

## Noncredit Instruction FAQs

### **What is the purpose and role of noncredit instruction?**

In 1856, elementary basic skills, vocational courses, and English courses for immigrants were the original courses offered in California's first evening adult schools. Today, noncredit courses often serve as a first point of entry for many underserved students as well as a transition point to credit instruction. Noncredit instruction prepares students to achieve academic, career, and lifelong learning goals, including preparing to succeed in college-level work.

### **Is noncredit instruction part of the California Community College mission?**

Yes. Noncredit instruction is part of the CCC mission under California Education Code §66010.4.

### **What is the difference between noncredit and community service instruction?**

Community service courses are fee based and based on community needs and interests. Programs must be self-supporting at the local level. Title 5 does not require local curriculum committees to approve community service courses. In contrast, noncredit courses are supported by state funding, must be established through the college curriculum committee in a manner similar to credit courses, and are limited to the categories of services delineated in Education Code §84757.

### **What is the difference between K-12 adult education and CCC noncredit instruction?**

K-12 adult education programs and courses are offered through the California Department of Education (CDE). CCC noncredit programs and courses are offered through the California Community College system and are subject to Education Code and Title 5 regulations concerning community college instruction, including the qualifications of the instructors.

### **Are there different curriculum approval requirements for noncredit courses and certificates?**

No. Curriculum requirements for noncredit and credit at the local college and district levels are the same.

### **What is the role of career development and college preparation (CDCP) disciplines in noncredit instruction?**

In 2006, SB 361 increased funding for certain noncredit CDCP courses. In order to qualify for "enhanced funding," these courses must be sequenced and lead to certificates. The categories include the following: 1) English as a Second Language; 2) basic skills in Math and English; 3) short-term CTE courses with high employment potential; 4) high school diploma or high school equivalency certificates; 5) workforce preparation courses; and 6) programs for apprentices.

### **What are the recent changes affecting the structure and funding of adult education and noncredit instruction?**

- In 2013, the legislature passed AB 86<sup>1</sup> to amend California Education Code §84830 to create regional consortia to implement a plan to "better serve the educational needs of adults." Currently, 70 consortia are planning how to join the strengths of both systems (K-12 adult education and CCC noncredit programs) to better serve our students.

AB 86 areas include the following: 1) English as a Second Language; 2) basic skills in Math and English; 3) classes for immigrants eligible for educational services in citizenship and workforce preparation; 4) classes required for a high school diploma or equivalency certificate; 5) education programs for adults with disabilities; 6) short-term CTE programs with high employment potential; and 6) programs for apprentices.

- Career development and college preparation (CDCP) FTES will be funded at the same level as the credit rate beginning in the 2015-16 fiscal year.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> AB 86: Education Omnibus Trailer Bill. 2013-2014.

<sup>2</sup> SB 860: Education Omnibus Trailer Bill. 2014. 84750.5 (d)(4)(A)(ii)

## Noncredit Instruction: Opportunities and Challenges\*

### **Opportunities: Noncredit Instruction for Students**

- No course repeatability limits
- No fees (especially important to students who are not yet eligible for financial aid)
- No prerequisites
- Traditionally, open-entry and open-exit
- Flexible class attendance requirements
- No penalty when dropping or withdrawing from a course
- Educational option for students who have reached the 30 unit credit basic skills limit or for those that don't want to use up their 30 units too fast
- Affordable and accessible preparation option for students to complete the requirements for a High School Diploma or GED, which would enable financial aid eligibility for enrollment in credit courses
- Provides students with flexibility and time to adjust and transition to demands of college credit work
- Provides pathway to earn state-approved college certificates of completion and competency
- Students receive instructional and course evaluation of skills, coursework, and performance as approved by curriculum committee as appropriate for enrolled students (grades or no grades).
- Students have the ability to quickly review, refresh and accelerate in noncredit as they can demonstrate competency and move up levels more quickly.

### **Potential Challenges: Noncredit Instruction for Students**

- Students are not able to use financial aid to support their educational endeavors.
- Students may not have sufficient access to support services.
- Availability of textbooks and instructional materials may be limited due to fiscal barriers.
- If course offerings are limited, students with different academic levels may be placed in the same class.
- Since credit, grades, and certifications are not commonly offered, class attendance may fluctuate.

### **Opportunities: Noncredit Instruction for Colleges and Communities**

- Provides access to college credit courses for under-prepared and underserved adult populations (students of color, older adults, non-high school graduates, immigrants, students who have struggled academically, adults re-entering general society, etc.)
- Helps strengthen and support new, returning, and continuing college students' basic skills, ESL, and career preparation skills
- Increases student preparedness and success rates for students matriculating into credit from noncredit
- Provides students with early college success, academic and career preparation pathways, and educational certifications

### **Potential Challenges: Noncredit Instruction for Faculty**

- Viewed differently than credit faculty
- Under-funded, under-resourced in terms of full-time faculty, administrative support, and instructional and operational budgets
- Too few full-time faculty to ensure sufficient participation and representation in college policy and planning
- Highest teaching load of all disciplines
- Noncredit faculty are not included in the calculation of FON.
- Limitations at the local level on transcription of course grades and certificates and institutionalization of CDCP certificate applications and awards
- Teach multiple academic skills levels in same class if course offerings are limited
- Requires consistent class attendance and student retention since state reimbursement is based on daily attendance, not census date

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\* In the fall of 2014, the ASCCC Noncredit Committee wrote this FAQ sheet to provide information and inspire discussion about noncredit instruction. Please note that the potential challenges listed above may also be opportunities, depending upon your local student population and college/district policies.