

Noncredit Course Outline

Noncredit courses are basically what its title suggests – community college instruction that has no credit associated with it. Students who enroll in noncredit courses do not receive any type of college credit for these courses, nor do they receive official grades. Noncredit courses require no fees on the part of students.

Noncredit instruction can only be offered in specific areas detailed in regulation and Education Code. These areas comprise the following:

1. Parenting, including parent cooperative preschools, classes in child growth and development and parent-child relationships.
2. Elementary and secondary basic skills and other courses and classes such as remedial academic courses or classes in reading, mathematics, and language arts.
3. English as a second language.
4. Classes and courses for immigrants eligible for educational services in citizenship, English as a second language, and workforce 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.
5. Education programs for persons with substantial disabilities.
6. Short-term vocational programs with high employment potential.
7. Education programs for older adults.
8. Education programs for home economics.
9. Health and safety education.

Please contact the [Academic Services Office](#) for advisement on entitlement areas.

Standards and criteria for noncredit courses are delineated in Title 5 §55002(c). The standards and criteria requirements for credit courses are extensive, while noncredit has fewer regulations. Per Title 5, noncredit courses must meet the needs of enrolled students and must be approved by the local curriculum committee, local governing board, and the [Chancellor's Office](#). There must be an official [course outline](#) of record with scope, objectives, contents, instructional methodology, and methods for determining if objectives have been met and courses must be taught by a qualified instructor.

Noncredit is funded at approximately half the rate of credit courses, even though noncredit has persisted and succeeded in fulfilling its function and its part of the mission of California community colleges. The Chancellor's Office established requirements which must be satisfied in order for districts to receive "enhanced funding" available under SB 361 for certain types of noncredit courses and programs. To be eligible for enhanced funding, courses leading to a noncredit certificate of completion or competency¹ must be in the area of Career Development or College Preparation and must be part of one of the following: (1) a short-term vocational program with high employment potential; (2) a sequence of courses in (A) elementary or secondary basic skills including sequences of courses leading to a high school diploma; (B) workforce preparation in the basic skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing, mathematics, decision-making, and problem-solving skills that are necessary to participate in job-specific technical training; or (C) English as a Second Language (ESL) or Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL). The Taxonomy of Program (TOP) Codes eligible for funding in basic skills, ESL, and VESL are in the 4930 and 4931.00 series. Any TOP Code that is designated as a vocational program is also eligible. Note: Supervised Tutoring (4930.09 TOP Code) is not eligible for enhanced funding.

Throughout 2005-06, the [System's Noncredit Alignment Project](#) has been developing clearer definitions and criteria for all noncredit apportionment areas in addition to recommendations for changes in curriculum guidelines and processes to better serve the needs of noncredit instruction.

What is NOT noncredit instruction? First, courses offered for non-degree applicable credit are not noncredit instruction. Non-degree applicable credit courses are actually credit courses, the units for which are not

applicable towards graduation with an associate degree. Non-degree applicable courses typically comprise college-preparatory courses such as basic skills and ESL.

Second, noncredit instruction should not be confused with non-transferable courses. Non-transferable courses are credit courses for which the units cannot be transferred to a four-year institution, typically a University of California (UC) or California State University (CSU). In general, non-degree applicable credit courses and non-transferable courses are eligible for state apportionment funding at the established rate for credit courses.

Third, noncredit courses are very different from not-for-credit courses. The term "not-for-credit" is typically used in reference to classes where the students (or in some cases, the agency that arranges for the class) pay the full cost of the class and receive no college-credit for the classwork. Such classes may also be called community service, community education, tuition or fee-based classes and receive no state apportionment. Courses offered under contract to employers, generally under the title of Contract Education, also fall into this category.

Because there is overlap between courses offered as credit or noncredit, and the two systems can also offer different educational experiences and outcomes, student needs and intent play a significant role in where they enroll. Noncredit courses are generally categorized as open entry/open exit, meaning that students have the flexibility to attend when their schedules permit. An inability to attend a class session or early withdrawal from a course carries no penalties for the student. In addition, noncredit courses carry no fees or course grades. Noncredit courses often appeal to students who are unclear about their educational goals and may have significant work or family demands. Immigrants often turn to noncredit because of the lack of fees and the relative ease of enrollment into noncredit courses. Noncredit courses are offered at a wide variety of community sites, so they are often more accessible as well.

However, noncredit has some courses and programs that are not open entry/open exit. Many of the short-term vocational programs have fixed start dates and require completion to obtain a certificate of completion. While grades may not be given for these noncredit courses, other types of record keeping are involved, such as for CalWORKs or other welfare programs.

Much of the discussion around appropriate placement of courses in credit vs. noncredit arises because of the difference in funding for credit and noncredit courses. As it currently stands, noncredit is funded at approximately half the rate of credit instruction per FTES. Unlike credit courses, whose apportionment rate varies from college to college due to Proposition 13 (1978), noncredit courses are currently funded at a single rate across the state.

