ACES (Admitted Class Evaluation Service™)

CLEP® Placement Validity Study

Detailed Documentation

April 2022

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Overview of an CLEP Placement Validity Study

College Board ACES™ (Admitted Class Evaluation Service) CLEP Placement Validity studies are designed to assist institutions in evaluating the success of their CLEP policies for placing students in higher-level courses. To assess whether a particular policy for granting CLEP credit is working as intended, a CLEP study compares the performance of students who entered a higher-level course through CLEP credit for the introductory course(s) with the performance of students who entered the higher-level course by completing the introductory course(s) at their institution. A CLEP study may also include an "other" group of students who qualified for entry into the higher-level course through a "parallel" path, such as dual enrollment, if an institution chooses to include such a group in the comparison. Grades in the higher-level course serve as the measure of student performance in the statistical comparison of the groups.

A key step in preparing the data for a CLEP study is the assignment of students to comparison groups. While the assignment of students to an "other" group is primarily based on an indicator provided by the institution in the data submission, the assignment of students to all other comparison groups is inferred from a student's course-taking record and score(s) on the CLEP Exam(s) as they relate to the institution's policy for granting CLEP credit and entry into the higher-level course of interest.

In addition to performing a statistical comparison among the comparison groups, a CLEP study provides descriptive information on how well students with and without CLEP credit for the introductory course(s) performed in the higher-level course, along with the number and percent of students in each comparison group who earned a grade of C- or higher in the higher-level course. For students who entered the higher-level course through CLEP credit, the study presents a frequency distribution of their CLEP Exam scores. It also provides descriptive statistics for grades in the higher-level course by the background characteristics of the students in each comparison group if the institution provided background information in the data file submitted to the ACES system.

Sources of Information

The programming procedure relies on two sources of information to perform a CLEP study:

- the placement policy (or policies) specified by the institution, and
- the data file submitted by the institution that includes student course records, scores on the CLEP Exam(s) of interest, and other student-level information.

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Placement Policies

The ACES system collects information on an institution's placement policies in the Study Design component of the CLEP user interface. The policy specifications lay out the various ways a student may qualify to enter a higher-level course, referred to as paths of entry elsewhere in this document and in the *CLEP Placement Validity Report* prepared for an institution. A single CLEP placement policy may apply to more than one higher-level course if the paths for entering the higher-level courses are the same. To be the same, the paths must involve the same CLEP Exam(s), the same introductory course(s), and the same range of CLEP Exam scores to qualify for CLEP credit for the introductory course(s). An institution may request an evaluation of up to three higher-level courses in a single policy. The programming procedure iterates through the higher-level courses, generating a separate set of results for each higher-level course specified in the policy. An institution may also request the evaluation of more than policy in a single CLEP study submission to the ACES system. The programming procedure iterates through the policies in the order they are entered into the Study Design. Currently there is no limit on the number of policies that may be specified in a single submission.

Specifying a Policy

For each policy of interest, the institution must specify:

- The CLEP Exam(s) used to place a student in the higher-level course(s). A policy may include two CLEP Exams if scores on the exams are interchangeable. Two exams are interchangeable if CLEP credit for the introductory course(s) may be earned with the same qualifying score on either exam.
- The introductory course(s) a student must complete, or earn CLEP credit for, to qualify for entry into the higher-level course(s). A single policy may include up to four introductory courses.
- The range of CLEP scores that qualify a student for CLEP credit for the introductory course(s).
- The higher-level course(s) a student may enter (be placed in) with CLEP credit, by completing the introductory course(s), or through a "parallel" path. A single policy may include up to three higher-level courses, also referred to as placed courses.
- Whether students can earn credit for the introductory course(s) through a "parallel" path.

