

**ACES (Admitted Class Evaluation Service™)  
College-Level Examination Program (CLEP®)  
Placement Validity Study Guide**

January 2025

## Table of Contents

ACES Overview .....	3
CLEP Placement Validity Study Overview .....	3
Submission Overview .....	3
Getting Started – Account Registration .....	3
Password Reset .....	5
Logging In .....	6
Create a Study .....	6
Check Study Request Status .....	17
Retrieve Study Results .....	17
ACES Technical Support .....	18

## 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

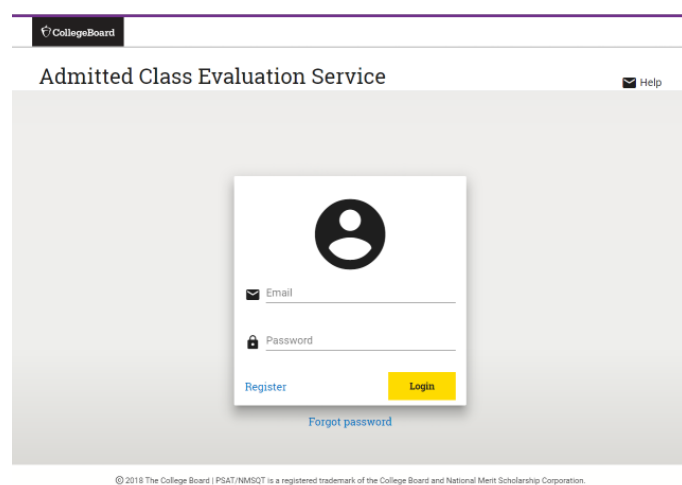
---

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

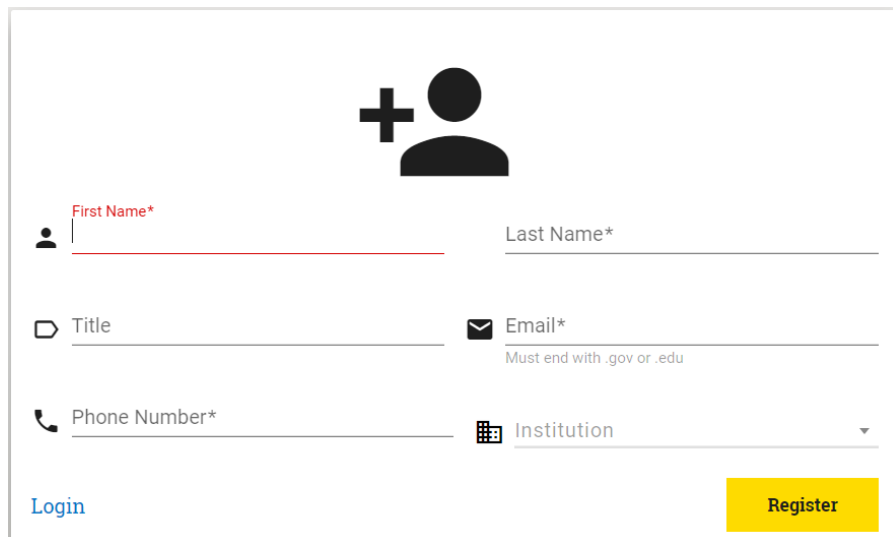
---

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.



