ACES (Admitted Class Evaluation Service^{TM})

College-Level Examination Program (CLEP$^®$) Placement Validity Study Guide

January 2025

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ACES Overview

Admitted Class Evaluation Service™ (ACES) is a free online service for higher education institutions that predicts how admitted students will perform at your institution generally and how successful they can be in specific classes. ACES helps you answer important questions about the assessments you use to admit and place students at your institution.

CLEP Placement Validity Study Overview

Evaluate how performance on CLEP exams relates to student performance in sequent or subsequent courses in order to validate and improve your institution's CLEP credit and placement policy decisions. By comparing mean course grades by pathway of entry into the course, this study can help support data-driven decisions regarding credit and placement of students with acceptable CLEP exam performance.
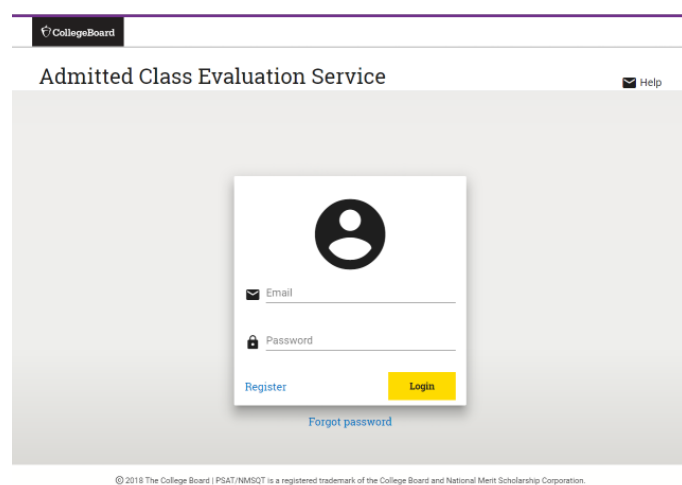
Submission Overview

Your first step will be to register for an account with ACES. You will then design your study and prepare your data file for submission. Before submitting data and finalizing your study, you will be required to sign the data sharing agreement on the ACES portal. Your data sharing agreement will be valid for two years. Once your agreement is signed and your study and data file are complete, you will be able to submit your request. You will be notified via email when your report is ready.

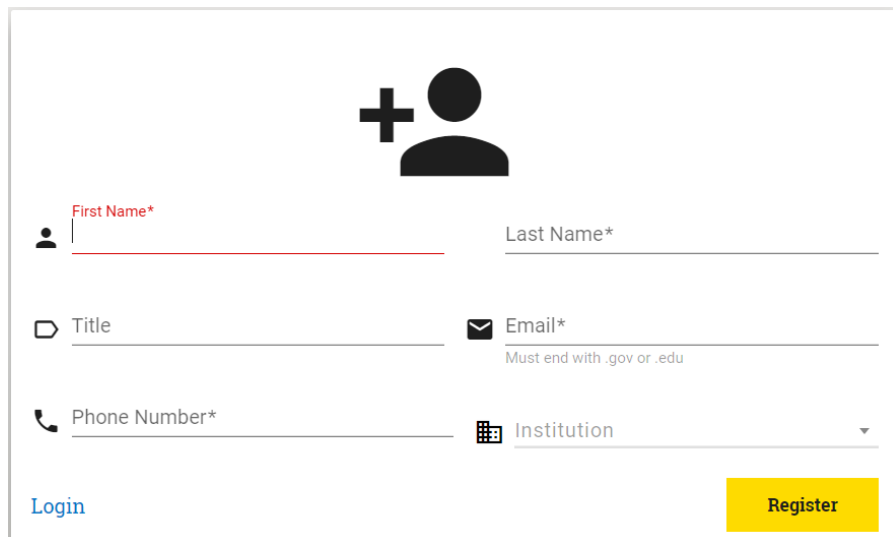## Getting Started – Account Registration

