



# UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Michael V. Drake, MD  
President

March 12, 2021

Office of the President  
1111 Franklin St.  
Oakland, CA 94607

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The Honorable Nancy Skinner  
Chair, Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 553  
Sacramento, California 95814

#### CAMPUSES

- Berkeley
- Davis
- Irvine
- UCLA
- Merced
- Riverside
- San Diego
- San Francisco
- Santa Barbara
- Santa Cruz

Dear Senator Skinner:

Pursuant to Section 66015.10 of the Education Code, enclosed is the University of California's annual report to the Legislature on the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR).

If you have any questions regarding this report, Associate Vice President David Alcocer would be pleased to speak with you. David can be reached by telephone at (510) 987-9113, or by e-mail at [David.Alcocer@ucop.edu](mailto:David.Alcocer@ucop.edu).

Sincerely,

Michael V. Drake, MD  
President

#### MEDICAL CENTERS

- Davis
- Irvine
- UCLA
- San Diego
- San Francisco

Enclosure

#### NATIONAL LABORATORIES

- Lawrence Berkeley
- Lawrence Livermore
- Los Alamos

- cc:
- Senate Budget and Fiscal Review
  - The Honorable John Laird, Chair
  - Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee #1
  - (Attn: Ms. Anita Lee)
  - (Attn: Ms. Jean-Marie McKinney)
  - The Honorable Kevin McCarty, Chair
  - Assembly Budget Subcommittee #2
  - (Attn: Mr. Mark Martin)
  - (Attn: Ms. Carolyn Nealon)
  - Mr. Hans Hemann, Joint Legislative Budget Committee
  - Ms. Erika Contreras, Secretary of the Senate
  - Ms. Amy Leach, Office of the Chief Clerk of the Assembly
  - Ms. Sue Parker, Office of the Chief Clerk of the Assembly
  - Mr. Jeff Bell, Department of Finance
  - Mr. Chris Ferguson, Department of Finance

Ms. Rebecca Kirk, Department of Finance  
Mr. Gabriel Petek, Legislative Analyst Office  
Ms. Jennifer Pacella, Legislative Analyst Office  
Mr. Jason Constantouros, Legislative Analyst Office  
Provost and Executive Vice President Michael Brown  
Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Nathan Brostorm  
Vice President and Vice Provost Yvette Gullatt  
Associate Vice Provost Elizabeth Halimah  
Senior Vice President Claire Holmes  
Associate Vice President David Alcocer  
Associate Vice President and Director Kieran Flaherty

## UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

### Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) Fall 2020

The following report is forwarded in compliance with Section 66015.10 of the Education Code, which states:

- (a) The University of California is requested to annually notify the governing board of each high school of both of the following:
  1. The number of graduates who enrolled in the university in the previous year and the number of graduates who were required to take the entry level writing requirement.
  2. The comparable numbers of all California high school graduates who enrolled in the university.
- (b) The University of California is requested to provide an annual summary of the information specified in subdivision (a) to the Department of Finance and the Joint Legislative Budget Committee.

This document is the annual report responding to this legislative request.

#### Background

The University of California (UC) Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) is a reading and writing proficiency requirement that is intended to assure that entering freshman students have the writing skills necessary to succeed in lower-division university-level courses. UC students must be able to understand and to respond adequately to written material typical of reading assignments in freshman courses, and this ability must be demonstrated in student writing that communicates effectively to university faculty.

The Academic Senate's University Committee on Preparatory Education oversees the ELWR. This requirement may be satisfied by successfully completing a course or program of study in English composition during the first year of enrollment at UC. In addition, prior to enrollment at the University of California, a student may satisfy the ELWR by attaining a score approved by the Committee on one of the following examinations:

1. the University of California Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE);
2. the SAT, Evidence-Based Reading and Writing;
3. the ACT, English Language Arts;
4. the Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Examination;
5. the Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition Examination;
6. the International Baccalaureate Higher or Standard Level English A: Literature Examination; or
7. the International Baccalaureate Higher or Standard Level English A: Language and Literature Examination.