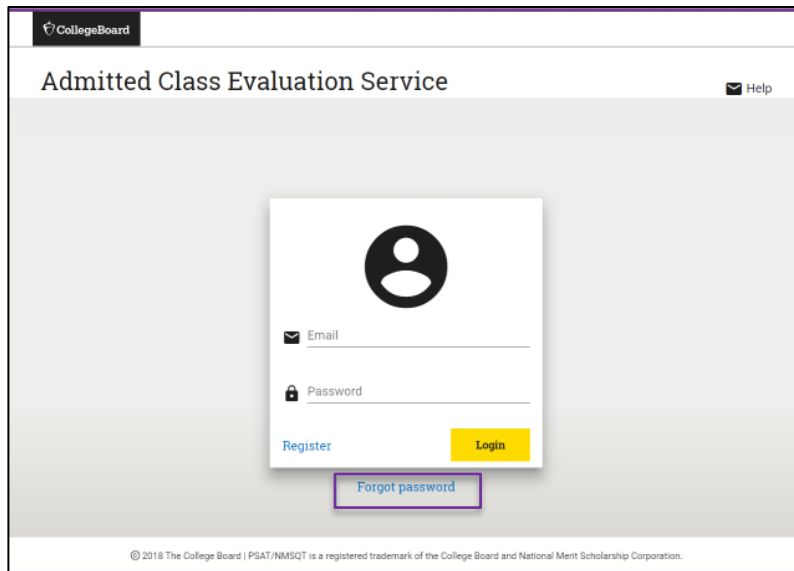
The registration form is enclosed in a light gray border. At the top center is a large black icon of a person with a plus sign. Below this, the form is organized into two columns. The left column contains three input fields: 'First Name\*' (with a red asterisk), 'Title' (with a document icon), and 'Phone Number\*' (with a phone icon). The right column contains three input fields: 'Last Name\*' (with a red asterisk), 'Email\*' (with an envelope icon and a note 'Must end with .gov or .edu'), and 'Institution' (with a building icon and a dropdown arrow). At the bottom left is a blue 'Login' link, and at the bottom right is a yellow 'Register' button.

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 (!, ?, @, \*).

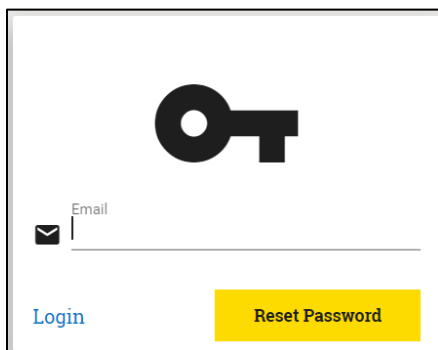
## Password Reset

---

1. Click on “FORGOT PASSWORD” on the login page.



2. Enter your registered email address.



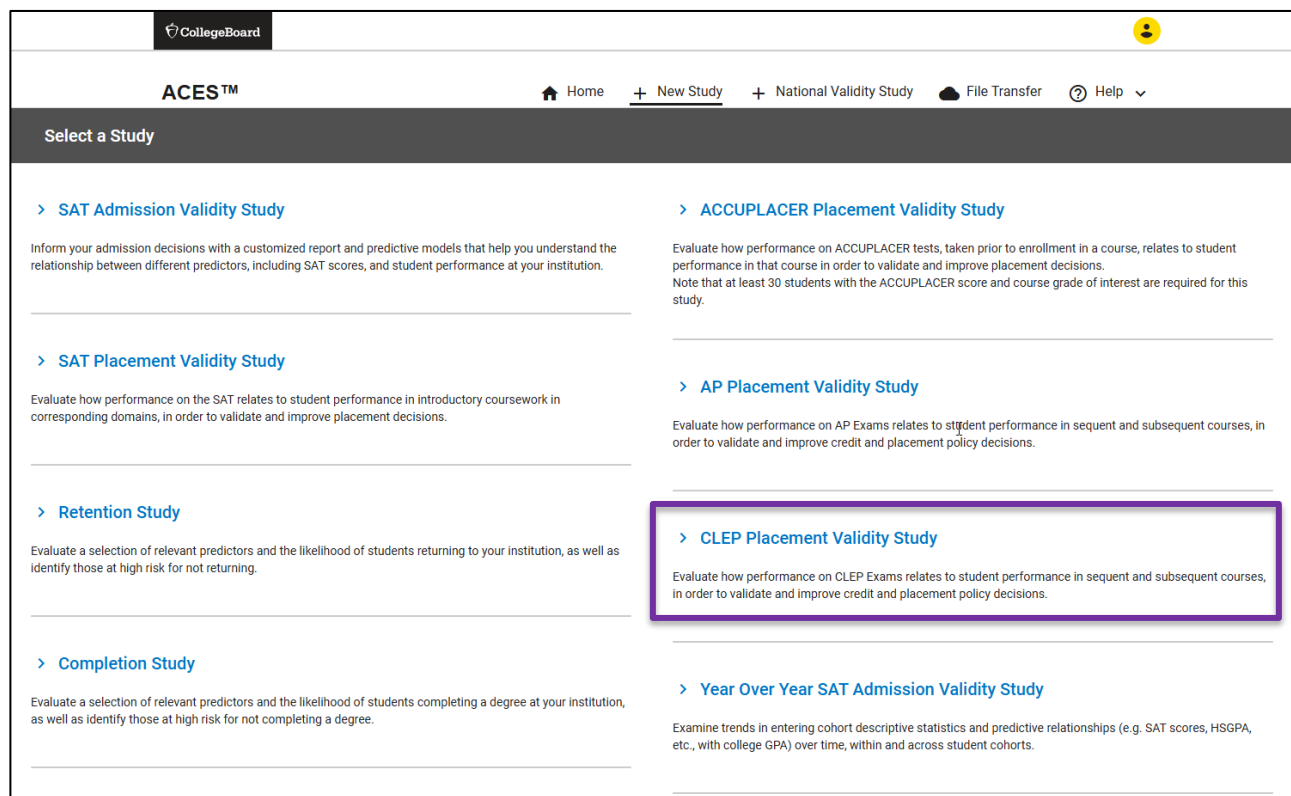
3. Click on “RESET PASSWORD.”
4. Open password reset link via email.
5. Create and confirm a new password.
  - Remember your password must contain at least eight characters, one uppercase letter, one number and one symbol.
6. Login with your new password on the login page.