1. Navigate to https://acesportal.collegeboard.org

2. Click "REGISTER" on the login page.

3. Fill out the appropriate information (name, title, email, phone number, and institution (drop down menu)).

- *Email*: Must be a .gov or .edu address

- *Institution*: If you are from a university system, not one specific institution, please select "non-institution user" and type in the name of your university system in the box provided.
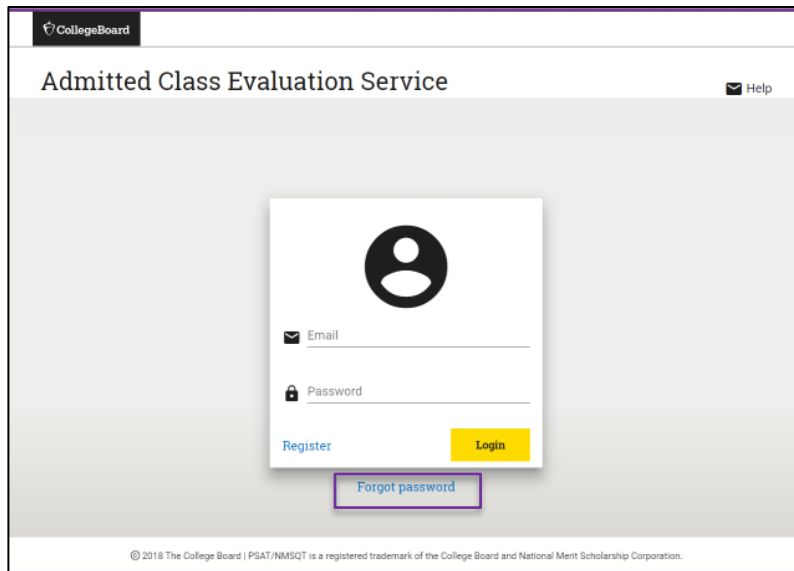

4. Click "REGISTER."

5. Upon registering, an "Account created!" message will appear.

6. Within a few minutes, you should receive a confirmation email.

- Please check your Spam/ Junk folder if you do not see your confirmation email in your inbox.

7. Click on the link within the confirmation email to activate the account and create a new password.

- Your password must contain at least 8 characters and at least one number, uppercase letter, and one symbol (!, ?, @, *).
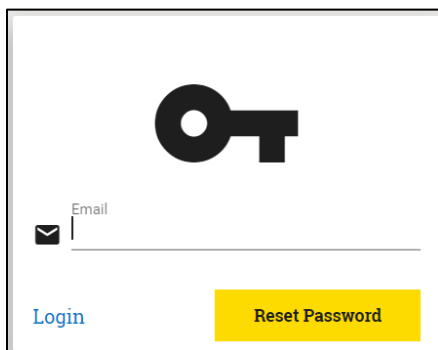
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Password Reset

1. Click on "FORGOT PASSWORD" on the login page.

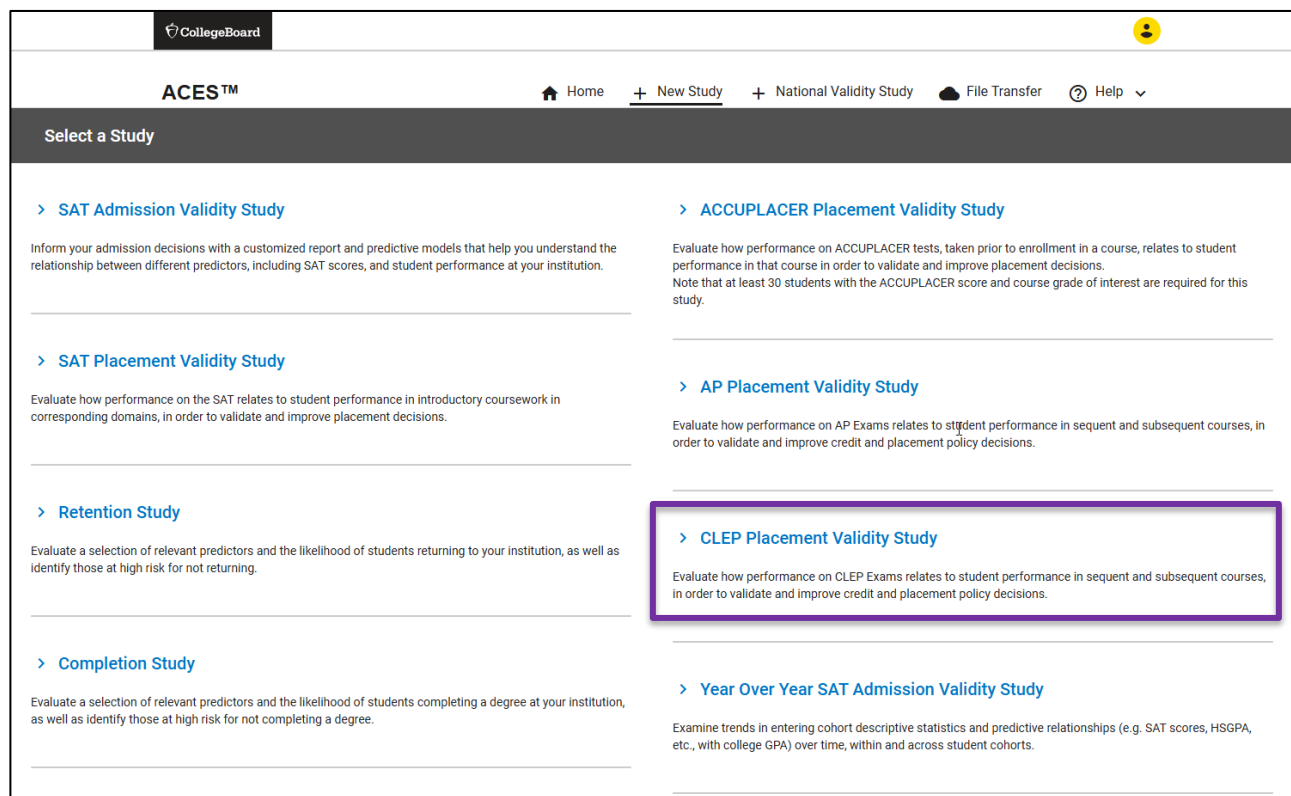2. Enter your registered email address.

