

V. Certificates of Achievement

A. Standards and Definition

Title 5, section 55070 defines Certificate of Achievement as a credit certificate that appears by name on a student transcript, diploma, or completion award. Chancellor's Office approval is required. The college can develop and propose a Certificate of Achievement that includes coursework taken to satisfy transfer patterns established by the UC, CSU, or accredited public postsecondary institutions in adjacent states. Certificates of Achievement that consist solely of basic skills and/or ESL courses are not permitted.

Certificates of Achievement represent a well-defined pattern of learning experiences designed to develop certain capabilities that may be oriented to career or GE. Colleges *must* submit programs of 18 or more semester units or 27 or more quarter units of degree-applicable coursework for Chancellor's Office approval. Colleges *may* submit programs of 12 or more semester units or 18 or more quarter units of degree-applicable coursework for Chancellor's office approval in order that the program may be included in the student transcript.

Community colleges may also award certificates for fewer than 18 semester units or 27 quarter units without Chancellor's Office approval, but must call such certificates something other than "Certificate of Achievement." The award names "Certificate of Completion" and "Certificate of Competency" are likewise reserved for noncredit certificates and may not be used for locally-approved certificates

1. Unit Thresholds and Requirements

As detailed above, a certificate that requires 18 or more semester units or 27 or more quarter units of degree-applicable coursework must receive Chancellor's Office approval and must be called Certificate of Achievement. A certificate that requires fewer than 18 semester units or 27 quarter units may be submitted for Chancellor's Office approval if it requires at least 12 semester units or 18 quarter units of degree-applicable coursework. If approved, it must be called a Certificate of Achievement.

2. Sequence of Courses

According to title 5, section 55070 the award of a Certificate of Achievement should represent more than an accumulation of units. It should symbolize successful completion of patterns of learning experiences designed to develop certain capabilities that may be oriented to career or GE.

When a college creates a sequence of certificates in a single four-digit TOP Code, arranged such that a student must complete one level before taking another level and the set or sequence as a whole requires 18 semester units or 27 quarter units or more, then the entire certificate sequence requires Chancellor's Office approval. For example, if a college creates the low-unit certificates listed below but then makes the Level I low-unit certificate prerequisite to Level II, the college has essentially created an 18-unit program:

- Multimedia, Basic (or Level I) – 9 units
- Multimedia, Advanced (or Level II) – requires completion of Level I or equivalent skills and knowledge plus an additional 9 units

As such, the college needs to submit the entire 18 units for approval as a Certificate of Achievement. However, Chancellor's Office approval of these two certificates would not be possible if the Basic (Level I) certificate is not required for the Advanced (Level II) because each certificate requires fewer than 12 semester units.

3. Certificates in California State University General Education Breadth and Intersegmental GE Transfer Curriculum or Adjacent State Transfer Pattern

Title 5, section 55070 allows for the approval of Certificates of Achievement that satisfy transfer patterns of UC, CSU, or accredited public baccalaureate institutions in adjacent states, which award the baccalaureate degree. To maintain statewide consistency, only the two titles listed below are permissible for this unique type of certificate:

- CSU GE-Breadth
- Intersegmental GE Transfer Curriculum (IGETC)

Certificates for public baccalaureate institutions in adjacent states may have any relevant title. Community colleges may not offer a Certificate of Achievement for completion of GE requirements for a private college or university or for completion of community college GE requirements.

B. Criteria for Approval

The Submission and Approval Guide details the process of obtaining Chancellor's Office approval of the Certificate of Achievement. However, the background and criteria of some of the required elements are briefly discussed below.

1. Narrative

All new and substantially changed Certificate of Achievement proposals must include a narrative that addresses:

1. Program Goals and Objectives – must address a valid transfer, workforce preparation, basic skills, civic education, or lifelong learning purpose. For the purposes of Chancellor’s Office submission and approval, programs may select one of three program goals: transfer, CTE, or local. Transfer is applied only to certificates for CSU GE-Breadth IGETC. CTE is limited to certificates in a vocational TOP Code. Local is used for all other certificates, but may include certificates designed to prepare students for transfer.
2. Catalog Description – includes program requirements, prerequisite skills or enrollment limitations, student learning outcomes, and information relevant to program goal
3. Program Requirements – includes course requirements and sequencing that reflect program goals
4. Master Planning – how it fits in the mission, curriculum, and master planning of the college and higher education in California
5. Enrollment and Completer Projections – projection of number of students to earn certificate annually
6. Place of Program in Curriculum/Similar Programs – how it fits in college’s existing program inventory
7. Similar Programs at Other Colleges in Service Area – justification of need for program in the region

2. Career Technical Education Certificates–Additional Documentation

In addition to a narrative, all new and substantially changed CTE programs must include:

- Labor Market Information and Analysis – refer to the section VII for additional information
- Advisory Committee Recommendation – includes advisory committee membership, minutes and summary of recommendations
- Regional Consortia Approval Meeting Minutes – showing program recommendation

Apprenticeship programs do not require advisory committee and regional consortia minutes, but do require labor market information and analysis and an approval letter from the [California Division of Apprenticeship Standards](#) (DAS).

