

TO: Chief Executive Officers
Chief Student Services Officers
Chief Instructional Officers
Academic Senate Presidents

FROM: Stacey Shears, Vice Chancellor of Student Services

RE: Student Education Plan

This memorandum addresses changes to Title 5 regulations related to student education plans, which were filed Jan. 14, 2026, and will become effective Feb. 13, 2026.

Background

The California Community Colleges have a long-standing policy of full and open access, as well as a foundational commitment to support all students to reach their educational goals. A vital part of a student's educational journey—and a central tenet of the Guided Pathways framework—is the timely development of a comprehensive education plan.

Recent amendments to Title 5, Sections [55524](#), [55530](#), and [55531](#) are intended to:

1. Ensure the timely delivery of comprehensive student education plans.
2. Establish institutional responsibility for educational planning; and
3. Clarify that comprehensive education plans must include all courses and requirements necessary to complete the identified credential.

Regulatory Requirements

Section 55524 (Student Education Plan) – Pursuant to §55524, colleges and districts are required to:

- Establish a process for assisting students in identifying an educational goal and course of study as soon as possible after admission. This process may include, but is not limited to, counseling, advising, and other educational planning services.
- Provide all non-exempt students with education plans that are either:
 - **Abbreviated** – Education plans that are one- or two-terms in length and designed to meet the immediate needs of students for whom a comprehensive education plan is not appropriate; or

- **Comprehensive** – Education plans that incorporate a student’s interests, skills, career, and educational goals, major, course placement, credit for prior learning, potential transfer institutions, and all steps required to complete the identified course of study.
- To the maximum extent possible, provide a comprehensive education plan to non-exempt students before the end of their first academic year, or within a shorter period if required by district or program policy.

Sections 55530 (Student Rights and Responsibilities) and 55531 (Institutional Responsibilities)

Pursuant to §55530 and §55531:

- Non-exempt, first-time students are required to:
 - Identify a course of study.
 - Participate in the course placement process; and
 - Participate in counseling, advising or education planning.

Failure to complete these requirements may result in a registration hold until the required services are completed.

- Institutions must provide non-exempt students with a **reasonable opportunity** to develop a comprehensive plan and must clearly identify student responsibilities associated with that plan.

Please refer directly to sections [55524](#), [55530](#), and [55531](#) for complete regulatory requirements.

Guidance

At a minimum, comprehensive education plans should:

- 1.** Be recorded electronically and accessible online.
- 2.** Specify intended transfer destinations, including degree, associate degree for Transfer, and general education patterns.
- 3.** Include all courses and requirements necessary for program completion; and
- 4.** Be reviewed and updated when students change educational goals.

Colleges should implement **proactive identification and outreach** strategies for students who do not have current education plans and use education-planning systems to surface requirements, schedule touchpoints, and support consistent and equitable delivery of services.

Additionally, colleges are encouraged to build their capacity to deliver complete comprehensive education plans—covering the student’s full course of study and transfer goal—by the end of the first academic year, **to the maximum extent possible**. This may include:

- Redesigning intake, orientation, and first-term processes so that education planning is the default.
- Shifting responsibility for plan creation and maintenance from students to the institution; and
- Establishing standards for regular review when goals or majors change.

Colleges and districts should plan to modernize the infrastructure supporting education plans. While section 55524 requires that electronic education plans be regularly updated to accurately reflect program progress, institutions may also configure online education planning systems to serve as the foundation for counseling and advising services.

For statewide reporting purposes, colleges and districts should ensure their education planning systems produce clear, accurate, and timely data for Chancellor’s Office Management Information System. Institutions should map local fields to the updated [SS09](#) definition and conduct monthly quality checks to identify missing and invalid plans.

Contact

For questions or additional guidance regarding this memorandum, please contact Stacey Shears, Vice Chancellor of Student Services at SShears@CCCCO.edu.

Thank you for your continued commitment to student success and equitable outcomes across the California Community Colleges system.

cc: Sonya Christian, Chancellor
Rowena Tomaneng, Deputy Chancellor
Chris Ferguson, Executive Vice Chancellor of Finance and Strategic Initiatives
John Hetts, Executive Vice Chancellor of Research, Analytics and Data
James Todd, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs