

eTranscript California Task Force Report Out

Overview

The Office of Cradle-to-Career Data convened the eTranscript California & Career Passport Task Force for the purpose of: 1) providing concrete, actionable recommendations for how to leverage eTranscript California to reduce administrative burden for students; 2) clarifying complementary systems and processes that are necessary to attain the concept of a Career Passport that would support skills-based hiring; and 3) documenting specific steps that various entities are ready to take in the next three years to advance this vision.

The taskforce is made up of representatives from the Association for Independent California Colleges & Universities (AICCU), The Wonderful Company (representing California Chamber of Commerce), California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO), California Department of Education (CDE), California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), California Federation of Teachers (CTA), California Labor & Workforce Development Agency (LWDA), California State Board of Education (SBE), California State University Chancellor's Office (CSU), California Volunteers, Governor's Office of Business & Economic Development (GO-Biz), University of California Office of the President (UC), and a student.

February 15, 2024 Meeting

After learning about the difficulties that dual enrollment students experience getting credit for early college course taking, the task force considered two potential solutions: integrating transcript requests into college applications and creating a California postsecondary transcript standard.

Application Integration

The task force considered three foundational issues:

- Colleges require an official transcript from the community college(s) where dual enrollment coursework was taken, but students lack streamlined ways to report dual enrollment
- Inconsistent transcription processes may impact admissions decisions
- Current data structures make it difficult to track dual enrollment coursetaking

Based on the successful model already in place, whereby the California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI) passes high school transcripts to CSU and UC as part of the

application process, the task force considered the following potential solutions:

- Send CCC coursework data from eTranscript California to CCGI to create a unified high school transcript that includes dual enrollment information
- Populate the CCC, CSU, and UC admissions applications with CCC coursework data to reduce manual entry
- Automate transcript requests within admissions applications so that final transcripts can be sent to the colleges where students are admitted, without cost

Task force members were supportive of having an option in the CCC, CSU, and UC applications to send transcript data via eTranscript California, with several task force members underscoring that the proposal would address equity gaps.

When implementing this solution, task force members stressed the importance of eTranscript California providing information on coursetaking across CCCs, such as when community college students take online courses offered by other institutions through California Virtual Campus, in addition to sharing information back to high schools on dual enrollment.

One task force member noted that when dual enrollment information is shared back with high schools, it will be important to have clarity about how those courses are noted in high school transcripts. The new California High School Transcript and Student Record Portability Standard (described below) will help to address this issue.

Some task force members noted that students might not want to share information on prior college coursework, so they should be able to proactively choose whether they want to send a comprehensive college transcript. Students should be made aware that for financial aid purposes, they must provide all college course records, even if they did poorly in a course. They also need to understand that dual enrollment courses will count toward their overall postsecondary units and be part of their college record. One task force member suggested creating toolkits for sharing this information to different audiences, such as students, parents, and counselors.

Some task force members expressed concern about whether the technical infrastructure would be able to deliver the high volume of transcripts during application season, and flagged the importance of having a robust and secure solution with clear

data governance. One member expressed concern that the cost might be significant for this type of solution, including technical, personnel, and professional development expenses. Clear roles and responsibilities would help to ensure smooth operations.

Another concern was providing adequate support to students related to using eTranscript California data to populate their prior coursetaking in the application form. Given that many students submit their applications close to the deadline, support would need to be in place to handle a large volume of support needs, at all hours of the day and night.

In addition to using eTranscript California to share dual enrollment course information back to high schools, some task force members felt it would be valuable to provide a definitive flag for whether specific dual enrollment courses meet a-g requirements (the sequence of courses high school students must take to be eligible for CSU and UC). Currently, there is no statewide "source of truth" for the a-g status of dual enrollment courses. If course crosswalks are created, there will need to be a mechanism for keeping this information up-to-date, with clearly defined roles and appropriate resources.

One task force member noted that while eTranscript California will help to share information on dual enrollment courses at community colleges, it will also be important to establish mechanisms for sharing information on dual enrollment courses taken at CSU, and identifying the a-g status of those courses.

