

# Multiple Pathways Program Assessment Rubric



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Self-assessing  
program  
quality.

**A RUBRIC FOR**

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Developing  
action plans for  
improvement.

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Measuring  
progress.



**ConnectEd**

The California Center for College and Career

## Using This Rubric

Without question, it is challenging to envision, establish, and continuously improve a pathway that meets the varied needs of a diverse group of students. Doing so typically involves a *design team*, including academic and career-technical teachers, counselors, administrators, parents, and students as well as postsecondary, business/industry, and community partners.

This rubric was created to help design teams as they work together to develop and improve a comprehensive pathway program of study. As with any program implementation effort, it is difficult to focus on all elements simultaneously. As a result, certain elements will emerge as stronger than others. However, with constant monitoring and continued planning, it is possible to build a pathway that reaches the “operational” or “fully developed” level. This *Multiple Pathways Program Assessment Rubric* is designed to help schools focus their attention on the various elements of a quality pathway program and to foster discussions at each stage of the pathway’s development.

Specifically, the *rubric* can serve as a tool for...

- **Visioning**—design team members can gain a common understanding of what a fully developed pathway looks like;
- **Self-assessment**—design teams can analyze the current status and quality of each element of the pathway program;
- **Planning**—design teams can identify and set priorities for areas of improvement from which to develop annual work plans; and
- **Evaluation**—external evaluators can assess program quality.

Developing a pathway requires substantial time, collaboration, and thought. It is not an easy process; however, the result generally pays great dividends for students through greater engagement in high school and increased postsecondary options; for teachers through job satisfaction and the approach’s positive influence on students; for schools through improved student achievement; and for institutions of higher learning and employers through better prepared students and employees.

We welcome comments and suggestions to improve the usefulness of the *rubric*. Good luck with your pathway development!

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## What Is a Pathway?

A *pathway* is a comprehensive program of high school study that connects learning in the classroom with real-world applications outside of school. It integrates rigorous academic instruction with a demanding career technical curriculum and field-based learning—all set in the context of one of California’s 15 major industry sectors, such as business and finance, building and environmental design, biomedical and health sciences, engineering, information technology, manufacturing, or arts, media, and entertainment.

### ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES

There is no one right way to design and implement a pathway. But whatever the strategy, designing a pathway requires attention to four organizing principles:

1. **Pathways prepare students for postsecondary education and career**—both objectives, not just one or the other.
2. **Pathways connect academics to real-world applications** by integrating challenging academics with a demanding career and technical curriculum.
3. **Pathways lead to a full range of postsecondary opportunities** by eliminating tracking and keeping all options open after high school.
4. **Pathways improve student achievement.**

### ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

In addition to the organizing principles, a well-designed pathway consists of four essential components:

1. A challenging **academic component** prepares students for success—without remediation—in California’s community colleges and universities, as well as in apprenticeships and other postsecondary programs.
2. A demanding **technical component** delivers concrete knowledge and skills through a cluster of four or more technical courses.
3. A **work-based learning component** offers opportunities to learn through real-world experiences that complement classroom instruction.
4. **Supplemental services** include counseling as well as additional instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics to help students succeed with a challenging program of study.

# Multiple Pathways Program Assessment Rubric

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: If there is no evidence of a specific element, assign a score of "0."

Elements of Model Multiple Pathways	Foundation Pieces 1	Emerging Pathway 2	Operational Pathway 3	Fully Developed Pathway 4	Score 0-4
<b>ACADEMIC AND TECHNICAL CORE CURRICULA</b>					
<b>Rigorous Curriculum</b> <sup>1,B</sup>	Only some academic and technical courses are standards-based, and students' postsecondary education and employment options may be limited.	Although students are not intentionally tracked, some, but not all, receive instruction in rigorous, standards-based academic and technical curricula that ensures access to both career opportunities and a full range of postsecondary options, including two- and four-year colleges and universities, apprenticeships, the military, and formal career training.	ALL pathway students receive instruction in rigorous, standards-based academic and technical curricula that ensures access to, and readiness for, both career opportunities and a full range of postsecondary options, including two- and four-year colleges and universities, apprenticeships, the military, and formal career training. Students understand the principles of effective oral, written, and multimedia communication. Students are encouraged to complete advanced courses.	ALL pathway students receive quality instruction in rigorous, standards-based academic and technical curricula that ensures access to, and readiness for, both career opportunities and a full range of postsecondary options, including two- and four-year colleges and universities, apprenticeships, the military, and formal career training. Students understand the principles of effective oral, written, and multimedia communication. Students are encouraged to complete advanced courses.	<input type="text"/>
<b>CTE Course Sequence</b> <sup>2,B</sup>	Students may choose from several CTE courses that are not necessarily part of a planned sequence. Course quality may vary.	A sequence of two to three CTE courses in the same general industry sector is available to students and presented as a pathway, but it may not be well-developed and of high quality.	The pathway includes a single identified sequence or cluster of well-developed, high-quality CTE courses, perhaps with a couple of advanced or capstone courses offered by the ROP. Where appropriate, CTE courses have been submitted to UC for "a-g" approval.	The pathway includes several well-developed sequences or clusters of high-quality, standards-based CTE courses that provide students with options to pursue different strands or specializations. Advanced and capstone courses take advantage of ROP and/or community college offerings and resources. Where appropriate, CTE courses meet UC "a-g" requirements.	<input type="text"/>
<b>Integrated Problem/Project-Based Curriculum and Instruction</b> <sup>1,3,4,B</sup>	Students participate in limited, sporadic problem/project-based learning experiences in either CTE or academic classes.	Students participate in quality problem/project-based experiences that are in CTE and academic classes that are not necessarily integrated.	Students participate in a few shorter, interdisciplinary problem/project-based learning experiences.	Students participate in multiple, extended, well-designed interdisciplinary problem/project-based learning experiences that seamlessly integrate standards-based academic and technical curricula. Ideally, no separation exists between academic and career-technical curriculum and classes. All classes have fully integrated curriculum, so that they cannot readily be identified as career-technical or academic.	<input type="text"/>
<b>Postsecondary Articulation<sup>f</sup></b>	Students visit postsecondary institutions and are informed about available programs. Based on an individual initiative, some students may pursue concurrent enrollment.	One or two courses are articulated to a local community college and are taken by some students. Concurrent enrollment may be an option for students, but it is not formalized in the pathway design.	A tech prep partnership has been established with local community colleges to enable students to earn credit for pathway courses. These agreements may include opportunities for concurrent enrollment and associated credit.	Formal partnerships have been developed to articulate the pathway program with local four-year universities, community colleges, and postsecondary training institutions. Pathway articulation incorporates concurrent enrollment options and allows students to earn substantial postsecondary credit for pathway completion.	<input type="text"/>