## 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

What was the name of your elementary school?

2

What was your grandfather's (on your mother's side) first name?

What was the first name of your favorite childhood friend?

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**. **KEEP THIS KEY FOR YOUR RECORDS.** 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:

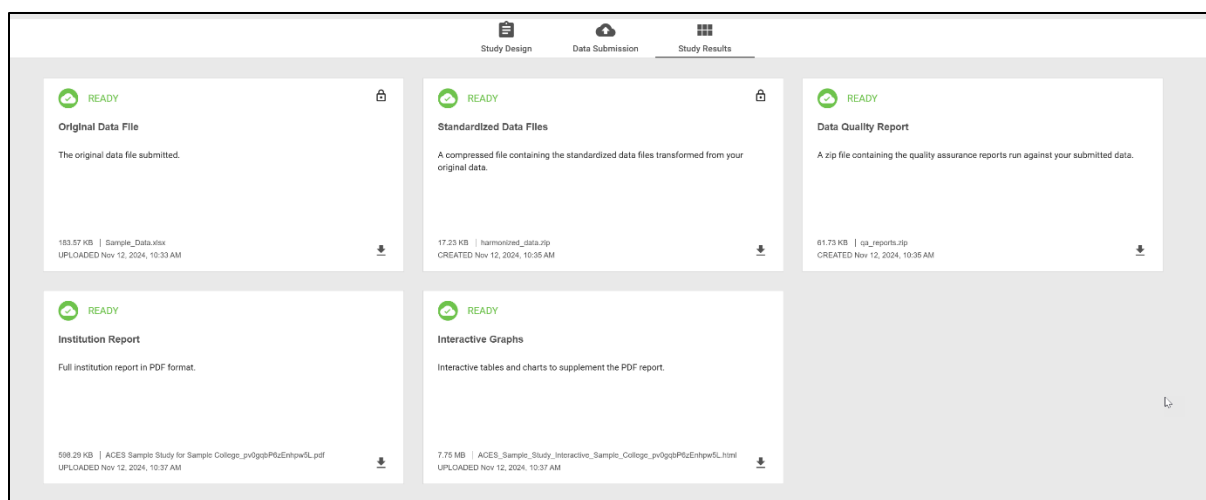
odLDbgGZ4YW

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.



