

Noncredit Curriculum

The MJC Curriculum Committee’s position on noncredit curriculum is that while it is not typical to have homework assigned in noncredit courses, it is allowable. While the Course Outline of Record (COR) cannot display outside-of-class hours for noncredit courses, there is no language in California Education Code or Title 5 that prohibits homework in noncredit curriculum. The Legislative Analyst’s Office March 2017 report titled, “California Community Colleges: Effects of Increases in Noncredit Course Funding Rates” includes discussion of the key differences between credit and noncredit courses. Attendance requirements are noted as the second of six key differences (Figure 1, page 6). In credit courses, students are expected to participate in the course during specific hours throughout the term and complete homework. In noncredit courses, depending on the course, students are permitted to join or leave a class at any time during the term and it typically does not require homework. The figure is included below for informational purposes.

Figure 1		
Key Differences Between Credit and Noncredit Courses		
	Credit Courses	Noncredit Courses
Subjects	May be in any academic or vocational subject. May be college level or precollegiate.	State funding is limited to ten categories of noncredit courses, all precollegiate (see categories in Figure 2).
Attendance Requirements	Students are expected to participate in the course during specific hours throughout the term and complete homework.	Depending on the course, students may be permitted to join or leave a class at any time during the term. Typically does not require homework.
Course Repetition	Students who receive a satisfactory grade generally may not reenroll in the same course. In addition, students may not earn more than 30 semester units of credit for remedial courses.	Typically no restriction on the number of times a student may reenroll in the same class.
Faculty Qualifications	Regulations generally require that faculty possess at least a master’s degree (with exceptions for certain vocational disciplines).	Regulations generally require that faculty possess at least a bachelor’s degree.
Enrollment Fees	State law establishes mandatory enrollment fees. For 2016-17, fees are \$46 per unit.	State law prohibits enrollment fees.
Funding	For 2016-17, the funding rate per full-time equivalent (FTE) student is \$5,070. Funding generally is based on student enrollment in a course at a given point in the academic term (typically the third or fourth week).	For 2016-17, the funding rates per FTE student are \$3,049 for regular noncredit courses and \$5,070 for career development and college preparation courses (same as the credit rate). Funding is based on students’ daily course attendance.

Figure 1 – Key Differences Between Credit and Noncredit Courses

Source: California Community Colleges: Effects of Increases in Noncredit Course Funding Rates (LAO, March 2017)