Elements of Model Multiple Pathways	Foundation Pieces 1	Emerging Pathway 2	Operational Pathway 3	Fully Developed Pathway 4	Score 0-4
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**STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

<p><b>Academic Support<sup>p</sup></b></p>	<p>Some support services are available to students. Although students know about these services, little effort is made to encourage students to take advantage of them.</p>	<p>All students have available to them a range of support services that may include supplemental instruction in English and math (e.g., additional coursework, tutoring, etc.).</p>	<p>Pathway staff assumes responsibility for monitoring student progress and helps students access a variety of support services to maximize opportunities for success in the pathway program. Services may include supplemental instruction in English and math (e.g., additional coursework, tutoring, etc.).</p>	<p>Each student is assigned to a staff member who serves as his/her "mentor" and advisor. This staff member monitors student progress, communicates with the student's parent/guardian, and ensures that the student takes advantage of available support services, as needed, to maximize opportunities for success in the pathway program. All students have available to them a range of support services that may include supplemental instruction in English and math (e.g., additional coursework, tutoring, etc.).</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 50px; height: 30px; margin: auto;"></div>
<p><b>College and Career Guidance and Counseling<sup>q,c</sup></b></p>	<p>The pathway does not have a designated counselor. College and career guidance materials are available through a college and career center, but services may be limited to those students who take the initiative to seek them.</p>	<p>The pathway does not have a designated counselor. School counselors and pathway teachers provide students with some college and career counseling to support postsecondary transition.</p>	<p>The pathway has a designated counselor who is familiar with the unique needs of the program and its students. All students receive some college and career counseling to support postsecondary transition, but those services and opportunities may be intermittent and inconsistent.</p>	<p>The pathway has a designated counselor who is familiar with the unique needs of the program and its students. A formalized advisory program during the regular school day provides structure for delivery of guidance services. All students receive formalized, sequenced college and career counseling that includes career awareness, career interest surveys and inventories, industry-relevant field trips, and visits to colleges and universities. All students receive guidance and assistance with college applications, testing, and financial aid.</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 50px; height: 30px; margin: auto;"></div>
<p><b>Pathway Preparation and Orientation<sup>c,f</sup></b></p>	<p>Brochures or other printed materials are distributed to middle school students through mass mailing.</p>	<p>Pathway students and staff may make presentations to middle school students as a way to introduce pathway options and/or distribute brochures or other printed materials. No formal orientation is offered.</p>	<p>Some feeder middle schools offer a series of career exploration activities and/or orientation to available high school pathways via presentations or printed material. The pathway offers limited orientation for students once they arrive on the high school site.</p>	<p>All feeder middle schools offer well-designed, comprehensive career exploration programs that inform students about the pathway options available in nearby high schools. The pathway offers summer orientation and other transition services intended to ensure smooth entry into high school and the pathway program.</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 50px; height: 30px; margin: auto;"></div>
<p><b>Parent Involvement</b></p>	<p>There is little evidence of active parent involvement. Parents support school activities by attending functions and/or fundraising.</p>	<p>A small group of self-identified parents participate in pathway planning and implementation. Other parents may be generally supportive, but their involvement is limited to a handful of parent-specific functions.</p>	<p>Through formalized structures, parents are encouraged to participate in various aspects of the pathway program. There are regular opportunities for parents to come to the school site, view student projects, learn about pathway activities, and provide critical feedback.</p>	<p>A strategic effort is made to engage parents as active partners in their student's education. Through formalized structures, parents of pathway students are actively involved in program development, implementation, and leadership. Through established support systems, parents are aware of their students' performance and provided with tools and information to support student success.</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 50px; height: 30px; margin: auto;"></div>

