



Priority Registration

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Admissions and Records Professionals

PURPOSE

This document provides guidance to California Community College admissions and records professionals regarding the implementation of priority registration requirements. It is intended to support consistent interpretation of California Education Code and Title 5 while recognizing that districts may adopt local board policies and administrative procedures consistent with state law.

This FAQ is intended as a resource for implementation and does not replace applicable statutes, regulations, or legal advice.

STATUTORY AND REGULATORY AUTHORITY

Priority registration is governed by various provisions of California Education Code and Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, including but not limited to:

Education Code

- [Education Code section 66025.8](#)
- [Education Code section 66025.81](#)
- [Education Code section 66025.9](#)
- [Education Code section 66025.91](#)
- [Education Code section 66025.92](#)
- [Education Code section 78211.5](#)

Title 5

- [Section 58108 – Registration and Enrollment Procedures](#)
- Other applicable Title 5 provisions governing academic and progress standing

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. What is priority registration?

Priority registration is the assignment of earlier registration appointments to students who qualify under California law or local district policy. Providing eligible students with earlier access to enrollment supports equitable access to courses and promotes student success.

Priority registration does not guarantee enrollment in a particular course; rather, it provides an earlier opportunity to register before subsequent registration groups.

2. Who establishes priority registration requirements?

Priority registration requirements are established through California Education Code, Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, and local district governing board policies. Each district is responsible for adopting registration and enrollment procedures that are consistent with state law and are administered uniformly.

3. Which students are entitled to statutory priority registration?

California law provides priority registration for several student populations, including:

- Veterans and current members of the Armed Forces
- Students with dependents
- Foster youth and former foster youth
- Youth who are homeless or formerly homeless
- Students determined eligible for Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS)
- Students participating in Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS)
- Students participating in CalWORKs
- Students receiving Rising Scholars Network funds

Districts should establish procedures to identify eligible students consistent with applicable law.

4. Are all statutory priority groups assigned the same priority level?

Yes. Title 5 establishes one statutory level of priority registration for students identified in law. Districts may not assign one statutory group a higher priority than another statutory group.

Within that highest priority level, districts may establish local appointment methodologies, such as assigning registration appointments based on completed units, educational objective, or other locally adopted criteria, provided those methodologies are applied consistently.

5. May districts establish additional priority registration groups?

Yes. Districts may establish additional local priority registration categories provided they do not conflict with state law or diminish the priority afforded to statutory groups. Examples may include local program participants or district initiatives established through board policy.

ELIGIBILITY

6. How should colleges identify students who qualify for priority registration?

Districts should establish written procedures describing how eligibility will be identified for each statutory group.

Whenever possible, colleges are encouraged to use existing institutional data rather than requiring students to submit additional documentation.

Examples of information that may already be available include:

- Financial aid applications
- California Dream Act Application information
- California College Promise Grant applications
- Program eligibility records
- Student information system indicators
- Data provided from county social services office
- Other institutional records

When additional documentation is necessary, districts should communicate requirements clearly and apply them consistently.

7. Does a student need to be a biological parent to qualify as a student parent?

No. The Education Code does not require that a student be a biological parent. Districts should apply the statutory definition of "student parent" when determining eligibility for individuals with dependents.

8. Can students lose priority registration?

Yes. Under Title 5, students may lose priority registration if they:

- Are placed on academic or progress notice for the period specified in regulation; or
- Exceed the maximum allowable degree-applicable unit threshold established in Title 5.

Districts should evaluate eligibility consistently and notify students when priority registration is lost.

9. Can students appeal the loss of priority registration?

Yes. Each district must establish written appeal procedures.

Appeals must be available for students who lose priority registration due to documented extenuating circumstances or because a student with a disability did not receive a reasonable accommodation in a timely manner.

Districts may also choose to permit appeals based upon demonstrated academic improvement or other locally adopted criteria.

FREQUENTLY ASKED IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS

10. May colleges require documentation to verify eligibility?

It is recommended for districts to use existing institutional data whenever feasible. When documentation is necessary, districts should clearly communicate what information is required and avoid creating unnecessary barriers to eligibility.

11. If a student becomes eligible after registration appointments have been assigned, should the student's registration appointment be adjusted?

Districts should establish local procedures addressing changes in eligibility after registration appointments have been assigned. Procedures should be applied consistently and communicated to students in advance.

12. May colleges manually adjust a student's registration appointment?

Yes, when authorized under district policy. Districts should establish internal controls for manual adjustments, including documentation of the reason for the adjustment and the employee authorizing the change.

13. What are recommended best practices for implementing priority registration?

The Chancellor's Office recommends that colleges:

- Publish priority registration timelines each term.
- Clearly communicate eligibility requirements to students.
- Coordinate regularly among Admissions and Records, Counseling, Financial Aid, Veterans Services, DSPS, EOPS, CalWORKs, and other student support programs.
- Periodically audit priority registration assignments for accuracy.
- Maintain written procedures for eligibility determinations, appeals, and manual adjustments.
- Train staff annually regarding statutory requirements and local procedures.