

Noncredit FAQs for Faculty

What is the purpose of noncredit courses and programs?

Noncredit courses and programs promote student success by enabling students to gain the skills, knowledge, and confidence to get a job, get a better job, or transition to credit education. By significantly lowering the barriers to entry, noncredit courses expand student access and are a vital stepping-stone for underserved students to reach their individual goals.

Who are noncredit students?

While some credit students will benefit from enrolling in noncredit courses, noncredit courses tend to target a different population.

- Skill Builders - Some students are interested in developing a particular skill to reach a career goal and are thus not interested in enrolling in a larger credit certificate or degree program.

- Bridge to Credit - New or returning students might require targeted support to ease their transition to credit education, including building confidence in their own academic skills.
 - Undocumented Students - Due to documentation status or other limitations, certain community members do not qualify for financial aid and consequently cannot enroll in credit education. The noncredit CCC Apply application is more concise than the credit version and does not ask for documentation status. Noncredit courses provide an alternative educational path for these students, while allowing undocumented students to earn AB540 eligibility.
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Which courses can be noncredit?

In order for a course to be noncredit, it must be in one of the categories:

- a. ESL
- b. Immigrant Education
- c. Elementary and Secondary Basic Skills

- d. Health and Safety
 - e. Substantial Disabilities
 - f. Parenting
 - g. Home Economics
 - h. Courses for Older Adults
 - i. Short-term Vocational
 - j. Workforce Preparation
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What is CDCP noncredit?

Four categories of courses can be Career Development and College Preparation (CDCP) noncredit. These courses are often referred to as enhanced noncredit because they have a higher apportionment rate than other noncredit courses and even credit courses. The four categories of CDCP noncredit are:

- a. ESL
- b. Elementary and Secondary Basic Skills
- c. Short-term Vocational
- d. Workforce Preparation

In order for a course in one of the above categories to generate CDCP or enhanced funding from the State, it also must be part of a noncredit certificate.

What noncredit certificates are there?

There are two types of noncredit certificates: competency and completion.

A certificate of competency is for ESL and Elementary and Secondary Basic Skills programs. A certificate of completion is for Short-term Vocational and Workforce Preparation programs.

A certificate must consist of at least two noncredit courses.

How long are courses and certificates?

There is no maximum or minimum number of hours for noncredit courses and certificates. However, El Camino College's scheduling software works better with courses that have hours that are a multiple of 3 (i.e., 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, etc.).

Who designs noncredit curriculum and what is the approval process?

The noncredit curriculum development and approval process mirrors the credit process. Noncredit curriculum must be proposed by faculty and approved by the the DCC and the CCC.

El Camino has local control on all noncredit curriculum except for short-term vocational programs. They still have to go to the Chancellor's Office for approval.

Is a noncredit course outline of record different from a credit outline of record?

No, noncredit course outlines of record contain the same fields as credit outlines of record. However, the information will be slightly different.

For instance, there are no units attached to noncredit courses, and there are different grade options.

What are the grade options for noncredit?

There are three grade options: Pass (P), No Pass (NP), and Satisfactory Progress (SP).

What is open entry/open exit?

There is no add or drop deadline for an open entry/open exit course. A student can register for and start attending the course at any point of the term. For instance, if an open entry/open exit course is 6 weeks long, a student can start attending in the 6th week, or a student can stop attending at in the 5th week without receiving a "W".

Noncredit courses can be open entry/open exit or managed enrollment.

Managed enrollment courses have an add deadline.

It should be noted in the course catalog description if a course is open entry/open exit. Otherwise, it will be assumed the course is managed enrollment.

Do students enrolled in noncredit get financial aid?

No, noncredit students do not get any type of financial aid. Many faculty use open resources to minimize out of pocket costs for students.

Can undocumented students take noncredit?

Yes, undocumented students can take noncredit courses, and the courses count toward their eligibility for AB 540. Students should contact the college's Admissions and Records office for more information.

Can students under the age of 18 take noncredit courses?

Yes, students under the age of 18 can take noncredit courses and must complete a concurrent enrollment form. Students should work with the El Camino's Admissions and Records office to complete any needed paperwork.

What are some unique considerations for noncredit courses?

Noncredit courses are a gateway to college for many students, and so students might not understand college processes or terms. A careful explanation on the first day of class regarding what students can expect from a noncredit courses is helpful to students. Additionally, faculty can choose to include information on noncredit on the course syllabus or handout.

Possible language for syllabus: About Noncredit Courses: This is a noncredit course. Since it is tuition free, students enrolled only in noncredit courses are not eligible for financial aid. While students will not earn academic credit for this course, students have the opportunity to earn a noncredit certificate. It will take at least 90 days after the end of the semester for the college to print a certificate. This course is part of the following certificate(s):

Certificate Name:

Courses Included in Certificate:

Are noncredit and Community Education courses the same?

No, community education courses are fee-based, and the curriculum does not have to be approved or chaptered by the state. Noncredit courses are tuition-free, taught by faculty, curriculum is approved or chaptered by the state and earn apportionment.

Do noncredit courses have positive attendance?

Yes, face-to-face noncredit courses are positive attendance, meaning that faculty must take attendance every class and record the total amount of time a student attended.

Online and hybrid noncredit courses use the alternative attendance accounting method, which is a formula that includes the outside hours of study indicated in the course outline of record.

What are mirrored noncredit courses?

A noncredit mirrored course has the same course outline of record as the credit version, but with hours listed instead of units and faculty have the option of choosing unlimited repeatability when creating the course. Also, verbiage indicating that it will be offered with the credit version is added to the catalog description.

These courses are cross-listed, taught in the same classroom as the credit version, and students enrolled in the noncredit section must complete the same work as those enrolled in the credit section.

What are the benefits of mirrored noncredit courses for students?

Noncredit courses give students an opportunity to “try out” college by taking FREE noncredit courses before entering the credit pathway. This benefits

students who are unsure if they will succeed in a credit course or cannot take credit due to residency restrictions.

What are the benefits of mirrored courses for the college?

There are a few reasons faculty might consider mirroring a course:

- By setting aside a few seats for noncredit students, the college can fill courses that may be under-enrolled by broadening access
- Mirrored courses can be bundled into approved certificates that receive enhanced funding
- Increased enrollment through expanding access to noncredit populations while incurring minimal to zero additional cost for the college

- Mirrored courses bundled into certificates will count for Strong Workforce and California Adult Education outcomes
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When should a noncredit mirrored course be considered?

Introductory courses in a larger credit certificate can qualify students for an entry-level position. If these introductory courses are mirrored and bundled into a certificate, students whose goal is to get an entry-level position can complete the noncredit certificate and the college will receive Strong Workforce points. When the student is ready to continue with the credit certificate, they can do credit-by-exam.

What are the minimum qualifications for faculty to teach noncredit?

Minimum qualifications are tied to the discipline and are set by the Chancellor's Office.

Are noncredit courses required to have textbooks?

No. While noncredit courses can require a textbook, many faculty choose to leverage open educational resources, instructor created materials, or other free material. Noncredit courses are often significantly shorter than credit courses and offered off-site, both of which can make obtaining the textbook in a timely manner challenging for students. Additionally, noncredit students do not qualify for financial aid, which means that they must pay for books out of pocket.