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NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING

INCLUDING STATEMENT OF NEED & FISCAL IMPACT

CHAPTER 589
HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING COMMISSION
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

FILED: 10/19/2026 4:20 PM
ARCHIVES DIVISION SECRETARY OF STATE

FILING CAPTION: Raising maximum length of community college Non-credit Training Certificates to align with Workforce Pell

LAST DAY AND TIME TO OFFER COMMENT TO AGENCY: 11/24/2026 5:00 PM
The Agency requests public comment on whether other options should be considered for achieving the rule's substantive goals while reducing negative economic impact of the rule on business.

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HEARING(S)
Auxiliary aids for persons with disabilities are available upon advance request. Notify the contact listed above.

DATE: 11/17/2026
TIME: 11:05 AM - 11:30 AM
OFFICER: Guthrie Stafford

REMOTE HEARING DETAILS
MEETING URL: Click here to join the meeting
PHONE NUMBER: 1-503-446-4951
SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:
Phone Conference ID: 461 829 265#
Meeting ID: 240 849 591 456 7
Passcode: RJ2Vk9BK

NEED FOR THE RULE(S):

The Commission proposes to amend the definition of Non-credit Training Certificate in OAR 589-006-0050(41) to raise

the upper limit of the certificate from 210 hours to 599 hours. The change aligns the maximum length of a Non-credit Training Certificate with the upper clock hour limit for an eligible workforce program under the federal Workforce Pell Grant program. Under federal law, an eligible workforce program consists of at least 150 and fewer than 600 clock hours of instruction offered over at least eight weeks and no more than 15 weeks.

The current 210-hour ceiling prevents a community college from designing a Non-credit Training Certificate in the upper portion of that federal range. Raising the ceiling to 599 hours removes a state constraint that would otherwise limit the ability of Oregon community colleges to design non-credit training that can be considered for federal Workforce Pell eligibility, while preserving the 18-hour minimum so that shorter certificates remain available for purposes unrelated to federal aid.

The filing also standardizes the spelling of “noncredit” as “non-credit” within the definition, conforming it to the usage elsewhere in Division 6. That edit is a housekeeping change and has no substantive effect on the certificate or on any college.

The amendment does not confer eligibility for federal student financial aid. Eligibility is determined under federal law through the approval process established for that purpose by the Governor and the U.S. Department of Education, and nothing in the amended rule names or depends on that program. The amendment also does not change how Non-credit Training Certificates are approved, reported, or reimbursed.

DOCUMENTS RELIED UPON, AND WHERE THEY ARE AVAILABLE:

Federal Workforce Pell Grant program provisions establishing the clock hour range for an eligible workforce program. Available on the U.S. Department of Education website.

Oregon Workforce Pell Policy, approved July 29, 2026. Available on the Higher Education Coordinating Commission website.

Oregon Community College Policy and Process Book, which carries the current 210-hour Non-credit Training Certificate limit. Available on the Higher Education Coordinating Commission website.

Documents are available on the HECC Website and by request to the filing contact.

STATEMENT IDENTIFYING HOW ADOPTION OF RULE(S) WILL AFFECT RACIAL EQUITY IN THIS STATE:

Non-credit Training Certificates are offered by Oregon community colleges to adults seeking short-term, job-focused training that does not require enrollment in a credit program. The learners affected by this amendment are the students who enroll in those certificates and the prospective students for whom a longer non-credit certificate would become available.

The potential impact on these groups is positive. Raising the ceiling allows colleges to design non-credit certificates long enough to carry the full skill set for an occupation, and long enough to be considered for federal Workforce Pell, which can cover the cost of training for low-income students. Where the cost of a non-credit certificate is currently paid out of pocket, access to federal aid for longer certificates would reduce a financial barrier that falls hardest on learners from currently and historically underserved groups.

The amendment does not worsen an existing disparity. It changes only the maximum length a college may choose, and does not require any college to lengthen a certificate or move students out of shorter ones. One unintended

consequence is possible: a longer non-credit certificate that is not designed to articulate to academic credit could leave a student with more training that does not carry forward toward a degree. The Commission will address that risk through its approval procedures and the Policy and Process Book rather than through this rule, and will monitor the length, completion, and articulation of Non-credit Training Certificates by race and ethnicity through its existing data collection.

FISCAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT:

Community colleges. The amendment modifies an existing activity and does not create a new one. Colleges already design, seek approval for, and offer Non-credit Training Certificates within the current 18 to 210 hour range. The amendment allows a college to offer a longer certificate but does not require any college to do so, and it imposes no new reporting, recordkeeping, approval, or administrative requirement. A college that chooses to design a certificate above 210 hours would incur the ordinary cost of curriculum development and instruction for that certificate, which is a discretionary program decision rather than a cost of compliance. Any such costs would be incurred as colleges elect to develop longer certificates, not at the effective date. The amendment does not affect state full-time equivalent reimbursement for non-credit instruction.

Higher Education Coordinating Commission. The Commission will incur a modest one-time cost in staff time to update the Oregon Community College Policy and Process Book, which carries the 210-hour figure in several places, and to update any approval materials and guidance that reference the limit. If the course and program approval system validates certificate length against the limit, a system change would be needed before the effective date. No new data collection is required.

Students and employers. The amendment imposes no cost on students or employers. To the extent longer non-credit certificates become eligible for federal Workforce Pell, students enrolling in them may pay less out of pocket, which is a benefit rather than a cost.
Assumptions. This statement assumes that colleges will adopt longer certificates selectively, that approval and reporting processes for Non-credit Training Certificates are unchanged, and that no system modification is required beyond a change to a validation rule, if one exists.

COST OF COMPLIANCE:
(1) Identify any state agencies, units of local government, and members of the public likely to be economically affected by the rule(s). (2) Effect on Small Businesses: (a) Estimate the number and type of small businesses subject to the rule(s); (b) Describe the expected reporting, recordkeeping and administrative activities and cost required to comply with the rule(s); (c) Estimate the cost of professional services, equipment supplies, labor and increased administration required to comply with the rule(s).

(1) The entities likely to be economically affected are Oregon's 17 community colleges, which are units of local government, and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. Members of the public affected are students who enroll in Non-credit Training Certificates and the employers who hire or sponsor them. No other state agency is affected.

(2) (a)No small businesses are subject to the rule. The rule applies to Oregon community colleges, which are public institutions, and to the Commission. Small businesses that employ students who complete a Non-credit Training Certificate are not regulated by the rule and have no obligation under it.

(b) The rule requires no professional services, equipment, supplies, labor, or increased administration of small businesses, and therefore imposes no cost on them.

(c) The rule requires no professional services, equipment, supplies, labor, or increased administration of small businesses, and therefore imposes no cost on them.

DESCRIBE HOW SMALL BUSINESSES WERE INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THESE RULE(S):

Small businesses were not involved in the development of these rules.

WAS AN ADMINISTRATIVE RULE ADVISORY COMMITTEE CONSULTED? NO IF NOT, WHY NOT?

No. The amendment is a single change to the length limit in an existing definition, and the Commission did not convene a formal Rules Advisory Committee for it. However, these changed were vetted with the Community College Council of Instructional Administrators at their August meeting with no questions or concerns raised.

AMEND: 589-006-0050

RULE SUMMARY: OAR 589-006-0050 sets out the definitions that apply to Division 6 of Chapter 589, which governs community college course and program approval. Section (41) defines the Non-credit Training Certificate (NCTC) as a transcripted certificate made up of a single non-credit course or a group of non-credit courses, currently between 18 and 210 hours in length, that requires at least one assessment of measurable outcomes or mastery of learning or knowledge. The amendment raises the upper limit of the Non-credit Training Certificate from 210 hours to 599 hours. It also standardizes the spelling of “noncredit” as “non-credit” in the two places the term appears in the section, conforming the definition to the usage in 589-006-0050(40) and elsewhere in Division 6. The 18-hour minimum, the assessment requirement, and the transcription requirement are unchanged. No other section of 589-006-0050 is amended, and no other rule is included in this filing.

CHANGES TO RULE:

589-006-0050
Definitions ¶

For the purposes of division 6 of chapter 589, the following definitions apply:¶
(1) "Academic standard of achievement" means demonstrated achievement, proficiency, or measured learning acknowledged as meeting a predetermined academic standard, which is normally noted through an academic transcript record maintained by the college.¶
(2) "Applied baccalaureate degree" refers broadly to an applied bachelor's degree designed to incorporate Associate of Applied Science or Associate of Science courses or degrees with an appropriate complement of additional upper-division academic and technical coursework. Upon satisfactory completion, students are awarded a Bachelor of Applied Science degree which indicates completion of a course of study approved by the community college board and the Commission or its designee.¶
(3) "Associate degree" is a state-approved lower division undergraduate award issued by a community college that indicates satisfactory completion of a course of study approved by the community college board.¶
(4) "Associate of Applied Science Degree (AAS)" is a state-approved associate degree that prepares graduates for direct entry into the workforce, career advancement, occupational licensure, or further study at the baccalaureate level. New and amended AAS programs are approved by the community college board and the Commission or its designee.¶
(5) "Associate of Applied Science degree option" is a transcripted specialization within a state-approved AAS degree that is intended to prepare graduates for direct entry into the workforce. New and amended AAS option programs are approved by the community college board and the Commission or its designee.¶
(6) "Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer (AAOT) degree" is a state-authorized associate degree that prepares students to transfer into upper division courses within a baccalaureate degree program.¶
(7) "Associate of Arts Transfer degree" is a lower division major specific undergraduate award issued by a community college that indicates satisfactory completion of a course of study that is intended to prepare students for transfer to a public university in Oregon and have junior standing in a specific Bachelor of Arts degree program. The classes, outcomes, and completion standards for the major-specific Associate Transfer degrees are defined by a Major Transfer Map Curriculum Articulation Policy as defined in 715-025-0005. In majors where junior standing within 90 credits is not possible, students who complete an Associate of Arts Transfer degree will have equivalent status to students who started at a public university in the same major. Major Transfer Map Curriculum Articulation Policies are approved by the Commission and will be published on the HECC website.¶
(8) "Associate of General Studies" is an associate degree that meets individual students' needs using a variety of

lower-division collegiate-level courses to meet degree requirements.¶
(9) "Associate of Science" is a state-authorized associate degree that is intended to prepare students to transfer into a baccalaureate degree program in areas such as Business, Science, Mathematics, or Engineering. The Associate of Science degree is often designed to meet the requirements of a specific receiving institution's program.¶
(10) "Associate of Science Transfer Degree" is a lower division major specific undergraduate award issued by a community college that indicates satisfactory completion of a course of study that is intended to prepare students for transfer to a public university in Oregon and have junior standing in a specific Bachelor of Science degree program. The classes, outcomes, and completion standards for the major-specific Associate Transfer degrees are defined by a Major Transfer Map Curriculum Articulation Policy as defined in 715-025-0005. In majors where junior standing within 90 credits is not possible, students who complete an Associate of Science Transfer degree will have equivalent status to students who started at a public university in the same major. Major Transfer Map Curriculum Articulation Policies are approved by the Commission and will be published on the HECC website.¶
(11) "Bachelor of Applied Science" is a state-approved applied baccalaureate degree designed to incorporate applied associate courses and degrees with additional upper-division coursework emphasizing higher-order thinking skills and advanced technical knowledge and skills.¶
(12) "Bachelor of Science: Nursing degree" means a post-licensure degree program in which individuals who have already received an associate degree in nursing receive a bachelor's degree in nursing.¶
(13) "Board" refers to the board of education of a community college district.¶
(14) "Business and Industry Based program" is an Associate of Applied Science degree or certificate of completion designed for an employer to meet specific occupational and educational needs of their current employees.¶
(15) "Career Pathways Certificate of Completion" is a certificate awarded by a community college for meeting specific technical skill proficiency requirements that meet an employment need. Career Pathways Certificates are a collection of 12 to 44 credits that are wholly contained in an approved Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree option, or an Independent Certificate of Completion (with at least 45 credits). A Career Pathways Certificate also has a defined job entry point, represents collegiate-level work, and meets Commission standards and criteria.¶
(16) "Career and Technical Education courses" refer to the collegiate-level courses that are designed to prepare persons for entrance into employment, stability, or advancement in specific occupations or clusters of closely related occupations. Career and Technical Education courses may be categorized as occupational preparatory or occupational supplementary courses.¶
(17) "Career and Technical Education program" refers to collegiate-level coursework that is designed to prepare persons for employment, stability, and advancement in specific occupations or clusters of closely related occupations. Career and Technical Education programs result in the achievement of a certificate of completion, an associate of applied science degree or option, bachelor of applied science degree, or a Bachelor of Science: Nursing degree, which has been approved by the community college board and the Commission or its designee.¶
(18) "Certificate of Completion" refers to a form of recognition awarded by a community college for meeting minimum occupational course, curriculum, or proficiency requirements. Certificates of Completion must have a defined job entry point, represent collegiate-level work, be credit-bearing, meet Commission standards and criteria, and be approved by the community college board and the Commission or its designee.¶
(19) "Clock or contact hours" means one clock (or contact) hour that is 60 minutes long. No more than 10 minutes of each hour can be used for a regularly scheduled break or passing period.¶
(20) "Collegiate-level work" means course and program content that provides skills and knowledge beyond that which is normally gained before or during the secondary level. It is characterized by analysis, synthesis, and application by which students demonstrate an integration of skills and critical thinking. It is a term that denotes more than college or university transfer courses. It also includes Career and Technical Education and other courses that exceed fundamental basic skills and workplace readiness. Courses must be collegiate-level if used to fulfill a requirement in a bachelor of applied science degree, Bachelor of Science: Nursing degree, associate degree or option, or certificate of completion.¶
(21) "Commission" means the Higher Education Coordinating Commission¶
(22) "Complementary courses in general education" are courses that are designed to serve as supportive parts of Career and Technical Education. They are designed to aid students in attaining a higher degree of self-development and to assist the student in making a maximum contribution as a citizen in a democratic society.¶
(23) "Continuing education units (CEUs)" refers to a form of recognition given for completion of a unit of training for selected occupational supplementary courses. CEUs are based on time attended and not on the assessment of learning.¶
(24) "Credit" is the means by which a school indicates or certifies that a student has completed a unit of study, demonstrated achievement or proficiency, or manifested measured learning outside of school, so as to have satisfied a portion of the requirements for a degree or for any other academic recognition offered for credit by the school.¶

