Subchapter 6. Matriculation Programs

Article I. Scope and Definitions

55500. Scope and Implementation.

(a) This chapter implements and should be read in conjunction with the provisions of the Seymour-Campbell Matriculation Act of 1986, Statutes 1986, chapter 1467, codified as Education Code sections 78210, et seq. The purpose of this subchapter is to further equality of educational opportunity and success for all students in the California Community Colleges.

(b) The requirements of this subchapter apply only to districts receiving funds pursuant to Education Code section 78216 for the period of time during which such funds are received.


55502. Definitions.

For purposes of this subchapter, the following definitions shall apply:

(a) “Matriculation” means a process that brings a college and an enrolled student into an agreement for the purpose of realizing the student’s educational goal through the college’s established programs, policies, and requirements. This agreement is to be implemented by means of the student’s individual educational plan developed pursuant to section 55525.

(b) “Assessment” means the process of gathering information about individual students to facilitate student success. Assessment shall include, but is not limited to, information regarding the student’s study skills, English language proficiency, computational skills, aptitudes, goals, learning skills, career aspirations, academic performance, and need for special services. Assessment involves the collection of such information at any time before or after enrollment, except that the process by which an instructor assigns a grade or otherwise evaluates the extent to which a student has achieved the objectives of a course shall not be considered part of the assessment process. Once a grade has been assigned and recorded on a student’s transcript, it can be used in the assessment process.

(c) “Assessment instruments, methods, or procedures” means one or more assessment instruments, assessment methods, or assessment procedures, or any combination thereof. These include, but are not limited to, interviews, standardized tests, holistic scoring processes, attitude surveys, vocational or career aptitude and interest inventories, high school or college transcripts, specialized certificates or licenses, educational histories and other measures of performance. The term “assessment instruments, methods, or procedures” also includes assessment procedures such as the identification of test scores which measure particular skill levels, the administrative process by which students are referred for assessment, the manner in which assessment sessions are conducted, the manner in which assessment results are made available, and the length of time required before such results are available. The term “assessment instrument” does not include a test which is used solely to determine whether a student who has formally challenged a prerequisite or corequisite pursuant to subdivision (m)(4) of section 55003 has the knowledge or ability to succeed in a course or program despite not meeting the prerequisite or corequisite.

(d) “Disproportionate impact” occurs when the percentage of persons from a particular racial, ethnic, gender, age or disability group who are directed to a particular service or placement based on an assessment instrument, method, or procedure is significantly different from the representation of that group in the population of persons being assessed, and that discrepancy is not justified by empirical evidence demonstrating that the assessment instrument, method or procedure is a valid and reliable predictor of performance in the relevant educational setting.
(e) “Exemption” means waiving or deferring a student’s participation in orientation, assessment, counseling, or advisement required pursuant to subdivisions (b), (c), and (f) of section 55520.

(f) “Matriculation services” are those services listed in section 55520.

(g) “Matriculation practices” means one or more instruments, methods, or procedures, or any combination thereof, used in providing any of the matriculation services listed in section 55520.

(h) “Orientation” is a process which acquaints students and potential students with college programs, services, facilities and grounds, academic expectations, and institutional procedures.

(i) “Student follow-up” is the process of monitoring a student’s progress toward his or her educational goals and providing the student with appropriate advice based on the results of such monitoring.


55510. Matriculation Plans.

(a) Each community college district shall adopt a matriculation plan describing the services to be provided to its students. The plan shall include, but not be limited to:

(1) a description of the methods by which required services will be delivered;

(2) the district’s budget for matriculation;

(3) plans for faculty and staff development;

(4) computerized information services and institutional research and evaluation necessary to implement this subchapter;

(5) criteria for exempting students from participation in the matriculation process;

(6) procedures for establishing and periodically reviewing prerequisites pursuant to section 55003;

(7) procedures for considering student challenges to prerequisites established pursuant to section 55003; and

(8) in districts with more than one college, arrangements for coordination by the district of the matriculation plans of its various colleges.