Another task force member indicated that when communicating about the integration of eTranscript California into the college application forms, it would be important to address whether this change would impact the number of people employed by college admissions and records offices. The CSU representative clarified that the integration of CCGI's transcripts into CSU Apply had not changed the number of staff, but rather allowed those staff to focus more on personalized advising to students.

Finally, task force members flagged that any solution should be fully accessible for people with disabilities. The CCC representative verified that this would be part of the minimum specifications.

Transcript Standards

CCGI shared a process that was used to develop the California High School Transcript and Student Record Portability Standard, which will be used to streamline and align information exchanges between CDE, CCC, CSU, and UC. The task force then considered the possibility of developing a postsecondary transcript standard that can be used to share transcript information among CCC, CSU, UC, and independent colleges. eTranscript California currently uses a California-specific transcript standard for community college courses, but this standard is not applied to four-year institutions.

Creating a more comprehensive postsecondary standard would provide an opportunity to address updates needed to the existing eTranscript California Transcript Standard such as new Cal-GETC standards for general education requirements and documenting credit for prior learning. The standards would support further integration of data sets, including providing dual enrollment data (for both CCC and CSU) to populate CCGI's eligibility tools and with ASSIST to certify whether specific courses meet general education requirements.

One task force member flagged that the transcript standards will require a data element dictionary and detailed specifications for colleges to implement. Another noted that it would be important to identify how data from ASSIST would be included, given that it is the source of truth for whether course credits may be transferred to a CSU or UC, and if they count as electives or toward a specific major.

Task force members noted that it would be important to determine what the minimum transcriptable unit should be, such as potentially establishing a standard for documenting skills or competencies. This determination could help to clarify what information should be exchanged through eTranscript California (for academic purposes) and what should be integrated into the Career Passport (for employment purposes). One task force member suggested looking at ways that UC San Diego is currently documenting skills. Another noted that the adoption of competency-based education might further complicate the distinctions between academic and employment domains.

One task force member suggested creating potential use cases for sharing transcript data to inform the content of the standards. For example, in addition to Cal-GETC,

implications for associate degrees for transfers (ADT) should be considered. Another suggested that it would be important to understand whether the standards might affect curriculum either directly or indirectly. One task force member wondered how AP, IB, and CLEP scores might be integrated into the standard.

Several task force members wondered how information on credit-for-prior-learning would appear in the transcript, particularly related to how different types of credit should be noted (including as for course credit, as an elective that can be transferred to a CSU or UC, or as a course that will count toward a specific CSU or UC major). A clear policy is needed for how those credits are recognized.

The task force agreed that a subcommittee should develop a draft standard, which builds upon the existing eTranscript California standard, for review by the task force. This subcommittee should solicit input from the existing eTranscript California steering committee. CCC, CSU, UC, and AICCU representatives (particularly admissions staff, registrars, and articulation officers) should also be consulted, as well as students.

March 14, 2024 Meeting

Task force members learned about two tools that support student advising: college eligibility tools provided by the California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI) and the CSU Transfer Planner. They then considered these two use cases to identify ways that eTranscript California could improve advising tools and discussed the feasibility of using the ASSIST data system to track CSU/UC college eligibility (a-g) status of dual enrollment courses.

CCGI Eligibility Tools

The task force considered four key issues:

- UC and CSU have different criteria for determining whether students are eligible to apply, including which courses they will accept. CCGI's tools leverage high school transcript data to provide individualized guidance about progress towards application requirements while students are still in high school, so they can prepare for the college of their choice.
- CCGI uses the Course Management Portal (CMP), which is managed by UC, to determine whether specific courses count toward a-g requirements. However

CMP does not include information on dual enrollment courses. As more students take dual enrollment courses, it will be harder for counselors to advise them on whether they are on target to apply to their chosen college.

- Students have to manually enter information about the a-g status of their dual enrollment courses as part of the CSU and UC college application process. Currently, both CSU and UC direct students to ASSIST (a database describing whether community college courses meet general education requirements and if they are accepted for transfer within a major) to determine a-g status of dual enrollment courses. However, ASSIST does not explicitly list the a-g status of dual enrollment courses.
- If students misunderstand whether a dual enrollment course fulfills a-g eligibility requirements, or if they enter the information incorrectly on their application form, they may be denied admission. Therefore, it would be helpful to have an official source of truth about the a-g status of specific dual enrollment courses that could be appended to the planned eTranscript California/CCGI data integration.