3. Click on "RESET PASSWORD."

4. Open password reset link via email.

5. Create and confirm a new password.

• Remember your password must contain at least eight characters, one uppercase letter, one number and one symbol.

6. Login with your new password on the login page.

Logging In

1. Navigate to the login page https://acesportal.collegeboard.org

2. Enter your registered email and password.

3. Click "LOGIN."

Create a Study

1. From the home screen, navigate to the "New Study" section.

2. Select "CLEP Placement Validity Study."

   a) When you request a study for the first time, you will be prompted to choose whether you are a two year or a four-year institution. You will only need to indicate this information the first time you use the system as it will save your choice for future study requests.

b) When you request a study for the first time, you will be prompted to provide answers to **security questions**. These questions will be asked in the event you need to reset your Encryption Key. You will be provided with a list of options for each of the three questions. If you need to reset your Encryption Key, you will be asked these three questions, and need to provide the exact responses you gave.

Configure Security Questions

In order to assure the security of your data, all files that may contain PII (personally identifiable information) will be encrypted upon download. The files will be packaged in an AES-256 encrypted zip file with a random passcode specific to your account. To allow you to securely reset the passcode if you lose it, you will need to answer three additional security questions from the list below. Your answers will be encrypted such that they are not disclosed to anyone.

1	Question *
	What was the name of your elementary school?
	What was your grandfather's (on your mother's side) first name?
	What was the first name of your favorite childhood friend?
2	What is your grandmother's (on your mother's side) maiden name?
	What was your favorite vacation place as a child?

3	Question *
	Answer *

Step 2 of 3   Set Questions

c) Once you have selected your **three security questions** and provided responses, you will be given an **Encryption Key**. <u>**KEEP THIS KEY FOR YOUR RECORDS.**</u> It is required for you to download and open your data files. This key is unique to you and linked to your account.

Encryption Key   ✕

Please copy this and store it in a secure location. Only your pass code can be used to open the files you download. You will need to use an application that supports AES-256 encryption (e.g. WinZip, 7-zip, Keka).