(b) The plan shall be developed through consultation with representatives of the academic senate, students, and staff with appropriate expertise, pursuant to section 51023 et seq.

(c) Such plans shall conform to the requirements of this subchapter and shall be submitted to the Chancellor for review and approval. The Chancellor may require periodic updates of such plans.

55512. Evaluation and Audits.

(a) Each community college district shall establish a program of institutional research for ongoing evaluation of its matriculation process to ensure compliance with the requirements of this subchapter.

As part of this evaluation, all assessment instruments, methods or procedures shall be evaluated to ensure that they minimize or eliminate cultural or linguistic bias and are being used in a valid manner. Based on this evaluation, districts shall determine whether any assessment instrument, method or procedure has a disproportionate impact on particular groups of students described in terms of ethnicity, gender, age or disability, as defined by the Chancellor. When there is a disproportionate impact on any such group of students, the district shall, in consultation with the Chancellor, develop and implement a plan setting forth the steps the district will take to correct the disproportionate impact. The evaluation shall include, but not be limited to, an analysis of the degree to which the matriculation program:

(1) impacts on particular courses, programs, and facilities;

(2) helps students to define their educational goals;

(3) promotes student success, as evidenced by outcome and retention data such as student persistence, goal attainment, skill improvement, and grades;

(4) assists the district in the assessment of students' educational needs;

(5) matches district resources with students' educational needs; and

(6) provides students with the support services described in section 55520(g).

(b) Each district shall also, as part of its annual financial audit, provide for a review of the revenue and expenditures of the matriculation program.

(c) The Chancellor shall establish a system for evaluation of the matriculation program on a statewide basis, including procedures for monitoring compliance with the requirements of this subchapter.


55514. Data Collection.

Each community college district shall submit an annual report describing the district's efforts to implement its matriculation plan and expenditures made for that purpose. In this report, or through the established management information system or otherwise, the data to be collected for evaluation purposes pursuant to Education Code section 78214 and section 55512 of this subchapter. Such data shall specifically include, but is not limited to, the information necessary to permit the Chancellor to determine the following:

(a) the proportion of students from various ethnic, gender, age or disability groups, as defined by the Chancellor, who are placed in nondegree-applicable credit courses, degree-applicable credit courses, or transfer level courses in reading, writing, computation or English as a Second Language.

(b) the proportion of students from various ethnic, gender, age or disability groups, as defined by the Chancellor, who enter and complete nondegree-applicable basic skills courses.
(c) The proportion of students from various ethnic, gender, age or disability groups, as defined by the Chancellor, completing nondegree-applicable basic skills courses who subsequently enter and complete degree-applicable credit courses;

(d) outcome and retention data, as described in section 55512(a), indicating the effectiveness of matriculation;

(e) the basis on which the use of particular assessment instruments, methods or procedures was validated by a district;

(f) the numbers of students exempted, pursuant to section 55532, from participation in the district's matriculation program, by category of exemption;

(g) the number of students filing complaints pursuant to section 55534 and the bases of those complaints;

(h) the particular matriculation services, as listed in section 55520, which each student received; and

(i) any other matter the Chancellor, after consultation with community college districts, deems necessary for the effective evaluation of matriculation programs.


55516. Training and Staff Development.

Each community college district shall develop and implement a program for providing all faculty and staff with training appropriate to their needs on the provision of matriculation services, including but not limited to, the proper purpose, design, evaluation, and use of assessment instruments, methods or procedures, as well as their limitations and possible misuse.


55518. Funding.

(a) The Chancellor shall adopt a funding formula, consistent with the requirements of this section, for allocating matriculation funds to community college districts complying with the requirements of this subchapter.

(b) Each dollar of state matriculation funding shall be matched by three dollars of other district resources devoted to the matriculation program.