CSU Transfer Planner

The task force considered two key issues:

- The CSU Transfer Planner helps community college students understand whether they are taking the right courses to transfer to a specific CSU campus in a specific major. However, because student transcripts are not available to CSU until a student applies for transfer, the CSU Transfer Planner requires students to select which community college courses they have taken from a list generated from ASSIST.
- If eTranscript California were integrated with CSU Transfer Planner, and students gave permission to share their course data each term, the tool would provide more comprehensive and reliable information on transfer preparation, particularly regarding how courses fulfill CSU requirements.

Taskforce members brainstormed on how connecting data sets could improve advising tools, core considerations for implementation, required supports, and other opportunities to improve advising.

Task force members were supportive of integrating data sets, noting that doing so would provide more seamless access to information to support student planning, decrease confusion for students while increasing transparency of eligibility requirements, provide a more coherent picture of the courses students are taking to prepare for college while in high school (including repeated courses), and support dual enrollment students as seeing themselves as actively making progress toward a four-year degree--particularly in fields they may not have considered.

The task force also listed some additional functionality that this technical integration could create, such as recommendation engines that alert students to similar majors and what-if scenarios where students can see options based on their prior coursetaking or courses they are considering. In addition, UC's transfer planning tool (which also leverages ASSIST data) could integrate information from eTranscript California to provide similar functionality to CSU Transfer Planner.

When considering implementation considerations, task force members reprised an issue raised at the February meeting: the concern that students will not want to share information with colleges about their dual enrollment courses. They underscored the need to support students and counselors in understanding how dual enrollment counts toward both CSU/UC eligibility and transfer, particularly when the grade received in the course is taken into account.

The group also highlighted several technical issues, including establishing the appropriate technical infrastructure, data standards, and protocols. A workflow process should be defined for batch sending and updating transcript data to CCGI and CSU Transfer Planner, so that data are up-to-date and timing will work for advising and application timeframes. Ideally, students would give permission to share transcripts as a first step, so that information can be passed between institutions as needed. Task force members also reiterated the importance of ensuring that requirements are fully accessible to people with disabilities. This workflow should take into account existing integrations for sharing transcript data with CCGI and CSU. Ideally, ASSIST data would be appended to eTranscript California so that courses are tagged with information needed by four-year institutions to evaluate prior course-taking (both in the case of a-g and more generally).

In addition, an analysis should be done to understand the cost of implementation at the local level. Special attention should be paid to smaller institutions that may not have

staff capacity to support changes to existing processes. A staggered implementation could be considered, such as providing the service to an initial cohort of students.

Documenting a-g Status in ASSIST

The task force reviewed a proposal to use ASSIST to document the a-g status of dual enrollment courses, which would address the current challenge of missing dual enrollment designations in CCGI's advising tools and improve ASSISTS' current public website so that it documents how dual enrollment courses count toward both high school and college requirements. Currently, [CSU](#) refers students to the ASSIST website to inform how to fill out college applications related to the a-g status of dual enrollment courses and [UC](#) states that one criterion for whether a dual enrollment course counts toward a-g is if it is transferable to UC (which is documented in ASSIST).

In addition, the task force discussed the possibility of crosswalking a-g to other designations that are already recorded in ASSIST, such as general education requirements like Cal-GETC, to address the challenge of having UC personnel review each dual enrollment course to determine its a-g eligibility. Currently a team of three people is assigned to review each course submitted for a-g approval and to apply criteria established by faculty to determine its a-g designation.

Task force members expressed concern that ASSIST is not currently conceptualized as the place to learn about a-g requirements--it generally is used to understand whether community college courses will be accepted by CSU and UC for transfer. One person wondered if this would change the scope of the information that would need to be included in ASSIST. For example, if dual enrollment courses offered by CSU are included, would ASSIST now document whether UC accepts CSU courses? How should dual enrollment courses be treated that are not accepted for transfer?

