

Santa Ana College Faculty Professional Learning Flex Guidelines

What Is Flexible Time and Why It Matters

Flexible time (Flex) is a contractual obligation for faculty professional development mandated by California Education Code Section 87153 and Title 5, California Code of Regulations, Sections 55720-55724. Under Title 5, Section 55720, all community college faculty must participate in professional development activities designed to improve teaching effectiveness, student success, and institutional service. Faculty flex obligations are further specified in the FARSCCD contract (Section 6.5) and CEFA contract (Section 11.5). Flex is built into your workload because your growth as an educator matters. It is a required component of your faculty responsibilities under state law and collective bargaining agreements.

Where Flex Comes From

Our college has chosen to opt into the flexible calendar under California Education Code and Title 5 regulations. These rules require community colleges to provide and track professional development time for faculty. While the state sets the framework, each college decides how Flex is implemented locally. If we were not a part of the flexible calendar system, student contact hours would be required for 18 weeks instead of the 16 that we currently have as our semester.

Under California Education Code Section 70902(b)(10) and Title 5, Section 53200, professional development policies fall under the Academic Senate's 10+1 areas of purview. This means faculty, through the Academic Senate, have primary responsibility for recommending policies for faculty professional development activities. These guidelines reflect that shared governance principle.

New revisions to Title 5 have expanded flex obligations to the entire campus, ensuring that all employees are committed to improving student learning through their own professional growth.

Who Needs to Do Flex

Instructional faculty, full-time and part-time, are required to complete Flex. The exact requirements may vary depending on your appointment and load. Specific faculty obligations are outlined in FARSCCD and CEFA contracts.

All flex activities must be documented in the PD Gateway system. Under our college's flexible calendar adoption, participation tracking is mandatory for compliance with state regulations and contract requirements.

Understanding the Spirit of Flex

While Title 5 provides specific categories for Flex activities, the underlying purpose is growth-oriented professional learning. Flex is meant to help you become more effective in your role, not just to check boxes or accumulate hours. When deciding whether an activity counts as Flex, ask yourself: Will this genuinely help me serve students better, improve my teaching, or contribute meaningfully to the college community? If the answer is yes and the activity aligns with Title 5 categories, it likely qualifies. However, routine duties you are compensated for, like preparing your regular classes or attending required meetings, do not count, even if they support student success.

How Much Flex You Need to Complete (Flex Obligation)

Check your load sheet to ensure accuracy of flex obligations every semester.

Credit Faculty (FARSCCD Section 6.5)

- FT teaching faculty load (15 LHE) per semester = 12 hours during Flex week + 6 hours (18 hours total per semester)
- PT teaching faculty load = per LHE x 1 = flex obligation (e.g., 3 LHE x 1 = 3 hours)
- FT teaching faculty overload = same as PT obligation
FT using banked LHE or with reassigned time, flex is calculated on instructional LHE only = instructional LHE (non-reassigned time) x 1.2 + any overload flex (if applicable)

Continuing Education Part-time Faculty (CEFA Section 11.5)

Your FLEX hour obligation is based on your schedule as of seven (7) calendar days after the start of the term using the formula:

- $(\text{LHE} \times 30) \div \text{number of instructional weeks} = \text{Flex hours for the semester}$
- **LHE (Lecture Hour Equivalent) is listed in your assignment letter.**
- Bridge Programs affiliated with K-12 partners are excluded from FLEX hour calculations. (CEFA Section 11.5.2)

What Counts as Flex

Flex includes a wide range of activities that support teaching effectiveness, student success, professional growth, or institutional service. Activities should align with college

goals and Title 5 guidelines. In general, if an activity helps you do your job better as a faculty member, it may count as Flex.

Title 5 Categories	Activities that may count for flex activities
Evaluation of course instruction	<p>Workshops or trainings on teaching strategies, pedagogy, or assessment</p> <p>Instructional design or redesign (including online, hybrid, or accessible course design)</p> <p>Evaluation and reflection on instructional practices</p> <p>Development of inclusive, equitable, or innovative instructional approaches</p> <p>Participation in instructional communities of practice and professional learning communities</p>
Staff development, in-service training, & service improvement	<p>Attendance at professional development workshops, institutes, or conferences</p> <p>Participation in mentoring or leadership development programs</p> <p>Technology training related to professional or instructional responsibilities</p> <p>Participation in professional learning communities, retreats, or learning cohorts</p> <p>Training related to compliance, accessibility, safety, or instructional effectiveness</p> <p>Participation in diversity, equity, inclusion, or anti-racism professional development</p>
Curriculum and learning resource development, evaluation, and redesign to better meet the needs of students and improve student outcomes	<p>Development of new curriculum, programs, or certificates</p> <p>Creation or substantial revision of learning resources (e.g., DLAs, instructional materials)</p> <p>Reading and documenting discipline-related scholarly or professional literature</p> <p>Documented peer mentoring activities</p> <p>Researching, evaluating, or integrating Open Educational Resources (OER) and Zero Textbook Cost Materials (ZTC)</p> <p>Discipline-related writing or publishing (non-compensated)</p>
Student engagement and learning resource services	<p>Student mentoring or advising beyond assigned responsibilities</p> <p>Student outreach and in-reach activities</p> <p>Facilitating student workshops or orientations</p> <p>Non-compensated tutoring or academic support services</p>

Engagement in governance activities focused on student success related activities, such as evaluation and improvement of college and/or district services to students and communities served	Institutional research related to student learning or services Attendance at statewide or system-level faculty development conferences Departmental retreats or institutional research conducted outside regular meetings Evaluation, testing, or piloting of instructional technologies or systems
Departmental or division meetings, conferences & workshops, & institutional research	Faculty mentoring and onboarding activities Learning a second language for professional or instructional purpose
Other duties as assigned by the district	N/A
Necessary supporting activities for the above	Wellness, fitness, or stress-management activities tied to professional effectiveness (Note: Full-time faculty limit-6 hours, Part-time faculty limit-3 hours) Classroom or workspace improvement supporting instruction Attendance at institutionally sponsored cultural or educational events

Institutional Service vs. Flex: Key Distinctions

Some activities fall into a gray area between required institutional service and professional development. Here are clarifications for commonly confused activities:

Curriculum Development: Regular curriculum committee meetings or routine course updates as part of your divisional responsibilities are institutional service. Developing a new course, program, or certificate, or making substantial revisions to learning resources outside of routine responsibilities, counts as Flex.

