



## Noncredit Repetition and Multiple Enrollments in the Same Course During the Same Term

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office  
*Jack Scott, Chancellor*

Prepared by the Academic Affairs Division  
and the Office of Communications

*July 1, 2009*



*"Empowering Community Colleges through  
Leadership, Advocacy, and Support"*

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July 1, 2009

Board of Governors  
California Community Colleges  
1102 Q Street  
Sacramento, CA 95811-6549

Dear Board of Governors,

I am pleased to present to you the Chancellor's Office report on the study of Noncredit Repetition and Multiple Enrollments in the Same Course During the Same Term, 2009.

This report represents the outcome of research efforts that were focused on the issues of noncredit course repetition and multiple enrollments. The following title 5 provision, adopted by the Board of Governors on May 5, 2008, requires the chancellor to examine these issues and make recommendations.

§ 58161.7 "The Chancellor shall report to the board of Governors by May 31, 2009, on appropriate limitations on state apportionment for repetition of noncredit courses including multiple enrollments in the same course during the same course during the same term. The Chancellor's recommendations shall be developed in consultation with the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, the Chief Instructional Officers and other appropriate groups and shall be based on research concerning the educational efficacy and public benefit of repetition of each of the categories of noncredit courses. The Chancellor shall also consider recommendations related to ensuring appropriate academic standards for noncredit courses and determining when it is in the public interest to provide continued instruction through noncredit courses. It is the intent of the Board of Governors to consider the recommendations of the Chancellor and adopt appropriate limitations on multiple enrollments and repetition of noncredit courses by January 31, 2010."

To examine related issues and arrive at an appropriate set of recommendations, the Chancellor's Office formed an eighteen (18) member subcommittee of the System Advisory Committee on Curriculum (SACC) and charged it with studying the value, role, level and cost of repetition, re-enrollment, and multiple enrollments in all areas of noncredit. Subcommittee members also analyzed Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems (COMIS) data for re-enrollments in the same course over a six-year period, from 2000 through 2006, using a cohort model.

This report presents a summary of the findings of the subcommittee's review and analysis and provides carefully considered recommendations for the Board of Governors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jack Scott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jack Scott  
Chancellor



# Introduction

The chancellor of the California Community Colleges is required to report to the Board of Governors (BOG) on the findings from its study on repetition and multiple enrollments for noncredit courses and to make recommendations for appropriate limitations on state apportionments for course repetition and multiple enrollments.

Title 5, § 58161.7, further calls upon the chancellor to develop a set of recommendations related to noncredit instruction that are based on research concerning the educational efficacy and public benefits of noncredit course repetition in each of the noncredit categories. More specifically, title 5 directs the chancellor to make recommendations for appropriate limitations on state apportionment for repetition of noncredit courses and for multiple enrollments in the same course during the same term. Additionally, the chancellor is directed to make recommendations related to appropriate academic standards for noncredit courses and to determine when it is in the public's best interest to provide continued noncredit instruction. This report fulfills these requirements.

This report addresses relevant issues related to making recommendations for re-enrollment and repetition limitations, including the following:

- the frequency of noncredit repetition and multiple enrollments;
- the frequency of repetition and multiple enrollments in certain areas of noncredit;
- the pedagogical explanation for multiple enrollments and repetition; and,
- the fiscal impact of repetition and multiple enrollments to the California community colleges.

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## Proposed Actions

### July 2009

The California Community Colleges Board of Governors accepts the chancellor's report on Noncredit Repetition and Multiple Enrollments in the Same Course During the Same Term.

### November 2009

Proposed regulations are presented to the Board of Governors for first reading, no action taken.

### January 2010

The Board of Governors adopts regulations on noncredit repetition and multiple course enrollments.



# Background

## Noncredit Instruction

Noncredit instruction is one of several educational options offered within the California Community Colleges. It offers students access to a variety of courses and assists students in reaching their personal and professional goals. Noncredit courses are intended to provide students with lifelong learning, college transfer, and career preparation opportunities. Since many students do not need or desire unit credits, noncredit courses serve as a first point of entry to college.

