



TO: Chief Executive Officers
Chief Instructional Officers
Chief Student Services Officers
Chief Business Officers
Academic Senate Presidents
Curriculum Committees
Curriculum Specialists

FROM: James E. Todd, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs

RE: TOP to CIP Transition: Updated Guidance and Revised Timeline

Purpose

This memorandum provides updated guidance, revised timelines, and additional implementation support for the California Community Colleges systemwide transition from the Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) codes to the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes, as originally announced in memo [ESS 26-06](#) and memo [ESS 25-72](#). This update reflects ongoing input from the field and is intended to support coordinated planning, thoughtful local decision-making, and consistent systemwide adoption.

Background

The transition from TOP to CIP codes represents an important step toward alignment with a nationally recognized federal taxonomy. This alignment will improve consistency in reporting, strengthen connections with external partners, and support more effective analysis of programs and outcomes across the system.

At the same time, this transition requires substantial coordination across instruction, student services, institutional research, information technology, and business services. Based on feedback from colleges and districts, the Chancellor's Office has extended key deadlines and refined guidance to better support implementation at scale.

Updated Implementation Timeline

To provide colleges with additional time for planning and coordination, the following deadlines have been extended:

- **June 30, 2027** – All program and course CIP codes must be submitted in the Chancellor's Office Curriculum Inventory System (COCI)
- **June 30, 2028** – All fiscal codes and related processes must be updated

- **After spring 2028 reporting period** – TOP codes will no longer be used for any reporting

Colleges are required to **report both TOP and CIP codes through the spring 2028 reporting period** to ensure continuity and data integrity during the transition.

Crosswalk Development and System Implementation

The TOP-to-CIP Crosswalk remains a critical foundation for this work and will continue to evolve based on system input. The Crosswalk is open for submissions through May 15, 2026, and colleges are encouraged to submit mapping requests or inquiries to TOP2CIP@CCCCO.edu. Submissions should include the current TOP code, the requested CIP code, and an indication of whether the program should be considered Career Technical Education (CTE). To support transparency, a Change Log is updated weekly with newly approved mappings.

Once finalized, the Crosswalk will be integrated into a COCI interface tool that allows colleges to select CIP codes through a structured dropdown menu aligned to existing TOP codes. The tool will be tested in July and August and published for colleges to submit CIP codes in September 2026.

Although CIP codes are currently visible in COCI for many programs, our understanding of CIP classification has continued to evolve. Where possible, **colleges are strongly encouraged to wait until the release of the Crosswalk tool before entering or revising CIP codes in COCI**. We recognize that some programs may require earlier action; however, **all CIP codes—regardless of when they are entered—must be validated or resubmitted in COCI after the tool is released**. Changes made during the transition period will not trigger a new control number.

CTE and Program Classification

Because CIP codes are determined at the federal level, they do not always align directly with TOP-based classifications. As a result, **some programs and courses currently identified as CTE under TOP may be classified differently under CIP**.

The Chancellor's Office is actively reviewing TOP-to-CIP mapping submissions from colleges across the system to reduce unnecessary changes, particularly where programs might otherwise shift from CTE to non-CTE status. While this work is helping to minimize reclassification, some changes are unavoidable. The extended implementation timeline until 2028 is intentional and is designed to provide colleges with a multi-year runway for planning and adjustment. This includes time to assess and respond to potential fiscal impacts associated with programs that may shift between CTE and non-CTE classifications, ensuring that colleges can make informed decisions to sustain program offerings and student access.

Implementation Guidance

As colleges begin applying CIP codes, thoughtful local judgment will be essential. The guidance below is intended to support consistency while allowing flexibility to address the structure and needs of programs across the system.

CIP codes for courses. Colleges are responsible for assigning CIP codes at the course level. In most cases, courses should align within the same two-digit CIP family as the program to which they belong, while interdisciplinary courses may appropriately align outside of that primary area when warranted by content. The Chancellor's Office will review program and course CIP assignments to support consistency across institutions.

Work Experience (WE). Work Experience courses should be clearly connected to programs of study whenever possible. For CTE programs, this will mean aligning Work Experience courses with the program CIP code and an appropriate CB10 designation. Because of the ongoing priority for students to have work or internship experience, we need to be able to track which CTE programs include this opportunity.

