

California Community Colleges Noncredit Course Approval Primer April 2005

This Noncredit Course Approval Primer serves as a guide to assist colleges in obtaining course approval from the System Office. This primer provides the legislative intent and the basic requirements for noncredit course approval.

The Legislature has clearly affirmed that adult continuing education is essential to the needs of society in an era of rapid technological, economic, and social change and that all adults in California are entitled to quality publicly supported continuing education opportunities including the following:

(a) The opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to participate effectively in today's economy and society.

(b) Access to courses at the postsecondary level that are foundations upon which successive academic or occupational knowledge are dependent.

(c) Participation in other courses designed to meet the particular needs of the local community. The California Community Colleges have a central role in providing quality and responsive continuing education opportunities to members of the community.¹

Further, the Legislature has affirmed that noncredit adult education is an essential and important function of the mission of the community colleges²; and to that end, it is important that community colleges provide the same quality of curriculum review and approval that is given to other areas of the college curriculum.

Curriculum Approval

Local Curriculum Approval

Curriculum approval at the local level plays a central role in ensuring that noncredit students receive the same quality of instruction provided to other students. More importantly, it is the fundamental mechanism that engages faculty in the design and evaluation of noncredit curriculum and its effectiveness in helping students to transition to college, gain meaningful-wage work and contribute to the community and civic society.

Requirements for local curriculum approval include:

- ✓ Local curriculum committee approval of all noncredit courses or sequence of courses constituting a program.
- ✓ The curriculum committee conducting review has been established by the mutual agreement of the college and/or district administration and the academic senate. The committee is either a committee of the academic senate or a committee that includes faculty and is otherwise comprised in a way that is mutually agreeable to the college and/or district administration and the academic senate.³
- ✓ Curriculum committee shall recommend approval of the course only if the course treats subject matter, uses resource materials, teaching methods, and standards of attendance and achievement that the committee deems appropriate for the enrolled students.⁴

¹ CEC § 8500

² CEC §66010.4

³ CCR, Title 5, §55002(a)(1)

⁴ CCR, Title 5, § 55002(c)(1)

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- ✓ The course outline of record shall specify the scope, objectives, content, instructional methodology, and methods of evaluation for determining whether the stated objectives have been met.⁵
- ✓ The course outline serves as the official record of the course description; is maintained in the official college files; and is made available to each instructor.⁶
- ✓ The course outline of record includes a signature block for the Chair of the Curriculum Committee and the Chief Instructional Officer.
- ✓ All sections of the course are taught by a qualified instructor in accordance with the set of objectives and other specifications defined in the course outline of record.⁷
- ✓ The district governing board as a course meeting the needs of enrolled students must have approved all noncredit courses.
- ✓ For the purposes of noncredit state apportionment courses fall within one of the nine categories listed in ECE, § 84757 and be approved by the state. (See Legal Advisory 05-03)

CEC § 84757 Categories of Noncredit Courses Eligible for State Funding

The following are the noncredit categories eligible for funding:

- 01 Parenting, including parent cooperative preschools, classes in child growth and development and parent-child relationships
- 02 Elementary and secondary basic skills and other classes such as remedial academic courses or classes in reading, mathematics, and language arts.
- 03 English as a second language
- 04 Classes and courses for immigrants eligible for educational services in citizenship, English as a second language, and work force preparation classes in the basic skills of speaking, listening reading, writing, mathematics, decision making and problem solving skills, and other classes required for preparation to participate in job-specific technical training.
- 05 Education programs for persons with substantial disabilities
- 06 Short-term vocational programs with high employment potential
- 07 Education programs for older adults
- 08 Education programs for home economics
- 09 Health and safety education

⁵ CCR, Title 5, § 55002(c)(2)

⁶ Ibid

⁷ CCR, Title 5, §55002(c)(3)

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State Curriculum Approval

Curriculum approval at the state level is to affirm that the colleges have complied with provisions of the California Education Code and Title 5, Regulations for claiming apportionment. Courses that have not been approved by the Chancellor's Office are not eligible for funding. "Legal Advisory 05-03" has been developed to provide technical guidance on Title 5 provisions related to state approval and eligibility requirements for noncredit state apportionments and should be used in tandem with this primer.

In brief, the following is a list of conditions that apply to state approval:

- ✓ Courses or programs offered for noncredit shall be approved by the Chancellor in accordance with section 55100 on forms provided by the Chancellor's Office.
- ✓ Colleges must complete all sections of application form CCC-456. The application form shall, include the original signature of the Chancellor, Superintendent of Instruction or President certifying that the district board of governors has approved the course outline of record.
- ✓ The course outline of record is part of the application and a copy must be attached to the application form CCC-456. The course outline of record should include a signature block that shows that the course has been signed and dated as approved by the Chair of the District/College Curriculum Committee and the District/College's Chief Instructional Officer.
- ✓ Course outline of record for all noncredit courses shall be on file in the community college offering the course.
- ✓ Authorities of each community college maintaining noncredit courses shall keep such current records and reports as may be required by the Chancellor.
- ✓ Colleges must conduct an annual review of their noncredit course inventory and submit it annually to the System Office on or about July of each year.

Reasons for Returned Applications

Applications are returned without review if any of the following conditions exist:

- An outdated application form CCC-456 is used. Check the Noncredit Education Website for current application forms and instructions.
- An incomplete Application Form CCC-456 is submitted. All items, 1-15, must be appropriately filled in. No boxes should be left blank.
- Missing signature and date by Chancellor/Superintendent/President certifying that the District Board of Governors has approved the course outline of record.
- Curriculum Committee approved course outline of record is not attached and signed by Curriculum Chair and Chief Instructional Officer.
- Appropriate Application for Approval –Credit or Noncredit Apprenticeship Program are not be used. (See Program and Course Approval Handbook page 12 and Appendix A.)

