

TO: Chief Executive Officers
Chief Business Officers
Chief Instructional Officers
Academic Senate Presidents

FROM: Wrenna Finche, Vice Chancellor, College Finance and Facilities
Office of Institutional Supports and Success

Dr. John Stanskas, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs,
Office of Equitable Student Learning, Experience, and Impact

RE: Standardized Attendance Accounting Regulations Updates

The Board of Governors recently approved new regulations that will alter how districts calculate Full-Time Equivalent Students (FTES) for credit courses. On January 22, 2024, the Standardized Attendance Accounting Method regulations were presented at the Board of Governors for first reading. The regulations were approved by the Board of Governors on March 25, 2024. The approved regulations were filed with the Office of Administrative Law and the California Secretary of State on July 22, 2024, and become effective 30 days from the July 22, 2024, filing date, on August 21, 2024. The updates to Title 5, Section 58003.1, and the addition of Section 58003.2 introduce the new Standardized Attendance Accounting Method, which will replace some existing attendance accounting methods for credit courses. This memorandum provides information on the forthcoming changes, the implementation timeline, and next steps as we transition to the new FTES calculations.

Vision 2030 and the Working Learners Project

The California Community Colleges Vision 2030 includes the Working Learners Systems Development Project, which aims to enhance strategies to support the success of low-income adults and working learners by establishing favorable policy and funding conditions. Serving working learners requires institutional action to build programs of study that are flexible and provide support in innovative, non-traditional formats. The recently approved regulatory changes are designed to assist working learners by eliminating existing fiscal barriers and disincentives to college funding structures, thereby facilitating more flexible course scheduling including variable term lengths.

The Working Learner Taskforce launched in August 2023 in alignment with the Vision 2030 goal of *Equity in Success*. The group focused on removing policy and funding barriers associated with shorter-length courses and flexible scheduling which are proven to support the success of working learners. The goal of these newly approved regulations is to simplify attendance

accounting methods and increase the number of students attending full-time by promoting and incentivizing flexible scheduling. Our office will persist in encouraging districts to use these regulations to create schedules that better serve all students, including working learners.

Overview of Attendance Accounting Regulatory Updates

Attendance accounting regulations are designed to compute the FTES served by an institution. Currently, under title 5, section 58003.1, there are five methodologies available to calculate FTES based on course type, scheduling format, and course duration.

Amendments to Title 5 sections 58000-58164 simplify existing attendance accounting policies by reducing the number of methodologies from five to three and replacing the following methods: weekly census, daily census, and the alternative attendance accounting method for credit courses. The new regulations introduce a single methodology for all credit courses, called the “Standardized Attendance Accounting Method.” This method will be used for all credit courses, except open-entry /open-exit credit courses which will still be required to use the Actual Hours of Attendance procedure (commonly referred to as positive attendance).

Prior Attendance Accounting Methods

According to the prior regulations, each course uses one attendance accounting method to calculate the FTES generated in the course. The method used to compute FTES for apportionment purposes is determined by the type of course (including those delivered by distance education pursuant to Title 5, Section 55200 et seq.), the way the course is scheduled, and the length of the course. The attendance accounting method must be applied consistently for any course section (i.e., only one attendance accounting method can be applied per course section). Currently, every credit or noncredit course section to be reported for apportionment funding must use one of the following attendance accounting methods to compute FTES:

- a) Weekly Student Contact Hour Procedure (credit courses only, one census point); Title 5, Section 58003.1 (b).
- b) Daily Student Contact Hour Procedure (credit courses only, one census point); Title 5, Section 58003.1 (c).
- c) Actual Hours of Attendance Procedure – Positive Attendance (credit and noncredit courses, no census); Title 5, Section 58003.1 (d) and (e).
- d) Alternative Attendance Accounting Procedure – Credit (credit asynchronous distance education courses only, one census point); Title 5, Section 58003.1 (f)(1).
- e) Alternative Attendance Accounting Procedure – Noncredit (noncredit asynchronous distance education and noncredit independent study courses, two census points); Title 5, Section 58003.1 (f)(2).

New Standardized Attendance Accounting Method

Under the newly approved regulations, all credit courses will use the Standardized Attendance Accounting Method to compute FTES, except for certain credit courses that use the actual hours

of attendance procedure, commonly known as positive attendance. The following is the updated list of attendance accounting methods outlined in Title 5, Section 58003.2:

- a) Standardized Student Contact Hour Procedure (credit courses only, one census point).
- b) Actual Hours of Attendance Procedure – Positive Attendance (credit and noncredit courses, no census) Note: Positive attendance will still be required for credit courses that are open entry/ open exit. All other credit courses would use the Standardized Attendance Accounting Method.
- c) Alternative Attendance Accounting Procedure – Noncredit (noncredit asynchronous distance education and noncredit independent study courses, two census points)

The new regulations replace Weekly Census, Daily Census, and the Alternative Attendance Accounting Method for Credit methodologies with the Standardized Attendance Accounting methodology.

