



**TO:** Chief Instructional Officers  
Chief Student Services Officers  
Chief Information Systems Officers

**FROM:** Dr. John Stankas, Vice Chancellor, Educational Services and Support  
Office of Equitable Student Learning, Experience and Impact (ESLEI)

**RE:** Guidance for Implementing the New Associate Degree for Transfer Placement Requirement

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This memorandum provides guidance for colleges to plan and implement the new requirement for automatic enrollment of students who intend to transfer into an Associate Degree for Transfer program (Education Codes section 66749.8). To meet the statutory deadline of August 1, 2024, colleges may need to update their application process, student education plans, counseling practices, and opt-out procedures for the mandated exceptions to the new requirement. This guidance summarizes the requirements and provides key decision points for colleges. Where an Associate Degree for Transfer pathway exists for their intended major, the California Community Colleges will place that student on that Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) course-taking pattern on their mandatory education plan.

### Background

In 2010, the [Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act](#) established a guaranteed transfer pathway to California State University system for California community college students who earn an Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT).

[Assembly Bill 928](#) (Berman, 2021) amended Education Code by adding Section [66749.8](#), the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act of 2021, that directs the California Community Colleges “on or before August 1, 2024, where ADTs for major pathways exist, the California Community Colleges shall place students on the ADT pathway if students declare a goal of transfer on their mandatory education plans”. This new procedure is intended “to maximize the probability that students will transfer into a four-year postsecondary educational institution and earn a degree in their chosen field of study in a timely manner, and to minimize the accrual of excess units.” This effort aligns with Vision 2030’s strategic direction of “Equitable Baccalaureate Attainment.” Depending on a college’s calendar this effort could commence in a late summer session that begins on or after August 1, 2024, or with the Fall 2024 term.

### Existing SEP Requirements Relevant for Auto-ADT Implementation

The statutory start date of “on or before August 1, 2024” indicates the expectation that newly enrolled students without a student education plan (SEP) are most affected. Students who change their educational goal to transfer on or after August 1, 2024 may also be required to auto-enroll into an ADT pathway if they do not qualify for an exception. Correspondingly, if there is an existing SEP in place then those students are not bound by this mandate.

*Enforcing the use of an SEP.* The Student Equity and Achievement Act (SEA, [Education Code 78222](#)) requires Student Education Plans (SEPs) for all enrolled California Community College (CCC) students. As part of the matriculation process students must visit with a counselor at least once and develop some version of a SEP. If this is not accomplished, per local protocols at the earliest by the census date, or at the latest when the 15-unit requirement would be triggered ([Title 5 §55530](#)), a hold would be placed on the student's enrollment process.

*Informing priority registration students.* For a qualified student to activate priority registration the matriculation process, including SEP development, must be completed ([Title 5 §58108](#)). Students are typically informed of this process through the college's automated system.

*Reaching financial aid recipients.* To receive financial aid, the development of a SEP is necessary ([Education Code 78215](#)). In some instances, this might be programmed into the student portal but for many this is a semi-manual process where individuals work from reports generated by the college's education planning program and will contact the student through that program.

These requirements already drive students to SEP development processes of the college.

### **Implementation Guidance**

To ensure compliance by the August 1, 2024 deadline, local decisions for the inclusion of this "auto-ADT" requirement will be necessary. Local implementation will depend on the community college's business processes, technology tools, and programming capacity and capabilities. All related third-party student information systems (SIS), education planning applications, mapping tools, and degree audit software may be leveraged to automate the enterprise system for optimal coordination, especially student-facing functions and pages. Discussion and decisions about these logistics would most likely need to include representatives from student services, information technology, research, and leadership.

When self-evaluating for automation, consider :

- How to program to facilitate this mandate?
- Is there a common SIS to SEP transition point to leverage?
- How to crosswalk to prioritize the ADTs?
- How to build in needed checks to monitor and notify students when off-track?
- What are the configuration needs?
- What historical student information will be maintained and managed?

### **Key Planning Decisions**

Each college must operationalize how they will implement changes to meet the new auto-ADT enrollment requirement. There are three key decision points that colleges should leverage to develop a standard and actionable process to include this requirement. Rooted within the established matriculation process established by Education Code 78222 and Title 5 Section 55530 should be local practice to synthesize and assure proper ADT placements.

#### *Decision 1: Presenting the ADTs in CCCApply*

In CCCApply, students are required to select Educational Goal and Major (with the optional Major Categories). Currently, all credential options are displayed alphabetically regardless of education goal selected.

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To clarify for students and assist colleges with identifying applicants requiring ADT auto-enrollment, a new CCCApply standard application filter will be added in Spring 2024 under educational goal: “obtain an associate degree and transfer to a four-year institution”. When this goal is selected the student will then only view the college’s associate degrees in the major area dropdown listing. CCCApply will display available associate degrees in the order of AA-T, AS-T, AA, and AS. Associate degrees will continue to be displayed in alphabetical order. The functionality of this filter will depend on the college’s configuration of each award type associated with the degree in the CCCApply administrator system. All colleges can participate in the CCCApply Spring 2024 pilot period for this new feature, will control when they can set up the feature in production, and when they can activate this filter feature. Colleges should coordinate with the appropriate technology personnel to stay apprised of these updates and coordinate administrative adjustments that maximize student clarity.