Reasons for Delay in Application Review Time

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Applications often require further clarification or technical assistance that can cause delay in the approval process and are often due to the following reasons:

- Courses do not meet one of the nine eligible categories or are coded under the wrong eligibility category. For example, career development, employment or workforce literacy are coded as short-term vocational education and should be coded as basic skills.
- Use of wrong TOP Code. (Use February 2004, Sixth Edition TOP Code, Corrected Version, November 2004).
- Improper coding of demonstration of need. This is particularly true for short-term vocational programs with high employment potential. In accordance with CEC, §§ 78015-78016, at a minimum, the college must have conducted a labor market or employer survey or show that the course is mandated or needed for licensing/certification or employment. All short-term vocational education courses must be coded as a one, two or six. Noncredit short-term vocational education course of study or program should compliment not duplicate existing vocational/career technical education programs and be viewed in the context of the district/colleges vocational education plan.
- Course outline of record doesn't meet the basic criteria of CCR Title 5 § 55002 (c) (2).
- Difficulty in determining learning objectives or exit competencies and methods for determining student achievement.
- Instructional hours are missing or appear to be insufficient for students to accomplish the learning objectives as presented in the course outline of record.
- Courses are being offered in dance and physical education and do not adhere to the provisions of CCR, Title 5, and § 58130. The Chancellor's Office will approve noncredit courses for older adults or courses for persons with disabilities, which incorporate dance or recreational activities as a component of the course. Dance or recreational activities may be taught in other types of noncredit courses, but student participation in such activities may not be claimed for apportionment.
- Courses intended for special populations such as older adults, persons with substantial disabilities, immigrants are not being designed to specifically meet the needs and interests of a noncredit eligible target population. The course outline of record, particularly the course description, objectives, content, methodology and evaluation should clearly demonstrate they are meeting the needs of these special populations.
- Courses appear to be closed to the public and are in conflict with the "open course" provisions of CCR, Title 5, § 51006. and in §58051.5(a)(b).
- Courses use work experience, internships, cooperative education, fieldwork, and independent study as a method of instruction. With the exception of distance education, noncredit is not eligible for apportionment in these areas.
- Courses do not seem to be compliance with CEC § 76380(a), which, with the exception of an occasional material fee, do not allow the colleges to charge an enrollment fee for noncredit courses.
- Course outline of record does not demonstrate that the noncredit course went through the formal college curriculum committee.

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Definitions

Program, Course and Class Classification and Standards

For the purpose of noncredit the following definitions shall apply:

- a) "Course" means an organized pattern of instruction on a specified subject offered by a community college.
- b) "Educational program" is an organized sequence of courses leading to a defined objective, a degree, a certificate, a diploma, a license, or transfer to another institution of higher education.
- c) "Class" means a community services offering. (Community service courses do not have to be approved by the Chancellor's Office).

Mutual Agreement (MOU)

A court decision on the application of California Education Code, § 8510, *Orange Unified School District v. Rancho Santiago CCD*, held that a mutual agreement between the community college and K-12 is no longer required because the mission of the community colleges includes offering adult noncredit instruction (CEC, § 66010.4). The Chancellor's Office continues to encourage partnership development to improve articulation with K-12.

Noncredit Course Attendance

Contact hours of enrollment in noncredit courses shall be based upon the count of students present at each course meeting. Full-time equivalent students in noncredit courses shall be computed by dividing the sum of contact hours of enrollment by 525.⁸

Noncredit distance education courses may be conducted as independent study pursuant to [section 55316.5](#), and the computation of full-time equivalent students for such courses is prescribed in [section 58003.1\(f\)\(2\)](#). Forty-eight hours of noncredit instruction typically translates to 1 unit of credit.

Reporting of Noncredit Courses

CCR T. 5 §55001(c)

(c) All districts shall report the classification of all courses, classes and activities offered in accordance with the system contained in Subsections (a) and (b) and the standards in Section 55002 by transmitting the following information to the Chancellor's Office:

- (1) the unique static course identifier and the course title for all credit and noncredit courses
- (2) the classification of each credit and noncredit course in accordance with its primary objective, consistent guidelines published by the Chancellor
- (3) whether the course is offered for credit or noncredit;

(The noncredit course identifier used to identify a course on the Application Form CCC-456 should be the same as used to report course enrollments to MIS. (When course identifier numbers do not comport, it serves as an indicator that the course may not have been approved by the Chancellor's Office)

The Noncredit Annual Inventory Report

The Chancellor's Office maintains and updates an annual inventory of all approved noncredit courses. Inventories are sent to each college via email in July of each year.

⁸ CCR T. 5 § 58007

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The colleges are requested to review and verify the accuracy of the inventory and make the applicable revisions.

Noncredit Curriculum Resources

Colleges can download the application Form CCC-456 and instructions from www.cccco.edu. The application form is located under the Academic Affairs and Educational Services Division, Noncredit (Adult Education) menu.

Taxonomy of Programs and Program Course Approval Handbook can be downloaded from www.cccco.edu. The documents are located under the Academic Affairs and Educational Services Division, Credit Program and Course Approvals, Reference Materials.

Components of a Model Course Outline of Record, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. www.academicssenate.cc.ca.us
Office of Faculty Development, Riverside Community College District, www.4Faculty.org provides staff development opportunities for curriculum development.

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