Noncredit instruction plays a pivotal role in helping students transition to careers and college, including opening the doorway to basic preparation, transfer level courses, and higher paying jobs. Noncredit instruction also provides opportunities for developmental education in basic skills and English as a Second Language and assists California residents with engaging in family and civic life. Additionally, noncredit instruction assists students with sustaining and improving quality of life. Most recently, the Department of Aging, working in collaboration with the community colleges, is employing noncredit as a primary means to improve the quality of life and life expectancy of California's growing aging population.

### Definitions

**Repetition in noncredit courses:**

When the student has completed the maximum number of hours required for the course and re-enrolls and repeats the same course content.

**Re-enrollment in noncredit courses:**

When a student has completed fewer than the maximum number of hours required for the course and re-enrolls in the same course during another term. This student then proceeds in the course and completes subsequent content or another portion or all of the required hours for the course.

**Multiple enrollments in noncredit courses:** When a student enrolls in more than one section of the same course during the same term.

**Completion of noncredit courses:**

When a student has participated in the course for the total number of hours specified on the course outline. The hours required for a noncredit course completion may be accumulated in one section during one term, over multiple terms or by enrollment in multiple sections during a single term or terms.

**Funding for noncredit courses:**

For noncredit courses, the base state apportionment rate is \$2,745 per full time equivalent student (FTES). The enhanced rate of \$3,232 per FTES is paid for eligible noncredit course sequences/programs that advance career development or college preparation.

## Noncredit Course Enrollments: Student Body

In 2007-08 there were 929,986 students enrolled in noncredit courses. These students, enrolled in an average of two classes and accounted for 2,053,637 total enrollments. Noncredit students' educational backgrounds are diverse, ranging from highly educated to a large number of "unknowns."

- Thirty-nine percent of noncredit students have a high school diploma or completion certificate, including awards from foreign schools.
- Eight percent of noncredit students have an advanced degree beyond high school.
- Fifty-eight percent of noncredit students were female and 39 percent were male. Three percent provided no gender data.
- Many noncredit students, 18.4 percent, have either dropped out of school or have not yet received the high school diploma or certificate.
- Adding to the complexity, one out of every three students is listed as "unknown" with no disclosure of educational status.
- Eighty-two percent of the total noncredit FTES reported for 2007-08 was generated by only twenty-five colleges, representing 22.7 percent of all colleges offering non-credit courses.

### Demographics

Much like California, the population of noncredit students is very diverse.

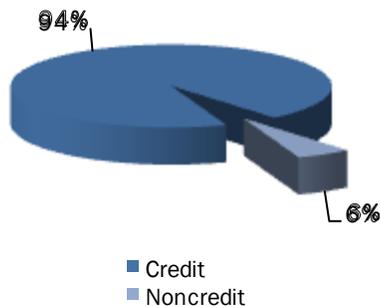
For 2007-08:

- 57 percent of noncredit enrollees were underrepresented minorities. Of those students enrolled in noncredit courses:
  - Hispanics represented 32 percent;
  - Caucasians represented 31 percent (white non-Hispanic);
  - Asians represented 12 percent;
  - African Americans represented 6 percent;
  - Filipinos represented 3 percent; and,
  - American Indians, Alaskan natives and Pacific Islanders represented slightly less than 1 percent.
- The two largest age groups were:
  - 36 percent were 18-24 years of age;
  - 22 percent were 65 years of age or older.
- Approximately 5 percent of the non-credit student population was disabled.

## Noncredit Instruction: Generated Apportionment

Apportionment for noncredit instruction is small in comparison to apportionment calculated for credit instruction. Slightly less than six percent of the total apportionment allocated to the colleges is generated through noncredit full time equivalent students (FTES). Chart 1 illustrates the relationship of apportionment generated through credit courses and noncredit courses in the California Community Colleges.

**Chart 1**  
Comparison of Apportionment for Credit and Noncredit, 2007-08



## Noncredit Instruction: Authorized Areas

There are ten (10) noncredit course and program categories identified in title 5 section 58160 that are eligible for state apportionment funding. These categories can be grouped into two (2) broad areas, special populations and subject disciplines.

