attention to specific needs that are not met in transfer-level English even with co-requisite or co-curricular support.”

*Stage 2:* Guided Placement for placement into levels within credit ESL programs

- Colleges are allowed to continue to use approved methods of placement (see above) until their expiry date.
- Colleges will be asked to submit their AB 705 Adoption Plans for ESL by July 2020. ESL departments are encouraged to share and explore options that work for their local populations.
- Upon release of explicit guidance regarding Guided Placement, the CCCCO will create and maintain a bank of promising models of assessment that do not require validation.

## **CURRICULUM FOR CREDIT ESL**

### *Previous Recommendations Regarding Curriculum:*

Pursuant to the July 2018 Initial Guidance for Credit ESL (AA 18-41), institutions are strongly encouraged to explore the following:

- Review currently offered credit ESL curriculum and consider integrating skills (e.g. grammar/writing, reading/writing, or reading/writing/grammar).
- Develop ESL pathways that transition students from the highest levels of credit ESL coursework directly into transfer-level English rather than into developmental English courses (which will not be compliant with AB 705);
- Pursue the possibility of submitting transfer level ESL courses for inclusion in CSU General Education Breadth Area C2 and for course-to-course articulation;
- Explore credit ESL pathways to transfer-level English that can include the following:
- Enabling credit ESL faculty to teach English Composition to ESL students;
- Assignment of faculty with dual minimum qualifications to teach both English and ESL to teach transfer-level English for English language learners.
- Local curriculum committee assignment of ESL as a discipline accepted to teach transfer-level English
- Creation of cohorts of English language learners to move through credit ESL into English with an ESL instructor
- Learning community cohorts that move students through ESL at two or three levels below into transfer-level English
- Develop ESL co-requisites and support courses for transfer-level English
- Creation of a credit ESL course that is the equivalent of transfer-level English

## **ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CREDIT ESL**

In addition to exploring the previous recommendations, institutions should also:

- Explore creation of pathways for ESL students which clearly guide (or lead) to their degree and transfer goals;
- Create stronger connections and greater equity between credit ESL and English faculty, as well as credit ESL and non-credit ESL faculty.
- Explore options for programmatic alignment to international foreign language standards, such as those established by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), the Global Standard of English (GSE), or the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB).

## **SUMMARY**

- Colleges can continue to use assessment tests for ESL (including writing tests) in the 2019-2020 academic year.
- Colleges should collect data for everything that the college tries. There are no simple answers for ESL, and we all need to work together to ensure our students achieve their educational goals.
- Colleges should consider implementing a guided self-placement process that determines whether a student will benefit from proceeding into transfer-level English or into credit ESL courses as well as a separate process that determines the most appropriate course to begin in the credit ESL sequence, and maintain a designated space where students may engage this process.
- Colleges should explore curricular revisions that integrate reading and writing, shorten longer sequences, explore transfer GE credit, and create credit certificate programs that recognize student accomplishments on their way to their final educational goal.
- Colleges should be proactive and anticipate options for scheduling to maximize success for students enrolled in credit ESL courses.

cc: Marty Alvarado, Executive Vice Chancellor, Educational Services & Support