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.

The screenshot shows the 'Password' and 'Security' sections of the ACES user interface. A modal window titled 'Security Questions' is open, requiring the user to answer two questions to reset their encryption key.

**Security Questions Modal:**

- Title:** Security Questions
- Instruction:** In order to reset your encryption key, you must first answer your security questions. Please submit your answers below.
- Question 1:** What is the zip code where you grew up? Answer \*
- Question 2:** What was your favorite vacation place as a child? Answer \*
- Buttons:** Close, Submit Answers

**Background Page:**

- Header:** ACES™, Home, + New Study, + National Validity Study, Search, Study History, File Transfer
- Section: Password**
  - Change your password
- Section: Security**
  - Reset your encryption key
  - RESET** button

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.

Study Information

Provide a custom name and optional secondary contacts for this study.

Study Name  
Give this study a unique name to distinguish it from other similar studies.

2022 CLEP Placement Validity Study

Secondary Contacts (optional)  
You will be automatically notified when your study is complete. If desired, include any colleagues you would also like notified of study completion. This will simply be a notification email; results will only be shared with you.

Full Name \*

E-mail address \*

Add Secondary Contact

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.

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.

New Data Existing Data

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.

+ BEGIN X

Start Data Submission

2022 CLEP Placement Validity Study  
Data

→

If you want to change your data submission, remove it and select a new one.

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

1

Submission Information

Provide a name and description for your data submission.

Data Submission Title \*

2022 CLEP Placement Validity Study Data

Description

- 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.

2

Institution Grade Mapping

Describe how grades for course work will be formatted in your data. After you complete this, the information will be used for future data submissions. You can update this at anytime if necessary.

Please tell us the format you will use to submit grades and the GPA range your institution uses.

Submitted Grade Format

Letter values

Example: A+, B-, C, F, W, I

Institution GPA Range

GPA value on a scale of 0 ~ 4.5

Examples: A=4.0, B=3.0, C=2.0, D=1.0, F=0.0

Please complete the following table. Default values have been provided, you may modify as needed.

Submitted value	Standard value	GPA value
A+	Grade *	4.33
A	Grade *	4
A-	Grade *	3.67

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

How is the year formatted in the coursework terms you will submit in your data?

Note: academic year refers to the school year the term occurs in (e.g. both Fall and Spring terms for the 2017-2018 school year, will use only one or both of 2017/2018). Calendar year refers to the actual year the term takes place (e.g. for the 2017-2018 school year Fall will use 2017, Spring will use 2018).

Which year is used in your data  
Calendar year ▼

How is the year formatted  
4 digit calendar year ▼

Fall 2017, Spring 2018

The actual year the term starts.

The examples above, based on a 2017-2018 year, are for illustration purposes only. You may spell your terms differently (e.g. FA,SP).

How many full terms do most students typically enroll?

☒ 2 (e.g. Fall and Spring)

- often referred to as semesters
- full terms are about 16 weeks
- a 3rd term (e.g. Summer) may be offered
- sessions may be offered within terms (e.g. 8 week courses)
- mini-terms may be offered between main terms (e.g. 4 week December term between Fall and Spring)

☐ 3 (e.g. Fall, Winter, and Spring)

- often referred to as quarters
- full terms are about 12 weeks
- a 4th term (e.g. Summer) may be offered
- sessions may be offered within terms (e.g. 6 week courses)
- mini-terms may be offered between main terms (e.g. 4 week May term between Spring and Summer)

☐ Other

This is not typical. Most calendars can be described using the first two options and utilizing the supported sessions and mini-terms

- 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.

4 Data File Upload

To initiate your submission, please upload your data file. Consult the ACES Data Submission Guide for information on how to prepare your data.

[Download Excel Template](#)

Contact us or use the discussion feature if you need technical assistance.

Drag and drop your files  
Or, if you prefer...

