Letter from the Computer Science Department Head

April 2020

Hello!

Computers have found their way into nearly everything we do at CA and beyond, so it’s important to be confident with technology, beginning in your first year here. We ask that you show a level of fluency with computers either by passing the Creative Computing course in your first year, or by earning an exemption from the course by taking the Computer Science Placement Test before you arrive.

We ask all new students to attempt the Computer Science Placement Test so we have a baseline on your computer skills, and we can provide support as needed. Please don’t spend more than one hour on the test, and you’re welcome to spend less time, but please give all problems a try so we know where you stand with each skill. If you’re a very tech-savvy student and score well above the threshold, we may offer you an exemption from Creative Computing and encourage you to take higher-level computer science courses here! Exemptions are rare however, and are earned usually by students who go on to pursue CS-related fields here and in college.

New students who are not granted an exemption should take Creative Computing in either their first or second semester. New students who take the test but do not earn the exemption will have Creative Computing added to their schedules if not already requested.

If you plan to take the test, please note:

1. You may take the test only once, since it’s meant to help us place you in your first year at CA.
2. To prepare for the test, look through the Topic List and Sample Questions (link at END of this letter).
3. The test requires a web-capable Mac or Windows computer running the software mentioned in the topic list.
4. Please take the test (link at END of this letter) on your own, without help from parents, books, websites, sample test, etc. We want your results to accurately reflect your current skill level.
5. Please email the test within 1 hour of downloading it, even if you aren’t finished. As the test is used for placement, most students are not expected to complete the whole test.

When you are ready to take the test:

1. To save time, open the programs you will need for the test ahead of time: a web browser, email, a word processor, a spreadsheet program, presentation software, and photo editing software.
2. Write down the time, open the test, and be sure to email it within 1 hour, even if you haven’t finished — you may find that some of the material is unfamiliar to you.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Benjamin Stumpf
Computer Science Department Head
link to Topic List and Sample Test Questions

link to Computer Science Placement Test (PDF)

link to Deadlines and Materials and Where to Send