The calculation for the new Standardized Attendance Accounting Method is as follows:

$$\text{FTES} = \frac{\text{Total Standardized Hours} \times \text{Number of Students Enrolled at Census}}{525}$$

The total standardized hours are based on the number and type of units identified in the Course Outline of Record and are calculated by multiplying the number of units of lecture and lab (as stated in the COR) by the standardized hours defined in the regulation.

- Standard hours per unit of lecture = 18 hours for semester colleges and 12 hours for quarter colleges.
- Standard hours per unit of lab = 54 hours for semester colleges and 36 hours for quarter colleges.

These standard hours are used regardless of the term length (standard or compressed) or the course duration (term length or short term).

Standardized Attendance Accounting Method Examples

Method Calculation:

$$\text{FTES} = \frac{\text{Total Standardized Hours} \times \text{Number of Students Enrolled at Census}}{525}$$

The census date for credit courses means the day closest to the end of the first twenty (20) percent of a course's length. Students who are actively enrolled on the census date may be claimed for apportionment.

Standard hours for unit of lecture:

- 18 for semester colleges

- 12 for quarter colleges

Standard hours for unit of lab:

- 54 for semester colleges
- 36 for quarter colleges

Examples:

3 unit course, semester college

$3 \text{ units} * 18 \text{ hours} = 54 \text{ standardized total hours}$

$54 \text{ total hours} * 30 \text{ students} = 1620 / 525 = 3.09 \text{ FTES}$

1 unit lab course, semester college

$1 \text{ unit} * 54 \text{ hours} = 54 \text{ standardized total hours}$

$54 \text{ total hours} * 30 \text{ students} = 1620 / 525 = 3.09 \text{ FTES}$

3 unit lecture course with 1 unit of lab, semester college

$3 \text{ units} * 18 \text{ hours} = 54 \text{ standardized total hours (lecture)}$

$1 \text{ unit} * 54 \text{ hours} = 54 \text{ standardized total hours (lab)}$

$54 + 54 = 108 \text{ standardized total hours (lecture and lab)} * 30 \text{ students} = 3240 / 525 = 6.17 \text{ FTES}$

Positive Attendance

The majority of credit courses that calculate FTES using the Actual Hours of Attendance procedure (positive attendance) under the prior attendance accounting rules will transition to the Standardized Attendance Accounting method. However, credit courses that are open-entry/ open-exit must continue to use the positive attendance method in calculating FTES (title 5, section 58164). All credit courses may at the option of the district, use the positive attendance method to calculate FTES.

College Term Length Multipliers (TLM)

College Term Length Multipliers (TLM) are not used in the calculation of FTES under the Standardized Attendance Accounting Method. Colleges will maintain their current TLM which should be used in determining appropriate scheduling patterns based on their term length and flexible calendar configuration. Once the district transitions to the Standardized Attendance Accounting Method, they will use the standard multipliers outlined in the regulation, rather than the TLM in the calculation of FTES.

Flexible Time Adjustment (F-Factor)

The F-factor is a multiplier used in the CCFS-320 to adjust the units of FTES, so that districts do not lose FTES as a result of employees participating in flexible calendar activities. Adoption of a Flexible Calendar is intended to fund colleges for professional development activities despite the

loss of student contact hours and therefore provide no loss or gain in funding. Title 5 Section 55729 provides procedures for adjusting the actual apportionment eligible FTES to what would have been generated had the flexible activities not been permitted and instruction had taken place instead. The FTES adjustment is based on the type of courses affected by the flex activities.

Under the prior attendance accounting rules, districts had the option to apply the F-factor to the units of actual FTES generated in courses (other than those assigned to the Weekly Census or Alternative Attendance Accounting Weekly Census procedure). This option will remain until districts transition to the new Standardized Attendance Accounting Method. Districts do not have the option to apply the F-factor to FTES generated during the summer or other intersessions since flex days are not scheduled during these terms.

Once a district transitions to the Standardized Attendance Accounting Method, they will continue to have the option to apply an F-factor for courses using positive attendance and those using the alternative attendance accounting method for noncredit. There will be no option to apply an F-factor for courses using the new Standardized Attendance Accounting Method. Since the Standardized Attendance Accounting Method uses standard multipliers of 18 hours/12 hours per unit of lecture and 54 hours/36 hours per unit of Lab, districts will not experience a loss in FTES generated in courses using this method to calculate FTES as a result of cancelling classes for faculty to participate in flex activities, and therefore will not need an F-factor adjustment to these FTES.

Course Scheduling and the Course Outline of Record

The revisions make updates to the sections related to attendance accounting, specifically the formula used to calculate FTES; however, no changes were made to the sections on course scheduling. Colleges should continue scheduling courses in accordance with the minimum requirements of 48-54 hours listed in the Course Outline of Record, as stipulated in § 55002.5, where one credit hour of community college work (one unit of credit) shall require a minimum of 48 semester hours or 33 quarter hours of total student work, which may include both in-class and out-of-class hours. Therefore, the checks and balances used by colleges to ensure that credit courses meet instructional unit requirements do not need to be modified due to these regulatory revisions.