College may modify the filtered major list displayed to applicants. Within the established CCCApply this listing can be managed, with some latitude, through the naming conventions used for majors and imported through the CCCApply administrative portal. For example, it is recommended where both transfer and local degrees are available in the same discipline that distinctions between those award types should be included in the degree title for display purposes (e.g., Biology Associate in Science and Biology Associate in Science for Transfer).

Another college determination is whether to use this new default major listing presentation or adjust it, to display Associate Degrees for Transfer only. Such decisions here will influence subsequent actions. If the college chooses to limit the student’s options to only Associate Degree for Transfer, then the CCCApply student profile information will trigger compliance for this provision when an abbreviated education plan is generated within the student account. However, a college may prefer to maintain student choice at this preliminary application point and display a full complement of associate degrees listed in CCCApply. Thus, this choice shifts more statutory responsibility onto the college’s personnel to assure ADT placement for those applicable students at the subsequent counselor visit when a comprehensive education plan is developed.

### *Decision 2: Developing the student education plan*

The second decision point is how the college will develop the student’s education plan and include the ADT pathway where required. When an abbreviated education plan or course-taking pattern is developed this could be a point that includes ADT pathway placement to provide the student with a preliminarily clarified path. Moreover, automated business processes at this juncture would assist independent student planning and further comprehensive education plan development during any subsequent counselor visit.

While [Title 5 §55524](#) allows for either an abbreviated or comprehensive education plan, the expectation is that once a continuing nonexempt student has selected an education goal and course of study, the district shall make a reasonable effort to afford the student the opportunity to develop a comprehensive education plan. Whether at the abbreviated or comprehensive education plan point or whether automated or manually applied, if a transfer student identifies a program of study in which there is a current Associate Degree for Transfer available then the college is obliged to place the student on that pathway via the student’s education plan. The new auto-ADT mandate reinforces the

importance of keeping updated student records, educational goals, and information across multiple local platforms and applications.

*Decision 3: Handling the Exceptions*

When validating the exceptions to the auto-ADT enrollment requirement, the third decision colleges must make is how to establish a built-in procedure to address the opt outs and exceptions provided by statute. Each community college should use their existing processes for student education plans and enrollments to implement any potential opt out or exception feature where an ADT exists.

Statutory exceptions from auto-ADT placement include:

1. an ADT pathway does not exist in the chosen major at the college.
2. the student's educational pathway is better served by a local associate degree.
3. the student plans to apply to transfer to a UC campus or an independent college or university.
4. the student is seeking to complete a community college baccalaureate degree program.
5. the student is seeking to complete a career technical education program that does not have an ADT pathway.

Colleges are advised to consider how they will automate procedures to identify and track these exceptions. If the college utilizes a degree planner tool it may be possible to create a notation of an allowable exception in the student's education plan. This might necessitate updated programming to tag exceptions and facilitate the population of that exception to other college systems.

Colleges are also advised to consider how they will strengthen the student-counselor interactions. As part of the student-counselor discussion to develop a meaningful education plan, leveraging these exceptions could be braided into existing processes. The addition of a somewhat formalized exception step here should not preclude established student-counselor interactions. Systemic transfer complexity, regional transfer pathways, and distinct university requirements encourage counselor visits and discussions to help shape the individual student's transfer approach and make informed course selections that support degree completion. These long-standing student-counselor partnerships along with this new requirement all have a goal of enhancing the probability that the student will transfer into a four-year university while earning a degree in their chosen program of study in a timely manner and minimizing excessive units.

**Additional/Supplemental Considerations**

Continuing students who *change their education goal* to transfer with a degree on or after August 1, 2024, will now be held within this new ADT placement mandate. While all exceptions are applicable for this student, some type of local consideration to check for this eventuality and for appropriate follow-up may be in order to conform to the statutory expectation.

*Change of major* initiates many subsequent effects and should be taken with a degree of informed seriousness by the student. For example, financial aid mandates a SEP and enrolled classes must be on the SEP. And now additionally, if a student wishes to change their major on or after August 1, 2024, and the new program of study aligns with an ADT then the student must be placed in that

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pathway on their education plan. Colleges should ensure students are informed of the ramifications that a change of major may have on their program of study.

If an existing *ADT is discontinued* by a regional California State University, either within the entire discipline or for a major concentration option, students enrolled at the community college retain their catalog rights for the courses already completed. The systemwide TMC has not been discontinued.

The current reporting through the Chancellor's Office Management Information System identifies the student's educational goal, program of study, and final program award through discrete data elements. To facilitate the clarification of credit program information, it is expected that *student success data element SS02*, Student Credit Course of Study, which currently allows reporting with either a Control Number or TOP Code, employ the Control Number as the preferred value. Use of the TOP Code in this element is deemed too vague and less than ideal for determination of ADT program identifications in the "student success" area of the Management Information System.

Colleges are expected to update websites, facilitate professional development activities for relevant faculty and staff, and all process all relevant programming and procedures to be compliant by August 1, 2024. Please share this information with all college departments and pertinent staff that advise and support students on matters of transfer.

The Chancellor's Office is committed to supporting the field in its implementation of this updated policy and will provide additional guidance and technical assistance as needed. If you have any questions, please send them directly to [transfer@cccco.edu](mailto:transfer@cccco.edu). Any questions related to CCCApply and how it's supporting this provision please contact [crms@ccctechcenter.org](mailto:crms@ccctechcenter.org) Then once implemented if you encounter any issues in CCCApply please open a support ticket in [staffsupportccctc@openccc.zendesk.com](mailto:staffsupportccctc@openccc.zendesk.com).

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