

TO: Chief Instructional Officers
Institutional Research Directors
Career Technical Education Deans
Apprenticeship Program Leads

FROM: Gary W. Adams, Dean of Adult Education, Apprenticeship, and Contract Education,
Workforce and Economic Development Division
Terrence Willet, Visiting Assistant Vice Chancellor, Research, Analytics, and Data

RE: Apprenticeship Course and Student Coding Guidance

Background

Apprenticeships are a key workforce development strategy both nationally and for the state of California. Governor Newsom set a goal serving 500,000 apprentices by 2029. California Community Colleges are a key provider of apprenticeships and are essential to meeting this goal to serve our students and communities. The accuracy of apprenticeship data submitted to the Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems (MIS) is key for matching with the California Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS). Apprenticeship data are critical for securing funding and assessing the efficacy of our services. We are working with our internal research team, program staff, several technical assistance providers, and our community college colleagues to provide guidance on how colleges should code apprenticeship courses and students in apprenticeships to ensure these data are accurate.

Overview

This memorandum provides guidance for how the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS collects apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship data, particularly in relation to coding. It outlines two main approaches to course and student coding:

- 1.** Course Level: Creating dedicated apprenticeship courses coded with SAM code "A" (for apprentices only).
- 2.** Student Level: Enrolling apprentices in standard career/CTE courses that may not be SAM coded as an apprenticeship course.

This memo then reviews key data-elements (attributes) that support tracking these students: the SB23 Student-Apprenticeship-Status element, the CB09 Course SAM-Priority-Code element, and relevant cohort/attribute codes. Finally, it provides best practices and next steps for institutions.

Approach A: SAM-A (Apprenticeship-Only) Courses

Definition & purpose:

- The course data element CB09 – COURSE-SAM-PRIORITY-CODE is used to indicate “the degree to which a course is occupational, and to assist in identifying course sequence in occupational programs.”
- A code of A under CB09 means: *Apprenticeship (offered to apprentices only) – the course is designed for an apprentice and must have approval from the California Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS). *
- In practice, many apprenticeship programs develop their own dedicated courses that are restricted to registered apprentices, and coded CB09 = A.
- The benefit of SAM-A courses includes easier tracking of apprentices (via the course coding), the ability to apply apprenticeship-specific approval/funding (e.g., RSI hours), and eligibility for apprenticeship minimum qualifications under Title 5, Section 53413.
- Also, SAM-A courses often are set up so that the usual student fee does not apply for apprentices enrolled in those courses (via local ERP coding) because of apprenticeship program funding status.

Considerations / trade-offs:

- If you create separate SAM-A courses, you will have more courses in your catalog, and you will need to maintain those courses through your curriculum review, program review, SLO assessment, etc.
- The minimum qualifications of instructors for apprenticeship courses (and associated curriculum) must align with title 5 standards (for example Section 53413) which may differ from standard CTE courses.
- For smaller apprenticeship programs (few apprentices per cohort), the administrative overhead of separate courses might be burdensome.

When this approach is recommended:

- When the institution has a well-defined registered apprenticeship program approved by DAS, with a robust cohort of apprentices.
- When you want clean, dedicated course sections that only apprenticeship students take, for easier reporting/tracking.
- When the program expects special funding (RSI or apportionment) or waiving of student fees for apprentices enrolling in those courses.

Approach B: Enrolling Apprentices in Non-SAM-A Courses

Definition & purpose:

- Apprentices can be enrolled in “standard” career/technical education (CTE) or other credit courses that are not coded SAM = A (for example, SAM = B, C, D, or E) but still count as part of their apprenticeship/RSI pathway.

Considerations / Implications:

- Because the course is not restricted to apprentices only, you may have mixed enrollment (apprentices and non-apprentices) which may complicate tracking.
- If the course is non-SAM-A, then the special fee/wavier privileges or apprenticeship-specific funding/RSI tracking may require additional local processes to identify and tag the apprentices. For example, external tracking of hours may be required.

When this approach is recommended:

- When your apprenticeship program is smaller scale or integrated into broader career-education offerings, and you want to leverage existing CTE courses rather than duplicate.
- When you have an administrative system to track apprentice status and hours even in mixed-enrollment sections.
- When you want to minimize extra catalog/course overhead but still serve apprentices.

