Online Administration FAQs

General Questions

Can we add additional items or customize the survey?
No. The survey will be the same for all participating colleges.

Is the survey confidential?
Yes. CCCSE does not have a record of access code assignments beyond what is provided by the college and the Survey Coordinator is responsible for matching access codes with individual student records. Colleges can elect to match individual records with other initiatives at their college. CCCSE staff may use survey data in the aggregate for national and sector reporting purposes, for supplemental research of interest to community colleges, and for other undergraduate improvement initiatives.

Survey Population

Who should be invited to participate in the survey?
The survey should be shared with all high school students who are concurrently enrolled in credit courses at the college. Currently incarcerated students and those enrolled in lowest-level ESL should be excluded from the survey population.

Can the online survey be administered to students in the classroom?
If some courses are meeting face-to-face, the college may want to consider setting aside class time to allow students to complete the online survey. Each student will need a smartphone, tablet, or computer with Internet access to complete the survey. To avoid confusion, it may be prudent to withhold sending invitations to students enrolled in face-to-face classes if online administration takes place in those classrooms.

Survey Administration and Reminders

How is the survey administered?
The survey is administered online in a format compatible with both computers and mobile devices. Students will need individual codes, provided to CCCSE by the Survey Coordinator, to access the survey.

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How should we distribute the survey links to our students?
Colleges can share the survey link using email, LMS, text, or any mechanism through which the survey link can be shared with all survey-eligible students. Colleges that have attained high response rates in CCCSE online surveys have generally used more than one method. It is important to note that CCCSE will neither assign nor have any information regarding which access codes match with individual students so colleges must track this information.

How long does the survey take to complete?
The survey takes 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

How will we know whether students complete the survey?
The Responder Tool displays the number of students who have reached the end of the survey as well as a downloadable spreadsheet of used access codes. The Responder Tool is updated twice daily. Your liaison will provide you with details on accessing the Responder Tool when they provide you with your survey link.

How can we send reminders?
You can log into the Responder Tool to check response counts and to download the spreadsheet of used access codes. You may exclude students assigned these used access codes from any reminders you send.

Can CCCSE email the survey invitations to our students?
Your college is responsible for distributing the survey link and individual access codes to your students. Past CCCSE experience, as well as published research, suggests that sending the email from an address recognized by the recipient results in higher responses. Please contact your liaison if you have questions related to this.

Who should students contact if they have questions about survey access?
Since CCCSE staff will not have information about individual access codes, colleges will provide contact information for the person at your institution who can respond to student inquiries about accessing the survey. This information will be displayed on the survey and should be included in survey invitations and reminders.

While any person can be listed as a contact for students, CCCSE will direct any administration-related communications to the college's *DESSE* Survey Coordinator.

Can colleges implement processes to encourage participation in the survey beyond what is recommended in CCCSE's materials?
While CCCSE does not endorse a particular promotion process beyond what is described in the Procedure Guide and other materials, some colleges may decide to implement additional processes locally as they align with their institutional policies.

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Is the survey accessible? What do we do if a student has special needs?
Accommodations should be made for special-needs students at the college level and should be consistent with those made for students on similar multiple-choice tests and forms. *DESSE* is compatible with screen reading software. Please contact your liaison if you have any questions.

Can students start the survey and finish it later?
Yes. When students re-enter their access codes, they will be automatically returned to the place in the survey where they left off and regardless of device used.

What if a student doesn't finish the survey?
Their partial record is saved.

What kind of reporting will we receive?
On August 15, 2026, CCCSE will share college level frequencies along with the raw data file with the Survey Coordinator and college president.

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