There are four (4) special population categories: Citizenship for Immigrants, Parenting, Education Programs for Persons with Substantial Disabilities, and Education Programs for Older Adults. There are six (6) categories that address several disciplines or skill areas: Elementary and Secondary Basic Skills, English as a Second Language (ESL) (*including Vocational ESL*), Home Economics (*Consumer and Family Sciences*), Health and Safety Education, Short-term Vocational Programs with High Employment Potential, and Workforce Preparation.

## Noncredit Instruction: Student Enrollments

The Chancellor's Office data indicates that of those students enrolled in noncredit instruction, nearly 78 percent were enrolled in career development and college preparation courses, which include the areas of ESL, basic skills, short term vocational, and workforce preparation.

The largest area of enrollments was in basic skills, representing 38 percent. However, the largest number of FTES generated was in the ESL area, representing 32 percent.

Virtually all the community colleges, 109 out of 110 colleges, offer some form of noncredit instruction. The area offered by most colleges is basic skills; 95 colleges offer elementary and secondary basic skills.

## Authorized Areas of Noncredit Instruction

<p><b>Special Populations</b></p> <p>There are four (4) special population categories.</p>	<p><b>Citizenship for Immigrants</b> – Courses for immigrants eligible for educational services include citizenship, ESL and workforce preparation. Classes include the basic skills of speaking, listening reading, writing, mathematics, decision making and problem solving. This curriculum is specifically designed to provide immigrants and their families with the opportunity to become active and participating members of economic and civic society and may include preparation for citizenship</p> <p><b>Parenting</b> – Courses include parent cooperative preschools, child growth and development, and parent-child relationships. This curriculum is designed to offer lifelong education in parenting, child development and family relations in order to enhance the quality of home, family, career and community life.</p> <p><b>Education Programs for Persons with Substantial Disabilities</b> – This curriculum is designed to provide students with life skill proficiencies that are essential in the fulfillment of academic, vocational and personal goals. A person with substantial disabilities is a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such impairment.</p> <p><b>Education Programs for Older Adults</b> – This curriculum is designed to offer lifelong education that provides opportunities for personal learning that helps maintain and improve the quality of life outcomes, including improving the wellbeing and life expectancy of a growing aging population.</p>
<p><b>Disciplines or Skill Areas</b></p> <p>The remaining six (6) categories address several disciplines or skill areas.</p>	<p><b>Elementary and Secondary Basic Skills</b> – This curriculum is designed to provide instruction for individuals beginning at elementary and secondary levels in reading, writing, computation, and problem-solving skills. Elementary level skill development addresses the content and proficiencies at levels from first (1st) through the eighth (8th) grade. Secondary level instruction addresses the content and proficiencies at levels ninth (9th) through the twelfth (12th) grade and may incorporate a high school diploma or GED.</p> <p><b>English as a Second Language (ESL), (Including Vocational ESL)</b> – This curriculum is designed to provide instruction in the English language to adult, non-native English speakers with varied academic, vocational and personal goals. ESL provides instruction primarily in, but not limited to, the areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing, and may integrate other areas such as computer literacy and cultural competency.</p> <p><b>Home Economics (Consumer and Family Sciences)</b> – These courses are designed to offer lifelong education to enhance the quality of home, family, career and community life. This area of instruction provides educational opportunities that respond to human needs, future technologies, consumer decision-making and lifelong learning.</p> <p><b>Health and Safety Education</b> – This curriculum is designed to offer lifelong education to promote the health, safety and well-being of individuals, families and communities.</p> <p><b>Short-term Vocational Programs with High Employment Potential</b>– These programs, known as Career Technical Education (CTE), are organized in a sequence of courses leading to a vocational/career technical objective, certificate, or an award that is directly related to employment.</p> <p><b>Workforce Preparation</b> – These classes are designed to provide basic employability skills and are for students eligible for educational services pertaining to basic skills. In addition to basic skills, workforce preparation introduces students to skills such as valuing diversity at work, accessing and navigating in-formational technology and applying interpersonal skills necessary for team work.</p>

## Noncredit Courses: Academic Standards

The process for ensuring appropriate academic standards for noncredit instruction has been examined and is effectively in place. Academic standards criteria is set both in code and by college curriculum committees. Technical assistance, administrative guidelines, legal advisories and a web-based curriculum handbook are available to the colleges to ensure adherence to appropriate academic standards.

