



# SDCCE to College Credit by Exam -Summary- Annual Report, 2019-20 to 2022-23 3/18/2024

## Context

This summary provides key findings of the SDCCE to College Credit by Exam Annual Report. It is to provide a picture of the overall mechanism and challenges throughout the different stages of a student's journey. There are opportunities to improve processes, communication, and outcomes for the SDCCE CTE Transitions Credit by Exam mechanism. The full report provides additional data, context, and insights about each of the stages of the student's journey. The full report also provides details on the credit by exam mechanism requirements, how this implementation has changed over time, the report's methodology (shaped by SDCCD's data architecture) and limitations. This summary does not include those details fully but includes the report's executive summary, recommendations, and lists the eleven guiding questions designed to support improved process management and student success. [Please view our full report for more details here](#)<sup>1</sup>.

SDCCE to College CTE Transitions Credit by Exam is a mechanism to provide San Diego College of Continuing Education (SDCCE) career education students with opportunities to earn credit for prior learning at San Diego City, Mesa, and/or Miramar College and accelerate credit college degree completion. Faculty led course-to-course credit by exam articulated agreements are developed and maintained to allow students to earn college credit ***without fees and regardless of residency status*** after successfully completing approved SDCCE career education courses and meeting all requirements.

Over the past three years major revisions to the administrative back-end of the process have been made as well as student and faculty requirements. The business processes around SDCCE's credit by exam mechanism are still being revised.

**The earned college credit values in this report reflect challenges with the external and manual credit by exam process and are not reflective of the revised final assessment grades procedures in place beginning summer 2023.** As SDCCE implements revised processes (including communication of revisions to staff, faculty, and students), we anticipate improved student outcomes. The changes are designed to address barriers identified previous reports.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sdccd.edu/docs/ISPT/workforce/docs/SDCCE-CBE-AnnualReport-2019-20-to-2022-23.pdf>

## Executive Summary

### Background

SDCCE to College CTE Transitions Credit by Exam is a mechanism to provide San Diego College of Continuing Education (SDCCE) career education students with opportunities to receive credit for SDCCE courses at San Diego City, Mesa, and/or Miramar college. These agreements enable SDCCE students to receive college credit **without additional fees and regardless of residency status** after demonstrating mastery in pre-approved SDCCE career education courses and after meeting all agreement requirements. The requirements to receive SDCCD college credit through SDCCE to College CTE Transitions Credit by Exam in 2022-23 are below. In 2022-23 students were required to:

1. Enroll in a SDCCE course tied to an active Credit by Exam agreement
2. Not have opted out of receiving credit (**new**)<sup>2</sup>
3. Have an active college application for City, Mesa, or Miramar College
4. Earn an "A" or "B" in the course(s)<sup>3</sup>
5. Earn an "A" or "B" on the approved final assessment within the course(s)

### Process Revisions

SDCCE to College CTE Transitions Credit by Exam has continually undergone process revisions to improve the mechanism for both students and faculty. Accordingly, five major process revisions were made recently to remove barriers to student success (Table 1).

**Table 1. Summary of Changes to Credit by Exam Mechanism and their impact**

Revision	Impact
<b>Fall 2022:</b> Courses that can receive college credit are indicated on the SDCCD online class search.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides visibility of SDCCE credit by exam courses before enrollment</li> </ul>
<b>Fall 2022:</b> Students have to opt out of receiving credit as signing up for the course automatically opts students in.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer students are ineligible for credit due to lack of acceptance</li> </ul>
<b>Summer 2023:</b> Final assessment grades are submitted in Campus Solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher rates of academically eligible students</li> </ul>
<b>Fall 2023:</b> Students are still course grade eligible if they earn a "C".	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of course grade eligible students</li> </ul>
<b>Fall 2023:</b> Academically eligible students see 'Apply to Credit Colleges' in 'My To Do' List' in student portal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides students reminder and guidance of credit college CCCApply eligibility requirement</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> The student opt out model was adopted in Fall 2022. When students enroll in the noncredit course, they are acknowledging the acceptance of credit unless they choose to electronically opt out.

<sup>3</sup> As of Fall 2023, students needed to earn an "A", "B", or "C" in the course(s).

## Methodology

Student data was analyzed with the goal of answering guiding questions related to active agreement counts, student enrollments, credit received by students, student's transition to the credit colleges, credit college enrollment in CBE pathways, and awards received by students. Student data was stratified by credit college history and grade eligibility as these two factors strongly impacted credit college transitions.

## Results

### Active Agreements

The number of SDCCE courses with active agreements increased by 23%, from 40 to 49 in 2022-23, with new agreements in Hospitality/Culinary Arts, Child Development, and Digital Media and Programming. All nine SDCCE programs have at least one active agreement.