Student Outreach: Assigned outreach duties (e.g., high school visits as part of your position) are institutional service. Voluntary student mentoring, advising beyond your assigned load, or facilitating additional student workshops count as flex.

What Does *Not* Count as Flex

- Routine job duties, such as preparing for and teaching your classes, grading, office hours, required meetings, or institutional service requirements to the college (these

are compensated duties under your contract and are not eligible for Flex credit per Title 5, Section 55721)

- Activities unrelated to your role as faculty or that lack an approved professional development purpose under Title 5, Section 55721
- Flex credit awarded at other community colleges (per Title 5, Section 55724, flex activities must be completed at and documented by the employing district)
- Activities used towards salary advancement and column movement (these serve a different professional development purpose; see FARSCCD Section 8.6 and CEFA Section 7.5)
- Compensated work or assigned responsibilities except for compensation for the Online Teaching Course outlined in FARSCCD contract Section 6.5.3 (if not used for salary advancement)

How Flex is Calculated

Credit Faculty

- Workshop participants each 1 hr participation = 1 hr flex credit
- Workshop presenters each 1 hr presentation = 2 hrs flex credit

Continuing Education Faculty

- Workshop participants each 1 hr participation = 1 hr flex credit
- Workshop presenters for each new 1 hr presentation = 2.5 hrs flex credit
- Workshop presenters for repeated 1 hr presentation = 2 hrs flex credit

Understanding Presenter Credit

Presenter credit recognizes the additional time required for planning and delivering professional development. According to ASCCC Flex Guidelines (p. 14):

“Faculty who present flexible calendar activities should receive additional hours to accommodate their preparation time. A presentation is one where the individual is involved in the planning and delivery of an activity meant to disseminate factual knowledge or to facilitate specific skill development and/or competencies. Delivery formats could include but are not limited to workshops, seminars, and panel presentations.”

This recognition of preparation time is why presenters receive 2-2.5 hours of flex credit for each hour of presentation, depending on whether it is a new or repeated presentation.

Flex Week vs. Flex Activities

Flex Week are scheduled days set aside by the college for professional development and often include organized sessions before the beginning of the spring and fall terms.

Activities during flex meet the requirements for flex time. Flex activities can also be completed independently outside of Flex Week, such as online training or conferences, as long as they meet requirements and are documented.

External Trainings

External trainings are any trainings that are not automatically given attendance within the PD Gateway system. If they meet the Title 5 criteria for professional learning, they should count. Your Dean will need to approve these trainings within the PD Gateway system. If you have questions or clarification about trainings, please have a conversation with you department chair, Dean or faculty professional development facilitator/coordinator.

How to Record and Submit Your Flex

Faculty are responsible for tracking and submitting their Flex activities in the PD Gateway system. Workshops approved in the Gateway system automatically are entered into the system. External trainings (including conferences) are submitted using the External Training form. Documentation and approval by your Dean are required to show completion.

Useful Contacts on Campus for Professional Learning

General questions about professional learning:

- Faculty Professional Development Facilitator (Credit)
- Faculty Professional Development Coordinator (Continuing Education)
- Department Chair
- Dean and/or Supervisor

Attendance at sessions listed in the PD Gateway

- Presenter or instructor listed in training

Ideas for leading professional development

- Faculty Professional Development Facilitator (Credit)
- Faculty Professional Development Coordinator (Continuing Education)

Resource and Reference List

Regulatory Sources

[Final Revisions to Title 5 Flexible Calendar, 2025](#)

California Education Code Section 87153 (Flexible Calendar Authorization)

California Education Code Section 70902(b)(10) (Academic Senate 10+1 Authority)

Title 5, California Code of Regulations, Section 53200 (Academic Senate Authority)

Title 5, California Code of Regulations, Sections 55720-55724 (Flexible Calendar Program)

- Section 55720: Purpose of flexible calendar programs
- Section 55721: Categories of professional development activities
- Section 55722: Program development and Academic Senate consultation
- Section 55724: Reporting and documentation requirements

Contract Sources

[FARSCCD \(Rancho Santiago Community College District Faculty Association\) Contract, 2025](#)

- Section 6.5: Flexible Calendar/Professional Development Activities
- Section 8.6: Salary Advancement

[CEFA \(Continuing Education Faculty Association\) Contract, 2025](#)

- Section 11.5: Flexible Calendar
- Section 7.5: Salary Schedule Advancement

Professional Guidance Documents

[Guidelines for the Implementation of the Flexible Calendar Program](#), Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC), 2007

Note: ASCCC passed a resolution in Fall 2025 to update these guidelines in collaboration with the Chancellor's Office.

[Final Revisions to Title 5 Flexible Calendar](#), California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2025

[Memo Summarizing Professional Learning and Flexible Calendar Regulatory Revisions](#), California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to College CEOs, 2025