Noncredit instruction is subject to accreditation conducted by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and other accrediting/licensing entities for specific disciplines. The public benefit of noncredit instruction is also set in code and has repeatedly been reaffirmed by the legislature.

## Noncredit Courses: State Funding

As summarized in Table 1, credit has only one funding level, \$4,564, but noncredit has two levels of funding. One is the basic rate of \$2,745, for all courses in noncredit areas that are not covered by Education Code section 84760.5 and for those courses in noncredit areas that are covered but have not been arranged in approved sequences of courses leading to a certificate of completion or competency. The second and enhanced rate of \$3,232, is for those courses that are covered under the areas of section 84760.5 and that have been arranged in approved sequences of courses leading to a certificate of completion or competency. These courses in sequences or programs are designed to prepare noncredit students for career development and/or college preparation.

<b>Table 1 2007-08 California Community College Noncredit Apportionment Statewide Totals</b>		
Rates	Funded FTES <sup>1</sup>	Revenue
Noncredit Base Rate of \$2,745	54,315	\$149,095,196
Noncredit Higher Rate of \$3,232	43,152	\$139,468,234
Noncredit Sub-Totals	97,468	\$288,563,430
Credit Rate of \$4,564	1,071,985	\$4,893,427,279
Totals	1,169,452	\$5,181,990,709
<sup>1</sup> FTES data in this table is based on the Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges, Fiscal 320 Report for 2007-08.		

Table 1, 2007-08 California Community College Noncredit Apportionment Statewide Totals, looks at the amount of funding for credit and noncredit and compares the two FTES levels and amounts of funding. As of the 2007-2008 Recalculation for Apportionment, the community colleges received \$288,563,430 in noncredit apportionment for 97,467.56 FTES, based on the 320 Report for 2007-08.

While the headcount of students in the California Community Colleges enrolled in noncredit courses may be significant (almost one-third), the apportionment generated by noncredit students is small. Of the total apportionment allocated to the colleges, approximately 5.6 percent is allocated for noncredit FTES.

Apportionment for nearly all noncredit instruction is derived from positive attendance where colleges are paid based on the actual hours of student attendance. Colleges receive funding only for the hours of participation.

In all situations analyzed, it appears students are benefitting from re-enrollment and multiple enrollments. Such course taking patterns do

not necessarily increase the cost to the state compared to offering instruction in a block scheduled manner for the length of the term. In fact, if scheduling courses for numerous hours a day each day of the week were required, many students would not be able to access noncredit instruction.

Since noncredit allocation is based on positive attendance, the cost is the same for a student who completes a course over the duration of several terms as for another student who completed the same course in one term.

### Noncredit Courses: A Significant Public Benefit

#### A Learner Centered Curriculum for All Students: The Report of the Noncredit Alignment Project<sup>1</sup>

A study conducted in 2005-2006, demonstrates that noncredit education continues to be of great benefit to the citizens of California. This study includes an extensive review of the literature on adult education as well as a review of local and state curriculum planning and approval processes, including the criteria and practices used to ensure appropriate academic standards for noncredit instruction.

The report points out that the key challenge faced by the colleges is one of capacity and infrastructure, particularly in terms of space, budget constraints and stability of the faculty to provide the needed programs and services in response to public demand. Although funding has improved, achieving equitable funding continues to be the biggest challenge for noncredit instruction.

The California Community College funding reforms enacted through the passage of SB 361(Scott) in 2006, took the first step in addressing the inequities in funding for noncredit instruction.

In addition, the California Legislature has historically resolved that all of the noncredit categories identified in code are of public benefit to the state and noncredit instruction is considered an essential element of the community colleges mission.

<sup>1</sup> *A Learner Centered Curriculum for All Students: The Report of the Noncredit Alignment Project*, Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges, Academic Affairs, 2006

# Key Findings

## Noncredit Repetition and Multiple Enrollments

The most critical factor analyzed for this report is the level of noncredit repetition in the system. The Chancellor's Office Management Information System (COMIS) data for re-enrollments in the same course over a six-year period, beginning with the fall 2000 term, was used to determine the level of noncredit course repetitions and multiple enrollments.

