This handbook describes the Flexible Calendar Program, and how it functions at Saddleback College. Note that this document is searchable; if you have a question, search for key words to find it quickly!

For forms and links, please go to: [http://www.saddleback.edu/flex](http://www.saddleback.edu/flex)

1 ❍ What is the Flexible Calendar Program (Flex Program) and how did it originate?
It is a program instituted by the state of California in the early 1980’s to encourage and provide time for professional development among California community college faculty and staff.

Due to the rapid expansion of community colleges and the influx of faculty during the 1960’s and 1970’s, numerous activities were developed to address the professional, personal, and organizational needs of these new instructors. Additionally, the traditional 175-day community college calendar, 15 days longer than community college calendars in many other states, limited the amount of time for faculty to prepare for spring courses. Also, because of the limited break after the end of the fall semester in January and the immediate start of the new semester, student services personnel needed more time to counsel students, process grades, and complete other tasks.

Because of these needs, the flexible calendar program was initiated by six California community colleges in 1976 as a pilot project authorized by Assembly Bill 2232 (1975). The bill allowed colleges the opportunity to replace up to 15 days of regular instruction with alternative activities, such as course and program development and revision, staff development activities, development of new instructional materials, and other instruction-related activities. Saddleback College, along with five other community colleges became part of this test venture, to test its effectiveness.

After the success of the pilot programs was noted, legislation (AB 1149) in 1981 allowed all colleges the option of adopting a flexible calendar program. The program is not mandatory for all CA community colleges, and any college may opt out if it chooses. Saddleback College has participated in Flex Week Activities since the test project.

The basic purpose of the Flexible Calendar Program is to replace instructional days with professional development activities that enhance institutional programs and services and further student learning.

2 ❍ What does “flex” mean?
“Flex” generally refers to the Flexible Calendar Program or activities associated with it, and is synonymous with “In-Service.”

3 ❍ What are professional development, or flex activities?
These are activities that result in staff, student or instructional improvement. (California Education Code, Title 5, Section 55724). These three (staff, student or instructional improvement) are the keys to all flex activities. When you fill out an Individual Activity form, for example, you relate your activity to one (or more) of these three areas.

4 ❍ I am always involved in improving myself professionally. Why do I have to document activities for the college?
Because the Flex Program, in which the college participates, requires documentation of 38 hours of professional development activities, in exchange for dismissing classes for two weeks during the academic year.
5. Can I continue to undertake my own professional development activities without asking for hours of flex credit?

Yes.

6. Can I earn flex credit for taking a class intended to help me advance on the salary schedule, or if I am paid to give a presentation?

No for both.

7. Why isn’t an activity such as attending a class to obtain CPR certification necessary for your job considered an individual activity?

Because you are increasing or retaining your professional standing through the efforts of someone else (the presenter) instead of investigating, researching and acquiring the information yourself. However, taking a class required to maintain your credential would count.

On a related note, if you attend a conference and get reimbursement for the costs of the conference only, that does not prevent you from claiming flex credit for the hours you attend the conference presentations. You will fill out the Individual Activity form for the hours you attend (or present) at the conference.

8. Can I obtain flex credit for attendance on a regular college committee?

Not unless the event takes place during in-service week and appears in the program as a scheduled event. Otherwise it would be considered part of your regular assignment. However, if you serve on more than one committee (but excluding job search committees), you can submit paperwork for those hours (use the Individual Activity form). You can even put all of the meetings for the entire year (or semester) on the single page form. All job search committee work is considered part of your regular job, and you cannot claim flex hours for this.

9. Could I complete my flex obligation of 38 hours without attending in-service weeks?

Yes, as long as none of your flex activities coincided with hours of duties that you are required by the current Certificated Employee Master Agreement. The flex hours for a given academic year are completed between July 1 and June 30 of that year. Flex hours may not be banked or carried forward.

10. How do I earn flex credit other than attending Flex Week activities?

There are three primary ways to earn flex credit outside Flex Week:

1. Participant (Attendee) at a professional development activity, for example, attending a conference or a meeting (use Individual Activity Form)
2. Individual Activity relating to professional development (use Individual Activity Form)
3. Presenter of a professional development activity (use Presenter Form, if presented outside of Flex Week, otherwise report 3x hours as part of the regular flex reporting online).

11. How many flex credits do I earn for presenting an activity?

Faculty members who present during Flex Week will earn 3 hours flex credit for each hour of presentation. For example, when presenting a 2-hour activity, a faculty member will earn 6 flex hours; 4 hours for preparation time and 2 hours for presentation time. If no one attends the activity, flex hours will be earned for prep time only. For faculty members presenting an activity more than one time in a semester, flex hours for the prep time will only be counted once.
12. What is the difference between “presenting” and “participating in or attending” an individual activity?

a. If you present an activity, you must address an audience of at least one person. You are responsible for preparing for the event, delivering your message or information clearly and professionally, supplying necessary handouts, requesting needed equipment, and beginning and ending the session the times stated in the In-Service Week Schedule of Events or as scheduled. For this you fill out the Presenter Forms.

b. If you participate in, or attend an activity, you are part of an audience observing the presentation of information by a speaker or other presenter. You do not have to perform any work during the activity outside of reasonable requests made of you by the presenter during the event. For this you fill out the Individual Activity form.

