Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)? The CLA is a test given to thousands of students across the country at similar institutions to LaGuardia. The CLA is intended to assist LaGuardia Community College to improve teaching methods to help students learn vital subjects such as critical thinking and written communication.

How were you selected? As a pilot study for City University of New York, you were selected at random to participate in this test. Our objective is to test a total of one hundred freshmen this Fall.

Do you need to study for the exam? No. all we ask is that you show up for the exam on time and do your very best.

What is on the exam? Students will take a brief 12 minute pre-test called the SLE exam. After taking the SLE students will randomly be chosen to take one of two exams:

1. GROUP A- The Performance Task Exam: You are presented with a realistic problem that requires you to analyze materials and provide a written response. (Duration: 90 minutes)

2. Group B- Two short tests:
   a. Make An Argument: You are presented with an opinion on an issue and you write about this issue from any perspective you wish as long as you provide reasons and examples to explain your view. (Duration: 45 minutes)
   b. Critique An Argument: You are asked to evaluate an argument by writing about how well you find it to be (rather than just agreeing or disagreeing with the position presented). (Duration: 30 minutes)

How long will the exam take?

It depends which exam you are given. There are two time frames:

Test # 1
Total Time: approx. 2 hours
SLE Exam: 12 minutes
Performance Task: 90 minutes

Test #2
Total Time: approx. 1.5 hours
SLE Exam: 12 minutes
Make An Argument: 45 minutes
Critique An Argument: 30 minutes

Does this test have anything to do with my studies?

No. Your participation in the CLA exam does not have any impact on your current studies and major at the college. Results of the exam will be reviewed only by CUNY as part of a pilot study.
When are the test scheduled? There are different dates and time throughout the month of October. Selected students will receive an e-mail with a username, password and log-in instructions.

Why should I take the exam?

Benefits to the student:

- For taking the exam and doing your best, you will receive a $50 cash gift card. (That is equal to being paid $25 per hour to show us what you already know!)

- We have a wide array of times available for you to take the exam: morning, afternoon and evenings.
- We have made it easy for you to sign up. You can email, call, or come by in person to sign up for an exam.

- You will be helping us to continue to improve the education at LaGuardia for all students. Your test results will help us set a frame of reference for where students begin and how much progress they make during their time at LaGuardia. This data will be compared with similar colleges throughout the USA.