CHOOSE A FILE TO UPLOAD

4 Data File Upload

To initiate your submission, please upload your data file. Consult the ACES Data Submission Guide for information on how to prepare your data.

[Download Excel Template](#)

Contact us or use the discussion feature if you need technical assistance.

Clep.xlsx X

- 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.

**5 Identifiers**  
Variables that uniquely identify individual students within and across institutions.

1 of 1 Required Fields Mapped

Data Element	Data Source
student_id	✓ 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](#).

**7 College Coursework**  
Variables holding the students course work, grades, and related information.

4 Mapped (4/4 Required)

Data Source	Data Element
course_code	✓ Course Code*
course_title	✓ Course Title*
course_term	✓ Course Term*
24/24 have been mapped <a href="#">View Mappings</a>	
Select Column	Course Other Pathway Flag
course_grade	✓ Course Grade*
14/14 have been mapped <a href="#">View Mappings</a>	

- 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.**

8
Unmapped Variables

Unmapped Variables (0)

No unmapped variables found.

Add to Passthrough

- 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.

11
Finalize Data Submission

✓
Data Mapping
All data mappings are complete.

✗
Quality Assurance
Once all sections above are complete, you will be able to submit data submission for quality assurance analysis.

✗
Load Data Submission
Once all quality assurance errors have been fixed, if any, you will be able to load your data.

When data mappings are complete, you will be able to analyze your data submission to produce a quality assurance report.

Perform Quality Assurance

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

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
Once all quality assurance errors have been fixed, if any, you will be able to load your data.

Once all sections above are complete you will be able to load your data submission to the data warehouse.

Load Data Submission

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

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.

Study Design      Data Submission      Study Results

2 of 2 Options Selected

History & Social Sciences	Composition & Literature	Science & Mathematics	Business
<input type="checkbox"/> American Government	<input type="checkbox"/> American Literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biology	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Accounting
<input type="checkbox"/> History of the United States I	<input type="checkbox"/> Analyzing and Interpreting Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Calculus	<input type="checkbox"/> Information Systems
<input type="checkbox"/> History of the United States II	<input type="checkbox"/> College Composition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chemistry	<input type="checkbox"/> Introductory Business Law
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Growth and Development	<input type="checkbox"/> College Composition Modular	<input type="checkbox"/> College Algebra	<input type="checkbox"/> Principles of Management
<input type="checkbox"/> Introduction to Educational Psychology	<input type="checkbox"/> English Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> College Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/> Principles of Marketing
<input type="checkbox"/> Introductory Psychology	<input type="checkbox"/> Humanities	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Sciences	
<input type="checkbox"/> Introductory Sociology		<input type="checkbox"/> Precalculus	
<input type="checkbox"/> 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**

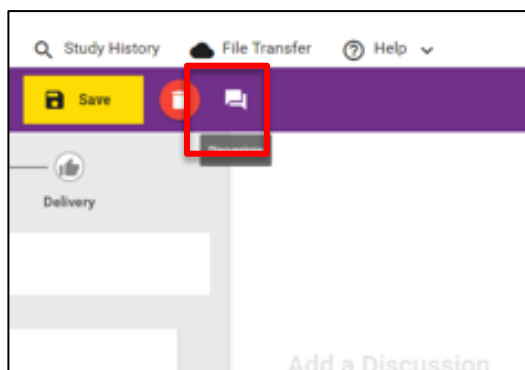
7. In the Parallel Group Analysis section, you can indicate with a check whether or not you would like to evaluate the performance of an “other” group of students in the placed courses along with the performance of students who entered through CLEP credit or through taking the credited courses(s). In 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

