UTAH SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

ANNUAL REPORT

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Math Competency Initiative Annual Report Academic Year 2024-25

Brief History of USHE's Math Competency Initiative

In 2015, the Utah Legislature passed Senate Bill 196, *the Math Competency Initiative*. This legislation provides ongoing funding to support the Utah System of Higher Education's efforts to increase the number of students who earn college Qualitative Literacy (QL) general education credits while in high school, a common barrier to student completion in higher education. Utah does not have a specific high school math requirement for the senior year, presenting an opportunity for college-inclined students to complete their QL requirement through Concurrent Enrollment (CE). The appropriated funds from this initiative bolster access for students to CE QL across Utah, and especially rural portions of the state, which present additional logistical challenges.

Ongoing funding assists:

- Work with faculty and curriculum committees to determine qualifying scores for tests and exams that will fulfill QL requirements or place students into appropriate college-level courses;
- provide electronic tools and helplines to guide students through QL course options appropriate to their major and explore the transferability of their completed QL requirements; these tools include the Utah Transfer Guide and the Utah Programs and Majors Guide; and
- via Concurrent Enrollment, to
    - increase access to a range of CE QL courses;
    - establish a consistent CE course approval process;
    - establish a consistent process to qualify high school teachers to teach CE QL courses; and
    - pay for the Concurrent Enrollment Common Participation Form.

Concurrent Enrollment, Quantitative Literacy, and Timely Completion of Degrees

Quantitative Literacy requirements represent a significant academic challenge for many students pursuing degrees. From inception, the Math Competency Initiative has implemented a series of coordinated efforts to improve access and completion of CE QL math for more than 200 participating public, charter, and alternative high schools statewide. These efforts have included, but are not limited to:

- Expanding CE courses beyond College Algebra (MATH 1050) to include Statistics (MATH/STATS 1040) and Quantitative Reasoning (MATH 1030) to better align with the needs of students' academic and career goals and reduce barriers to timely completion.

- Strengthening advising towards appropriate QL math courses through coordination with high school counselors, parent information nights, high school math teachers, campus visits, and the like.
- Increasing the number of high school teachers qualified to teach CE QL courses via professional development by supporting further education, licensure, and/or preparatory training.
- Developing new recruitment strategies and tools, including outreach materials, to encourage non-self-selecting but academically qualifying students toward CE QL math.
- Academic support—such as graphing calculators, instructional videos, tutoring, and summer preparatory work—to enhance student success in QL courses.

Commonly Noted Challenges

- MATH 1050—which is intended for students who will go on to Calculus—continues to be over-advised as the go-to option for undecided students, when MATH 1030 or 1040 would be more applicable to their interests.
- MATH 1010—While not a QL course, it is a prerequisite for MATH 1050, but not MATH 1030 or 1040—proves challenging for teachers to adequately cover all course materials, and faces challenges with student completion.
- High schools struggle to offer MATH 1030, 1040, and 1050, often offering only two of the three.
- Rural areas struggle to recruit and retain qualified CE QL teachers, leading them to rely on virtual instruction rather than in-person instruction.

Outcomes of the Math Competency Initiatives

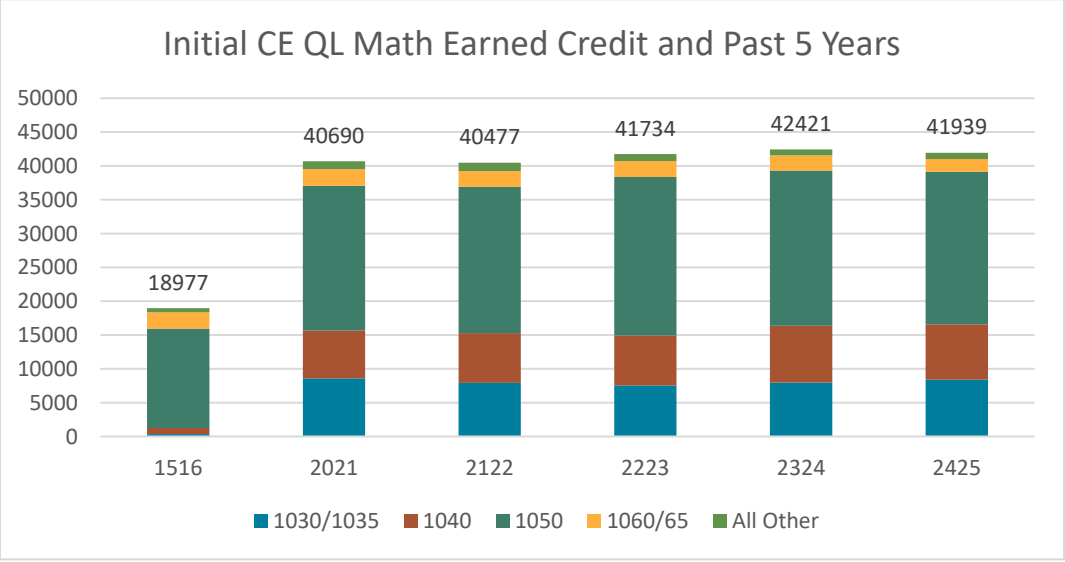

Figure 1.
NOTE: 121% increase in CE QL earned credit since 2015.

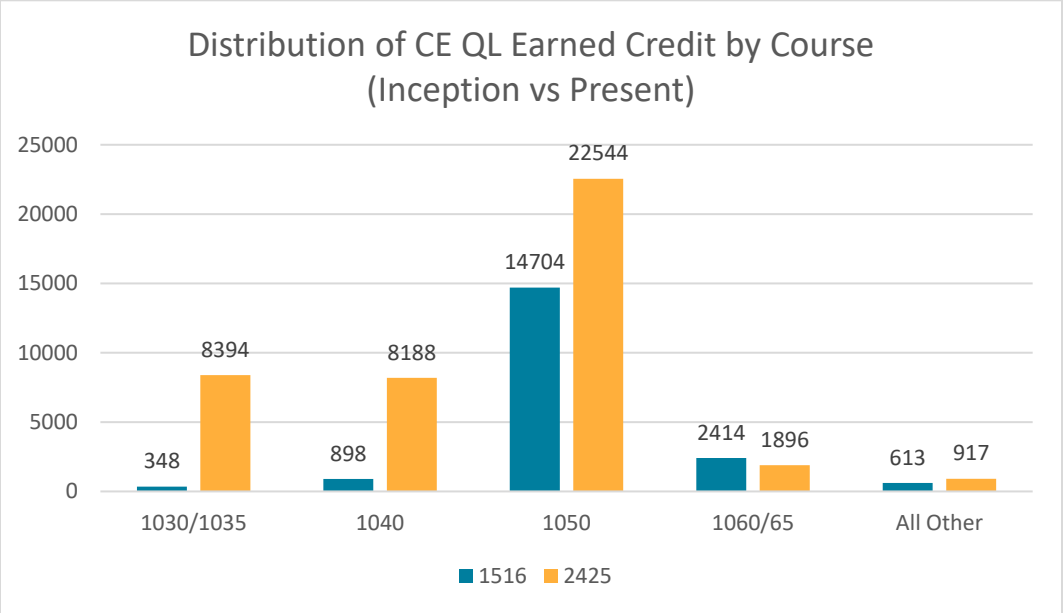

Figure 2.
NOTE:1050 is a prerequisite for 1060/65