

Recommendation for Contextualized Sections of College & Career Success (CCS):

There is much interest in creating contextualized sections of CCS at CT State Community College. This will be **optional** by campus and would only be in addition to the majority of sections offered as non-contextualized sections of CCS*.

If a campus opts to offer a contextualized section, it is recommended by the CCS Advisory Council that:

- 1) Contextualized sections are reviewed, approved, developed, and offered only after a non-contextualized section has been taught on a campus. Specifically, the CCS Advisory Council recommends that campuses offer non-contextualized sections for one academic year prior to offering contextualized sections to allow for appropriate planning and assessment. Prior to teaching a contextualized section, an instructor must teach a non-contextualized section of CCS first.
- 2) A contextualized section be contextualized by Area of Study:
 - Social & Behavioral Sciences
 - Arts & Humanities
 - Sciences and Mathematics
 - Nursing & Health Careers
 - Business & Hospitality
 - Engineering & Technology

All contextualized sections of CCS will need to be requested and reviewed by the Discipline Coordinator of College & Career Success. If there is a particular program that has a larger enrollment, that program may be contextualized by section only with approval by the Discipline Coordinator of College & Career Success at the campus. For example, a Psychology program can request to create a contextualized section for contextualization through a formal request process (see page 4).

***IMPORTANT: Contextualizing sections of CCS by area of study is an OPTION to carefully consider at each campus. Not only does enrollment in that area of study need to be considered (to support offering a contextualized section), but also how to contextualize the course while still meeting the outcomes and benefiting students.**

Why have the option to contextualize sections of CCS by Area of Study?

Assigning sections by areas of study aligns with Guided Pathways principles to help students explore, choose, and enter a pathway (Jenkins et al. *What We Are Learning About Guided Pathways - Part 1: A Reform Moves From Theory to Practice*). Because the policy currently requires that students take CCS within the first nine credits, having the option to contextualize sections by Area of Study can afford the student the opportunity to fully explore the broader Area of Study that they selected upon enrollment and clarify their choice in academic program and career goal.

In the publication, “Redesigning Colleges at Scale: Fall 2019 Guided Pathways Scale of Adoption Assessment Update for the Washington State Community and Technical Colleges”, it describes the benefits of having, “**early-term courses to align with meta-majors...**For example, **colleges can use meta-majors to structure**

convocation, orientation, and **first-year experience courses**” and encourages, “strengthening the first year through onboarding that focuses on helping students explore and enter a program aligned to their interests from the start; create a full-program customized educational plan as early as possible; and take an engaging course on topics of interest in the first term.”

(Fay Redesigning Colleges at Scale: Fall 2019 Guided Pathways Scale of Adoption Assessment Update for the Washington State Community and Technical Colleges)

And in the article, “How Ohio Community Colleges Are Using Guided Pathways to Personalize Student Support”, it states how “...the goal of guided pathways is to change the student experience. Supporting students as they enter and progress through programs of study is essential. The development of meta-majors and program maps might be where many colleges enter into guided pathways reform work, but on their own these elements are unlikely to lead to a much improved or more equitable student experience. They do, however, serve as a key foundation for colleges to design and implement more personalized activities and practices—such as field-specific orientation sessions, **contextualized first-year experience courses**, and small-group and one-on-one advising and career counseling sessions—that meet students where they are. Personalized support is necessary to ensure that students are receiving the level and type of support that will help them start college strong, complete their programs, and prepare for transfer in a particular field or for direct entry into a family-sustaining career...Colleges taking this approach have adopted two different strategies for redesigning their first-year experience course: **offering contextualized course sections dedicated to specific meta-majors, and embedding assignments based on meta-majors in general course sections**. For example, Cuyahoga Community College is revising the first-year experience course for all new students to include meta-major specific career advising and assignments. The college is hoping that more personalized advising and assignments in the first term will help increase retention to the second term.”
(Klempin and Lahr How Ohio community colleges are using guided pathways to personalize student support)

For example, Westchester Community College (SUNY) has seen some great results through “introducing a **contextualized First-Year Seminar in fall 2019**. The sections are aligned to the academic and career pathways at WCC and the enrolled students in these sections are in similar or related pathways. The curriculum is standard across all sections with the exception of a few modules (such as educational planning, career, transfer) which the faculty member can tailor to the section’s pathway. We are excited about the results we are seeing since the course was launched. **The retention rate among the fall 2020 FTFT for students who took First-Year Seminar was 21% higher than the rate for FTFT students who did not take the course. The course also appears to be contributing to the narrowing of equity gaps among our FTFT cohort.** The fall 2020 retention rates for FTFT FYS students at WCC: Black/African American: 68%, Hispanic/Latinx: 67%, White: 62% Pell Recipients: 69% *(Campagna)*

What would this contextualized section of CCS look like for students?