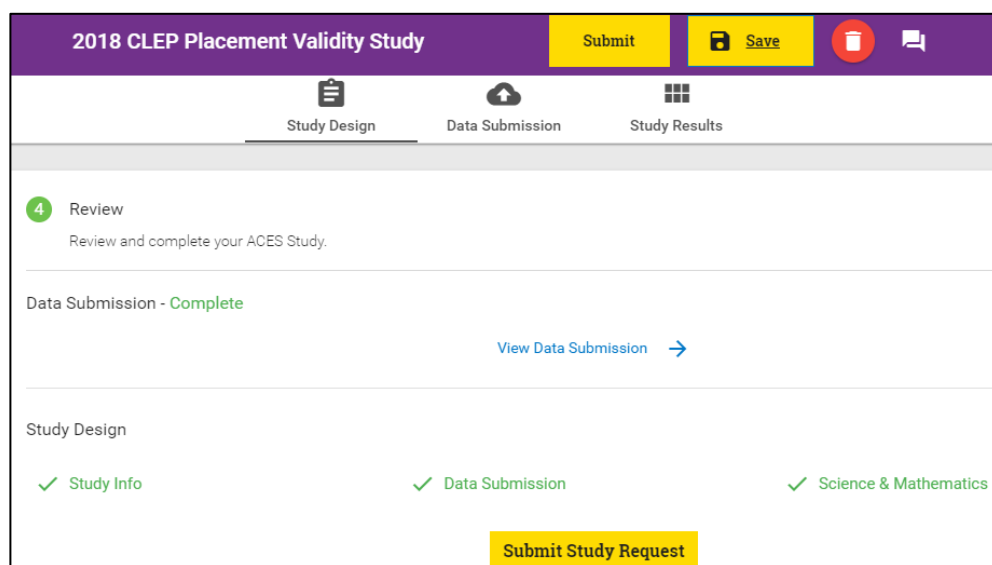
Would you like to evaluate the performance of an “other” group of students in the placed courses along with the performance of students who entered through CLEP credit or through taking the credited course(s)? If you select this, your course level data must include a flag indicating the students in this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

☒ Analyze Parallel Group

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.”

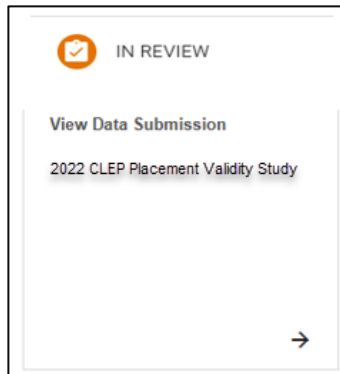


10. You will receive an email when your study request has been reviewed and the analysis has begun. It will take approximately 20 business days to complete your study.

