

CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES BILL ANALYSIS

BILL NUMBER: SB 744 **VERSION:** AMENDED JUNE 11, 2025

AUTHOR: CABALDON **SPONSOR:** AUTHOR

STAFF RECOMMENDED POSITION: SUPPORT

SUBJECT: ACCREDITING AGENCIES

Summary: This bill safeguards California’s higher education institutions, financial aid eligibility, and licensure pathways from potential federal disruptions by providing that any national or regional accrediting agency that was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as of January 1, 2025, will retain recognition under California law through January 20, 2029, provided it continues to operate in substantially the same manner.

Existing Law:

1. Defines school accreditations that are acceptable to the Board for the purposes of recognizing qualifying degrees, including schools, colleges, or universities that are accredited by a regional or national institutional accrediting agency that is recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDE). (Business and Professions Code (BPC) §4980.03(a), 4980.36(b), 4999.12(b), California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 16, §1854)
2. Specifies that continuing education and additional required coursework from schools with the above-described USDE accreditation are acceptable to the Board. (BPC §4989.54(g), 4989.34(b), 4996.22(e)(2), 4999.76(e), CCR 16 §1810.5)

This Bill:

1. Provides that for purposes of any code or statute, a national or regional accrediting agency recognized by the USDE as of January 1, 2025, retains that recognition until January 20, 2029 as long as it continues to operate in substantially the same manner as it did on January 1, 2025. (BPC §144.7(a))

Comment:

1. **Author’s Intent.** In the fact sheet for the bill, the author states the following:

“President Trump’s Executive Order #14279 specifies that accreditors must remove diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) from all standards and emphasizes that policies need to prioritize student achievement, institutional accountability, and academic freedom. The Department of Education is using these new standards to target

universities by threatening to remove their accreditation. A May 1, 2025 memo from the U.S. Department of Education directs the Secretary to terminate the accreditation authority of entities that “engage in unlawful discrimination in accreditation-related activity under the guise of ‘diversity, equity, and inclusion’ initiatives.”

“...California statutes frequently reference “federally recognized” or “recognized by the U.S. Department (or Secretary) of Education” for the purpose of accrediting educational institutions. This standard is used for institutions to be eligible for higher education financial aid programs and for training students to meet professional licensure or certification requirements.

If or when the U.S. Department of Education pressures an accreditor to withdraw accreditation from a California institution, that withdrawal would render the institution ineligible for state services and programs, regardless of whether the removal of accreditation was justified.”

2. **Background.** The Board accepts degrees and required additional coursework from schools that are accredited by a regional or national institutional accrediting agency that is recognized by the USDE, as outlined in multiple sections of the Board’s statutes and regulations. If USDE accreditation were eliminated due to federal action, it would present challenges for the Board. This bill establishes a contingency plan to address that possibility.
3. **Measuring Compliance.** In its July 8, 2025 analysis of the bill, the Assembly Committee on Higher Education noted that the bill raises a policy question regarding whether the state will assume responsibility for ensuring that educational institutions continue to operate in a substantially similar manner, should this law be triggered due to federal action. The appropriate mechanism for addressing this concern remains to be determined.
4. **Staff Recommended Position.** Staff recommends the Board consider taking a support position on this bill.

5. **Support and Opposition.**

Support:

- None at this time.

Opposition:

- None at this time.

6. **History**

07/09/25 From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR. (Ayes 7. Noes 3.) (July 8). Re-referred to Com. on APPR.

06/11/25 From committee with author's amendments. Read second time and amended. Re-referred to Com. on HIGHER ED.
 06/05/25 Referred to Com. on HIGHER ED.
 05/29/25 In Assembly. Read first time. Held at Desk.
 05/29/25 Read third time. Passed. (Ayes 38. Noes 0.) Ordered to the Assembly.
 05/27/25 Ordered to special consent calendar.
 05/23/25 Read second time. Ordered to third reading.
 05/23/25 From committee: Do pass. (Ayes 6. Noes 0. Page 1211.) (May 23).
 05/16/25 Set for hearing May 23.
 04/21/25 April 21 hearing: Placed on APPR. suspense file.
 04/10/25 Set for hearing April 21.
 04/09/25 From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR. (Ayes 7. Noes 0. Page 736.) (April 9). Re-referred to Com. on APPR.
 03/26/25 Set for hearing April 9.
 03/12/25 Referred to Com. on ED.
 02/24/25 Read first time.
 02/24/25 From printer. May be acted upon on or after March 24.
 02/21/25 Introduced. To Com. on RLS. for assignment. To print.

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AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 11, 2025

SENATE BILL

No. 744

Introduced by Senator Cabaldon

February 21, 2025

An act to ~~amend Section 84757 of, and to repeal and add Section 66025.7 of, the Education Code, relating to community colleges; add and repeal Section 144.7 of the Business and Professions Code, and to amend, repeal, and add Section 66010 of the Education Code, relating to postsecondary education.~~

legislative counsel's digest

SB 744, as amended, Cabaldon. ~~Community colleges: credit for students with prior learning. Accrediting agencies.~~

Existing law establishes the California Community Colleges, the California State University, the University of California, independent institutions of higher education, and private postsecondary educational institutions as the segments of postsecondary education in the state. Existing law requires certain postsecondary educational institutions to be accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education to qualify as an independent institution of higher education to be eligible for certain programs and to receive an approval to operate.