Contextualized sections would be labeled on the schedule of classes and students could have the option to choose to sign up for a CCS section in a particular area of study. If a campus decides to offer contextualized areas of study sections of CCS, the Discipline Coordinator and responsible faculty should communicate with advising to educate students about the contextualized sections, benefits, and option to enroll. Again, signing up for a contextualized section by area of study should be entirely optional for students so that if they choose a non-contextualized section or any area of study contextualized section, the CCS course (regardless) will count in any degree program and will afford them with the opportunity to meet all outcomes of the course.

How would an area of study contextualized section of CCS be contextualized and different from a non-contextualized section of CCS?

CCS must be consistent in its delivery* and assessment of outcomes, but there is the opportunity to provide contextualization for an area of study throughout several topics of the course. For example, in the area of study for Health Sciences, it could be helpful to show how a nurse needs to use exceptional time management skills to effectively meet with all patients, and this can help reinforce the value of this life skill.

But, mainly, an area of study contextualized section of CCS will be able to contextualize exemplar assignments (which are currently being reviewed and developed by the CCS Advisory Council). For example, in an assignment that focuses on Academic & Career Planning, students would be required to explore, research and reflect upon two careers: one in that specific area of study and the other in any other career of their choosing (in any field). While contextualization can help the student further examine career possibilities in that area of study, it is important that assignments do allow for flexibility if a student decides they no longer want to pursue that particular area of study.

It should be emphasized that creating a contextualized section of CCS is 1) completely optional and 2) will require the work of the faculty and CCS Discipline Coordinator to ensure that there is enough enrollment to justify the creation of contextualized sections(s), and that the course is well designed to meet the approved outcomes. The aim is that, regardless of the section of CCS that the student takes, that they will be able to develop a greater self-awareness, build and apply skills and strategies for success, and fine tune their individualized academic and career plan*. Any student who takes CCS should have a consistent experience leading to the effective assessment of **all** outcomes, ultimately to improve student success in college and beyond.

*please see the approved CCS policy, course outcomes, and topics outline at www.ct.edu/ccs

Works Cited

- Jenkins, Davis, et al. *What We Are Learning About Guided Pathways - Part 1: A Reform Moves From Theory to Practice*. Community College Research Center, Apr. 2018, <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/guided-pathways-part-1-theory-practice.pdf>.
- Fay, Maggie. *Redesigning Colleges at Scale: Fall 2019 Guided Pathways Scale of Adoption Assessment Update for the Washington State Community and Technical Colleges*. Community College Research Center, May 2020, https://www.clark.edu/guided-pathways/SBCTC_2020GP_scale-of-adoption-assessment.pdf.
- Klempin, Serena C., and Hana Lahr. *How Ohio Community Colleges Are Using Guided Pathways to Personalize Student Support*. Community College Research Center, 2 June 2021, <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/ohio-guided-pathways-personalize-student-support.html>.
- Campagna, Dr. Michele, Assistant Dean, Learning Initiatives & Student Success, Academic Affairs, SUNY WCC. *Re: promising practices in teaching cohort sections of FYE*. Email Received by Jill Rushbrook, 1/27/22.

Request to offer CCS as a contextualized section

Requester Name:

Instructor Name (if different from Requester):

- 1) Which area of study will the proposed and dedicated CCS section serve?
- 2) Does the instructor have a related degree and background in this area of study?

If yes, what is related degree and background:
- 3) Provide enrollment data which supports offering and enrolling students into the proposed contextualized section of CCS:
- 4) How will this contextualized section positively impact student success? List additional research or data as support.
- 5) What is the rationale for this contextualized section of CCS?
- 6) Describe how this section of CCS will be contextualized? Please include specific examples to demonstrate contextualization.
- 7) How will you ensure that individual student needs and the course outcomes are still met for 1) students who are no longer interested in this area of study or 2) students who enroll in this section but are not connected to the area of study?
- 8) What CCS instructional training has the instructor received?
- 9) Please include the syllabus for the proposed contextualized section of CCS.

This request is to be reviewed by the Academic Discipline Coordinator of CCS. A meeting will be scheduled for discussion and final decision. Only upon approval of the Academic Discipline Coordinator, can this section be offered at _____.