If you forget your passcode, you can reset it from your user account settings at the top right. After reset, all future downloads will be encrypted using the new passcode. Files previously downloaded will not work with new passcodes.
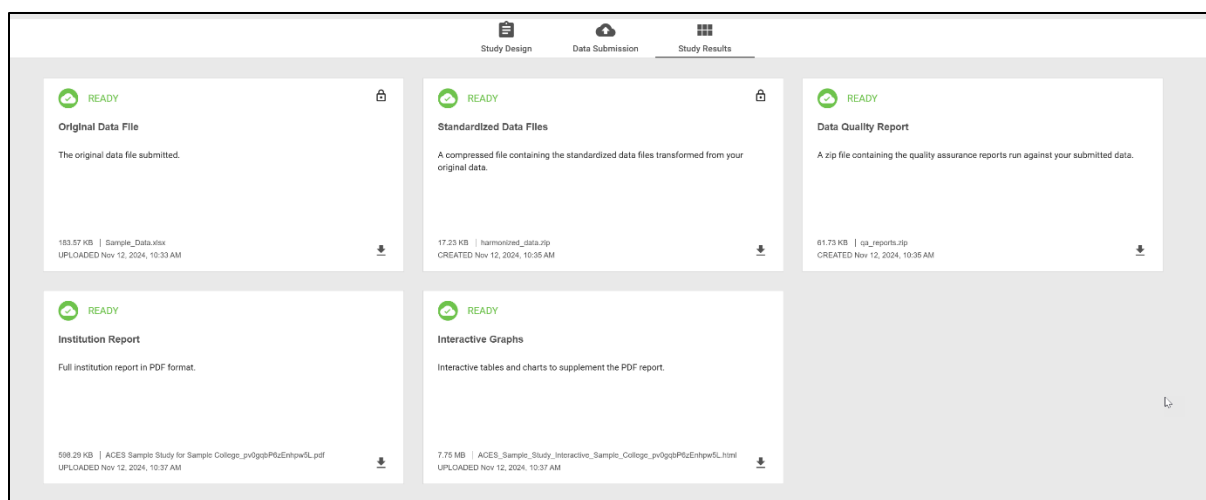
Your encryption passcode is:

odLDbgGZ4YW

Close

The files that require the Encryption Key are shown with a "lock" icon on the top right corner of each study results section. You will need to enter this Encryption Key in order to download and open the following data files:

- Original Data File
- Standardized Data Files

The key is not required to download the Data Quality Report, the PDF Institution Report or the Interactive html graphics.

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In the event that you misplace your encryption key, you can reset it under your account settings, click on "**reset key**" and proceed to answer the security challenge questions you answered when obtaining the key.

If you are unable to answer your questions, contact the ACES technical support email or toll-free line to have your questions reset. Be prepared to answer questions to confirm your identity.

3. Create a unique study name (e.g.,2023 CLEP Placement Validity Study) to help identify your study and add optional secondary contact information to notify others when the study is complete.

Note: Secondary contacts will not receive the study results but will be informed when the study results are available.

4. Select a data source for the study.

a. If using **existing data**, select the source from the drop-down list.

b. If **submitting new data** for this study, select "New Data" and click on the arrow to continue to the data submission page. Before preparing your data submission, you should review the study design page. Your data submission must have the variables you want to include in your study, including CLEP exam scores.

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c. The following steps will focus on creating a new data submission:

i. On the data submission page, indicate a name for the data submission and a description. This will help you identify the submission in the future if you want to use the submission for another study.

ii. Specify your institution's grading policy by selecting one of the options.

Map your grading scale and add more grading standards if it applies. You will only need to indicate this information the **first time** you use the system as it will auto populate in future study requests.

Example: Add "P" for pass and "F" for fail. For the numeric value, select "No value" for this scenario.

iii. Specify your institution's academic term format for the data submission and follow the prompts and instructions on the screen.

iv. Make sure the file is properly formatted. Microsoft Excel, Comma Separated Value (CSV), SAS Transport (XPORT) or Tab Delimited (.TXT) are acceptable formats. Refer to Data Preparation Guide for assistance.

It is recommended you use the ACES Data Template designed for this study whenever possible as this will help facilitate the data submission.

v. Upload your data file for submission.

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vi.   Once your data file has been successfully uploaded, scroll down to start editing the mapping fields.

vii. Begin by selecting a data element on the left to map to the data source on the right. Click the field and a drop-down menu will appear.

In the example below, "student_id" is mapped as the student identifier.

You will need to map all required variables for your study. Required variables are noted in the data template and the Data Preparation Guide.

viii. Review unmapped variables and decide whether to map them or to add them as extra passthrough variables. To add a variable to the passthrough list, check the box next to it.