Existing laws applicable to, among other things, the licensure and regulation of various professions and vocations by the Department of Consumer Affairs require applicants for licensure or licensees to satisfy educational requirements by completing programs or degrees from institutions or universities accredited by a regional or national accrediting agency or association recognized by the United States Department of Education, or otherwise impose a requirement that a

school or program be accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.

This bill would provide that, for purposes of any code or statute, a national or regional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education as of January 1, 2025, shall retain that recognition until January 20, 2029, provided that the accrediting agency continues to operate in substantially the same manner as it did on January 1, 2025. The bill would repeal those provisions on January 1, 2030.

~~Existing law requires the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges to establish, by March 31, 2019, an initiative to expand the use of course credit at the California Community Colleges for students with prior learning. Existing law required the chancellor to submit, by January 1, 2020, a report on the initiative to the Legislature.~~

~~This bill would delete those requirements and would instead require the chancellor to award credit for competency based educational opportunities that recognize students' prior learning and help students advance toward a credential or degree while reducing redundant study and student expenses. The bill would require the office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges to establish competencies, with the advice of appropriate faculty and employers, that are focused on the knowledge and skills a student needs to demonstrate in order to pass a course and to earn a degree or credential, or to transfer to a baccalaureate degree program. The bill would describe methods for awarding credit pursuant to these provisions as including, but not being limited to, military service, credit by examination, and evaluation of training, certifications, apprenticeships, licenses, and service learning, as provided. The bill would require the chancellor's office, on or before September 1, 2027, to submit a report to the Legislature on the credits awarded pursuant to these provisions.~~

~~Existing law establishes a system through which state funds are apportioned to community college districts based on specified formulas and identifies certain noncredit community college courses and classes that are eligible for that state apportionment funding.~~

~~This bill would require individualized evaluation, assessment, and portfolio review of students' prior learning and competencies for the awarding of credit pursuant to the above described provisions to be eligible for state apportionment funding.~~

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.

State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 *SECTION 1. Section 144.7 is added to the Business and*
2 *Professions Code, to read:*

3 144.7. (a) *For purposes of any code or statute, a national or*
4 *regional accrediting agency recognized by the United States*
5 *Department of Education as of January 1, 2025, shall retain that*
6 *recognition until January 20, 2029, provided that the accrediting*
7 *agency continues to operate in substantially the same manner as*
8 *it did on January 1, 2025.*

9 (b) *This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2030,*
10 *and as of that date is repealed.*

11 SEC. 2. *Section 66010 of the Education Code is amended to*
12 *read:*

13 66010. (a) *Public higher education consists of (1) the*
14 *California Community Colleges, (2) the California State University,*
15 *and each campus, branch, and function thereof, and (3) each*
16 *campus, branch, and function of the University of California.*

17 (b) ~~As~~ (1) *Except as provided in paragraph (2), as used in this*
18 *part, “independent institutions of higher education” are those*
19 *nonpublic higher education institutions that grant undergraduate*
20 *degrees, graduate degrees, or both, and that are formed as nonprofit*
21 *corporations in this state and are accredited by an agency*
22 *recognized by the United States Department of Education.*

23 (2) *For purposes of any code or statute, a national or regional*
24 *accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department*
25 *of Education as of January 1, 2025, shall retain that recognition*
26 *until January 20, 2029, provided that the accrediting agency*
27 *continues to operate in substantially the same manner as it did on*
28 *January 1, 2025.*

29 (c) *No provision of this part is intended to regulate, subsidize,*
30 *or intrude upon private education, including, but not limited to,*
31 *independent educational institutions and religious schools, nor to*
32 *vary existing state law or state constitutional provisions relating*
33 *to private education.*

34 (d) *This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2030,*
35 *and as of that date is repealed.*

36 SEC. 3. *Section 66010 is added to the Education Code, to read:*

37 66010. (a) *Public higher education consists of (1) the*
38 *California Community Colleges, (2) the California State University,*

1 *and each campus, branch, and function thereof, and (3) each*
2 *campus, branch, and function of the University of California.*

3 *(b) As used in this part, “independent institutions of higher*
4 *education” are those nonpublic higher education institutions that*
5 *grant undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees, or both, and that*
6 *are formed as nonprofit corporations in this state and are*
7 *accredited by an agency recognized by the United States*
8 *Department of Education.*

9 *(c) No provision of this part is intended to regulate, subsidize,*
10 *or intrude upon private education, including, but not limited to,*
11 *independent educational institutions and religious schools, nor to*
12 *vary existing state law or state constitutional provisions relating*
13 *to private education.*

