

[cla] SAMPLING, RECRUITMENT, & MOTIVATION

Sampling

The purposeful sampling of students is an important part of obtaining valid and reliable results. While each institution is responsible for student sampling and recruitment, CLA staff are available to assist you with this process and to discuss a sampling and recruitment plan that best suits your campus.

Requirements for Student Sample

In order to be included in the value-added institutional analysis, each participating student must:

- Have SAT or ACT scores on file with the Registrar's Office or have completed the SLE
- Be in the appropriate class level (i.e., first-time, full-time students in the fall; exiting students in the spring)
- Provide a scorable response to the CLA task

Assembling the Student Sample

- In the fall test administration, the sample should be drawn from your cohort of entering (first-time, full-time) students only.
- In the spring test administration, the sample should be drawn from exiting seniors who attended your institution as freshmen.
- The recommended sample size for each fall and spring cross-sectional assessment is at least 100 students or 25-50% of your population size.
- Institutions planning to administer the CLA to the same students longitudinally are encouraged to sample at least 300 students as freshmen during the first fall administration. Please contact your CLA Rep if your institution would like further instructions on how to construct a longitudinal study.

Sampling Strategies

Institutions should try to approximate a true random sample. Below are examples of sampling strategies employed by two different institutions. Sampling and recruitment strategies, as well as testing conditions, should be standardized across fall and spring administrations.

Simple random sample:

1. Obtain a list of 1000 registered students (name, student ID, etc.) from the Registrar Office
2. Generate a list of random numbers (e.g., in Excel)
3. Attach the random numbers list to the list of students
4. Sort students by these random numbers
5. Select every fifth student, assuming half of the 200 students selected will participate in the CLA

Non-random but representative sample:

1. Identify six courses (for example: Psychology, English, Art History, Economics, Biology, Statistics) covering a range of disciplines that reach a representative cross section of the 700 standard students at your school. Make sure not to exclude any major demographic (gender/race) or field of study (social sciences, natural sciences, liberal arts) and confirm that all groups are proportionally included.
2. Sample within these courses and aim for student counts in proportion to the enrollment sizes. For example, if Biology has 200 students, $200/700$ is approximately 29%, so 29 of the students are from Biology. If Statistics only has 100 students, $100/700$ is approximately 14%, so to test 14 of these students.

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Faculty Support & Recruitment

Embedding the CLA into courses or campus activities and mandating that all students participate are effective ways to ensure student participation. Examples include administering the CLA during orientation seminars for freshmen or capstone courses for seniors.

Faculty involvement at this stage is crucial.

Obtaining Faculty Support

Participating institutions have emphasized the importance of obtaining faculty support of the CLA. For example, institutions' methods for garnering support include obtaining permission from faculty members to post bulletins in classrooms, asking them to make announcements that encourage student participation, or requesting use of class time to administer the CLA. Sharing information about the CLA in advance of student recruitment helps to foster a collaborative relationship with faculty. Some schools have also organized an "Assessment Day." This day could include the CLA as well as other student activities, such as course evaluations or program assessments.

Ideas for Faculty Engagement Faculty Demonstration Capabilities

- Hold an information session for faculty so they may feel more invested in the CLA and truly understand why your institution is participating. If your institution has participated in the past, share the results from those administrations with your faculty, as they are stakeholders in the results.
- Encourage faculty and staff to view an example of a CLA task online visit: <http://clademoevent.starttest.com>
- Invite faculty to participate in a Performance Task Academy. For more information, visit: <http://collegiatelearningassessment.org/pta.html>

Student Recruiting Techniques

- Brainstorm with your institution contacts and faculty to discuss recruitment methods, asking:
 - What methods have worked in the past
 - And what methods work best for the culture of your institution.
- Talk to staff in Admissions and other campus offices, such as Institutional Research, and ask them for suggestions on how to engage students on campus.
- Send campus e-blast emails (See page 4 for correspondence ideas.)
 - Invitations can include the URL for the new CLA student guide, available upon request from your CLA Rep. This guide's purpose is to help students better understand their role in testing and how the CLA can help the institution as a result.
- Host an "Assessment Day" at your institution.
 - A campus-wide day for testing
 - You could also incorporate other activities on this day that would benefit your institution, such as surveys or qualitative feedback for the institution or department levels.
 - Promotes faculty involvement as well as student involvement. Share how your school uses the assessments to make improvements.
- Post flyers in all areas of campus, to encourage a representative sample (dining hall, athletics departments, academic departments, campus activities offices, etc.) A flyer template is available by request from your CLA Rep.
- Create a webpage explaining the CLA and how involvement will affect your school. You could also include past institutional results.
- Provide student incentives (see page 4 for ideas.)
- For freshmen, have a sign-up table during orientation. We suggest that you:
 - Reserve in advance all computer labs for specific dates for testing
 - Have students sign up for a date and time on the spot
 - Take their email addresses and/or phone numbers and inform them that they will be contacted twice: first to confirm that they signed up, and again as a reminder closer to the actual test date.

Have a successful recruiting strategy? Use the contact map to communicate with similar institutions and brainstorm together, or inquire about their best practices and strategies!

Incentives for Students

Embedding the CLA in campus events may not work for all institutions. Depending on your campus culture, you may want to offer incentives to your students to encourage participation. Experience from most campuses suggests that simply asking students to participate voluntarily in the CLA is not as successful as other recruitment strategies. The following is a list of strategies used to recruit students for the CLA. It is ranked in order of preference by freshmen that were surveyed during a previous administration. Please note that successful recruitment practices vary across institutions.

