

## California State University, Northridge (CSUN)

### Basic Principles of Program Development for CSUN Self-Support Degree and Credit Certificate Programs

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1. The CSUN self-support degree and credit certificate program are offered through CSUN's Tseng College: *Graduate, International, and Midcareer Education* (the Tseng College). CSUN's self-support degree and credit certificate programs are designed to focus on providing excellent and purposefully distinctive advanced education for midcareer professionals/working adults.

Excellence is defined in both terms of:

- Each program's insightful and forward focused connection to scholarship and contemporary practice in the field(s) in question as well as the program's ability to foster advanced conceptual and practical skills in program participants.
- Student achievement - as measured by on-time graduation rates, students' mastery of the measureable student learning outcomes for the program, and graduates of the program finding a viable career path in the field(s) in question.

Distinction is defined in terms of how the choices made in the crafting of each program creates educational excellence in a thoughtful and innovative way, looking at aspects of program development such as:

- How well the program is crafted in light of forefront issues in scholarship and professional practice in the field(s) in question.
- How thoughtfully the curriculum is developed by the faculty program development group and integrated from one course to the next to provide a comprehensive program of study focused on achieving the program's learning goals.
- How carefully the instructional strategies are chosen and refined to ensure graduates have developed the advanced conceptual skills needed to be a reflective, innovative, and agile leader in the field(s) in question.
- How effectively each program engages students in acquiring the knowledge, professional skills needed in senior roles in contemporary practice in the field, and advanced conceptual skills (habits of mind) needed to be an effective senior professional in the field(s) in question – a leader in the field (including being a thought leader and someone influencing the future of the field).

- How well the program is created to link scholarship in the field to the excellence in professional practice and/or to the broader forefront conversations that are shaping the future of the field (preparing students to make meaningful contributions and to be life-long learners growing in habits of mind, knowledge, and reflective practice across the careerspan and the lifespan).
  - How well the program's structure is innovatively and purposefully designed to provide an exceptional educational experience focused on ensuring that students achieve measureable student learning outcomes.
2. Before a program reaches the program development stage, there will have been a number of idea exchanges between/among the deans of the academic partner college(s) in question and the dean of the Tseng College, conversations with relevant department chair(s), and formal and/or informal market research done prior to consensus on whether or not a given degree or credit certificate program would be a valuable addition to the educational opportunities CSUN offers.
  3. Each self-support degree and credit certificate program CSUN offers through its Tseng College is crafted with the focus on excellence and distinction as outlined above. Whether a program is already offered by CSUN through state-funding (being considered for a first-time offering in self-support with a focus on the educational needs of midcareer professional) or will be an entirely new CSUN degree that is created using self-support funding, there is a careful program development process that ensures that each program is thoughtfully crafted to provide the forefront advanced education that the university-prepared workforce needs to be leading practitioners in urban areas of LA California, the U.S., and beyond. While there are a selection of self-support baccalaureate degree completion programs CSUN offers, the emphasis for CSUN self-support degree and credit certificate programs is on post-baccalaureate education at the master's and post-master's levels.
  4. The CSUN self-support degree and credit certificate programs that CSUN offers through its Tseng College are developed through a close collaboration with partner academic colleges and departments that are the academic home of the program. For multidisciplinary programs, the academic home resides in many departments and colleges, which all participate in the development process. This ensures our self-support degree and credit certificate programs draw on the university's academic strengths and distinctions and possess links to extended research and educational relationships with industry and practitioners at the regional, national, and international levels. This allows the self-support programs to respond effectively to forefront educational needs with particular emphasis on professional practice in emerging, changing, and increasingly global urban contexts.
  5. After extensive exploration of the viability of a new program, if a given CSUN degree or credit certificate program is approved for development using CSUN self-support funding, the program development process begins with a conversation between the dean of CSUN's Tseng College and the dean(s) of the partner CSUN academic

college(s). This conversation focuses on identifying the faculty members from the partner academic college(s), that should be involved in the program planning and development process. Those faculty members identified are those who are recognized as excellent for their teaching abilities, course design experience, collaboration and innovation, links to industry, and/or the scope and influence of their scholarship in the field. They are faculty members who are current in the field and they, in turn, understand the realities of practice in the professional. (They are “in touch,” in other words, with practice in the field today.) It is also an advantage if the faculty members chosen are familiar with the structure, content, and points of distinction in the forefront programs in the field(s) in question at other universities (regional, national, and international). The dean of the Tseng College and the dean of the partner academic college(s) will also work together with the academic lead of the program, as well as the associate dean of Tseng College, to identify leading practitioners/subject matter experts (SMEs) in the field who should be a part of the curriculum development process.