One task force member noted a technical consideration: the importance of including course codes in ASSIST (rather than just course titles).

Another person noted that if data documentation were limited to dual enrollment courses that are developed through an MOU between a local education agency and a community college, then perhaps CMP might be a better location to store

information. However, another task force member pointed out that this would still put the onus on students who participate in dual enrollment through other mechanisms to identify and correctly describe individual articulation agreements between community colleges and specific four-year institutions. Another person expressed concerns that different LEAs have different standards for what is counted as an a-g course. Finally a task force member noted that the state needs to ensure there is capacity to swiftly review and update the a-g status of courses.

Returning to the idea of crosswalks, one task force member proposed that an initial mapping could be done based on all courses that are currently accepted for transfer, as well as the three sets of general education requirements (Cal-GETC, IGETC, and CSU-Breadth). Another person noted that technology could be used to identify courses that are highly likely to be eligible for a-g, so that effort can focus on courses that are less clear. Several task force members recommended that determinations about whether a dual enrollment course meets a-g requirements should be based on consultation with faculty.

Finally, one person wondered whether gaining an a-g designation might drive demand for specific dual enrollment courses.

The group agreed to create a subcommittee that will bring a proposal about how to map dual enrollment to a-g requirements to the full task force in June.

April 11, 2024 Meeting

Credit for prior learning (CPL) is the process that colleges and universities use to evaluate the college-level knowledge and skills an individual has gained outside of the classroom for college credit. Task force members learned about two efforts that support providing CPL: the Mapping Articulated Credit initiative (MAP) and Credential Engine. They then considered four potential strategies to support CPL as part of efforts to adapt and scale eTranscript California.

CPL Concerns

The task force learned about three key challenges:

For students:

- Students may not be alerted about CPL after they enroll and don't know that some colleges offer more CPL opportunities than others.
- When students become aware of their CPL options, it takes time to gather required documentation and meet with college staff to have their requests evaluated. This can have a significant impact on a student's educational planning and time-to-degree, particularly if they have already enrolled in courses that could have been satisfied through CPL.

For educators:

- Students can bring in a variety of work and learning experiences, making the process of CPL evaluation time-consuming for college faculty. In addition, California's colleges and universities provide learning opportunities that are not typically captured and shared on academic transcripts, such as digital badges, work-based learning, noncredit and extension courses, and portfolios.
- Many prior learning qualifications have not yet been evaluated for articulation, so the burden falls on colleges and faculty to understand the types of artifacts that are being submitted to determine if they represent equivalent forms of learning.

For documentation:

- Institutions have developed a variety of processes for documenting participation and outcomes, and share information in several different forms.
- There is no statewide, endorsed solution or interoperable set of platforms that allow individuals to continue to collect their learning throughout their lifetime in a format that ensures verified, secure data that can be easily used by receivers.

Mapping Articulated Credit (MAP)

The task force heard a presentation from Samuel Lee from MAP, which is an initiative sponsored by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. After hearing about the significant economic benefits of CPL for learners, task force members learned how the initiative:

- Uses a faculty-led process to align prior learning with specific college courses
- Is creating a repository of CPL opportunities, so that colleges can see where CPL has already been granted, to inform their own decisions

- Has a public portal that allows students to search for CPL opportunities and allows students to upload training and certification documents that can be sent to colleges for evaluation for CPL
- Is coordinating with other statewide course documentation efforts such as common course numbering, C-ID, and the Chancellor's Office Curriculum Inventory
- Is being integrated with student advising tools such as Program Pathways Mapper and the California Virtual Campus Exchange
- Is coordinating with Credential Engine to ensure information could be passed to colleges in other states
- Would benefit from integration with eTranscript California to document CPL that has been granted to individual students

Credential Engine

The task force heard a presentation from Scott Cheney from Credential Engine, a nonprofit that is helping to document credentials and their associated competencies. They learned how Credential Engine:

- Has created an open-source common language about the features of credentials, credentialing organizations, competency frameworks, and quality assurance, which allows records to be "interoperable," meaning that records can be shared across numerous systems
- Is working in 26 states to provide information for tools like e-transcripts, credential libraries, and creating learning and employment records
- Is coordinating with other national entities that are documenting transfer recommendations, competency frameworks, and course equivalencies, so that information can be more easily connected and shared