Overall, there are likely more similarities than differences between credit and noncredit as both strive to provide quality education and services to meet increasingly diverse student needs and support student success, while struggling to overcome the challenges created by insufficient funding to both areas. Credit and noncredit can be viewed as an educational continuum where the two complement each other and can be used by students to meet their needs in different ways and at different stages of learning.

Further information can be obtained from [The Role of Noncredit in the California Community Colleges](#). This is a paper created by Educational Policies Committee of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges and was adopted Fall 2006.

TBA (to be arranged) hours are a unique type of instructor-student contact. In some instances the entire course might be TBA while in other courses only a portion of the total contact hours will be TBA. TBA hours are lab hours and include, but are not limited to, fieldwork, supplemental learning, open access labs, tutoring through a designated learning center, self-paced learning center work, and service learning. TBA hours must provide specific instructional activities (integrate this information on the instruction and assignment pages).

The noncredit course outline of record is similar to the credit course outline. Some of the fields on the outline are the same as those used for credit courses. Only the unique fields are discussed below:

1. Catalog Number(s): 600-699 (more advanced topics should be given the higher numbers in the 600-band)
2. Units: All 600-band courses are zero units. Thus, the unit designation is preprinted for 0.
3. Grade Code: The grade code is preprinted "NG" (no grade).
4. Entitlement Area: Noncredit curricula must qualify under one of the nine entitlement areas listed on the face page of the course outline. Identify one of the boxes. Note that only curricula in selected T.O.P. Codes qualify in some areas. Please contact the [Academic Services Office](#) for advisement.
5. Student Outcomes/Objectives: Course level student learning outcomes and objectives are clear and measurable statements that define what a student knows and/or is able to do at the completion of a course. These learning statements may involve knowledge (cognitive), skills (psychomotor), or attitudes (affective) that display evidence that learning has occurred at a specified level of competency. A word of warning: Be careful when describing attitudes in a course level student learning outcome and objective. These are difficult to assess. Ask yourself if the attitude is crucial to success in this course. If a student doesn't obtain a certain value or attitude, but demonstrates the knowledge and skills expected, is that satisfactory?

Outcomes and Objectives: Student learning can be identified as either outcomes, which are broad, more global statements or objectives, which are narrow, more specific statements. The difference is primarily that the outcomes demonstrate an overarching understanding and/or application of a core subject aspect while the objectives are the small pieces of subject matter, which build up to the learning outcome(s).

The section labeled "outcomes" is designated for student learning outcome statements that are the overarching knowledge, skills, abilities, or values students should acquire in a course. These broad learning outcomes demonstrate core student understanding and application of a subject. A noncredit course will typically have one (1) to five (5) broad student learning outcomes.

The remaining sections are designated for learning objectives, which are defined as the more specific aspects that students are expected to master at the completion of a course. Narrow objectives represent valuable skills, tools, or content that enables a student to engage in a particular subject and assists the student to build toward and support their achievement of the broader course student learning outcomes. The format of the Learning Objectives portion of this page consists of four different groups, Group One: Skill Development-Application, Group Two: Personal Development, Group Three: General Knowledge, and Group Four, Specialized Knowledge. The faculty author may select from any of the four objective groups provided on this page or choose parts from each of the four groups because any combination is appropriate. Further elaboration to describe course specificity within these objectives is recommended. The inclusion of a few sentences with each identified objective describing the specific knowledge and/or skills obtained by students from this course in that objective is recommended. Typically no more than three boxes should be selected.

6. Process for Assessment of Course Effectiveness: Identify which assessment is to be used to evaluate the extent to which the course--not the students--accomplished its objectives. Please include any established or published assessment tool(s) as appropriate.

For new courses, also complete the [New Course Supplemental Information Form](#), [Impact Assessment Form](#), and, as appropriate, a [materials fee justification memorandum](#).

The Curriculum Committee has not articulated standards for noncredit instruction materials, teaching methods or student achievement. However, there is an expectation that the course will be scheduled for the numbers of hours approved by the Board and students will faithfully attend classes.

The California Department of Education and the [California Community College Chancellor's Office](#) partnered to develop content standards for the various areas of noncredit and adult education. These model standards have yet to be published and/or disseminated by the Chancellor's Office. But a document entitled "[Noncredit At A Glance](#)" is available on the Chancellor's Office link in noncredit reference materials and was published in November 2006. This Noncredit Guide is meant as a reference document for the development of Noncredit course and programs for the California Community Colleges. This Guide is a result of the Noncredit Alignment Project, a collaborative project within the California Community College System, overseen by the Chancellor's Office, has worked to better integrate and improve the efficacy of noncredit instruction within the California Community College System.

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