*Note: faculty members who participate in the program development process as part of the program development group are compensated or given reassigned time. During the program planning and development phases, there is compensation for participating in the full program development group meetings, additional compensation for developing a specific course if assigned to do so, and, if the program is to be fully online, there is also additional compensation for working with the Distance Learning instructional design team in the Tseng College to produce the course online.*

6. The dean of the partner CSUN academic college(s), in consultation with the dean of CSUN's Tseng College, also selects a faculty member to serve as academic lead for the program in question. The work of the academic lead begins with the program planning and development stages, continues through the production stage, and ideally continues through the launch and ongoing academic offering of the program, leading the full program development group. For the length of their tenure in the role, the academic lead is responsible for oversight of the ongoing academic quality of the program, the integrity of the curriculum designed, and the quality of the program's instruction and instructional strategies. The academic lead works with assigned senior professional(s) in CSUN's Tseng College to reconvene the program faculty, every 12 months, to ensure that the faculty remains engaged in collaborating on both the effective delivery of the program and continuous improvement, evaluation, and refinement of the program.

*Note: The academic lead is compensated per term (or given reassigned time) for this role. The compensation is outlined in keeping with the various phases of the process from the start of program development through approvals to program launch.*

7. Senior professional staff from CSUN's Tseng College will bring expertise in fields and areas of instructional design, learning theory – particularly adult learning theory, online teaching and learning best practices and national models, educational technologies, program design best practices and national models with a focus on working adults/midcareer professionals, program design options available through the flexibility offered by self-support funding, relevant CSUN and CSU policies and approval

processes, budgeting and pricing, accreditation and regulatory compliance issues, market factors and marketing strategies that may impact the success of the program, and extensive connections with leading organizations and industries in the region. Senior professional staff from the Tseng College collaborate with each program development group to participate in and facilitate the program development process.

8. The process begins with the planning stage, in which the Tseng College convenes the designated faculty and practitioners to discuss the realities of practice in the field today; how a reflective and effective practitioner in that field would need to think (conceptual skills); and what they would need to know, understand, and be able to do to be a leading practitioner in the years ahead.
9. The program development process is focused at the level of the full program first, rather than individual courses, in order to promote program excellence and a cohesive integrated student experience. The process starts with a very board consideration of the field(s) in question from the perspective of forefront scholarship and professional practice. The faculty group, alongside CSUN staff and leading practitioners, first consider how to craft a program from a fresh, contemporary context – one that reflects current and emerging trends in the field. The program development group looks closely at the curricula and instructional strategies of competing programs at leading/innovative regional, national, and international universities. The program development group also looks at recent influential articles about the evolution of professional practice in the field(s) in question. In addition, the program development group gives careful consideration to CSUN strengths within and across disciplines/colleges; CSUN links to other resources in the field (sister campuses, practitioners, and more); contemporary practice and needs in the field with an emphasis on urban LA and similar urban regions in California and beyond, and more. During this phase of program development, the broader exploration of models, current and emerging issues, and a wider range of possibilities is the emphasis.
10. Following the exploratory and formative conversations, a set of program learning goals are developed and refined in co-creative conversation. Once these program learning goals are agreed upon, the program development group creates measureable student learning outcomes that align to those program learning goals.
11. Once the program development group has developed general learning goals and student learning outcomes, the group determines what courses would have to be offered, created, and/or redesigned (and in what order those courses would need to be offered) to ensure the program's curriculum supports the achievement of learning goals. These considerations also factor in overall student success plus each student's achievement of the essential measurable student learning outcomes (in keeping with CSUN and WASC standards).
12. The self-support degree and credit certificate programs CSUN offers through its Tseng College are offered in a distinctive CSUN cohort format with all students starting the program at the same time, taking the same set of courses, and completing the program

at the same time. This CSUN cohort approach allows courses to be developed with a focus on the cumulative impact of the program by designing the program so that one course builds on another to foster the development of increasingly advanced conceptual skills and to support achievement of the program level learning goals at the highest possible levels.

