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65 YEARS OF SERVICE

Issue 2 (Updated): March 2011

Are Entering Freshmen Prepared For College-Level Work?

☑ California's colleges and universities evaluate newly admitted students to determine whether they are prepared for college-level work.

- Students at the California State University (CSU) and the University of California (UC) who do not demonstrate proficiency must pass the appropriate precollegiate (commonly known as "remedial") courses.
- The California Community Colleges (CCC) encourage students to take assessment exams, but do not require enrollment in remedial courses.

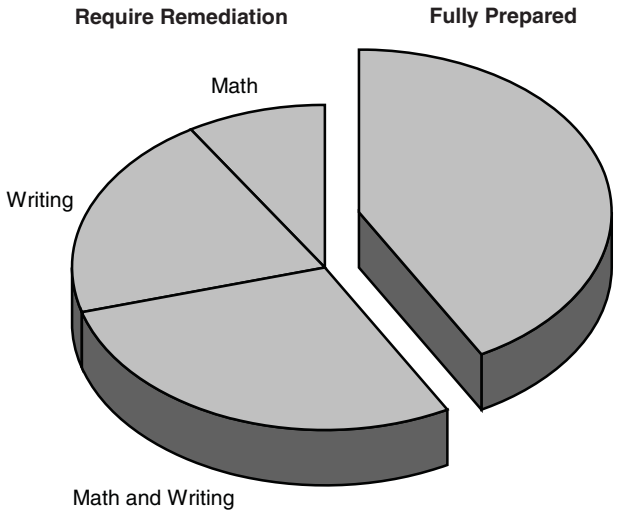
☑ The CSU currently admits many students who are unprepared for college-level writing and math.

- Of regularly admitted CSU freshmen (those meeting the system's eligibility requirements) in 2009, about 58 percent were unprepared for college-level writing or math (or both).
- At seven CSU campuses, at least two-thirds of regularly admitted freshmen arrived unprepared for college-level work. At the Los Angeles and Dominguez Hills campuses, about 90 percent of regularly admitted freshmen were unprepared for college-level work.

☑ In 1996, CSU set a goal to reduce the percentage of unprepared freshmen to 10 percent in math and English by 2007. That goal was not met, and CSU has now implemented its Early Assessment Program to improve student preparation.

Most CSU Freshmen Require Remediation

Regularly Admitted Freshmen in Fall 2009



☑ Unpreparedness rates of freshmen at UC have declined slightly in recent years.

- In 2010, about 26 percent of regularly admitted freshmen arrived unprepared for college-level writing.
- The percentage of freshmen needing remediation varies considerably across UC campuses. In fall 2009, the unpreparedness rates ranged from a low of 8 percent at UC Berkeley to a high of 64 percent at UC Merced.

☑ Almost all community college students have remediation needs.

- According to a survey by the CCC Chancellor's Office, about 85 percent of incoming community college students arrive unprepared for college-level work in math, and about 70 percent arrive unprepared for college-level English.
- In 2009-10, about 10 percent of CCC's classroom instruction was at a precollegiate level, at a total cost of about $550 million.

This is one of a series of issue briefs examining important questions about higher education funding in California. For more information on this topic, or to request other briefs from this series, contact the Legislative Analyst's Office Higher Education section at (916) 445-4656, or visit our website at **www.lao.ca.gov**.