**Recommendation: Increase credit and noncredit faculty training and support for agreement development focused on core credit college requirements and industry needs.**

**Recommendation: Continue the implementation of strategies to support existing agreements and develop new agreements connected to college courses that lead to core certificate and degree requirements (and when possible lead to high wage and high demand careers).**

### Student Enrollments

***There is a significantly larger number of students that could earn college credit in the 2022-2023 academic year than ever before.*** In 2022-23, SDCCE had 7,290 active enrollments. Of those enrollments, 3,221 (44%) met the program's course grade requirement and 1,725 met both the course grade and final assessment grade requirements (24%). Finally, 802 enrollments (11%) are expected to receive college credit through the CTE Transitions Credit by Exam agreements. Although active enrollments have not exceeded the 2019-20 academic year, ***enrollments that meet both the course grade and final assessment grade requirements have increased dramatically due to changes to the final assessment grade submission process.*** Consequently, the 2022-23 academic year, which only makes up 37% of all active enrollments over the past four years, has more academically eligible enrollments than the three previous academic years combined (1,725 vs. 1,619).

**Recommendation: Automate and streamline verification and transcription of eligibility as well as the transcription process as much as possible. Volume of academically eligible enrollments has increased and is expected to continue to grow.**

### Credit Received by Students

The 2022-23 academic year is expected to have credit transcribed 444 times. This is nearly the amount from the previous three academic years combined (2019-20 to 2021-22). However, ***there are ten agreements with no students expected to be transcribed credit in 2022-23.***

**Recommendation: Explore agreements with zero academically eligible students, specifically prioritizing multi-course agreements.**

The last report identified four barriers that prevented students from receiving credit in a timely manner. Since the last report, the need for an active credit college application on file, and wait times related to verification/processing of all requirements, still remain as primary barriers to students receiving credit in a timely manner.

**Recommendation: Increase student awareness and support for completing the credit college application.**

**Recommendation: Provide clear application process language to ensure students understand requirements and minimize confusion by the term 'CCCApply'.**

**Recommendation: Continue Campus Solutions query development to streamline as many verification, validation, and confirmation requirements as possible.**

### Student Transitions to Credit College

Approximately one out of ten SDCCD CTE Transitions participants in the 2022-23 academic year subsequently enrolled at the credit colleges (11%, 526 of 4,612).

***Noncredit only students that had some credit by exam eligibility*** ('A' or 'B' in at least one credit by exam course grade and final assessment grade) ***were four times more likely to transition to the credit colleges than noncredit only students without some credit by exam eligibility.*** This highlights the potential for CTE Transitions Credit by Exam to be a leading mechanism for transitioning students from noncredit to the credit colleges. Finally, of the students that transition to credit colleges, 52% of students transition into a credit college pathway related to the noncredit course they took.

**Recommendation: Increase faculty engagement focused on further identification and communication of what is considered a pathway. Pursuing opportunities to connect/integrate CTE Transitions Credit by Exam into Guided Pathways initiatives is encouraged.**

### Awards Received by Students

At the time of analysis, 17 students from 2022-23 were conferred 25 awards. All of the students had prior credit college history. Due to the recency of completion, more time is needed for noncredit only students to be conferred awards. 2020-21 and 2021-22 participants were

conferred 51 awards across 40 students. Preliminary data suggests that students that receive college credit and transition are more likely to earn a college credit award. However, student counts are too small to analyze for significance. Six of the 51 awards are from noncredit only students and four of those degrees have credits from the credit by exam offering as part of that degree's requirements.

### **Student Experience**

No new research into the student perspective has been conducted since the last report. Future exploration of the student experience is recommended after process improvements are fully implemented. Below are themes the prior report's qualitative data identified in 2021 and 2022.

1. Students often did not know about the credit by exam opportunity, and when they first heard about it, came with an expectation of what credit by exam is.
2. Students are motivated by the supportive programs, faculty, counselors, peer success stories, and SDCCE community at the credit colleges.
3. Students are balancing various life and scheduling logistics.
4. Students felt prepared for credit college after transitioning and appreciated credit college services.
5. Registration and enrollment processes are unclear for students pursuing both noncredit and credit coursework.
6. Students desire flexible options to complete their credentials.
7. Faculty and advisors are viewed as a core function of student success.
8. Course costs are a concern for students considering credit transitions.
9. Bolstering opportunities for prior learning assessment may benefit immigrants and English-language learners.

**Recommendation: Continue to apply the nine student experience themes from qualitative research to support improvement efforts tied to CTE Transitions Credit by Exam.**

### **Additional Recommendations**

**Recommendation: Increase CTE Transitions Credit by Exam awareness. Increasing noncredit student awareness, as well as general awareness across staff and faculty roles within SDCCE continues to be a priority need. Increased SDCCE promotion, communication, and student support for CTE Transitions Credit by Exam may be beneficial, particularly in digital spaces. At the date of this report's publication, no indication of credit by exam could be found on the [sdcce.edu](http://sdcce.edu) website.**

**Recommendation: Provide training to faculty, deans, counselors, and staff employees. Provide ongoing and regular training to faculty, deans, counselors, and staff across both instructional and student services. Clear communication and understanding of the revised processes and requirements as well as awareness of current agreements is needed throughout the SDCCE community.**

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the highlighted orange boxes provided throughout [the full report](#) as well as informed by the efforts of the SDCCE Credit by Exam process improvement team and recent process and practice changes.