Article 3. Matriculation Services

55520. Required Services.

At a minimum, each community college district shall provide students, except as exempted pursuant to section 55532, with all of the following matriculation services:

(a) the processing of applications for admission;
(b) orientation and pre-orientation services designed to provide nonexempt students and potential students, on a timely basis, information concerning college procedures and course scheduling, academic expectations, financial assistance, and any other matters the college or district finds appropriate;

(c) assessment for all nonexempt students pursuant to section 55524;

(d) counseling or advisement for nonexempt students pursuant to section 55523;

(e) assistance in developing a student educational plan pursuant to section 55525, which identifies the student's educational objectives and the courses, services, and programs to be used to achieve them;

(f) post enrollment evaluation, pursuant to section 55526, of each student's progress; and

(g) referral of students to:

(1) support services which may be available, including, but not limited to, counseling, financial aid, health services, campus employment placement services, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, campus child care services, tutorial services, and Disabled Students Programs and Services; and

(2) specialized curriculum offerings including but not limited to, pre-collegiate basic skills courses and programs in English as a Second Language.

Last amended July 6, 1990.

55521. Prohibited Practices.

(a) In implementing matriculation services, community college districts shall not, except as provided in subdivision (b), do any of the following:

(1) use an assessment instrument which has not been approved by the Chancellor pursuant to section 55524, except that the Chancellor may permit limited field-testing, under specified conditions, of new or alternative assessment instruments, where such instruments are not used for placement and are evaluated only in order to determine whether they should be added to the list of approved instruments;

(2) use any assessment instrument in a manner or for a purpose other than that for which it was developed or has been otherwise validated;

(3) use any single assessment instrument, method or procedure, by itself, for placement, required referral to appropriate services, or subsequent evaluation of any student; provided however that, in the case of assessment instruments, the use of two or more highly correlated instruments does not satisfy the requirement for use of multiple measures;

(4) use any assessment instrument, method or procedure to exclude any person from admission to a community college, except that a college may determine the admission of special part-time or full-time students under Education Code section 76002 based on an assessment which involves multiple measures and complies with other requirements of this subchapter;

(5) use any assessment instrument, method or procedure for mandatory placement of a student in or exclusion from any particular course or educational program, except that districts may establish appropriate prerequisites pursuant to sections 55002 and 55003; or
(6) use any matriculation practice which has the purpose or effect of subjecting any person to unlawful discrimination prohibited by subchapter 5 (commencing with section 59300) of chapter 10.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivisions (a)(1) and (2), assessment instruments approved by the Secretary of the United States Department of Education may be used to determine “ability to benefit” in the process of establishing a student’s eligibility for federal financial aid pursuant to subdivision (d) of section 1091 of title 20 of the United States Code.

(c) Notwithstanding paragraphs (1), (2), (3) or (5) of subdivision (a) or the provisions of sections 55003 or 55524, a community college district may use an assessment test to select students for its nursing program, provided that:

(1) the district complies with all other provisions of this subchapter;

(2) the assessment instrument is used in conjunction with other assessment instruments, methods or procedures to select students for enrollment in the nursing program; and

(3) the Chancellor has determined that the assessment instrument predicts likelihood of success in nursing programs, has approved use of the assessment instrument for that purpose and has established statewide proficiency cut-off scores for that instrument pursuant to Education Code section 78261.


55522. Special Accommodations.

Matriculation services for ethnic and language minority students and students with disabilities, shall be appropriate to their needs, and community college districts shall, where necessary, make modifications in the matriculation process or use alternative instruments, methods or procedures to accommodate the needs of such students. Districts may require students requesting such accommodations to provide proof of need. Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) and Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS) are authorized, consistent with the provisions of subchapter 1 (commencing with section 56000) and subchapter 2.5 (commencing with section 56200) of chapter 7, to provide specialized matriculation services and modified or alternative matriculation services to their respective student populations. Notwithstanding this authorization, participation in the EOPS and DSPS programs is voluntary and no student may be denied necessary accommodations in the assessment process because he or she chooses not to use specialized matriculation services provided by these programs. Modified or alternative matriculation services for limited or non-English-speaking students may be provided in English as a Second Language programs.