Key Data Elements & Codes

SB23 – STUDENT-APPRENTICESHIP-STATUS

Data Element Name: SB23 STUDENT-APPRENTICESHIP-STATUS. Format: X (one character)

Coding:

- 0 = NOT registered with the DIR or participating in a pre-apprenticeship program approved by DAS.
- 1 = Registered with the DIR in an approved apprenticeship program.
- 2 = Participating in a pre-apprenticeship program approved by DAS.
- X = Apprenticeship status unknown/uncollected.
- Y = College does not offer an apprenticeship program.

Definition & purpose:

- Identifies whether a student is engaged in a state-recognized apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship pathway.
- Supports accurate reporting to the Chancellor’s Office and alignment with statewide workforce and apprenticeship initiatives.

- Enables tracking of apprenticeship participation for funding, accountability, program evaluation, and equity analysis.
- Helps distinguish between registered apprentices, pre-apprentices, and non-apprentice students for programmatic and compliance purposes.

Considerations / Implications:

- Because apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship designations affect eligibility for certain funding streams, misclassification can lead to reporting errors or missed opportunities.
- Institutions must maintain reliable documentation of student participation and registration status with DAS to ensure accurate coding.
- Incorrect coding may impact accountability metrics, performance reporting, and state/local decision-making related to apprenticeship funding and expansion.

When this approach is recommended:

- It is **always required** to code apprentices and pre-apprentices who are in a DAS-registered apprenticeship program.
- Some colleges and districts assign cohort and/or attribute codes to apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships in local data systems. This data can be leveraged for the Chancellor's Office MIS submission.

Implications on Fees:

- Education Code Section 76350: This section states that "no charges or fees shall be required to be paid by a resident or nonresident apprentice... for admission or attendance in any course of activity or community college course that is offered pursuant to Section 3074 of the Labor Code." Labor Code Section 3074 outlines instructional responsibility, coordination, flexibility, compliance and enforcement, and program approval related to the provision of Related and Supplemental Instruction (RSI) for apprentices.
- It is important to note that, per regulatory language, programs must be registered with the DAS, under the Division of Industrial Relations (DIR), for the student to be coded and for apprenticeship course fees to be waived. DOL registration alone is insufficient to meeting this requirement.

Recommended Next Steps for Colleges/Districts Offering Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships

1. Conduct a course coding analysis:
 - a. Review all current apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship related programs and courses and ensure they have a SAM Code (CB09) of A in your curriculum management system.
 - b. Review courses that historically had SAM Code (CB09) of A but changed to a different SAM Code and verify they are no longer apprenticeship courses or update CB09 as needed.
 - c. Ensure new curriculum committee members have received training on apprenticeship course coding.

- 2.** Review and update institutional procedures for coding apprenticeships at the student level:
 - a.** Ensure students in apprenticeships are identified in your student information system.
 - b.** Verify that student level apprenticeship is used to report SB23 to MIS.
 - c.** Where applicable, review how apprenticeship attendance and RSI hours are recorded for reporting.

Effective practices for reviewing and improving course and student level coding of apprenticeships include.

- Incorporate apprenticeship coding into campus data governance priorities if not already included.
- Have a cross functional team including curriculum, admissions and records, information technology, and institutional research with a point of contact to lead the apprenticeship coding effort.
- Apprenticeship Programs at colleges must work closely with their respective Institutional Research (IR) Offices to ensure all apprenticeship data submitted to the Chancellor's Office is accurate, timely, and coded correctly. It is critical that these two departments establish a reliable process to ensure reporting is accurate. Because this data affects FTES, RSI reimbursement, fiscal audits, and statewide reporting, both teams must establish consistent communication and validation procedures. Regular data review meetings, shared coding definitions, and IR access to required platforms help ensure clarity and reduce reporting errors. Prior to data submission, both parties should validate enrollment counts, instructional hours, completion outcomes, and withdrawal records. Shared dashboards and designated data leads can further support accuracy and accountability, while documented change-management processes ensure coding updates and policy shifts are implemented consistently.

Resources

[Apprenticeship Programs | California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office](#)

[Student Attendance Accounting](#)

Conclusion

Correctly coding apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship students and courses are critical for accurate reporting, tracking, funding compliance, program accountability, and advocacy. The decision between using dedicated SAM = A courses versus enrolling apprentices in standard non-SAM-A courses involves trade-offs of administrative overhead versus flexibility. In either scenario, ensuring robust local tagging (cohort/attribute codes), accurate SB23 status updates, correct CB09 course coding, and tight collaboration across curriculum, scheduling, MIS/IR, and employer partners is essential.

cc: Anthony Cordova, Vice Chancellor of Workforce and Economic Development Division

Sabrina Lopez, Program Lead of Apprenticeship, Workforce and Economic Development Division