



## Common Course Numbering Taxonomy and Numbering Convention Expectations

The [ESS Memo 25-11, dated March 18, 2025, Common Course Numbering \(CCN\) System Update and Implementation \(Phase II\)](#), disseminated CCN taxonomy and numbering convention information. The following email is to clarify Common Course Numbering (CCN) taxonomy and numbering convention expectations and includes Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) intended to clarify the use of CCN aligned templates.

The [11-character CCN taxonomy](#) provides course identification consistency across the 116 community colleges. The taxonomy aligns with the format recommended by the CCN Task Force and establishes:

- A four-letter subject to distinguish between disciplines with similar potential abbreviations (i.e., English and Engineering),
- Adds a “C” designator in front of the number as a quick visual confirmation to students of transferability as a commonly numbered course, and
- Provides a four-digit number to allow for new common course numbers to be established without duplicating numbering currently in use at many California community colleges.
- Provides the option of additional elements to designate a course as honors (H), having embedded support (E), or being lab only (L). These designators are established on CCN course template and cannot be independently added by colleges to a commonly numbered course.

Here is an example of the CCN course taxonomy: **ENGL C1000 Academic Reading and Writing**

| COMPONENT     | EXAMPLE                  |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| SUBJECT       | ENGL = English           |
| COURSE TYPE   | C = Common Course Number |
| COURSE NUMBER | 1000 = 100-level course  |

**Here is an example of courses with special designators:**

**ENGL C1000** Academic Reading and Writing

**HIST C1000H** United States History to 1877 - Honors

**MATH C2110E** Calculus I: Early Transcendentals with Embedded Support

**ANTH C1000L** Biological Anthropology Lab

**Use of banding within any level of course**

California community colleges have requested that the California Community College Chancellor's Office provide guidance for those that may wish to adopt the CCN taxonomy and numbering convention for non-CCN courses. Currently, colleges are required to use a specific taxonomy for CCN courses, and its use for non-CCN courses is strongly recommended. The table below illustrates the preferred numbering convention. The number bands are not meant to serve as the primary indicator for students to identify common courses (this is the role of the "C" preceding a course number). Instead, the number bands are designed to prevent overlaps between common course numbers and local course numbers.

|                                | <b>Common Courses will be assigned a number in range from:</b> | <b>Local Courses will be assigned a number in range from:</b> |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1XXX – 100-level course</b> | <b>1000-1399</b>                                               | <b>1400-1999</b>                                              |
| <b>2XXX – 200-level course</b> | <b>2000-2399</b>                                               | <b>2400-2999</b>                                              |
| <b>3XXX – 300-level course</b> | <b>3000-3399</b>                                               | <b>3400-3999</b>                                              |
| <b>4XXX – 400-level course</b> | <b>4000-4399</b>                                               | <b>4400-4999</b>                                              |

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Question:** Is the California Community College Chancellor's Office (Chancellor's Office) monitoring the use of CCN across the community colleges?

**Answer:** Yes, we are. The Chancellor's Office collects information from each California community college regarding the development of courses based on CCN templates, including rationale for when CCN templates are not utilized, for the purposes of ensuring participation and offering support where needed. At the individual college level, chief instructional officers and articulation officers play key roles in ensuring that the course information in ASSIST is accurate. As we work together to implement AB 1111 across the California Community Colleges, it is important that we all do our part to maintain accuracy, since any inconsistencies may have consequential articulation and transferability data implications for students.

Numbering and titles must remain identical across CCN courses. The Chancellor's Office monitors the public displayed information in ASSIST related to CCN course numbering and title to ensure that CCN is implemented consistently and in accordance with its intended design.

**Question:** Can we align a local course outline with CCN honors templates or embedded support templates if we have not aligned a course outline with the parent template? For

example, could a college align a course outline to the STAT C1000 honors template (STAT C1000H) and the STAT C1000 embedded support template (STAT C1000E) without also aligning a course outline to the parent STAT C1000 template (STAT C1000)?

**Answer:** Although the use of honors templates and embedded support templates are optional, these templates are intended to complement the parent template when the local college aligns courses with CCN. Therefore, a college choosing to use an honors or embedded support template should also offer the corresponding commonly numbered parent course. Colleges that are unable to align with a given template should be prepared to provide a reasonable rationale for not aligning with that CCN template.

**Question:** Are colleges required to use or create embedded support templates, or use the honors templates, if they are aligning local course outlines to the CCN parent template?

**Answer:** Colleges are not required to use embedded support or honors templates. However, if they choose to do so, they should use Part II to clearly indicate how these embedded support and honors courses differ from the parent course. It is also recommended that the parent and honors courses be submitted at the same time to support the transferability review process.

**Question:** Can colleges use a “C” on a course outline that is intentionally not based on a CCN template? For example, a co-requisite STAT course labeled STAT **C1000S** or STAT **C1000C**.

**Answer:** No, the use of “C” at the beginning of the course number shall be reserved exclusively for CCN courses. Colleges must follow the numbering conventions established by the Chancellor’s Office. Any use of “C” or numbers reserved for CCN-aligned courses outside of this framework will cause confusion for receiving institutions in their articulation review and mislead students into believing that locally numbered courses are CCN courses. The use of the C in non-CCN courses has implications for the students' credit mobility and is not compliant.

**Question:** Can we add the CCN taxonomy to the end of the course in our schedule and maintain our current number? For example: ENGL1A Academic Reading and Writing (CCN: ENGL C1000).

**Answer:** The above example is not compliant with the CCN alignment. The CCN is not intended to be a supra numbering system. All colleges need to update their digital registries (including transcripts) so that the CCN number and title is student-facing.

**Question:** Does the course title on a Course Outline of Record (COR) need to match the CCN Course Template title exactly?

**Answer:** Yes, the course title on a COR must be identical to the CCN Course Template title, including every word, space, hyphen, and punctuation mark. No additions or variances are permitted. This ensures consistency and recognizability for students across all California Community Colleges and facilitates student mobility.

The Chancellor's Office is committed to supporting the colleges in their CCN implementation and will provide additional guidance and technical assistance as needed. If you have any questions, please send them directly to [CCN@CCCCO.edu](mailto:CCN@CCCCO.edu).