55523. Counseling and Advisement.

(a) If not already required to do so by the minimum standards for counseling services set forth in section 51018, each community college district shall do all of the following:

(1) make reasonable efforts to ensure that all nonexempt students who are on probation participate in counseling as provided in section 55034;
(2) make reasonable efforts to ensure that all nonexempt students who have not declared a specific educational goal participate in counseling to assist them in the process of selecting a specified educational goal pursuant to section 55525;

(3) make reasonable efforts to ensure that all nonexempt students who are enrolled in nondegree-applicable basic skills courses participate in counseling or advisement; and

(4) make available to all students, advisement or counseling on general academic requirements and the selection of specific courses by counselors or appropriately trained instructor/advisors, and/or other appropriately trained staff working in consultation with counselors.

(b) Counseling by appropriately trained counselors or advisement by appropriately trained staff may also be made available in any other area the district deems appropriate, including but not limited to, the interpretation of assessment results and the development of a student's educational plan as required by section 55525.


55524. Assessment.

The Chancellor shall establish and update, at least annually, a list of approved assessment instruments and guidelines for their use by community college districts. These guidelines shall identify modifications of an assessment instrument or the procedures for its use which may be made in order to provide special accommodations required by section 55522 without separate approval by the Chancellor. Such guidelines shall also describe the procedure by which districts may seek to have assessment instruments approved and added to the list. The Chancellor shall ensure that all assessment instruments included on the list minimize or eliminate cultural or linguistic bias, are normed on the appropriate populations, yield valid and reliable information, identify the learning needs of students, make efficient use of student and staff time, and are otherwise consistent with the educational and psychological testing standards of the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education.


55525. Student Educational Plan.

(a) Each community college district shall establish a process for assisting students to select a specific educational goal within a reasonable time after admission as required by Section 55530 (d). This shall include, but not be limited to, the provision of counseling as required by Section 55523(a)(2).

(b) Once a student has selected a specific educational goal, the district shall afford the student the opportunity to develop a student educational plan describing the responsibilities of the student, the requirements he or she must meet, and the courses, programs, and services required to achieve the stated goal.

(c) The student educational plan developed pursuant to Subsection (b) shall be recorded in written or electronic form. The plan and its implementation shall be reviewed as necessary to ensure that it continues to accurately reflect the needs and goals of the student.

(d) If a student believes the district has failed to make good faith efforts to develop a plan, has failed to provide services specified in the student educational plan, or has otherwise violated the requirements of this Section, the student may file a complaint pursuant to Section 55534 (a).
55526. Student Follow-up.

Each community college district shall establish a student follow-up process to assist the student in achieving his/her educational goal. The follow-up system shall ensure that the academic progress of each student is regularly monitored to detect early signs of academic difficulty and students shall be provided with advice or referral to specialized services or curriculum offerings where necessary. Districts shall also identify and refer to counseling or advisement, as appropriate pursuant to section 55523(a), any students who have not declared a specific educational goal as required by section 55530, who are enrolled in pre-collegiate basic skills courses, or who have been placed on probation.

55530. Student Rights and Responsibilities.

(a) Nothing in this subchapter shall be construed to interfere with the right of a student admitted to a community college in accord with district admission policies adopted pursuant to Education Code sections 76000, et seq. to enroll in any course for which he or she can meet necessary and appropriate prerequisites, if any, which have been established pursuant to the requirements of section 55003.

(b) Community college districts shall take steps to ensure that information is available in written form to all students during or prior to enrollment (e.g., during orientation) and is included in class schedules, catalogs or other appropriate publications, describing their rights and responsibilities under this subchapter.

