

ASSESSMENT AND PLACEMENT POLICIES

West Los Angeles College



This report is part of a series of summaries that outlines the assessment and placement policies used across the nine community colleges that comprise the Los Angeles Community College District. The information presented in this report was collected from college websites and district documents.

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Matriculation

According to West Los Angeles College (WLAC), matriculation is a process that assists students in achieving their educational goals. The matriculation services that West Los Angeles College provides are:

- ❖ **Admissions:** WLAC provides prospective students with an opportunity to enroll in person or online.
 - High school students may enroll concurrently at West Los Angeles College by submitting the standard admissions application and a “Supplemental Application for Admissions for a Student in Grades K-12.” A high school counselor and parent/guardian must approve this form. High school students must re-apply every semester and are limited to 11 units per semester (7 units in winter session).
 - AB 540 Students must apply in person in the Admissions Office.
 - International Students must complete their admissions process through the International Student Office in Admissions.
 - Applicants do not need to be a California resident to attend West Los Angeles College. However, for tuition purposes, students are required to have a status that allows them to establish California residence prior to the Residence Determination Date.
- ❖ **Assessment:** Math, English or English as a Second Language (ESL) assessment tests are required for all first-time West Los Angeles College students or those who have not previously attended another community college or university. Students who have attended another college need to meet with a counselor to have assessment results evaluated. Assessment appointments can be made online.
- ❖ **Orientation:** To complete the matriculation process students must attend an orientation session before or after assessment testing. Through the orientation session, students learn about the college’s programs and services, and about student rights and responsibilities.
- ❖ **Counseling:** Counseling is available to students for educational, transfer, and career exploration. These services are provided by professional counselors through individual counseling, workshops, and referrals to resources on and off campus.
- ❖ **Follow-Up:** Students can receive follow-up consultations with professors to receive help in completing their educational goals. Students can also access an online program to help with planning for the courses they want to take. There is no information provided that states whether participation in a follow-up session is mandatory.

Who is eligible for matriculation?

- Students who are pursuing a vocational certificate
- Students who are pursuing an Associate’s degree
- Students who are intending to transfer to a four-year university or college
- Students who are undecided about their specific goals and considering one of the above options

Who is exempt from matriculation?

- Students who are not considering one of the listed educational goal options and have completed less than 16 units of courses for personal interest
- Students who have completed an Associate’s degree or higher
- Students who have participated in the assessment placement process within the last two years or took an equivalent course at another California Community College or four year institution

with a grade of "C" or higher and can present official transcripts. Some colleges are unable to provide courses/placement results that can be used for exemption; if this occurs, the student will need to take the assessment test. Students who have been declared exempt will be notified.

Registration

Students may register for classes after completion of the enrollment application, assessment, orientation, and counseling. Registration for classes is completed online. High school students are advised to register for classes at the Office for School Relations and Outreach.

After assessment scores are determined, new students will meet with counselors to develop a course load for the beginning semester.

Pre-requisites, co-requisite, advisories

- Prerequisites are skills a student must possess or classes a student must have passed with a grade of C or better before he or she can enroll in certain classes.
 - Co-requisites are conditions of enrollment consisting of a course that a student is required to take in order to enroll in another course during the same semester.
 - Advisories are recommended courses to be completed in preparation of another course.
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Assessment

Students are assessed in English, ESL, and math. Students can obtain information about assessment on WLAC's assessment webpage. The website provides practice tests in English, ESL and math. Links are also provided to the Heldman Learning Resource Center where students can take an assessment test preparation course. Further information regarding the services offered by the Assessment Center, such as the assessment test schedule, how to interpret placement test results, and the reasons why the assessment test should be taken are provided on the assessment webpage.

Assessment test used to place students in math?

- COMPASS

Who must take the assessment test?

- Students who are pursuing a vocational certificate
- Students who are pursuing an Associate's degree
- Students who are intending to transfer to a four-year university or college
- Students who are undecided about their specific goals and considering one of the above options

Who is exempt from being assessed?

- Students who have earned an Associate's Degree or higher
- Students who have completed less than 15 units of college courses for personal development
- Students who have taken the appropriate pre-requisite course with a grade of "C" or better as documented on an official transcript.

- Students who have completed an assessment test at another college and are able to provide official documentation.

How often can a student take an assessment test?

- Students are allowed to test once a semester. Assessment results are updated after re-testing and remain valid for two years, after which time the student can re-test.

What is the frequency with which tests are offered?

- Walk-in assessment is available throughout the year, except during the heavy registration period, which is usually two weeks before and one week after the first day of classes.

Are sample test questions available?

- Students have access to two practice tests through the West Los Angeles College’s website. Links below:
 - http://www.testprepreview.com/compass_practice.htm

Cut Scores

The following chart outlines math placements and assessment cutoffs in math between Fall 2005 and Fall 2007.