An additional option for completing the writing requirement prior to enrolling at the University is the successful completion of a transferable college-level course in English composition of three semester or four quarter units.

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Each spring, the University offers its Analytical Writing Placement Examination (AWPE) to incoming California freshmen who have not satisfied the ELWR by that date. The AWPE defines a basic level of proficiency in reading and writing for incoming students and sets a baseline of expectations that extends across all UC campuses. As the University Committee on Preparatory Education has observed in the past, “it is very important to have a single University of California standard that clearly communicates to students, parents, teachers, and schools the academic reading and writing abilities expected of entering freshmen.”

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation of the in-person administration of the AWPE in 2020. While an online administration of the AWPE was subsequently offered in late June, four campuses (Davis, Irvine, Santa Barbara, and Santa Cruz) developed and offered alternative testing and placement options. Students were allowed to fulfill the ELWR prior to enrollment with these local alternatives or with the online AWPE. The Table 1 data for 2020 show decreases in the number and proportion of students who fulfilled the ELWR, which likely reflects these unusual circumstances.

This report summarizes the outcomes of the ELWR for freshmen who entered the University for the fall 2020 term and provides fall 2019 data as a point of comparison. (See Table 1 and Table 2.)

### Information to Schools

Each year, the University notifies California high school principals and county and district superintendents that comprehensive ELWR performance results are available on the UC Information Center website (<https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/elwr>). These results may be useful to guide high school curriculum development that could improve the academic preparation of students. The 2020 ELWR performance results will be posted by April 2021.

The AWPE website (<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/elwr/>) contains an example of a previously administered examination, the scoring guide, and annotated sample student essays with reader comments exemplifying each scoring level. These resources are intended to help clarify the ELWR standard of competence.

### Entry Level Writing Requirement Data on Entering Freshmen

The attached tables display ELWR data for fall 2019 and 2020 entering freshmen from California public and private high schools.

The University of California admitted more California freshmen for fall 2020 (180,661 compared to 151,601 in 2019), and 1,679 more California freshmen enrolled (38,499) compared to fall 2019 (36,820). This increase in enrollment is not reflected in the number of entering freshmen that met the ELWR requirement (26,254, or 68.2 percent) compared to fall 2019 (26,745, or 72.6 percent), although the impact of the pandemic on students’ lives and campus processes in 2020 is likely reflected in these outcomes. Of the 38,499 fall 2020 freshmen who entered the University, 26,254 met the ELWR prior to their enrollment. The number who fulfilled the ELWR includes students who successfully passed the AWPE (2,029, or 5.3 percent of enrolled students), as well as students who met the requirement through other means – 62.9 percent of entrants (24,220).

Fewer enrolled students, proportionally and in number, took the AWPE in 2020; 21.4 percent took the 2020 exam (8,254 out of 38,499 enrollees) compared to 29.9 percent of the 2019 cohort (11,012 out of 36,820

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enrollees). The AWPE pass rate was also lower for fall 2020 at 24.6 percent (2,029 out of 8,254 examinees) from 31.9 percent the previous year (3,515 out of 11,012 examinees). The proportion of students who met the ELWR through other means prior to enrolling dropped slightly to 62.9 percent in 2020 from 63.1 percent in 2019, even though the number increased by 994 (24,220 in 2020 from 23,226 in 2019). The number of students required to meet the ELWR during their first year of enrollment at the University in 2020 was higher: 12,245 (31.8 percent) in 2020, compared to 10,075 (27.4 percent) in 2019.

The percentage of students who fulfilled the ELWR prior to enrolling differs by UC eligibility status. For fall 2020, the completion rate for regularly admitted enrollees was 68.4 percent (26,200 students), while the completion rate for students admitted by exception was 28.4 percent (54 students). The ELWR completion rate of 68.4 percent for regularly admitted enrollees was lower than the 2019 rate of 73.0 percent. The rate increased for students admitted by exception compared to the prior year's rate of 27.6 percent (76 students).

The percentage of all fall 2020 students who fulfilled the ELWR prior to enrolling varies by campus. In 2020, this ranged from a high of 90.6 percent at Los Angeles to 30.2 percent at Merced.