(c) Districts shall also take steps to ensure that the matriculation process is efficient so that students are not discouraged from participating in college programs. Whenever possible, students should be permitted to avoid additional testing by submitting scores on recently taken tests that correlate with those used by the district.

(d) Students shall be required to express at least a broad educational intent upon admission; declare a specific educational goal within a reasonable period after admission; participate in counseling or advisement pursuant to section 55523(a)(1), (2), and (3); diligently attend class and complete assigned coursework; and complete courses and maintain progress toward an educational goal according to standards established by the district, consistent with the requirements of subchapter 1 (commencing with section 55000) of this chapter. The governing board of each community college district shall adopt clear written policies not inconsistent with law, specifically defining these responsibilities of students and the consequences of failure to fulfill such responsibilities. This policy shall define the period of time within which a student must identify a specific educational goal as required by this subdivision, provided however, that all students shall be required to declare such a goal during the term after which the student completes 15 semester units or 22 quarter units of degree-applicable credit course work, unless the district policy establishes a shorter period. Once the student has developed a specific educational goal, the district must provide the student with an opportunity to develop a student educational plan pursuant to section 55525. Student responsibilities shall also be identified in the student's educational plan developed pursuant to section 55525. If a student fails to fulfill the responsibilities listed in this subdivision, fails to cooperate with the district in the development of a student educational plan within 90 days after declaring his or her specific educational goal, or fails to abide by the terms of his or her student educational plan, the district may, subject to the requirements of this subchapter, suspend or terminate the provision of services authorized in section 55520, provided however, that nothing in this section shall be construed to permit a district to suspend or terminate any service to which a student is otherwise entitled under any other provision of law.

(e) Information obtained from the matriculation process shall be considered student records and shall be subject to the requirements of subchapter 6 (commencing with section 54600) of chapter 5.
55532. Exemptions.

(a) Community college districts may elect to exempt certain students from participation in orientation, assessment, counseling or advisement, as required by subdivisions (b), (c), or (d) of section 55520. Each such district shall establish policies specifying the grounds for exemption. Such policies shall be identified in the matriculation plan required under section 55510 and the number of students so exempted shall be reported, by category, to the Chancellor pursuant to section 55514.

(b) District policies may exempt from orientation, assessment, counseling, or advisement any student who has completed an associate degree or higher.

(c) Any student exempted pursuant to this section shall be notified that he or she is covered by an exemption and shall be given the opportunity to choose whether or not to participate in that part of the matriculation process.

(d) District policies may not use any of the following as the sole criterion for exempting any student who does not wish to participate:

1. the student has enrolled only in evening classes;
2. the student has enrolled in fewer than some specified number of units;
3. the student is enrolled exclusively in noncredit courses;
4. the student is undecided about his or her educational objectives; or
5. the student does not intend to earn a degree or certificate.

(e) As part of the statewide evaluation provided for under subdivision (c) of section 55512, the Chancellor shall analyze and recommend necessary changes regarding the impact on the matriculation program of the exemption policies adopted by community college districts.


55534. Violations, Waivers and Appeals.

(a) Each community college district shall establish written procedures by which students may challenge any alleged violation of the provisions of this subchapter. Districts shall investigate and attempt to resolve any such complaints in a timely manner. Such complaint procedures may be consolidated with existing student grievance procedures by action of the governing board. Records of all such complaints shall be retained for at least three years after the complaint has been resolved and shall be subject to review by the Chancellor as part of the statewide evaluation required under section 55512(c).

(b) When a challenge contains an allegation that a community college district has violated the provisions of section 55521(a)(6), the district shall, upon completion of the challenge procedure established pursuant to this section, advise the student that he or she may file a formal complaint of unlawful discrimination pursuant to subchapter 5 (commencing with section 59300) of chapter 10. Completion of the challenge procedure shall be deemed to be an effort at informal resolution of the complaint under section 59327.