13. Once the program development group agrees upon the courses and sequence of those courses, the group determines which faculty and practitioners will work on the development of each course. This is an iterative and collaborative process with each course development effort tied back to the work and goals of the full program development group. This approach allows all group members to see how each course in the program is taking shape and, from there, work with one another to ensure courses are strongly linked and aligned with the learning goals and outcomes of the program.
14. The program development process is an iterative process that begins with meetings of the full program development group. Once decisions are made about the courses needed, individual faculty members (or small faculty teams – which might at some points in the process include small working teams composed of faculty members developing, for example, courses to be offered in the same term within the program’s course sequence so they can work on tighter connections between those courses to enhance the impact of that term) will work on developing drafts of assigned courses in keeping with the decisions made by the full program development group about learning goals, the sequence of the courses, the purpose of each course in the overall program, and how each course fits into the cohort sequence (building on prior courses and providing a purposeful learning platform on which later courses will build).
15. The courses are drafted and then shared in additional meetings of the full program development group so that the full group can respond to, refine, and enhance the cohesiveness among courses and promote sequential and increasingly substantial learning across the program in order to increase the educational impact of the overall program. The individual faculty members (or small faculty teams) then go back to work further on their assigned courses, taking them closer to final form in light of the full group co-creative discussion. The full program development group then meets again to review the evolving courses and the evolving program to make further co-creative changes. This process of alternation between full group meeting and individual (or small group) working time continues until the full program development group considers the program to be complete.
16. Throughout the CSUN program development process, the lead senior professional staff member (most often the assistant dean for program development or the associate dean) from the Tseng College will capture in a narrative format the evolving “story” of the program – including, but not limited to how the program approaches the field in question, who it is designed for, program learning goals, student learning outcomes, the purpose of each course, the content/learning experience to be built into each course, how each course in the program builds on prior courses, how each course prepares students for successful professional practice, and how the program prepares students

to be impactful leaders at the forefront of their professional practice, and the like. This evolving program narrative will be regularly shared with the full program development group to ensure a shared understanding of program decisions made and the parts in the context of the whole, as well as document how the program is taking shape overall. By the end of the program development process, the program narrative will capture all of the features of the program as well as the thinking behind the design and content of the program. This in turn will serve as the foundation for accurately and effectively explaining the value of each CSUN self-support degree or credit certificate program to prospective students and serve as a useful onboarding tool for any new program development group members who also serve as instructors in the program.

17. In keeping with standards put in place by WASC and CSUN, the program development group crafts key assignments designed to measure how well students have achieved the student learning outcomes established by a program's faculty development group. Once the courses and program are well along in development, the faculty program development group works on the design of these key assignments. This step in the program development process helps to ensure that key assignments purposefully draw together the learning across courses and push forward both the refinement of advanced conceptual skills and the demonstration of the essential professional knowledge, skills, and abilities that the program planning group has determined to be essential by the program learning goals and, in turn, the defined measureable student learning goals.
18. The key assignments designed as part of the program planning process are also those assignments that will form the foundation for program assessment. Collecting student work from the key assignments (via electronic portfolio for each cohort or the like) will allow program faculty to assess if the program's curriculum is indeed successful in ensuring that students achieve the specified student learning outcomes expected from each assignment and from the program as a whole.
19. When the "penultimate" version of the full program curriculum is ready, it is often shared with leading scholars and/or practitioners in the field to get final feedback from those who are widely respected in the field but who have been outside of the planning process and who, in that light, can offer a fresh eye. The faculty program development group makes any final refinements of the program based on feedback from this broader sharing.
20. All CSUN self-support degree and credit certificate programs require CSUN approvals and reviews at the CSUN departmental, college and university levels. In addition, for new (and sometimes for significantly redesigned) degree programs, approval at the CSU Chancellor's Office level is also required. The associate dean of the CSUN collaborating college and the associate dean of CSUN Tseng College, working with the program's appointed academic lead and the Tseng College's assistant dean for program development, guide the final curriculum through the required approvals. The approval process will vary depending on whether this program is a modification of an existing program or an entirely new program. So all parties are aware of the expectations for the approval process, a timeline is developed for the approval process