Note: Variables added to the passthrough list will not be included or analyzed in the submitted study. **All variables must either be mapped or else be added to the passthrough list.**

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ix. Review your data submission requirements. Once all required variables have been mapped, a check appears next to that step to indicate you may proceed. The next step is to save and click on the "Perform Quality Assurance" button. This is an automated process that examines your data for the presence of required fields and values, checks for duplicate students or courses, and ensures integrity of the data. This process should take approximately 2-3 minutes.

x. After the quality assurance step is completed and no errors are reported, load data submission.

xi. After Load Data Submission the screen indicates the status of the data submission

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11 Finalize Data Submission

✓ **Data Mapping**
All data mappings are complete.

✓ **Quality Assurance (PASS)**
PASS: Please view report for a detailed analysis. →

✓ **Load Data Submission**
Data Submission has been successfully loaded into data warehouse.

Your data submission is complete. If your study design is also complete, you will be able to submit your study for review.

xii. After the quality assurance step is completed and no errors are reported, navigate back to the study design page to finish the rest of the study's requirements.

Study Design   Data Submission   Study Results

2 Data Submission Selection
Associate the request with a data submission.

Your study must be associated with a data submission holding the student data necessary to produce the report. You can either start a new data submission or reuse one from a previously submitted study that has either been completed or has advanced to the Analysis in Process phase.

You **must** complete your data submission before starting the study design.

✓ COMPLETE

View Data Submission

2022 CLEP Placement Validity Study Data

→

5. Back on the Study Design page, under the Exam Analysis section, specify the exam you wish to evaluate. If two exams are used interchangeably for credit for the same course or courses, please select both exams. You will be able to create a new study for each exam or combination of exams of interest.

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Study Design	Data Submission	Study Results	

2 of 2 Options Selected

History & Social Sciences	Composition & Literature	Science & Mathematics	Business
American Government	American Literature	☑ Biology	Financial Accounting
History of the United States I	Analyzing and Interpreting	☐ Calculus	Information Systems
History of the United States II	Literature	☑ Chemistry	Introductory Business Law
Human Growth and Development	College Composition	☐ College Algebra	Principles of Management
Introduction to Educational	College Composition Modular	☐ College Mathematics	Principles of Marketing
Psychology	English Literature	☐ Natural Sciences	
Introductory Psychology	Humanities	☐ Precalculus	
Introductory Sociology			
Principles of Macroeconomics			

6. In the Course Placement section, specify what course(s) a student earns credit for and what course(s) the student can be placed into based on a placement exam score or score range. Add a minimum and maximum score for a new exam placement policy (default minimum is 0 and default maximum is 80). The screenshot below illustrates a CLEP exam score range of 50-80.

Course Placement

Specify what course(s) a student earns credit for and what course(s) the student can be placed into based on a placement exam score or score range.
If you do not see a course you are looking for, or there are no courses available for selection, ensure you have mapped them in the data submission.

New Exam Placement
Blank min score defaults to 0. Max defaults to 80.

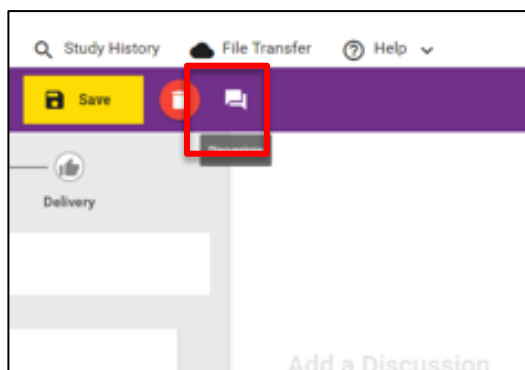| Min Score	Max Score	
50	80	**Add Placement**