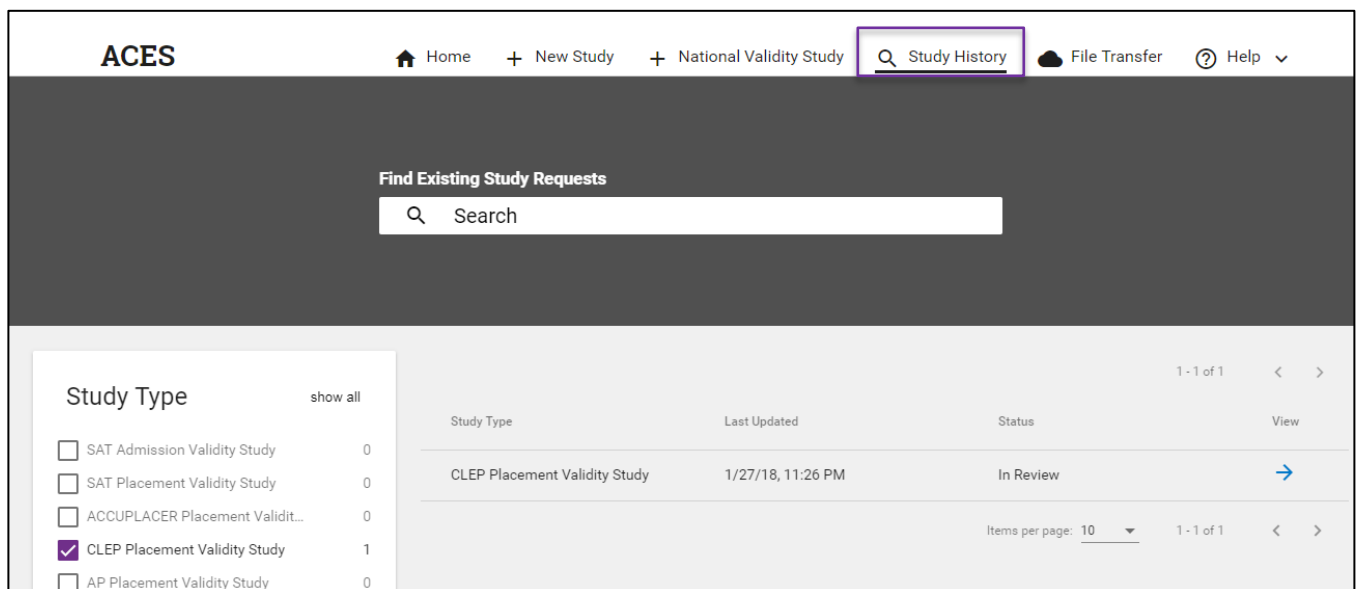


## Check Study Request Status

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

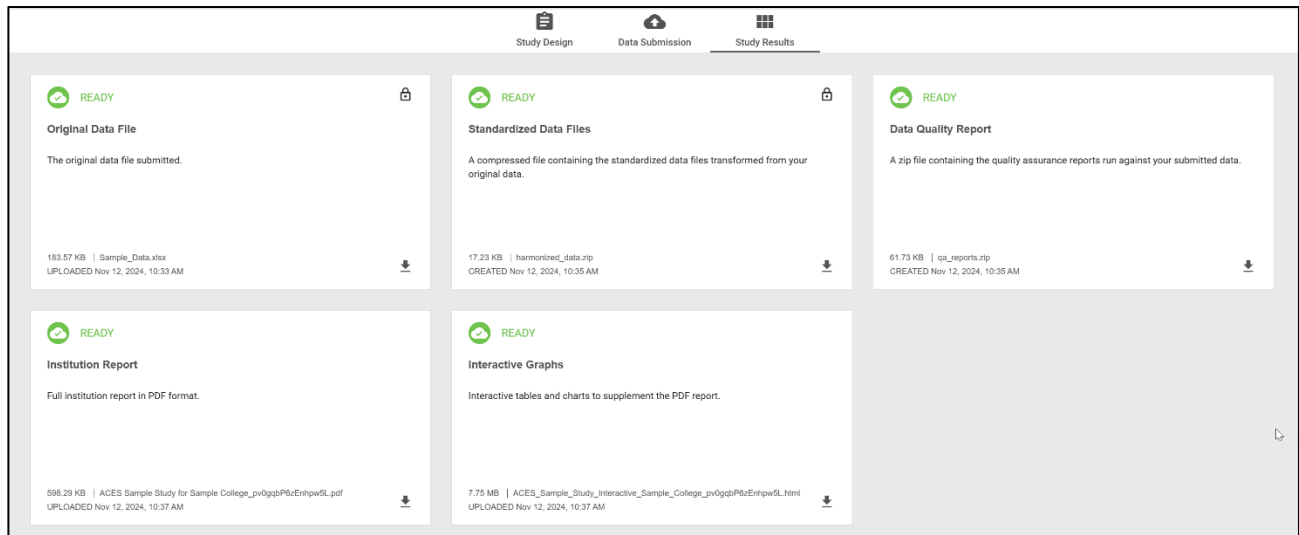


2. For information about previously submitted studies, navigate to the “Study History” tab in the top navigation bar.
3. Select the study to see the status. To filter the list, use the “Study Type” module on the left side.



## 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.



## ACES Technical Support

**Support email:** [aces-collegeboard@norc.org](mailto:aces-collegeboard@norc.org)

**Support telephone:** 1-800-439-8309

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

**General information:** [collegeboard.org/aces](https://collegeboard.org/aces)