and the launch of the program taking into consideration the nine to 12 months needed prior to the first application deadline for marketing the program.

21. CSUN's Tseng College is responsible for developing the budget for each self-support degree or credit certificate program looking at the features and requirements of the program in question given how it has been developed by the program development group. The Tseng College develops the program budget in keeping with CSUN and CSU policies and approved practices, setting a price aligned with CSU principles, and then marketing the program. The details of the working agreement and financial plan are captured in an MOU created for each program by the Tseng College executive director of business operations and finance working collaboratively with the Tseng College's dean, the associate dean, and the assistant dean for program development in the Tseng College. For new degree or credit certificate programs, the dean of the Tseng College often works with the dean of the partner academic college(s) to review the program plan and the program budget. Any needed adjustments are made following this conversation. The Tseng College's executive director of business operations and finance then works with the collaborating College(s)' manager of academic resources (MAR) to finalize the MOU.

*Note: CSUN's Tseng College takes all the risk for the development and marketing of the program. If the program fails to achieve the required minimum enrolment, CSUN's Tseng College assumes responsibility for the loss and does not pass any of it on to the partner CSUN academic college(s) or department(s). Further, if the program achieves the required minimum enrollment (as outlined in the MOU) to offer the program, the Tseng College commits to offering the full program and paying all instructional and program costs regardless of attrition in the program and, in turn, financial loss such that no loss is passed on to the CSUN partner academic college(s) or departments.*

22. Once the program launches, CSUN's Tseng College works with the academic lead appointed by the dean of the partner college, in conjunction with the dean of the Tseng College, for the program in question to reconvene the full program development group annually after a new program is launched. This will be a meeting at which the faculty teaching in the program can discuss how the program is going in light of their original plan and vision for the program (as captured in the final program narrative). The program development group will consider how students are responding to the educational experience and whether or not students are succeeding in achieving the specified measurable student learning outcomes (based on how successfully students are completing key program assignments as well as other course assignments). During this reconvening, the program development group will consider levels of student engagement in the program. The group will also discuss what changes, if any, should be made in the first part of the program prior to the start of the next scheduled cohort to enhance student achievement and/or enrich the educational experience the program offers. The program development group will discuss how those teaching in the remaining part of the program for the first cohort might anticipate the learning dynamic of the group and/or enhance or refine program components in light of the experience of those teaching in the first half of the program in question. The program development group for new programs will also meet at the end of the first cohort for a similar meeting

to consider the experiences of those teaching in the program and make decisions about how the program and/or the instructional strategies should be refined or enhanced to make the program increasingly excellent. The dean of the partner academic college(s) and/or the relevant department chairs can join these reflective conversations as listeners (and information resources as needed) to enhance their understanding of the program and its strengths and distinctions.

Thereafter the program development group for the program would be convened by the Tseng College in collaboration with the appointed academic lead once every 12 months. Working collaboratively with the Tseng College's associate dean and the assistant dean for program development, the academic lead facilitates discussion and guides academic decision-making at these meetings, focusing on continuous improvement of the excellence, distinction, and educational impact of the program in question. The faculty team that develops and teaches in each of CSUN's self-support degree and credit certificate programs are the academic community that works collaboratively and regularly to ensure the continuous improvement of the program and its ongoing enrichment through the regular exchange of ideas, experience, and possibilities among program faculty.

It should be noted that faculty are paid an honorarium for participating in such program enhancement meetings and doing so is part of the obligations of those who accept an assignment to teach in the program in question.