

UPDATE ON EQUITABLE PLACEMENT IN CALIFORNIA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES (AB 705, 2017)

California's landmark AB 705 legislation requires community colleges to recognize high school coursework instead of relying on inaccurate and inequitable placement tests, and to place students into English and math classes where they have the greatest chance to make progress toward a college degree.

"AB 705 is a cornerstone of our push to improve outcomes for all students, in particular students who have been left behind for decades."

–CA Community Colleges Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley

UNPRECEDENTED GAINS IN FIRST YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION



Increased access to transferable, college-level courses produced unprecedented completion gains



The percentage of students completing transfer-level math and English on their first attempt doubled over fall 2015



All racial/ethnic groups have 20+ percentage points higher completion in one term. Black and Latinx students' completion of transfer-level math quadrupled



Every group examined has increased completion, including low-income students, foster youth, veterans, students with disabilities & students with low high school GPAs

COREQUISITE SUPPORT BETTER THAN REMEDIAL COURSES



Under AB 705, many colleges began eliminating remedial courses and providing underprepared students additional support in transfer-level classes, an approach called corequisite remediation



The result? Students in corequisites completed transferable courses at rates 30+ percentage points higher in one term than students who started in a remedial course did in a year

As the state recovers from the COVID pandemic, colleges must address any potential learning loss with corequisite support, not remedial courses.

"Getting stuck in remedial classes predicts academic failure. Students must pay for the classes but don't earn any credits towards a bachelor's degree....starting in a remedial class makes them less likely to earn a degree."

– Andrew Nickens, Student Senate for CA Community Colleges

UNEVEN, INEQUITABLE IMPLEMENTATION

“The campus a student attends continues to play a critical role in whether or not a student gets access to transfer-level math.”

–Public Policy Institute of California

Implementation of AB 705 varies widely, particularly in math. Some colleges have eliminated or dramatically reduced remedial math. At others, schedules remain packed with remedial sections. This is especially true at colleges with 2,000+ Black students. Every college saw completion gains after AB 705, but the size of the gains varied, driven largely by something within colleges’ immediate control: the extent to which they expanded students’ enrollment in transfer-level courses.

Enrolling students in remedial courses – even if voluntary – lowers student completion and drives racial inequity.

AB 705 STANDARD

Colleges must place students in courses where they have the greatest chance of completing transfer-level English & math.

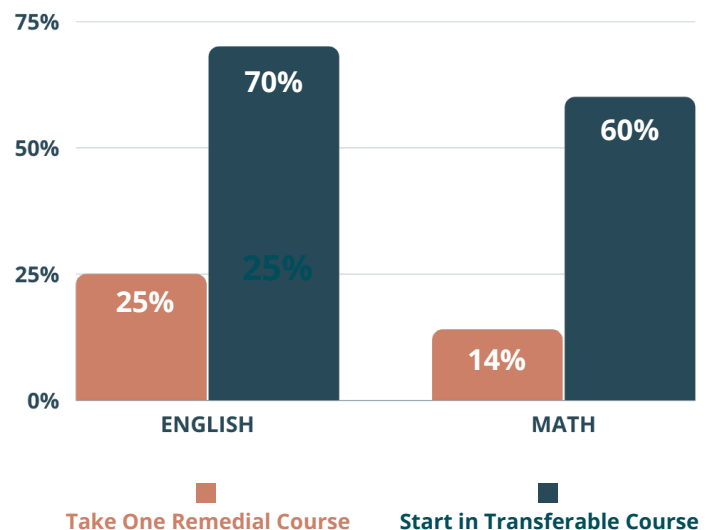
Exceptions granted for ESL and some certificate and associate degree programs



22% of students began in remedial math in fall 2019, and they were disproportionately Black & Latinx. Enrolling students in these courses does not meet the AB 705 standard

COMPLETION OF TRANSFERABLE COURSE IN 1 YEAR

2019 - 2020



“If there is one kid - one aspiring kid in this state who has a dream of college, who gets put into a remedial course when they don’t need to be there – that’s too many.”

– Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis

THE INADVERTENT LOOPHOLE

A few words in AB 705 are driving low and inequitable completion systemwide. Under the law, colleges must meet rigorous standards to **require** remedial courses, but they continue to enroll students in these classes regardless of the standards. **Because colleges continue to actively steer students into courses that undermine their progress, this small but critical loophole must be closed.**