For non-CTE programs, colleges may follow a similar approach (program CIP code plus CB10) or use a General Work Experience CIP code (24.0102). These practices will support accurate tracking of work-based learning and internship opportunities.

Guidance Courses. Because "Guidance" is not a defined CIP category, the Chancellor's Office has identified a limited set of CIP options for counseling and guidance-related courses. Colleges should select the option that most closely aligns with course content: First-Year Experience (30.0000), Academic Guidance or Educational Planning (24.0102), Career Guidance (13.1102), or Study Skills and related areas (13.1199). Where multiple courses exist, differentiation should be reflected through course titles and numbering.

ADTs and Common Course Numbers. For associate degrees for Transfer (ADTs) and Common Course Numbers, CIP codes will be assigned centrally in COCI. Colleges will not need to select these codes locally.

Student Accountability Model (SAM) Codes (CB09). The transition to CIP also provides an opportunity to improve the consistency of SAM code (CB09) assignments. Moving forward, **changes to SAM codes will no longer be treated as substantial changes in COCI.** Colleges are encouraged to review and update SAM codes to ensure alignment with CIP classifications. The Chancellor's Office will conduct systemwide reviews to support consistent application and to better understand the impact of these changes.

Interdisciplinary Programs. Programs that combine multiple disciplines should be assigned a CIP code based on their primary area of focus. For example, a small business program that

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includes coursework in a technical field should still be classified based on its core business content.

Noncredit programs. Noncredit programs present unique challenges due to the limited range of available CIP codes, which are restricted to two-digit series 32 through 37 and 53. To address this, an additional data element will allow colleges to report both a noncredit CIP code and a corresponding credit CIP code to better represent program content.

ESL courses. Similarly, English as a Second Language (ESL) courses are limited to a small number of CIP codes—16.1710 for credit and 32.0119 or 32.0112 for noncredit. Colleges should rely on course titles and control numbers to distinguish instructional focus within these constraints.

CIP Codes ‘Other’ (xx.xx99). Finally, while CIP offers a broader range of codes than TOP, colleges are strongly encouraged to avoid using “Other” CIP codes (xx.xx99) whenever possible. These codes lack specificity and are more likely to change in future federal updates.

Fiscal Processes and Accounting Codes

Although CIP codes apply specifically to instructional programs and courses, the transition will also affect fiscal processes. The Chancellor’s Office Finance and Facilities Division is working with Chief Business Officers to develop an account code structure aligned with CIP. These codes will resemble CIP formats but will function as distinct accounting identifiers. Additional guidance will be provided as this work progresses.

Required Actions and Next Steps

We recognize that this transition represents a significant effort for colleges and districts. The extended timeline is intended to support deliberate, collaborative planning; however, colleges are encouraged to continue moving forward at their current pace in alignment with the release of our COCI interface tool.

At this stage, colleges should prioritize submitting Crosswalk mapping requests by May 15, 2026; preparing for CIP code entry and validation in COCI beginning in September 2026; reviewing SAM codes and related classifications; and ensuring that faculty and all relevant stakeholders—including across academic affairs, student services, institutional research, information technology, and business services—are informed and engaged in the process.

Colleges should also ensure that strong data integrity practices are embedded across all affected systems. This includes both human review and system-based validation processes to support accurate and reliable reporting.

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This transition will affect multiple areas, including curriculum, reporting, funding, external partnerships, and internal systems. Ongoing communication and coordination across these areas will be essential to successful implementation.

Conclusion and Ongoing Support

The Chancellor's Office appreciates the significant work underway across the system to support this transition. We are grateful for the continued feedback from colleges and districts and remain committed to providing guidance, tools, and support throughout the process.

Please stay connected to our [TOP-CIP Transition Webpage](#) for all relevant updates, including open office hours. For any additional questions, inquiries, or support needed, please contact TOP2CIP@CCCCO.edu.

Linked Resources

- [TOP to CIP Transition Webpage](#)
- [National Center for Education Statistic \(NCES\) CIP Code List](#)
- [TOP to CIP Crosswalk](#) (login requires a Google account)
- [Crosswalk Change Log](#) (updated every Friday through May 15th)
- [Noncredit TOP-to-CIP Map](#)

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