(25) "Credit course" means courses offered by the college for which successful completion applies toward requirements of transfer degrees, associate degrees, bachelor degrees, or other Career and Technical Education programs.¶
(26) "Degree" means any academic or honorary title, rank, or status that may be used for any purpose whatsoever, which is designated by a symbol or series of letters or words such as, but not limited to associate, bachelor, master, or doctorate and forms or abbreviations thereof that may generally be taken to signify:¶
(a) Completion of a program of instruction at the college or university level; or¶
(b) Demonstration of achievement or proficiency comparable to such completion; or¶
(c) Recognition for nonacademic learning, public service, or any other reason of distinction comparable to such completion.¶
(27) "Deleted program" refers to the permanent elimination of a program previously approved by a community college board and the Commission or its designee.¶
(28) "Detrimental duplication" means a situation that occurs when recruitment of students for a new program or location could redirect prospects from a fixed pool concomitant with the application of educational cost subsidies for public institutions of higher education, thereby significantly reducing enrollment in existing similar programs for which student financial aid is available but the number of prospective enrollees is limited by non-financial factors such as interest, qualifications needed for admission, internship openings for students, and job openings for graduates.¶
(29) "Direct control" means the community college maintains direct and sole responsibility for the academic quality of all aspects of all programs and courses through management and supervision by faculty and institutional administrators.¶
(30) "General education" refers to an essential collegiate-level component of associate and baccalaureate degree programs which is designed to foster independent lifelong learning by introducing students to the content and methodology of the major domains of knowledge.¶
(31) "Hobby course" means any directed activity engaged in by individuals as an avocation resulting in a collection of objects or in the production of works.¶
(32) "Intersegmental" means across segments of education. See "Segment of education."¶
(33) "Laboratory or lab" means an instructional setting in which students work independently with the instructor available in the instructional area for assistance and supervision.¶
(34) "Lecture" means an instructional setting in which the instructor presents academic subject information.¶
(35) "Lecture and laboratory" is an instructional setting in which the instructor gives short presentations and supervises student application of content. Instructional methods are integrated, and lecture and lab are dependent upon each other for the student's educational success.¶
(36) "Local community college program approval" means the approval by the local community college board of education or its designee, indicating that a program has met or exceeded local community college program standards and processes prior to being submitted to the Commission or its designee for review.¶
(37) "Lower Division Collegiate (LDC)" means collegiate-level work in areas of instruction that parallel the offerings of the first two years of Oregon's four-year institutions and are generally accepted for transfer by Oregon's public higher education institutions.¶
(38) "New location of an approved program" means a facility where students collectively may receive instruction in the program face-to-face or through technology, in a community not previously so served, including a non-Oregon location within 50 miles of where a comparable program is located in Oregon.¶
(39) "New program" means any program not previously approved by the Commission or by their predecessor review authorities, regardless of whether it comprises new instructional components or the reassembled components of existing programs.¶
(40) "Non-credit course" means a course that does not offer college credit for completion and generally cannot be used as part of a credit-based degree or certificate program.¶
(41) "Non-credit Training Certificate" (NCTC) is a certificate that is made up of either a single non-credit course or a group of non-credit courses. The NCTC must be between 18 and ~~210~~599 hours in length and requires at least one assessment of measurable outcomes or mastery of learning or knowledge. The NCTC must also be transcripted.¶
(42) "Occupational preparatory program" means a state-approved Career and Technical Education program that is designed to prepare persons for employment in a specified occupation or cluster of closely related occupations. The program is approved by the community college board and the Commission or its designee.¶
(43) "Occupational supplementary program" refers to a Career and Technical Education program designed for individuals who have already entered an occupation, to improve their occupational skills and knowledge occupational skills and knowledge in order to achieve employment stability or advancement. The program is approved by the community college board and the Commission or its designee.¶
(44) "Office" means the Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development.¶
(45) "Other education courses" refers to general self-improvement courses intended primarily for adults. These