2005	Pre=Algebra				Algebra				College Algebra		Trigonometry		
Score	≤20	≥21	≥40	≥50	<19	≥21	≥41	≥71	≤30	≥31	≤44	≥45	≥61
Recommended placement	105	112	117	115	117	115	125, 120	245, 241,236, 235, 227, 215, 125, 120	125	245, 241,236, 235, 227, 215, 125, 120	245, 241,236, 235, 227, 215, 125, 120	260	261

Student Background Questionnaire

The student background questionnaire gathers background information on students who take an assessment test. The questionnaire is divided into three sections. The first section gathers information from both English Native Language (ENL) and ESL students. The second section gathers data on only ENL students. The third section gathers data on only ESL students. **Questions that are bolded are treated as multiple measures.**

First Section (both ESL and ENL students)

- 1. How many units do you plan to take?**
- 2. How many hours per week do you plan to work?**
- 3. How important is a college education to you?**
4. What is the highest level of math that you have completed with a grade of a grade of “C” or higher?

5. How long has it been since you have completed a math class?
6. What grade did you receive in your last English or ESL class?
7. How good are your English writing skills?
- 8. Are you a returning college student?**
9. How often do you read books or novels?
10. Do your friends and family members support your educational goals?
11. Are you currently attending high school?

Second Section (ENL students)

1. What was your high school G.P.A.?
2. When was your last composition class taken?

Third Section (ESL students)

1. How good is your writing in your native language?
2. Outside of class, how much English do you use at home, with friends, and at work?
3. How many years of school did you finish before coming to the United States?

Multiple Measures

As of 2005, West Los Angeles College uses four multiple measures to place ENL students in math. The math placement criteria from 2005—2007 does not offer information on multiple measures used to place ESL students in math. Unlike other colleges within the district, West Los Angeles College subtracts points from a student’s assessment score based on their answers on questions that count as multiple measures.

ENL Questions	Answers	Additional Points
Question 1: How many units do you plan to take?	a) Less than 3 units	+0.5
	b) 3-5 units	+0.5
	c) 6-8 units	+0.5
	e) 12 units or more	-0.5
Question 2: How many hours per week do you plan to work?	a) 0 hours per week	+0.5
	b) 1-9 hours per week	+0.5
	d) 20-29 hours per week	-0.5
	e) 30-39 hours per week	-0.5
	f) 40 hours or more per week	-0.5
Question 3: How important is a college education to you?	a) Very important	+0.5
	b) Important	+0.5
	d) Somewhat important	-0.5
	e) Left blank on EPQ. ¹	-0.5
Question 8: Are you a returning college student?	a.) No, I’m continuing from high school to college	+0.5

¹ The sample multiple measures document used to make this table did not contain an optional letter E for question number 3. No information is provided to determine whether or not a student who chooses letter E will have their total score deducted by 0.5 points.

	b.) Yes, after being away for 1 year or less	0.0
	c.) Yes, after being away for 1 to 5 years	0.0
	d) Yes, after being away for 5 to 10 years	+0.5
	e) Yes, after being away for more than 10 years	-0.5
Total multiple measure points	Minimum and maximum total points added	-2 to 2

Course Challenge Petition

To challenge a prerequisite or a co-requisite, students need to provide official college transcripts and show that they completed the prerequisite classes with satisfactory grades. In addition, students must complete and submit the prerequisite challenge petition to the department chairperson for the course they are challenging. Students can talk to counselors about a course challenge petition.

A student may challenge any pre-requisite or co-requisite on one or more of the grounds listed below:

- The pre-requisite or co-requisite has not been established in accordance with the district's process for establishing pre-requisites and co-requisites
- The pre-requisite or co-requisite is either unlawfully discriminatory or is being applied in an unlawfully discriminatory manner.
- The student has knowledge or the ability to succeed in the course program despite not meeting the pre-requisite or co-requisite
- The student will be subject to undue delay in attaining the goal in his/her educational plan because the prerequisite or co-requisite course has not been reasonably made available; and
- Such other grounds for challenge as may be established by the district governing board

Supporting Documentation

- Copy of high school/college transcript
- Written documentation of work or related experience from employer
- Doctor's statement
- Personal written statement
- A course is considered to be "not reasonably available" if it has not been offered in the last three semesters and the student believes their progress in attaining their goal will be delayed

Procedure to file a course challenge petition

Students are told to complete the following steps to submit a course challenge petition.

1. Complete the pre-requisite and co-requisite challenge.
 2. Submit the completed petition and any support documentation to the department chairperson.
 3. If necessary, an appeal may be filed with the Dean of Academic Affairs.
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Counseling

The Counseling Department at West Los Angeles College assists students in making decisions regarding educational, career, and personal concerns. Counseling is available for educational, transfer, and career exploration. These services are provided for by professional counselors through individual counseling, workshops, and referrals to resources on and off campus.

The primary goal of academic counseling is to provide opportunities for students to:

- Clarify their values and goals and determine an educational path (e.g., Associate's degree, transfer to a four-year university, etc.)
- Make decisions about a possible educational route to obtain these goals, including classes that need to be completed to fit each student's program of study
- Develop self-confidence, self-direction, and self-esteem in shaping a student's academic future

WLAC strongly encourages students to meet with a counselor each semester to maintain taking the proper courses in order for each student to reach their goals. However, there is no information stating that counseling is mandatory for student matriculation.

Sources

West Los Angeles College: Matriculation. (2007). Welcome to Assessment. Retrieved from <http://www.wlac.edu/matriculation/Assessment.html>