7. In the Parallel Group Analysis section, you can indicate with a check whether or not you would like to evaluate the performance of an "other" group of students in the placed courses along with the performance of students who entered through CLEP credit or through taking the credited courses(s). In order to make appropriate comparisons, this group should consist of only one type of parallel group, such as all dual enrollment credit holders.
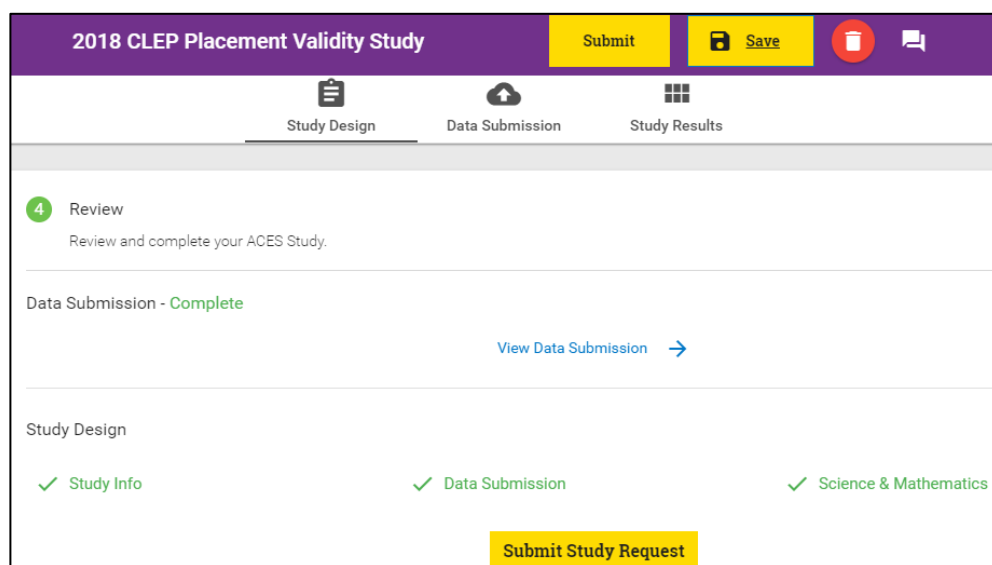
Parallel Group Analysis

Would you like to evaluate the performance of an "other" group of students in the placed courses along with the performance of students who entered through CLEP credit or through taking the credited course(s)? If you select this, your course level data must include a flag indicating the students in this group.

☑ Analyze Parallel Group

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8. Review all information and ensure the data submission is complete. If at any point during the study design or data submission process you have questions or require technical assistance, you can use the Discussions feature at the top right corner of the screen and technical support will be provided.

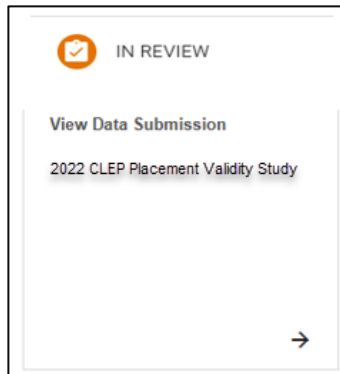9. Save and Select "Submit Study Request."

10. You will receive an email when your study request has been reviewed and the analysis has begun. It will take approximately 20 business days to complete your study.
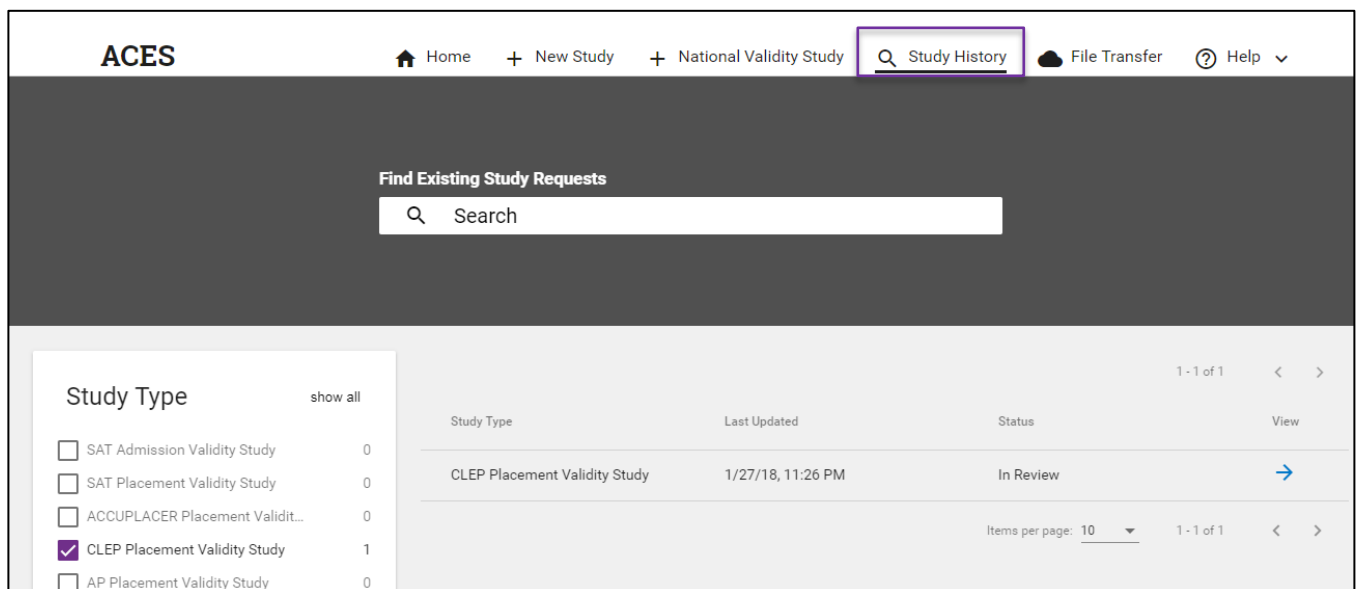
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Check Study Request Status