3. Local (non-CTE) Certificates–Additional Documentation

In addition to a narrative, all new and substantially changed local certificates may include:

- Programmatic articulation agreements
- ASSIST documentation verifying that a majority (51% or greater) of required courses in the program are articulated for the major (AAM) at the single baccalaureate institutions to which the program's students are likely to transfer
- Table of major requirements from the most recent catalogs, with catalog dates and page numbers cited, for targeted transfer institutions showing crosswalk with CCC program requirements
- Summary of lower division major preparation published or endorsed by relevant professional bodies or programmatic accreditors, with citations included
- Formal letters from the intended receiving institution that verify alignment of proposed program with their program curriculum

VI. Collaborative Programs

A collaborative program is one in which one or more colleges rely on another college or colleges to offer some of the coursework required for an approved degree or certificate. Collaborating colleges may either be in reasonable proximity to permit students to take classroom-based courses or the courses may be offered online through distance education local or shared platforms. This collaboration may be an ideal option for colleges who find themselves unable to add a specific ADT or a CTE degree or certificate to their offerings as a consequence of their inability to offer the entire breadth of required or restricted elective courses.

The development of collaborative programs can make better use of the CCC system's overall resources, facilitate legislated degree development mandates, and ensure that CTE programs meet regional workforce needs. Colleges determine the most effective and efficient pathway for the student when developing a collaborative program, which must be described through a written agreement between the colleges that delineates the responsibilities of each college with respect to the curriculum offered and the scheduling of classes. Any changes to the agreement should be mutually agreed upon to minimize any negative effects on students. A collaborative program should be designed and offered with students' needs in mind.

VII. Labor Market Information and Analysis

Pursuant to Education Code section 78015 Labor Market Information (LMI) data is specifically required for all new CTE program proposals, where available. Current LMI and analysis, or other comparable information, must show that jobs are available for program completers within the local service area of the individual college and/or that job enhancement or promotion justifies the proposed curriculum. Regional, statewide, or national labor market evidence may be included as supplementary support, but evidence of need in the specific college service area or region is also necessary.

The proposal must include projections from LMI for the most applicable Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes and geographical regions to be served by the program. If these projections do not suggest adequate job openings in the college service area to provide employment for all program completers, then the proposal must explain what other factors may justify the program and make the LMI figures misleading.

Program proposals will be evaluated in light of the data regarding expected job openings within the next five years and the number of students that will complete the program per year, taking into account the number of completers in similar programs at other institutions within the geographical region. Chancellor's Office staff refers to the Data Mart, available on the Chancellor's Office website (www.cccco.datamart.edu), to confirm the number of completers in a particular discipline.

If LMI is not available, other data sources may include:

- Recent employer surveys
- Industry studies
- Regional economic studies
- Letters from employers attesting to the service area need
- Minutes of industry advisory committee meetings (beyond required advisory committee meeting minutes)
- Job advertisements for positions in the individual college's service area
- Newspaper or magazine articles on industry or employment trends
- Applicable studies or data from licensing agencies or professional associations

A commonly referenced data source is the [EDD's LMI system \(http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov\)](http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov), which provides statistical projections of growth in specific jobs by county (or labor market area). Title 5, section 55130 requires the college seeking approval of a new program to show the "relation of the proposed program to job market analysis, where applicable."

Labor Market Analysis

Suggested areas of discussion:

	DISCUSSION POINTS FOR LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS
Net Job Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the number of enrollments that are projected for the program and that are necessary to support the program, are there enough openings locally to permit placement of the expected number of graduates? Has the job market been declining slowly? Holding steady? Growing slowly? Growing rapidly? Recently emerging?
Earning Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the average initial salary? What is the average percentage of salary increase in two years? Five years?
Program Credibility / Career Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If advanced degrees are typically needed for career advancement, will the courses required for this program count toward completion of the requirements for those degrees? Will this preparation permit students to remain current in their field? Does the program teach basic principles and theory, as well as application? Is it current and of sufficient rigor? Does it allow for later shifts in career? Does this preparation meet the needs of those already employed for upward mobility, entrepreneurship, or a career upgrade? Does the program prepare students to work in an ethnically diverse workforce and in an ethnically diverse, global market?
Emerging Occupations	<p>When job market data are not available or are not appropriate for a new CTE program in an area of emerging social need or technology, it becomes important to provide a careful analysis and explication of the specific demands of this new occupation. A carefully designed employer survey can elicit documentation demonstrating that employers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share the college's assumption regarding future direction(s) of the field and the skills that this emerging industry will require of employees. Recognize the value of the proposed degree or certificate in the hiring or promoting of staff.

	DISCUSSION POINTS FOR LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS (continued)
Competitive Fields	Colleges are often called upon to provide training that students greatly desire, even where the job prospects are limited and the field is highly competitive. In such occupations, often in the arts and entertainment, it is talent rather than education that drives hiring. While no community college certificate can substitute for talent, a program that is exceptionally well designed to identify and develop talent can still be justified when few programs of similar quality exist in the college service area.
Career Technical Education Skills	Many kinds of certificates are of occupational benefit to students already employed. In such circumstances, the program objectives and design, including the sequencing of courses, must fit the needs of students likely to be already employed. The course sequence must build on students' prior experience, and courses must be scheduled to accommodate working students. A program must not establish provisions that exclude students who are not already employed in a particular industry, unless the college makes available to such students a practicable entry-level pathway that would qualify them, upon completion, for the advanced training.
Small Businesses or Cottage Industries	Entrepreneurial opportunities and the market for cottage industries yield few statistics. Yet entrepreneurial opportunities are of value to an increasingly large proportion of the workforce, especially in rural areas. A proposal for approval of a program designed to meet the needs of students interested in pursuing entrepreneurial activities must include a careful analysis of needs and of the market within which they must compete.

When a proposed program is in an emerging occupation, finding relevant regional or local data can be challenging. One source of data for emerging occupations is available from the Centers of Excellence, an initiative of the CCCCCO Workforce and Economic Development (WED) Division. The Initiative website (www.coecccc.org) includes comprehensive reports on emerging occupations, called "Environmental Scans," as well as information about requesting customized reports if no scan has been published.