### Data Collection, Analysis, and Engagement

- **Continued Institutional support of final assessment grades:** The integration of final assessment grades was implemented in Summer 2023 and has already dramatically increased the percent of students academically eligible in that term. However, Institutional support for final assessment grade policies similar to the 2020 memo on Continuing Education Grading and Credit Policies for letter grades will be beneficial. While the number of grade eligible students has increased, there are still some agreements with no grade eligible students. Exploration of agreements with zero academically eligible students is recommended, specifically prioritizing multi-course agreements as is the exploration at the agreement level to better understand gaps in eligibility across agreements.
- **Include analysis of agreed upon pathways:** This report used NCAL's framework by looking at the credit college certificates and awards listed within the Career Pathways section as the criteria for identifying courses in the path. Faculty engagement is recommended for further identification and communication of what is considered a pathway. Pursuing opportunities to connect/integrate CTE Transitions Credit by Exam into Guided Pathways initiatives is encouraged.

### Agreement Development

- **Prioritize new agreement development that leads to degree completion and workforce needs:** Credit by exam has the opportunity to not only increase transitions from noncredit to credit, but also accelerate degree and certificate completion at the credit colleges and ensure that a student does not repeat the same content in a credit college course that they already learned at SDCCD. However, not all agreements include credit college courses that are meaningfully tied to a credit college certificate or degree. Increased credit and noncredit faculty training and support for agreement development focused on core credit college requirements and industry needs is recommended. The implementation of strategies to support existing agreements and develop new agreements connected to college courses that lead to core certificate and degree requirements (and when possible lead to high wage and high demand careers) should continue.

## Student Support and Outreach

- **Increase CTE Transitions Credit by Exam awareness:** Increasing noncredit student awareness, as well as general awareness across staff and faculty roles within SDCCE continues to be a priority need. Increased SDCCE promotion, communication, and student support for CTE Transitions Credit by Exam may be beneficial, particularly in digital spaces. At the date of this report's publication, no indication of credit by exam could be found on the sdcce.edu website.
- **Continue to support students with the credit college application and registration process from multiple SDCCD employees:** Increase student support for completing the credit college application. Completion of the credit college application continues to be the number one barrier preventing noncredit students from earning credit through the CTE Transitions Credit by Exam mechanism. Focusing on student awareness and hands-on support for completing the credit college application is recommended. With the transition to noncredit CCCApply, clear communication and guidance on the difference and how to complete both will be needed.
- **Provide training to faculty, deans, counselors, and staff employees:** Provide ongoing and regular training to faculty, deans, counselors, and staff across both instructional and student services. Clear communication and understanding of the revised processes and requirements as well as awareness of current agreements is needed throughout the SDCCE community.

## Processing

- **Automate and streamline verification and transcription:** Continue to invest in automation and streamlining of the verification and validation of eligibility as well as the transcription process. While some automation has occurred, more is needed. Since the integration of the final assessment grades into Campus Solutions, the volume of academically eligible enrollments has increased by more than four times and is expected to continue to grow. Manual validation and processing steps will become less and less sustainable as the volume increases. Investment into technical solutions, leveraging Campus Solutions, and other existing infrastructure is highly encouraged. Process elements prime for automation include:
  - Multi-course agreement verification and confirmation of status progress in multi-course agreements
  - Communication with grade eligible students
  - Opt-out tracking and follow-up
  - Transcription query



## Guiding Questions

### Active Agreements

1. How many SDCCE credit by exam courses are ***tied to active agreements?***

### Student Enrollments

2. ***How many enrollments could potentially earn credit*** through the SDCCE credit by exam mechanism?
3. What are the ***enrollment checkpoint trends*** over the last four years?

### Credit Received by Students

4. ***How many students are earning credit*** through the SDCCE credit by exam mechanism?
5. What are some ***barriers*** to receiving credit?

### Student Transitions to Credit College

6. How many CBE participants are transitioning to the credit colleges and are ***SDCCE credit earners more likely to transition to the credit colleges?***
7. For SDCCE credit by exam participants, when they transitioned, ***did they stay in the same general pathway*** as the credit they earned? (*new*)

### Awards Received by Students

8. ***Are SDCCE credit earners that transition to the credit colleges completing degrees/certificates?***
9. Are SDCCE credit earners who transitioned to the credit colleges ***more likely to complete credit degrees*** than SDCCE noncredit earners that transitioned?
10. For SDCCE credit earners that transitioned and got a credit award, ***did they earn an award in the same general pathway*** as they earned credit in through the SDCCE credit by exam mechanism?

### Student Experience

11. How do ***students feel*** about the SDCCE CTE Transitions Credit by Exam process?