1. Navigate to the home page to see an overview status of your recently submitted studies.
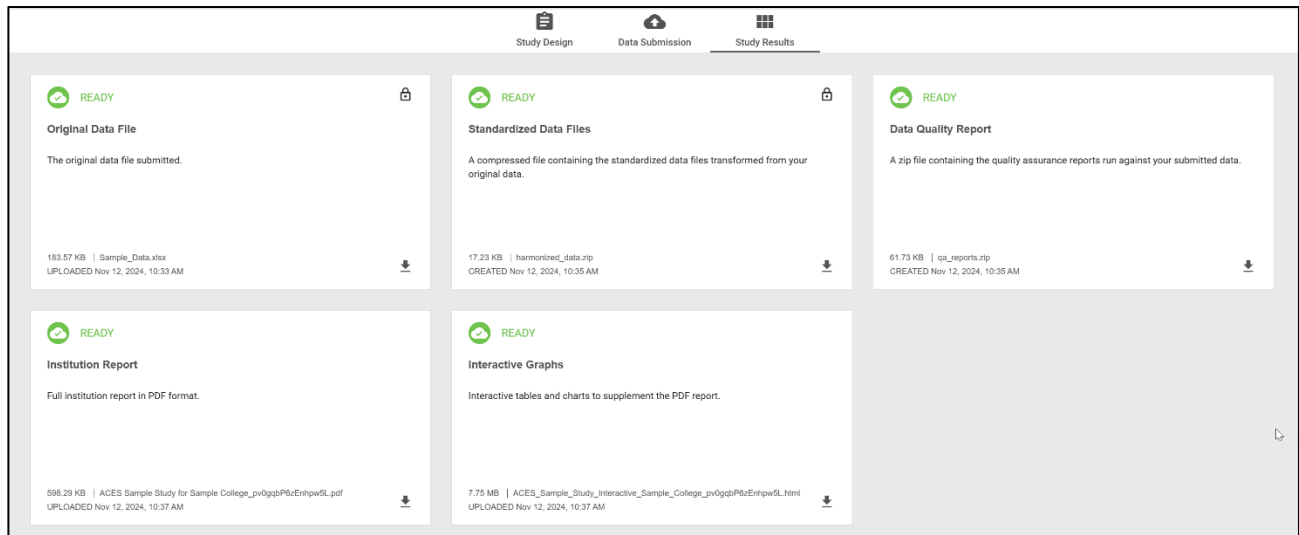

2. For information about previously submitted studies, navigate to the "Study History" tab in the top navigation bar.

3. Select the study to see the status. To filter the list, use the "Study Type" module on the left side.

Retrieve Study Results

1. You will receive an email when your study is complete and available for download.

2. From the home page, scroll down to the "Completed" section.

3. Select "Download Results" and choose the type of report/ file in the menu.

• The following reports and files will be available for download: original data file, standardized data files, data quality reports, PDF report, and interactive graph file.

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ACES Technical Support

Support email: aces-collegeboard@norc.org

Support telephone: 1-800-439-8309

Support hours: Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm EST

General information: collegeboard.org/aces

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