13. What is an “individual activity?”

An individual activity is a project that you undertake alone or in a small group. The project has aims and objectives, corresponds to activities designated as professional development activities, has a beginning and end date during the same academic year. An individual activity does not necessarily have an audience, and is not typically being observed by an audience while it is being performed.

14. What are examples of approved Flex activities?

A) Presenting: (report by filling out Presenter Forms)
- Presentation and discussion of a recent trip abroad
- Discuss recent changes in the curriculum in your department
- Provide an overview of state of the art devices to aid students with impairments
- Open your laboratory or center to colleagues and explain its function
- Report the outcomes of your sabbatical
- Demonstrate a new computer application
- Teach new ways to increase web page effectiveness
- Instruct the group in how to put your class online

B) Participating in/Attending an activity (report by filling out the single Individual Activity form)
- Participate in a training session that teaches you new technology
- Attend a short term class learning how to spot “troubled” students
- Attend a jazz ensemble performance in the Fine Arts complex
- Tour a colleague’s laboratory open house
- Attend department and division meetings other than during Flex Week
- Review newly acquired books and software, and recommend withdrawal of outdated materials
- Create instructional materials explaining how to utilize a computer program
- Write a grant
- Plan and organize activities for Multicultural Awareness Week
- Develop a class or department web site
- Committee work exceeding the contractually required committee work. Excludes job search committee work; that does not count for flex
- Write and compile SLOs or program review
15 How do I show completion of an activity as a presenter, or when I complete an individual activity?

Complete the proper form(s) for each. Forms available at: http://www.saddleback.edu/flex.
Presenter: Complete the In-Service Presenter Form if the presentation is to be given during in-service. If the presentation is given at times other than in-service, the Presenter Activity Pre-Approval Form and the Presenter Activity Report Form are both required.

2. Individual Activity
   • If you participate in an activity that occurs in the Program of Events for any flex week, you self-report your attendance on the flex website (the drop-down reporting menu).
   • If you participate in an activity that does not appear in the Schedule of Events, you must complete the Individual Activity Report Form. Complete the form, and return it to the Academic Senate Office.
   • The form must be filled out completely, and it requires signatures of both you and your division rep (may be electronic signatures).

16 Are there limits to the total number of hours I can earn doing an individual activity?

No. However, daily hours are capped at 8. Reporting more than 38 hours does not accomplish anything except more paperwork; hours may not be rolled over or banked.

17 What about attending a conference that takes place off-campus?

You fill out the Individual Activity Report Form, same as any other individual activity.

18 Who signs or approves my forms?

Forms for an individual activity must be signed by your division Flex Committee Representative. This signature, as well as your signature, may be electronic. Then send the application form to the Academic Senate Office, in AGB 121. The Flex Coordinator and the VP for Instruction will see and sign your form.

19 How do I find out who my division representative is?

The names are posted on the Flex Program web page at: www.saddleback.edu/ senate/FlexRepresentative.html or call 582.4969 (Academic Senate Office).

20 What is a facilitator, and what is the difference between a presenter and a facilitator?

A facilitator arranged for the presenter to come to the college during in-service week, and acts as the intermediary between the flexible calendar program coordinator and the actual presenter. The facilitator does not earn flex credit because he or she is not presenting the activity.

21 Do associate (part-time) faculty have to complete professional development activities?

No. Flex activities are intended for all faculty members, but associate faculty do not have to account for flex hours. However during in-service week, associate faculty member meetings are conducted at scheduled times.
What are the advantages of attending flex week activities?
One benefit of flex week is that it allows faculty time to meet and exchange knowledge and skills that would not be possible during regular instructional weeks.

Are flex days part of the academic calendar?
Yes. The target of 38 hours is equal to 9 days of the 178-day annual academic calendar. These days are divided into 5 in the fall and 4 in the spring.

Does the Certificated Employee Master Agreement refer to flex activities?
✓ The agreement defines “flex activities” as “activities performed in lieu of classroom, preparation, and office hour assignment time and, therefore, attendance is required for full-time faculty members” (Title 5, Section 55726).
✓ The agreement also states both full- and part-time faculty members are encouraged to attend and participate in … Professional development activities offered throughout the FLEX calendar.”
✓ It further states “each faculty member’s Flex obligation will be calculated at 4.2 hours per Flex day as designated in the Academic Calendar.” (Guidelines for the Implementation of the Flexible Calendar Program by the Faculty Development Committee of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges in cooperation with the Chancellor’s Office program staff, 1993.)

What is my flex obligation if I am granted a sabbatical or other leave, such as maternity leave, OSH banked leave, leave for extended illness, etc.?
You are not obligated to complete flex hours during the semester(s) that you are on leave, if it a sabbatical or OSH banked leave. If your leave occurs in the fall semester, your annual flex target is 16.89 hours (4/9 of 38 hours). If your leave is during the spring, your flex target is 21.11 hours (5/9 of 38 hours). In other words, if you are on leave in the fall, you owe the equivalent of the spring hours. If you are on leave in the spring, you owe the equivalent of the fall hours.

