

CTE Course Re-enrollment: Practices from the Field

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During the 2014 ASCCC Fall Plenary, delegates passed Resolution 07.06, *Re-enrollment Information for Admissions and Records Staff*. This resolution was a response to concerns raised by career technical education (CTE) faculty that colleges are struggling to secure permission for students to re-enroll in a course due to a significant change in industry standards or licensure or due to a legally mandated requirement (Title 5 §55040 (b) (8 and 9)). This resolution directed the ASCCC to recommend to the Chancellor’s Office that Admissions and Records staff be encouraged to permit students’ re-enrollment into necessary courses and to research effective practices used by local districts to re-enroll students that meet the criteria under Title 5 §55040 (b)(8 and 9) and present its findings by 2016 Spring Plenary Session.

More recently, at the first-ever CTE Curriculum Academy, faculty and administrators had an opportunity to explore local and statewide curriculum practices. Some colleges noted that they were experiencing extreme difficulty in allowing CTE students to re-enroll as permitted by Title 5. The voicing of these difficulties emphasized the need for the effective practices guidance requested in Resolution 7.06 F14 in order to help students re-enroll in compliance with the regulations.

CREDIT COURSE REPETITION REGULATIONS

Since 2011, significant changes have been made to Title 5 to clarify exactly when a student may repeat a course. As a general rule, a district may not permit a student to re-enroll in a credit course if the student received a satisfactory grade on the previous enrollment.

CTE courses do not fall under the types of courses that a district may designate as repeatable under the revised Title 5 §55041. Previous regulation §55041 (c) (2) (b), which permitted repeatability of activity courses, was extended by many colleges and districts to apply to career technical education courses. The recommendation of the Statewide Academic Senate Repeatability Taskforce in 2011 was for faculty to establish courses designed so that students can achieve an acceptable level of proficiency within a related number of hours of study. More advanced proficiency would be addressed by more advanced courses.

Since promulgation of the revised regulations regarding course repetition, some colleges have indicated an undue negative impact on their CTE programs. However, two sections of current regulations specifically address CTE students who may need to repeat coursework in pursuit of a career, career advancement, or career maintenance. These specific sections are as follows:

§55040. District Policy for Course Repetition.

(a) *The governing board of each community college district shall adopt and publish policies and procedures pertaining to the repetition of credit courses. Such policies and procedures shall not conflict with section 55025 or Education Code section 76224, pertaining to the finality of grades assigned by instructors, or with subchapter 2.5 (commencing with section 59020) of chapter 10 of this division, pertaining to the retention and destruction of student records.*

(b) *The policies and procedures adopted pursuant to subdivision (a) may,*

(8) *permit a student to repeat a course determined to be legally mandated as defined in section 55000, regardless of whether substandard academic work has been recorded. Such courses may be repeated for credit any number of times. The governing board of a district may establish policies and procedures requiring students to certify or document that course repetition is legally mandated.*

(9) *permit a student to petition the district to repeat a course as a result of a significant change in industry or licensure standards such that repetition of the course is necessary for employment or licensure. Such courses may be repeated for credit any number of times. The governing board of the district may establish policies and procedures requiring students to certify or document that there has been a significant change in industry or licensure standards necessitating course repetition.*

Title 5 §55040 (b) (8) was included in previous regulation, while §55040 (b) (9) was added to ensure that students would have access to courses needed to improve their competitiveness or to improve or maintain their skills in their field. The regulations state, “The governing board of the district may establish policies and procedures requiring students to certify or document that there has been a significant change in industry or licensure standards necessitating course repetition.” Colleges and districts must ensure that their communities are effectively served by providing current, relevant, and timely training while also, as stewards of the public trust, abiding within the spirit of limitations on course enrollments. In order to balance between these interests, college policy and procedure must be transparent and consistent.

The following recommendations may help to ensure effective practice in the implementation of §55040 (b) (8) and (9):

- Include in the course outline of record a course note indicating that the course is eligible for “Petition to Repeat” if legally mandated or when a significant change to industry or licensure standards occur. The note should appear in the course catalog as well as the schedule of classes. This practice ensures that the Curriculum Committee has evaluated the course as one for which students may apply for repetition and provides students with information.
- Provide students with clear instructions regarding how to petition to repeat a course based on the local policies and procedures. Publish these instructions online and in students’ advisement documents.
- Meet with Admissions and Records personnel to determine the documentation required to ensure that a petition is approvable and sufficient to establish an audit record. Remove as many barriers for students as possible through practices such as the following:
- Collect all statutes that relate to mandated training related to any program offered at the college. This task should not be the responsibility of the student.
- File significant changes to industry or licensure changes with Admissions and Records prior to the registration period so that they are aware petitions may be submitted. Provide documentation about such changes for the audit record.
- Establish a central point of contact for Admissions and Records for questions on petitions.
- Develop a template employer letter to help students gather the appropriate information that will facilitate their petition. Ask students to document what employment they are seeking, such as a clerical specialist.
- Provide access to petition forms in multiple locations and formats. Web-enable the petition process if possible.

In addition to establishing permitted practice to enable CTE students to repeat a course per §55040 (b) (8) and (9), faculty may consider developing noncredit or fee-based options for students for whom hours of continuing education, as opposed to course credit, is of value. Both noncredit instruction and fee-based classes may be co-offered with credit classes, providing additional flexibility to meet community needs for training. 🐦