To determine the number of re-enrollments in the same course, the Chancellor's Office noncredit enrollment data was constructed using a cohort model and tracked over a six-year period.

It was determined that up to 70 percent of noncredit students enroll in a noncredit course only one time. Re-enrollment occurs most frequently when students who do not initially complete the course return to proceed with course completion. Noncredit students who return to complete a course do so nearly five times to proceed through the student objectives included in the course outline.

It was also determined that re-enrollment occurs in some cases when students with substantial disabilities return to review skills and concepts previously covered.

Within the context of re-enrollments, there is an instructional relationship and benefit to student re-enrollment patterns for noncredit and most faculty and administrators view noncredit course re-enrollment, repetition, and multiple enrollments positively. Further, re-enrollment patterns appear to facilitate student movement

through successive course objectives required for course completion.

Multiple enrollments represent a small subset of re-enrollments. Students who enroll in more than one section of the same course during the same term complete more coursework and may access more than one off-campus center to do so.

Conclusions from the data include but are not limited to the following:

- More than two-thirds (69 percent) of the students in the cohort enrolled in the course only one time in the six-year period.
- Less than one-third of the students had a number of re-enrollments during the six-year period.
- The noncredit instructional categories with the highest rates of re-enrollment generate the lowest FTES in noncredit instruction (citizenship for immigrants and substantial disabilities).
- While the re-enrollment rates for these areas are high, the impact on apportionment for re-enrollment is low.
- An area with a high rate of re-enrollment is Older Adults, which generates a relatively high level of apportionment in noncredit. However, the impact on apportionment for re-enrollment in this area is low.
- The vast majority of re-enrollments consist of just one re-enrollment. In other words, students took a given course just two times.
- The cost per re-enrollment attempt to the system is less than \$35 per attempt.



## Conclusion

Multiple enrollments tend to occur most often when students need immersion in skill areas such as ESL and need to participate in more than one section of a course during the same term.

Multiple enrollments in other situations are driven by the need for students to utilize different centers/sites during the same term to complete a course offered at several sites. Child care needs and work schedules often drive this need. Permitting this practice enables the students to complete the course or at least to reach more objectives included in the course during a given term.

Multiple enrollments in the same course during the same term represent a small subset of re-enrollment data.

Re-enrollment and multiple enrollments in more than one section per term represent a very small portion of the system's apportionment, less than 2 percent. Re-enrollment occurs most frequently when students who do not initially complete the course return to do so.

It is generally understood that re-enrollment provides students an opportunity to further improve their levels of performance and to complete remaining portions of noncredit courses.

Processes for ensuring appropriate academic standards for noncredit instruction are essentially in place and are communicated through guidelines, advisories and other documents.

### Recommendations

As a result of the findings contained within this report, the chancellor recommends the following to the Board of Governors (BOG):

- The BOG should reaffirm the value and role of noncredit instruction in completing the various missions of the California Community Colleges.
- The BOG should reaffirm local control and not impose systemwide limitations on re-enrollment, repetition and multiple enrollments in noncredit instruction.
- The BOG should adopt regulations directing all colleges to review each category of noncredit instruction that they offer, analyze enrollment patterns, and create local policies and procedures for noncredit instruction that address re-enrollment and multiple enrollment practices and that address implementation of higher academic standards for noncredit courses/programs in their districts.
- The BOG should adopt regulations requiring each community college district to develop local policies and procedures designed to ensure that noncredit re-enrollment, repetition and multiple enrollments do not limit access and to develop policies that facilitate student progress.
- Colleges should continue the practice of publishing the criteria for the appropriate academic standards for noncredit courses and programs in the Program and Course Approval Handbook.



The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office would like to acknowledge and thank the members of the System Advisory Committee on Curriculum Subcommittee for their considerable contributions to this report.

### **The System Advisory Committee on Curriculum Subcommittee for Noncredit and Multiple Enrollments During the Same Course During the Same Term**

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