However, maternity or leave based on illness is treated differently. Employees on sick leave or maternity leave still owe their normal flex time for that semester or year. Missing flex hours is counted against sick leave, and unless the faculty member completes the flex obligation for the semester or year, it would add to the leave hours missed. Maternity leave is treated the same as other illness leaves.

What are the guidelines for the professional development activities in which I may participate?
Title 5, Section 55724, California Code of Regulations, states that, under the Flex Program, college personnel will be engaged in staff, student or instructional improvement activities that may include:
• Instruction and evaluation
• Instructional improvement
• Program and course curriculum or learning resource development and evaluation
• Student personnel services
• Learning resource services
• Student advising, guidance, orientation, matriculation services
• Student, faculty and staff diversity
• Departmental meetings
• Conferences, workshops, and institutional research
What are examples of specific activities that fall under the definition of professional development? (Article IV, Definitions)

A) Staff Improvement
- Developing new programs
- Faculty and staff meetings to improve learning resource support services to students
- Workshops on how to mentor students or how to mentor faculty
- Orientation/education (e.g. new faculty)
- Student, faculty, and staff diversity
- Workshops on how to write grants
- Workshops or individually designed activities to improve or enhance a person’s skills or knowledge in his/her discipline
- Wellness activities that assist individuals to be better able to perform their jobs
- Disaster preparedness
- New full or part-time faculty orientation

B) Student Improvement
- Teaching a class in shortened format during a flex period (in lieu of pay)
- Developing a new program to meet changing student needs
- Meeting with tutors or lab assistants to improve services to students
- Review of learning resource materials to identify outdated items and ideas for additions
- Creating self-study modules and/or computer-assisted instruction
- Training in classroom research (assessment) techniques
- Mentoring of students
- Faculty participation in student orientation programs
- Matriculation services
- Attending meetings specifically to discuss strategies for improving service to students
- Institutional research focused on meeting the needs of students
- Writing grants aimed to improve services to students
- Articulation to improve transfer processes
- Outreach for special projects (e.g. EOPS)
- Conducting special worship services for students

C) Instructional Improvement
- Attending workshops on teaching methods or techniques
- Development or revision of programs, courses, learning resources and evaluation methods
- Modifying an existing course to comply with changing institutional or discipline requirements
- Significant modification of a course to address the learning needs of diverse students
- Developing student readiness programs specific to course disciplines
- Review of learning resource materials to eliminate outdated items and recommend additions
- Faculty and counselor meetings to address areas of curriculum
- Creating self-study modules and computer-assisted instruction modules
- Student, faculty, and staff diversity
- Institutional research
- Grant writing to secure funds for improvement of instruction
- Visit the class of a colleague
28 What are some advantages of in-service week?

1. College-wide and District-wide programs and events allow faculty and staff to interact on a basis otherwise impossible during regular instructional weeks. Examples of these programs and events include: President’s Breakfast, Academic Senate, Chancellor’s Opening Session, SOCCCD Faculty Association Luncheon & Meeting.

2. The District is able to bring in special speakers to address large numbers of faculty and staff, something that cannot be done for relatively smaller groups, such as divisions and departments. Examples include: CalSTRS Workshops, OCTFCU Benefits & Retirement Planning, District Employee Benefits Workshops, Long Term Care Programs, District Employee Open Enrollment & Health Fair, Harassment-Discrimination Prevention Training.

3. Important College services can be explained to larger groups of faculty. Examples include: Crisis Intervention, Code of Student Conduct, Disaster Preparedness, Articulation & Transfer, Career Planning Center, EOPS Opportunities, Health Services to Students, Student Retention Options, Publication & Advertising Services, Foundation Opportunities & Fund Creation Opportunities, Campus Safety Services.

4. College divisions and departments can highlight their programs, courses, achievements, goals and objectives through open houses. Examples include: Open Houses of the Reading Center, Writing Center, Library, Career Center, Musical Performances, Lifetime Fitness Center, Biological, or other sciences labs.

5. Individual faculty members have the opportunity to share achievements, personal experiences & expertise, instructional techniques, and information with many others outside of their particular division or department. Examples include: Presentations on Overseas Teaching and Learning experiences; Teaching Strategies, Student Learning Outcomes, Writing Workshops, PowerPoint Applications, Identifying Special Needs Students, Sign Language & Hearing Impaired, Student Alcohol & Drug Awareness Sessions.

29 When are Flex Weeks?

Flex Weeks occur at the beginning of fall and spring semester. There is no summer in-service week, however flex activities may occur during the summer. The 9 flex days account for 5% of a faculty member’s contract year. See current Academic Calendar on the Saddleback website.

30 Forms on Flex Website: http://www.saddleback.edu/flex

   1. In-Service Presenter form (single form)
   2. Individual Activity Report Form
   3. A. Presenter Activity Pre-Approval Form (1 of 2)
      B. Presenter Activity Report Form (2 of 2)

This handbook was last updated 6 June 2013.