

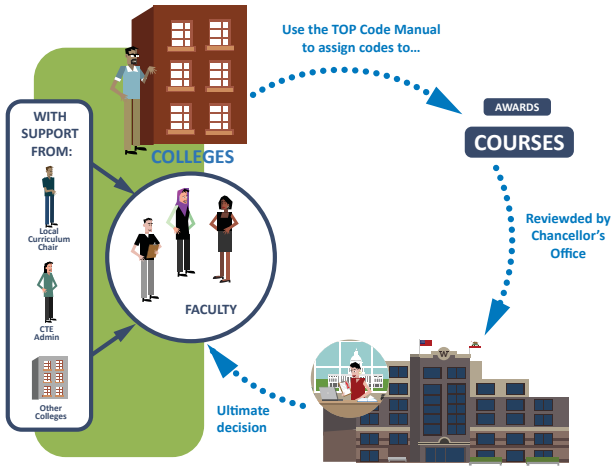
Understanding TOP Codes

Taxonomy of Program (TOP) codes were created by the California community college system in 1979 to make it possible to group programs and courses with similar objectives.



Over time, TOP codes have been expanded to serve a variety of purposes including supporting the curriculum approval process, documenting which types of certificates and degrees are issued, tracking enrollment data, recording outcomes for state and national funding streams for career and technical education (CTE), creating staffing reports, itemizing spending on instructional programs, supporting facilities planning, and displaying information in statewide data tools like the Data Mart, Salary Surfer, and the LaunchBoard.

HOW ARE TOP CODES ASSIGNED?



WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TOP 2, TOP 4, AND TOP 6?

TOP codes can be assigned at different levels of specificity using two digit pairs.



TOP 2 is indicated by the first two digits and represent the discipline, e.g. Health (12).

TOP 4 adds two additional digits to designate the sub-discipline, e.g. Nursing (1230).

TOP 6 adds two more digits to specify a field, e.g. Certified Nursing Assistant (1230.30)

HOW IS A TOP CODE DIFFERENT FROM A CIP CODE?



- TOP codes are unique to California community colleges.
- Most other post-secondary institutions use a different coding system called the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP).
- CIP codes are more detailed than TOP codes, so several different CIP codes could correspond to the same TOP code.
- Many colleges use CIP codes for federal Gainful Employment and financial aid figures, accreditation, and veterans programs.

WHY DON'T TOP CODES MATCH THE CONTENT OF MY PROGRAMS?

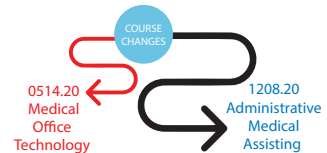
TOP code groupings don't align with interdisciplinary content



TOP codes are too broad



TOP codes have not been assigned consistently



WHY DO OTHER COLLEGES HAVE DIFFERENT TOP CODES FOR SIMILAR PROGRAMS?



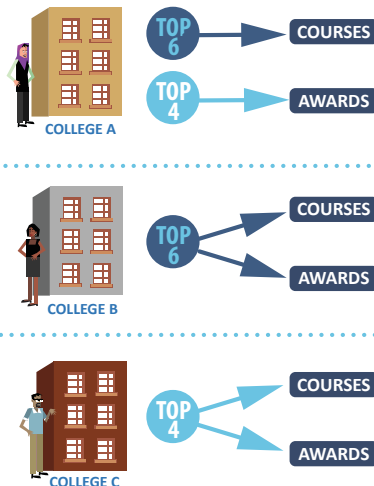
Codes were assigned before more specific codes became available.

Multiple codes may be applicable

Digital Media Certificate

- Animation (0614.40)
- OR
- Computer Graphics and Digital Imagery (0614.60)
- OR
- Graphic Communication (0602.00)

USE OF TOP 6 CODES



This can make it difficult to pinpoint similar programs across campuses using TOP codes alone.