Potential Solutions

Taskforce members considered four potential actions that would support CPL as part of efforts to adapt and scale eTranscript California:

- Leverage MAP and tools like Credential Engine to build a statewide library of CPL opportunities
- Enhance the use of existing college planning tools by embedding CPL opportunities

- Build awareness and expedite evaluation processes by capturing CPL information at the point of application
- Establish consistent approaches for documenting and sending CPL-related credentials

Task force members were asked to vote on the action that is most important, but votes split across all four items. The group then brainstormed challenges, considerations for implementation, and policy/organizational changes needed to support CPL so that it is recognized for transfer, academic awards, and employment.

Task force members stressed that faculty must be the ones to approve CPL, as it is a form of articulation. This includes validating that students have mastered learning outcomes and ensuring that credit will conform with accreditation standards (Samuel Lee clarified that this is the process used by MAP). For example, some forms of learning that are documented in Credential Engine might not be accepted for academic credit by California's higher education institutions. This will be particularly true for courses used to meet CalGETC requirements, especially given differences in how CSU and UC recognize CPL.

Task force members recommended that CPL review include learning that is gained in contexts other than earning a certificate. For example, skills can be gained in apprenticeship programs, noncredit coursework, prison training programs, and community service (such as when working with people who are unhoused).

Several noted the value of engaging employers in reviewing potential CPL, building off of existing practices in industries like automotive. For example, employers could validate high-value skills in instances where there are no certifications that document core competencies or in industries that are evolving rapidly. Having a shared skills taxonomy would help to make this more possible.

Task force members indicated that CPL approval should be granted broadly, rather than asking each institution to review potential CPL, especially given the lack of funding for reviewing work. Task force members noted that it would be important to flesh out what that broader review process should look like. For example, a statewide body could be designated that would develop options for colleges to consider. Several felt

that it would be vital to document how CPL will articulate, so that it will consistently count toward degree requirements at CSU and UC. Other suggestions included leveraging the Related and Supplemental Instruction (RSI) system for registered apprenticeship and the state's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Consistent funding would be needed to sustain the review process for CPL.

Task force members indicated that it will be important to determine who will build and maintain a statewide CPL library, and that this enterprise should be funded to ensure that it continues to provide current information. One task force member recommended that statute be used to ensure that colleges adopt a consistent standard for documenting CPL and establish an authoritative source for CPL agreements (this has been done in other states, according to Scott Cheney from Credential Engine). Others noted that any new requirements should be tested to ensure they don't conflict with existing regulations. Regulations should also include safeguards to prevent predatory for-profits from using CPL in a way that is detrimental to students.

The group also focused on the importance of advising. For example, students should be counseled to only seek CPL for courses that support their certificate and degree goals, as too many units can jeopardize access to financial aid. Several stressed the importance of making low wage workers aware of opportunities to earn CPL. For-profit colleges are already advertising their ability to provide CPL, so public institutions should make clear that they also provide pathways to credentials for those who may not have considered college as an option. One task force member felt that students should be alerted at the point of application, to ensure CPL is part of their education planning.

Task force members recommended that instructional faculty and counselors be informed about the context in which CPL can be utilized and applied to student's majors. This would help to address concerns that CPL is not allowable and clarify what types of learning have been articulated for academic credit. Colleges will need to revise business processes to ensure that CPL is taken into consideration for education and career planning.

Finally, task force members noted the importance of using CPL as a way to support hiring practices (a topic that will be explored further at the May meeting). For example, one task force member described the relatively rigid approach taken by CalHR when

evaluating non-academic factors. If learning from volunteer and lived experience could be documented through CPL, it could help reduce hurdles experienced by job applicants to secure government jobs. Scott Cheney from Credential Engine noted that other states are struggling with using non-academic records in hiring due to limitations in HR systems and reticence among employers to devote time to developing skills-based hiring mechanisms.

The group agreed that the contents of this discussion should help to inform recommendations that will be reviewed at the June meeting.