The specifications for each policy are entered into a set of three sections in the user interface. The first section in the sequence, the *Exam Analysis* section, is organized by subject matter and asks the institution to select the CLEP Exam(s) covered in the particular policy. Exams that may be selected for a policy are limited to the Exam fields included in the institution's data submission. The *Exam Analysis* section activates the checkboxes corresponding to those exams. The data submission associated with the *Exam Analysis* section shown below includes scores on two CLEP Exams, *College*

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Algebra and *Precalculus*. Thus the checkboxes for those exams are activated and the user may check one or both of those boxes, depending on whether the exams are interchangeable for the particular policy being specified. If a policy involves two interchangeable exams, the user interface performs a validity check to ensure that the exams are selected under the same subject matter.

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The second section in the policy specification sequence, the *Course Placement* section, is activated in parts as the institution fills in the requested information. As shown below, the section begins by asking the institution to specify the range of CLEP Exam scores— the minimum (*Min Score*) and the maximum (*Max Score*) Exam scores—that qualify a student to enter the higher-level course(s) with CLEP credit for the introductory course(s).

Once the minimum and maximum CLEP Exam scores have been entered (60 and 80, respectively, in the example below), *the Add Placement* box is activated as shown below.

After the *Add Placement* box is selected, the *Course Placement* section asks the institution to select from the drop-down menus the *Credited Course(s)* and the *Placed Course(s)* to which the policy applies. The *Credited Course(s)* refer to the introductory course(s) that a student must complete (or earn CLEP credit for) to gain entry into the *Placed Course(s)*, also referred to as higher-level course(s). The *Single Course Credit* checkbox serves to identify policies in which a student can choose to complete either one of two introductory courses to gain entry into the higher-level course(s) (see the discussion of *One of Two Introductory Courses)*. Note that the expanded section includes a *Trash bin*, allowing the user to remove a previously entered range of CLEP

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Exam scores and return to the *New Exam Placement* box to enter a new range of scores.

The third and final section in the policy specification sequence, *Parallel Group Analysis*, asks the institution to indicate whether it would like to include a "parallel" group in the comparison of students who entered the higher-level course(s). If this option is selected, the data file must include an "other" flag identifying those students who entered the higher-level course(s) through a "parallel" path.

Specifying More than One Policy

The policy specification sequence is followed by the *Add Another Analysis* section. The button on this section allows the institution to indicate whether it wishes to analyze another CLEP policy in its submission to the ACES system. When this option is selected, the user interface generates a fresh set of the *Exam Analysis*, *Course Placement*, and *Parallel Group Analysis* sections, asking the institution to enter the specifications for the policy.

Types of Policies

While the ACES system accommodates a range of placement policies, it is not designed to cover all possibilities. It focuses on policies requiring a student to complete or earn CLEP credit for *One Introductory Course* and *One of Two Introductory courses*, and on policies requiring a student to complete (or earn credit for) two, three, or four introductory courses in any order (referred to collectively as policies involving *Unordered Multiple Introductory Courses*). The system is also capable of handling the special case of *Tiered Introductory Courses* in which a student is required to complete or earn CLEP credit for a sequence of introductory courses in a preset order. Note that for any given policy, a student must complete all of the required introductory courses at their institution, or earn CLEP credit for all of the required courses to be included in a CLEP Placement study of that policy. The only exception to this rule is when an institution opts to include a group of students who qualify for entry into the higher-level course through a "parallel" path.

All types of policies may include one CLEP exam or two interchangeable CLEP exams, up to three higher-level courses, and a "parallel" path for entry into the higher-level course(s). In all cases, an institution must specify the CLEP Exam(s) and the range of CLEP scores that qualify a student for CLEP credit for the introductory course(s) before being asked to select the courses that pertain to the policy. Note that the discussion of types of policies that follows begins at the point in the specification process where an institution is asked to identify the courses covered in the policy.

One Introductory Course. This type of policy requires a student to complete (or earn CLEP credit for) one introductory course to enter the higher-level course(s). To specify a policy of this type, the title of the introductory course is selected from the *Credited Course(s)* drop-down menu and the titles of up to three higher-level courses are selected from the *Placed Course(s)* dropdown menu. The example below shows that a student must complete Precalculus, or obtain a score of at least 50 on the CLEP Exam, to gain entry into Business Calc. (Note that the range of qualifying CLEP Exam scores entered earlier as part of the policy specification process automatically appears on the *Course Placement* display.)