Most Preferable

- Cash incentives (\$25)
- Course registration preference for the next semester
- In-kind payment (discount at book store, gift certificate, etc. worth \$25)
- Prizes/raffles (1 in 10 chance of winning an iPad)

Moderately Preferable

- Feedback on personal strengths and weaknesses by faculty (professor, advisor, etc.) or school administrator (president, dean, provost, etc.)
- Helping school assess student learning
- Reviewing student performance as it compares to peers
- Ability to include CLA score on résumé
- Acknowledgment of participation in printed materials (newsletter, annual report, etc.)

Other Ideas from CLA Campuses

- Priority seating and/or extra tickets to graduation
- Providing snacks on the day of testing
- Recognition for participating during graduation
- Reserved parking permit
- University paraphernalia (T-shirts, pens, etc.)
- USB flash drives for all participants
- Participation and results noted on student transcripts
- Priority placement in housing lottery

The CLA strongly discourages the use of punitive recruitment and motivational techniques.

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Recruitment Correspondence

It is important to designate one assessment coordinator to manage the entire process—from initial communications to recruiting students, determining the testing schedule, securing computer facilities, and coordinating student data collection.

Who should send CLA correspondence?

Students are more likely to read messages from people they know and respect. To avoid the perception that CLA recruitment is a bureaucratic request, you might select the president or provost's office, student advisors, instructors, department heads, student leaders, and/or thesis advisors to send the recruitment letters.

Recruitment Correspondence Resources

See below for a sample email to students. Email templates and a correspondence timeline are available upon request. We can

also provide flyer templates for you to adapt and display around your campus.

Tips

- Personalize correspondence (avoid “dear student” salutations or multiple recipient addresses/listserv origin for emails) so as not to suggest a mass mailing approach
- Keep messages brief
- Inform students of alternative ways to respond (e.g., email, phone call)
- Emphasize the benefits of participation
- Reference incentives (if your institution has chosen to use them)

The Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) (00/00/00): Pre-notification

Sender Name [mailto:sender@universitycollege.edu]

To: Jane Doe (not a listserv, not multiple recipients)

Dear Jane,

You have been selected to represent **University College** in the Collegiate Learning Assessment on 00/00/00.

The Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) is an open-ended assessment that provides a measure of an institution's contribution to the development of critical thinking and writing skills of its students. For more information about the CLA, visit <http://www.collegiatelearningassessment.org/files/clastudentguide.pdf>. Please RSVP to participate using the information found at the bottom of this email.

Unlike many of the exams you may be familiar with, the CLA reports the results at the school level, rather than at the student level. And while the CLA allows schools to benchmark how much progress their students have made relative to the progress of similar students at other colleges, it is not designed to rank institutions, nor is it designed to rank students. The principal goal of the CLA is to assist faculty and administrators in improving teaching and learning. The CLA measures your critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving, and written communication skills. Your score report will include your strengths and weaknesses on these skills and compares your performance to other students at your school and nationwide. Your participation will also help **University College** gauge its performance in helping you develop these skills and, in the future, focus resources on what works.

Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,
Sender

Participation is voluntary. Send a message to cla_liaison@universitycollege.edu with your student ID number in the subject line or call (123) 456-7890 to opt out.

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Motivation

Campuses are often concerned about how to motivate their students not only to take the CLA, but also to perform well. Tests tied to grades or some other important stakes are most familiar to students, therefore institutions worry that students might not try as hard as they do in higher-stakes settings like mid-terms, finals, and standardized tests for college entrance or graduate school admission.

CAE examined student motivation in our field trials and feasibility study by holding focus groups with all students who took the CLA assessments. We found that the Performance Tasks themselves engage student interest—students find the problems to be realistic, fun, and a fair test of skills they feel are important. Indeed, students told us (via post-assessment surveys) that they wish they had encountered more assessments like the CLA in college and eagerly wanted to know how well they did compared to students in their own institutions and in others—data that we supply at the conclusion of each administration.

Not surprisingly, students' self-reported effort, time spent on the test, and CLA scores are positively correlated. Yet, the underlying nature of these relationships, including direction of causality, is unknown. We supply institutions with data on the amount of time each of their students spent on the CLA. Schools can also collect data on student self-reported effort during the test through a locally customizable online survey (see Proctor Manual for directions). These data empower institutions to evaluate the relationships between time and effort spent on the test and student scores on their own campuses and draw appropriate conclusions from their CLA results.

It is important to remember that the CLA is designed to be a low stakes institutional assessment. Students' scores reflect typical performance, which is distinct from maximal performance. Nonetheless, developing students' level of typical performance so that it approaches their level of their maximal performance is a laudable goal. Higher-education institutions should instill in their students the habit of devoting due effort to any task, whether it is taking a course, engaging in volunteer work, or participating in an assessment like the CLA. In other words, producing students that strive to perform well in all endeavors is itself a goal every higher education institution has or should have. The degree of motivation that students bring to the CLA is inextricably linked to the norms of performance that their college expects of them. In that sense, student willingness to perform well on the CLA is one indicator of institutional impact.

Additionally, we urge campuses to think about how they integrate assessment into their institutional fabric so that participation in assessments like the CLA becomes part of their educational plan for each student. We believe that campuses should have mechanisms of feedback to students, faculty, programs, and the institutions themselves. Effective and widespread communication about the CLA will increase support for the important endeavor of institutional assessment and while increasing the effort students apply to such assessments.