

Common Course Numbering (CCN) Protocol and Processes

Updated Spring 2023

The purpose of common course numbering (CCN) is to ease transferability of courses among the 34 community and technical colleges. The current list of common courses can be accessed on the [State Board website](#).

The creation of this project was directed by the presidents of Washington community and technical colleges with leadership from the Instruction and Student Services Commissions and support from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). The project scope was originally limited to academic transfer courses commonly offered in Washington State higher education institutions and institutions across the country and defined by the Intercollege Relations Council (ICRC) agreement. The CCN list was later expanded to include commonly offered professional-technical courses. Information about the PTCC process can be found on the [SBCTC website PTCC](#)

Definition of a Common Course

Courses delivered by a number of community and technical colleges are considered common if the official college catalog descriptions are similar enough to be accepted as equivalent at a receiving college for transfer purposes. Courses not similar enough to be accepted as “common” in transfer from one CTC to another are designated as unique and identified as separate.

Rules for Common Course Numbers and Titles

General Rules

Common course number designation includes a common department abbreviation followed by the “&” symbol and a common 3-digit number.

- Less advanced courses have numbers lower than more advanced courses within the same department/division abbreviation.
- Colleges may use a designator (i.e. Q for quantitative reasoning or W for writing across the curriculum or D for diversity requirement, etc.) after the 3-digit common course number when that serves an individual college need and does not impact how the course is accepted as common within the CTC system.

Rules for Determining a Common Course Number

- 000-099 Below college level
- 101-199 First year courses
- 100-119 Introductory and exploratory courses
- 120-189 Series and discrete courses*
- 200-299 Second year courses
- 200-209 Standard second year offerings
- 210-289 Series and discrete courses*
- 190-199 & 290-299 Experiential learning, including internships, cooperative learning, field experience, individual research, special seminar, special topics, and independent studies.

*Series and discrete courses:

- 1-3 Courses in series, with prerequisites—FRENCH I, II & III; Special Note: Students will need to be advised that when taking courses in a series, they should do so at the same college for ease of transferability.
- 0, 4-9 Discrete offerings (stand-alone courses), or a series with no prescribed order—AMER HIST I, II & III

Rules for Determining a Common Course Title

- Due to limits in ctcLink, the title should be no more than 30 characters long, including spaces and punctuation.
- Common course titles use upper- and lower-case letters (e.g., Anatomy and Physiology I).

- For course series that are not similar enough to be “common” but serve similar intents in transfer when the whole series is taken, colleges should distinguish the series by using roman numerals for one, Arabic for another, and letters for a third, if needed. For example, Engineering Graphics I, II & III (three course series), Engineering Graphics 1 & 2 (two course series), and Engineering Graphics (stand-alone).
- After the common course title (30 characters), colleges may put a colon (:) then append a customized title.

Avoiding Course Collisions

To avoid common course number and title duplication or collisions, colleges should check the SBCTC website for common course numbers prior to assigning numbers and titles to courses that are changed or new courses related to the direct transfer agreement.

To prevent course number or title confusion with unique courses, it is recommended that unique college courses (those not common) similar to common courses be renumbered and titled. For example, a college should avoid having both a SOC& 101 (common) and SOC 101 (unique).

Adding an Existing Common Course Number to a College Catalog/Offerings

Colleges that wish to add an existing common course number to their curricula may do so at any time by following these steps:

1. Review the course descriptions of three (3) colleges that currently offer the common course. This is to ensure that your course is common to those already offering it as a common course.
2. Seek approval for the common course through local college processes.
3. Notify the CCN Standing Subcommittee of the Articulation and Transfer Council (ATC) by completing this form [CCN FORM](#). The course will be reviewed for alignment with the CCN list and marked as offered by your college in the committee’s records.

Method for Adding, Inactivating, or Modifying an Existing Common Course Number

Additions, inactivations, or modifications of common courses will be initiated through the Articulation and Transfer Council with final approval by the Instruction Commission. The Articulation and Transfer Council will have a Standing Committee to oversee the review process and recommend changes to the ATC general membership.

The process will follow an annual cycle that begins in fall and concludes the following fall (with the revision effective the subsequent summer term to allow for curricular changes at all affected colleges). Proposed revisions may undergo additional review by faculty experts and other stakeholders as needed.

See-CCN Revision Process and Timeline Document

- Prior to October 15, any member of the community and technical college community may request a change or addition to the common course numbering list. To do so, the requesting person will need to notify their college ATC member regarding the request and submit the CCN Revision Proposal Form [\[add hyperlink\]](#). ATC members will bring all requests for changes and additions to the Standing Committee by October 15.
- At the fall ATC meeting, the Standing Committee will compile and review the proposed revisions submitted for that year and present the proposals and recommend the necessary scope of review (faculty teams, ATC discussion, etc.) to ATC. If faculty teams are needed, the Standing Committee will recommend ATC members or other campus leadership to facilitate the faculty discussion.
- During winter quarter, a broader review process occurs, including input from each college and the appropriate faculty and other stakeholders. This process is guided by a form sent to the ATC members to be completed by each college representative prior to the Spring ATC meeting. If formed due to the need for more in-depth research and discussion, a work group made up of faculty, deans, and other stakeholders will meet during this time.
- At the spring ATC meeting, the results of the review process are presented to ATC. ATC votes to recommend to IC the proposed revisions to the CCN list.

- At the fall Instruction Commission (IC) meeting, IC members vote on final approval of the revision to the CCN list.
- During the winter and spring quarters, colleges make the revisions to their catalog and ctclink to reflect the CCN changes.
- The revision becomes effective in summer.