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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.

Score	Credited Course(s)	Placed Course(s)
50 - 80	Select 1 to 4 courses.	Select 1 to 3 courses.
	Courses	Courses
	PRECALCULUS ▼	BUSINESS CALC ▼ 🗑
	☐ Single Course Credit	

One of Two Introductory Courses. This type of policy also requires a student to complete (or earn CLEP credit for) one introductory course to enter the higher-level course(s). It differs from the *One Introductory Course* policy in that a student can choose to complete either one of two introductory courses to gain entry into higher-level course(s). In this case, two introductory courses are selected from the *Credited Courses(s)* drop-down menu and the *Single Course Credit* box is checked to indicate that only one of the two introductory courses is required to qualify for entry into the higher-level course(s). In the example below, the *Single Course Credit* box is checked to indicate that a student must complete Precalculus *or* Intro College Math, or obtain a score of at least 50 on the CLEP Exam, to qualify for entry into Business Calc.

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.

Score	Credited Course(s)	Placed Course(s)
50 - 80	Select 1 to 4 courses.	Select 1 to 3 courses.
	Courses	Courses
	PRECALCULUS, INTRO C... ▼	BUSINESS CALC ▼ 🗑
	☑ Single Course Credit	

Note that the titles of the selected Credited Courses are not displayed in full on the screen, but may be viewed in full in the *Credited Course(s)* drop-down menu as shown

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below. The same holds true when more than one higher-level course is selected from the Placed Course(s) drop-down menu as is the case in the examples that follow.

Unordered Multiple Introductory Courses. This type of policy requires a student to complete (or earn CLEP credit for) multiple introductory courses to enter the higher-level course(s). The introductory courses in these policies may be completed in any order. To specify a policy of this type, two, three, or four introductory courses are selected from the *Credited Course(s)* drop-down menu and up to three higher-level courses are selected from the *Placed Course(s)* drop-down menu. The example below shows that a student must complete two introductory courses, Precalculus *and* Intro College Math, or obtain a score of at least 60 on the CLEP Exam, to gain entry into College Trig or Business Calc. Note that the *Single Course Credit* box is *not* checked in this case, indicating that a student must complete both introductory courses (or earn a qualifying CLEP Exam score) to enter either one of the two higher-level courses. Also note that the system will generate a separate set of results for each higher-level course.

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Tiered Introductory Courses. In some cases, especially those involving world languages, the introductory courses may be tiered requiring a student to complete or earn CLEP credit for the introductory course at the bottom level of the tier to qualify for entry into the introductory course at the next level of the tier and so on for each level in the tier. If the range of CLEP Exam scores for placing students at different levels in the tier do not overlap, the sequence of introductory courses can be broken down into a set of policies in which the introductory course at each level of the tier serves as the higher-level course for the introductory course(s) preceding it in the tier. The policies for granting CLEP credit for the introductory courses can then be evaluated in a series of placement studies that compare the performance of students who entered a course by completing all of the preceding courses to the performance of students who entered the course through CLEP credit for all of the preceding courses.

The displays below show how a tiered set of courses can be broken down into placement studies to evaluate the success of the policies for placing students in courses at different levels in the tier based on their scores on the CLEP Exam(s). In this example, the tier consists of two introductory courses, Intro College Math and Precalculus, and one higher-level course, College Trig, sequenced in that order. To evaluate the policy for placing students in Precalculus, Intro College Math (the only introductory course that precedes Precalculus in the sequence of courses) is selected from the Credited Course(s) drop-down menu and Precalculus is selected from the Placed Course(s) drop-down menu. To evaluate the policy for placing students in College Trig, Intro College Math and Precalculus (the only two introductory courses that precede College Trig in the sequence of courses) are selected from the Credited Course(s) drop-down menu, and College Trig is selected from the Placed Course(s) drop-down menu. Note that the score ranges for awarding CLEP credit for Intro College Math and for Intro College Math and Precalculus do not overlap. Also note that the same procedure may be applied to tiered sets of three and four introductory courses and generalized to cases in which a level in the tier consists of more than one introductory course.