Enrollment Management

The revisions, in practice, allow community colleges to collect the same apportionment for credit courses regardless of modality or term length. This flexibility allows colleges to design credit instructional offerings that meet the needs of their community without penalizing them for creating flexible scheduling options that nontraditional students and working learners often need to complete their educational goals. As colleges implement these new regulations, the focus should be on creating a student-centered approach to scheduling that removes consideration of policy barriers that limit access and success for students. Strategies should include:

- Review enrollment management policies and procedures;

- Apply a holistic approach that focuses on the student journey with an emphasis on retention and completion;
- Examine data to inform enrollment management strategies;
- Engage students for input;
- Evaluate community needs and potential students not accessing higher education due to current scheduling decisions.

Examples may include expanding course offerings that combine different modalities, such as asynchronous online lectures paired with in-person laboratory sessions, delivered in a shorter term-length format and offered in the evenings or weekends. Another example colleges may wish to explore is block scheduling or sets of courses in a half semester format such that the student can focus on one course to completion in the first half of the term and another course during the second half of the term. One last example may be a partnership with local employers to offer courses in a modified format and term-length to meet their employee schedules and fulfill the needs of the employer for additional training or advancement. This regulatory change frees concerns about potential apportionment loss due to scheduling formats, allowing the college to focus on whether these formats effectively serve working learners in the community.

By implementing these strategies and allowing colleges to innovate in course modalities and term lengths, colleges can increase access, shorten students' time to completion, and help reduce the accumulation of excess units needed for degrees and credentials.

Chancellor's Office Implementation Timeline

In the 2024-25 and 2025-26 fiscal years, districts have the option of using the current attendance accounting methods or transitioning to the new Standardized Attendance Accounting Method. However, all credit courses must fully transition to the new method in a single fiscal year.

In 2024-25, districts have the option to transition to the Standardized Attendance Accounting Method at either P2 reporting period or Recal. To transition at P2, districts must notify the Chancellor's Office via the CCFS-320 Application during the P2 reporting window in late February or early March 2025.

In 2025-26, districts transition at either P1 reporting period or Recal. Any district that does not transition in 2024-25 or 2025-26 will be required to adopt the Standardized Attendance Accounting Method starting with the 2026-27 P1 reporting period.

Districts are not permitted to use the Standardized Attendance Accounting Method for some courses while continuing with existing methods for other credit courses. Once a district adopts the Standardized Attendance Accounting Method, there is no option to revert back to the previous attendance accounting methods. It is important for districts to choose the option that best aligns with their specific needs.

Updates to the Student Attendance Accounting Manual and the CCFS-320 Reporting System

The Student Attendance Accounting Manual (SAAM) is published in compliance with Education Code provisions, including Sections 66700, 68044, 70901, and 78401. It includes setting the minimum conditions required for community college districts to receive state aid. The Chancellor's Office will update the SAAM by 2024-25 P2 to align with the new standardized attendance accounting regulations.

Districts will continue to report contact hours and FTES through the CCFS-320 application, which will be updated to accommodate the new standardized attendance accounting methodologies. These updates are expected to take several months, with the goal of having the updated application ready by **2024-25 P2 due April 20th, 2025**.

The revised CCFS-320 application will include prompts for districts to indicate whether they will transition in 2024-25 or defer until the next fiscal year. Flexibility will be provided in 2024-25 by allowing districts that are not ready by P2 to submit data by R1. Districts will also be provided flexibility in 2025-26 by allowing districts that are not ready by P1 to submit data by R1. The updated application will feature new District and College Forms for submitting contact hours under the Standardized Attendance Accounting Method.

Once contact hours are submitted, the CCFS-320 application will calculate the resulting FTES.

District Implementation Steps

Districts will need to decide the best time to transition to the new Standardized Attendance Accounting Method. The first step would be to work with their Student Information Systems company to determine a plan for tracking student enrollment data in a format that aligns with the new Standardized Attendance Accounting Method. The Student Information Systems will need to update the calculations and then transition all credit courses, other than those that will continue to use the positive attendance method, to the new Standardized Attendance Accounting Method. Once the necessary updates are made to the Student Information Systems, the district can transition to the new Standardized Attendance Accounting Method and begin reporting under that method in the CCFS-320 system and MIS.

As a reminder, transitioning to the new method in 2024-25 or 2025-26 is a local decision. Districts do not have the option to go back to the old attendance accounting methods once they have transitioned to the Standardized Attendance Accounting Method.

Webinars

Please join the Chancellor's Office at our Fiscal and Policy Webinar on September 26, 2024, from 11:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m. This webinar will cover the implementation of the Standardized Attendance Accounting Method, updates to the CCFS-320 and changes to course scheduling. You

can register for the webinar [here](#). A recording of this webinar will be available afterwards on our [Fiscal and Policy Updates webpage](#) and the [Vision Resource Center](#).

Contact

For questions on attendance accounting and the CCFS-320, please contact Natalie Wagner at nwagner@cccco.edu or Rafael Artiga Meza at rartiga@cccco.edu. For questions on course scheduling or minimum hours to award a unit of credit, please contact Dr. John Stanskas at jstanskas@cccco.edu or Raul Arambula at rarambula@cccco.edu.

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