14 *(d) This section shall become operative on January 20, 2029.*

15 ~~SECTION 1. Section 66025.7 of the Education Code is~~
16 ~~repealed.~~

17 ~~SEC. 2. Section 66025.7 is added to the Education Code, to~~
18 ~~read:~~

19 ~~66025.7. (a) The Chancellor of the California Community~~
20 ~~Colleges shall award credit for competency-based educational~~
21 ~~opportunities that recognize students’ prior learning and help~~
22 ~~students advance toward a credential or degree while reducing~~
23 ~~redundant study and student expenses.~~

24 ~~(b) The chancellor’s office shall establish competencies, with~~
25 ~~the advice of appropriate faculty and employers, that are focused~~
26 ~~on the knowledge and skills a student needs to demonstrate in~~
27 ~~order to pass a course and to earn a degree or credential, or to~~
28 ~~transfer to a baccalaureate degree program.~~

29 ~~(c) Methods for awarding credit pursuant to this section shall~~
30 ~~include, but are not limited to, all of the following:~~

31 ~~(1) Military service, as provided in Section 66025.71.~~

32 ~~(2) Credit by examination. The chancellor’s office, in~~
33 ~~coordination with the academic senate, shall support faculty in~~
34 ~~developing, sharing, and redeploying assessments to award credit~~
35 ~~by examination for courses that articulate to a public university~~
36 ~~and courses with common identifier designations. Assessments~~
37 ~~shall be developed to enable students to demonstrate mastery and~~
38 ~~shall be mapped to the competencies.~~

39 ~~(3) Evaluation of training, certifications, apprenticeships,~~
40 ~~licenses, and service learning, including certifications earned as~~

1 part of the Golden State Pathways Program or career technical
2 education programs in secondary schools. The chancellor's office,
3 in coordination with the academic senate, shall establish guidelines
4 by which certificated personnel shall examine a student's training
5 and determine whether the outcomes of that training correspond
6 to the outcomes of a course. Where appropriate under the
7 guidelines, a community college district shall be eligible for
8 funding pursuant to Section 84757 when the evaluation,
9 assessment, or portfolio review is organized as a noncredit course
10 or a supervised student support service. The chancellor's office
11 shall prioritize prior learning and credit in programs leading to
12 high-demand careers.

13 (d) Credit granted pursuant to this section shall be reciprocal
14 among California community college districts and accepted for
15 transfer in the same manner and for the same purposes as regular
16 course credit by each qualifying institution, as defined in
17 subdivision (f) of Section 69432.7.

18 (e) The State Allocation Board may consider the effectiveness
19 of a community college district in furthering opportunities for
20 students pursuant to this section in evaluating and prioritizing
21 funds allocated pursuant to Section 17078.74.

22 (f) (1) On or before September 1, 2027, the chancellor's office
23 shall submit a report to the Legislature, in compliance with Section
24 9795 of the Government Code, on the credits awarded pursuant
25 to this section, including, but not limited to:

26 (A) The number of students awarded credit.

27 (B) The number of courses awarded.

28 (C) The number of units awarded.

29 (2) The report pursuant to paragraph (1) shall not include
30 elective credit that does not satisfy a requirement for a credential
31 or degree, or for transfer to a baccalaureate degree program.

32 (g) For purposes of this section, "chancellor's office" means
33 the office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges.

34 SEC. 3. Section 84757 of the Education Code is amended to
35 read:

36 84757. (a) For purposes of this chapter, the following noncredit
37 courses, noncredit classes, and support services shall be eligible
38 for funding:

39 (1) Parenting, including parent cooperative preschools, classes
40 in child growth and development and parent-child relationships.

1 ~~(2) Elementary and secondary foundational skills and other~~
2 ~~courses and classes such as pretransfer level academic courses or~~
3 ~~classes in reading, mathematics, and language arts.~~

4 ~~(3) English as a second language.~~

5 ~~(4) Classes and courses for immigrants eligible for educational~~
6 ~~services in citizenship, English as a second language, and~~
7 ~~workforce preparation classes in the foundational skills of speaking,~~
8 ~~listening, reading, writing, mathematics, decisionmaking and~~
9 ~~problem solving skills, and other classes required for preparation~~
10 ~~to participate in job-specific technical training.~~

11 ~~(5) Education programs for persons with substantial disabilities.~~

12 ~~(6) Short term vocational programs with high employment~~
13 ~~potential.~~

14 ~~(7) Education programs for older adults.~~

15 ~~(8) Education programs for home economics.~~

16 ~~(9) Health and safety education.~~

17 ~~(10) Supervised tutoring for foundational skills and for~~
18 ~~degree-applicable and transfer level courses, as authorized pursuant~~
19 ~~to regulations adopted by the board of governors on or before July~~
20 ~~31, 2023. These regulations shall ensure that community colleges~~
21 ~~are compliant with Section 78213 in the implementation of~~
22 ~~supervised tutoring pursuant to this paragraph.~~

23 ~~(11) Individualized evaluation, assessment, and portfolio review~~
24 ~~of students' prior learning and competencies for the awarding of~~
25 ~~credit pursuant to Section 66025.7.~~

26 ~~(b) No state apportionment shall be made for any class or course~~
27 ~~that is not set forth in subdivision (a) and for which no credit is~~
28 ~~given.~~

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