courses include but are not limited to adult basic education (ABE), general educational development (GED), adult high school completion (AHS), English as a second language (ESL), and self-improvement courses not fitting into previously listed categories. These courses are independent of Career and Technical Education or lower division curricula and are not intended for programs that may lead toward a baccalaureate degree. However, these courses may be used as prerequisite and elective courses in Career and Technical Education degree and certificate programs.¶
(46) "Program" means any organized teaching and learning activity in which successful completion qualifies a student for a degree, a certificate of substantial academic or career and technical learning short of a degree, a certificate of preparation related to new or modified occupational licensure, or another academic or Career and Technical Education certificate that represents a shorter period of activity but has value as a public credential.¶
(47) "Program amendment" means a change in a state-approved program submitted to the Commission or its designee by a college to receive approval to revise the program. Revisions include minor changes in curriculum content, courses, program outcomes, or titles.¶
(48) "Program approval" means the process by which the local community college Board of Education and the Commission determine that a program has met the applicable program standards and requirements of the board and Commission or its designee.¶
(49) "Recognition award" means an award given to a student by a community college for completion of a state-approved course or courses or for attendance and participation in workshops or seminars. Recognition awards may not be called "certificates of completion" or "certificates" and may not be included on the official student transcript.¶
(50) "Recreational course" means any directed activity in which individuals participate with the purpose of engaging in physical activity, except those activities which focus on physical fitness, or which directly relate to the initial skill development of physical activities in which individuals could reasonably be expected to participate during most of their adult lives.¶
(51) "Related instruction" is relevant to programs of study for which applied or specialized associate degrees are granted, or programs of an academic year or more in length for which certificates are granted. Related instruction refers to a recognizable body of instruction in program-related areas of communication, computation, and human relations. Additional topics that should be covered as appropriate include safety, industrial safety, and environmental awareness. Related instruction areas are either embedded within the program curriculum or taught in blocks of specialized instruction.¶
(52) "Segment of education" refers to any one of the following:¶
(a) Oregon community colleges, community college districts, or service districts, together with every other postsecondary program or location ultimately sponsored by the Commission;¶
(b) Oregon public universities and related organizational units, together with every other postsecondary program or location ultimately sponsored by the Commission;¶
(c) The Oregon Health & Science University, any hereafter created public corporations for higher education, and any organizational units of such public corporations, together with every postsecondary program or location under their ultimate sponsorship;¶
(d) Private Oregon degree-granting institutions and organizations and all non-Oregon entities offering residential instruction in Oregon for credit toward full degrees approved by the Office of Degree Authorization, together with every postsecondary program or location they sponsor; and¶
(e) Private non-degree career schools offering instruction in Oregon and licensed under ORS 345, together with every postsecondary program or location they sponsor.¶
(53) "Stand-alone occupational preparatory courses" refers to courses not included in one or more of a community college's existing approved programs.¶
(54) "Statewide or regional consortium program" means a certificate of completion, an associate of applied science degree, an associate of science degree, a bachelor of applied science degree, or a bachelor of Science: Nursing degree which is developed, applied for and continuously monitored by a partnership of colleges to address a specific program need through a cohesive and transferable curriculum among participating colleges.¶
(55) "State-approved program" means a community college certificate of completion, an associate degree, a bachelor of applied science degree, or a Bachelor of Science: Nursing degree that has met and continues to meet the standards and criteria of the Commission.¶
(56) "Suspended program" means the temporary removal of a state-approved program from the overall curriculum of a community college by the local community college board of education or their designee.¶
(57) "Upper Division" courses refer to collegiate-level work usually taken in the third and fourth year of a four-year undergraduate program. These upper-division courses build upon the lower-division framework to build a deeper level of knowledge and understanding.
Statutory/Other Authority: ORS 350.075, ORS 350.150
Statutes/Other Implemented: ORS 348.910, ORS 341.013, ORS 341.465