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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.

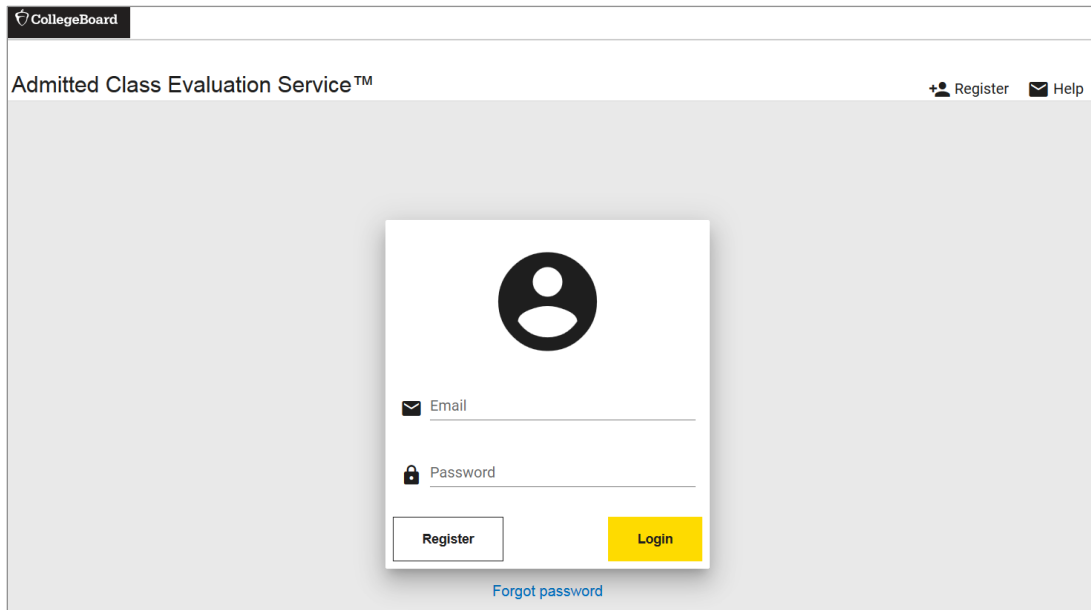| Score	Credited Course(s)	Placed Course(s)
50 - 59	Select 1 to 4 courses.	Select 1 to 3 courses.
	Courses	Courses
	INTRO COLLEGE MATH ▾	PRECALCULUS ▾ 🗑
	☐ Single Course Credit	

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.

Score	Credited Course(s)	Placed Course(s)
60 - 80	Select 1 to 4 courses.	Select 1 to 3 courses.
	Courses	Courses
	PRECALCULUS, INTRO C... ▾	COLLEGE TRIG ▾ 🗑
	☐ Single Course Credit	

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)).

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

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  b. *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.

  a. 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.

  a. Your password must be at least eight characters and contain at least one number, uppercase letter, and symbol (!, ?, @, *).

Password Reset

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

Login with your new password.

Logging In

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

2. Enter your registered email and password.

3. Click "LOGIN."

Creating a Study

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

3. 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. Consider sample size and other study requirements:

    - a minimum of 15 students whose CLEP scores and course-taking records indicate that they entered the higher-level course with CLEP credit

    - a minimum of 15 students without CLEP credit whose course-taking records indicate that they entered the higher-level course by completing the required introductory CLEP-equivalent course(s) at your institution.

    c. Upload the following data elements using the data template and design your study:

    - identifying information on the students in your sample as well as data on the CLEP credit and placement policy at your institution, data on the predictors (e.g., students' CLEP scores or course grades in courses for which your institution offers CLEP credit) and data on the criterion (e.g., their final grade in the relevant course at your institution).

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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