The following tables display information regarding the fulfillment of the ELWR for new entering freshmen from California high schools for fall 2020 and fall 2019. (As discussed above, the COVID-19 pandemic caused disruption to the ELWR process for fall 2020.)

**Table 1**

<b>Table 1: Fulfillment of Entry-Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) for New Freshmen from California High Schools, Fall 2020</b>											
Campus	Admitted*	Enrolled	Met Requirement		Took AWPE Exam	Passed AWPE Exam		Met Requirement Through Other Means		Did Not Meet Requirement	
			n	%		n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>REGULAR (ELIGIBLE ADMIT)</b>											
Berkeley	10,110	4,547	3,929	86.4	742	249	5.5	3,680	80.9	618	13.6
Davis	22,237	4,912	3,096	63.0	358	68	1.4	3,028	61.6	1,816	37.0
Irvine	17,210	4,710	1,885	40.0	208	60	1.3	1,825	38.7	2,825	60.0
Los Angeles	9,119	4,756	4,318	90.8	688	230	4.8	4,088	86.0	438	9.2
Merced	20,753	1,908	580	30.4	1,104	108	5.7	472	24.7	1,328	69.6
Riverside	28,494	4,696	2,717	57.9	2,107	414	8.8	2,303	49.0	1,979	42.1
San Diego	22,123	4,875	4,141	84.9	1,045	380	7.8	3,761	77.1	734	15.1
Santa Barbara	22,571	4,009	3,295	82.2	882	266	6.6	3,029	75.6	714	17.8
Santa Cruz	27,182	3,896	2,239	57.5	1,064	249	6.4	1,990	51.1	1,657	42.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>179,799</b>	<b>38,309</b>	<b>26,200</b>	<b>68.4</b>	<b>8,198</b>	<b>2,024</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>24,176</b>	<b>63.1</b>	<b>12,109</b>	<b>31.6</b>
<b>ADMISSION BY EXCEPTION</b>											
Berkeley	7	7	3	42.9	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	57.1
Davis	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Irvine	17	16	2	12.5	2	0	0.0	2	12.5	14	87.5
Los Angeles	19	17	5	29.4	9	1	5.9	4	23.5	12	70.6
Merced	202	32	5	15.6	17	1	3.1	4	12.5	27	84.4
Riverside	206	44	13	29.5	7	0	0.0	13	29.5	31	70.5
San Diego	22	3	2	66.7	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	33.3
Santa Barbara	19	8	3	37.5	4	2	25.0	1	12.5	5	62.5
Santa Cruz	370	63	21	33.3	17	1	1.6	20	31.7	42	66.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>862</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>28.4</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>23.2</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>71.6</b>
<b>ALL STUDENTS</b>											
Berkeley	10,117	4,554	3,932	86.3	742	249	5.5	3,680	80.8	622	13.7
Davis	22,237	4,912	3,096	63.0	358	68	1.4	3,028	61.6	1,816	37.0
Irvine	17,227	4,726	1,887	39.9	210	60	1.3	1,827	38.7	2,839	60.1
Los Angeles	9,138	4,773	4,323	90.6	697	231	4.8	4,092	85.7	450	9.4
Merced	20,955	1,940	585	30.2	1,121	109	5.6	476	24.5	1,355	69.8
Riverside	28,700	4,740	2,730	57.6	2,114	414	8.7	2,316	48.9	2,010	42.4
San Diego	22,145	4,878	4,143	84.9	1,045	380	7.8	3,761	77.1	735	15.1
Santa Barbara	22,590	4,017	3,298	82.1	886	268	6.7	3,030	75.4	719	17.9
Santa Cruz	27,552	3,959	2,260	57.1	1,081	250	6.3	2,010	50.8	1,699	42.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>180,661</b>	<b>38,499</b>	<b>26,254</b>	<b>68.2</b>	<b>8,254</b>	<b>2,029</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>24,220</b>	<b>62.9</b>	<b>12,245</b>	<b>31.8</b>
Source: University of California Office of the President, Graduate, Undergraduate and Equity Affairs.											
*Admission counts are duplicated. Except for the admission counts, data are for new enrolled freshmen.											

**Table 2**

<b>Table 2: Fulfillment of Entry-Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) for New Freshmen from California High Schools, Fall 2019</b>													
Campus	Admitted*	Enrolled	Met Requirement		Took AWPE Exam			Passed AWPE Exam		Met Requirement Through Other Means		Did Not Meet Requirement	
			n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
<b>REGULAR (ELIGIBLE ADMIT)</b>													
Berkeley	9,260	4,612	4,006	86.9	653	251	5.4	3,755	81.4	606	13.1		
Davis	19,966	4,940	3,444	69.7	1,632	508	10.3	2,936	59.4	1,496	30.3		
Irvine	14,560	4,810	3,342	69.5	1,852	590	12.3	2,752	57.2	1,468	30.5		
Los Angeles	8,242	4,349	3,952	90.9	605	249	5.7	3,703	85.1	397	9.1		
Merced	17,223	2,069	682	33.0	1,346	236	11.4	446	21.6	1,387	67.0		
Riverside	24,576	4,583	2,786	60.8	2,038	631	13.8	2,155	47.0	1,797	39.2		
San Diego	17,957	4,420	3,360	76.0	998	360	8.1	3,000	67.9	1,060	24.0		
Santa Barbara	18,022	3,701	2,970	80.2	829	305	8.2	2,665	72.0	731	19.8		
Santa Cruz	20,159	3,061	2,127	69.5	963	376	12.3	1,751	57.2	934	30.5		
Total	149,965	36,545	26,669	73.0	10,916	3,506	9.6	23,163	63.4	9,876	27.0		
<b>ADMISSION BY EXCEPTION</b>													
Berkeley	4	4	4	100.0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0		
Davis	11	11	4	36.4	4	1	9.1	3	27.3	7	63.6		
Irvine	889	22	8	36.4	9	1	4.5	7	31.8	14	63.6		
Los Angeles	77	76	16	21.1	26	2	2.6	14	18.4	60	78.9		
Merced	147	27	6	22.2	10	0	0.0	6	22.2	21	77.8		
Riverside	125	39	9	23.1	16	2	5.1	7	17.9	30	76.9		
San Diego	9	2	1	50.0	2	1	50.0	0	0.0	1	50.0		
Santa Barbara	16	12	1	8.3	4	0	0.0	1	8.3	11	91.7		
Santa Cruz	358	82	27	32.9	25	2	2.4	25	30.5	55	67.1		
Total	1,636	275	76	27.6	96	9	3.3	63	22.9	199	72.4		
<b>ALL STUDENTS</b>													
Berkeley	9,264	4,616	4,010	86.9	653	251	5.4	3,755	81.3	606	13.1		
Davis	19,977	4,951	3,448	69.6	1,636	509	10.3	2,939	59.4	1,503	30.4		
Irvine	15,449	4,832	3,350	69.3	1,861	591	12.2	2,759	57.1	1,482	30.7		
Los Angeles	8,319	4,425	3,968	89.7	631	251	5.7	3,717	84.0	457	10.3		
Merced	17,370	2,096	688	32.8	1,356	236	11.3	452	21.6	1,408	67.2		
Riverside	24,701	4,622	2,795	60.5	2,054	633	13.7	2,162	46.8	1,827	39.5		
San Diego	17,966	4,422	3,361	76.0	1,000	361	8.2	3,000	67.8	1,061	24.0		
Santa Barbara	18,038	3,713	2,971	80.0	833	305	8.2	2,666	71.8	742	20.0		
Santa Cruz	20,517	3,143	2,154	68.5	988	378	12.0	1,776	56.5	989	31.5		
Total	151,601	36,820	26,745	72.6	11,012	3,515	9.5	23,226	63.1	10,075	27.4		
Source: University of California Office of the President, Graduate, Undergraduate and Equity Affairs.													
*Admission counts are duplicated. Except for the admission counts, data are for new enrolled freshmen.													

**Contact Information:**  
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