Elements of Model Multiple Pathways	Foundation Pieces 1	Emerging Pathway 2	Operational Pathway 3	Fully Developed Pathway 4	Score 0-4
<b>WORK-BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES</b>					
<b>Work-Based Learning</b> <sup>1,5,B,D</sup>	Some students have the opportunity to participate in work-based learning experiences, but they are neither available to all students nor offered regularly. There is no connection to pathway coursework or monitoring of quality of placement.	Some students participate in at least some worksite visits and/or job shadows, but the opportunities may be hit-and-miss. More intensive internships may be available to a handful of students. Overall, there is little structure, coordination, monitoring of quality, or connection to coursework.	All students participate in at least a couple of work-based learning experiences, including an internship, with or without intentional connection to pathway courses. Structure and coordination is emerging. Quality of placement and experience may not be monitored and evaluated.	All students participate in a coordinated, structured, and monitored sequence of work-based learning experiences that are intentionally designed to reinforce the academic and technical pathway coursework. These experiences are sequenced through the years from speakers, field trips, mentors, and job shadows, to student-run enterprises, virtual apprenticeships, and internships. Every student participates in at least one internship that is intentionally designed to reinforce classroom learning. Quality is monitored regularly.	<input type="text"/>
<b>Authentic Work-Based Projects</b> <sup>1,3,4,5,B</sup>	Students work on fictitious school-based projects and have no contact, guidance, or support from industry professionals.	Students work on industry projects similar to those found in industry or school projects that are interdisciplinary, created by the teacher(s), and have limited guidance or support from industry professionals.	Students work on well-designed projects similar to those found in industry. Some guidance and support is provided by professional mentors/contacts.	Pathway students collaborate with industry partners to complete complex, authentic, and interdisciplinary industry projects, working both at school and in the community. Industry professionals guide and support student teams and play a role in project evaluation.	<input type="text"/>
<b>PROGRAM / SCHOOL CULTURE</b>					
<b>Personalized Learning Environment</b> <sup>E</sup>	Teachers recognize that students have different learning needs and provide differentiated instruction in their classrooms.	Teachers make every effort to know students and care about their academic success. Because students remain together as a cohort for three or more classes, teachers have the opportunity to meet together to discuss student progress and to work together to identify and address individual student needs.	Young people and adults in the school know each other well. Every student is known well by at least one adult in the school who ensures that the student's learning needs are met. Personalization is a clear priority that is reflected in reallocating resources to provide smaller classes, looping so that teachers remain with students for more than one year, and/or reducing pupil loads by reorganizing the school day (e.g., 4x4 schedule).	A clearly structured, personalized learning environment supports the development of meaningful, sustained relationships between students and teachers and creates a close family atmosphere. Teachers know students' individual strengths and challenges and provide academic support, as needed, in a timely fashion. The school is intentionally structured to support the development of meaningful, sustained relationships between students and adults. An advisory period provides regular opportunities for guidance, support, and home/school communication.	<input type="text"/>
<b>School and Program Leadership</b> <sup>A,D</sup>	A program director, principal, or lead teacher is dedicated to the program and motivated to ensure pathway development but he/she receives little or no support or buy-in from others.	A few dedicated individuals drive the program and are motivated to ensure pathway development; the remaining staff are mostly supportive but not actively engaged.	A motivated, effective pathway program director is supported by site administration and some pathway teachers; other pathway staff cooperate without creating barriers to effective pathway implementation. Students have input into decisions.	A strong leadership team consisting of the school's principal, program director, teachers, and business/community partners collaborate effectively in planning, implementing, and sustaining the pathway program. All are motivated to develop and maintain a high-quality program. Students participate in programmatic decisions.	<input type="text"/>

Elements of Model Multiple Pathways	Foundation Pieces 1	Emerging Pathway 2	Operational Pathway 3	Fully Developed Pathway 4	Score 0-4
<b>PROGRAM / SCHOOL STRUCTURE</b>					
<b>Inclusion of Targeted Student Population<sup>6</sup></b>	Students enroll in, or are placed in, a pathway program with no explicit attention paid to diversity or balanced representation.	An informal network of teachers, counselors, and/or other staff recruits students who they believe may benefit from the program. Any interested student is accepted if space is available. No formal application or interview process is required.	Pathway students are selected randomly from a pool of applicants with a clear goal of representing a diverse group of students including at-risk, minority, low-income, and "non-traditional" students.	A strategic effort is made to identify, target, and recruit a broad range of the student population including at-risk, minority, and low-income youth as well as non-traditional students (e.g., females for construction careers). No GPA entry requirement exists, and no students are excluded because of prior low achievement.	<input type="text"/>
<b>Teacher Collaboration<sup>6,H</sup></b>	Interested and willing CTE and academic teachers consult periodically on curriculum and instruction. Curriculum integration may occur sporadically or in one direction (e.g., academics infused into CTE).	Interested and willing CTE and academic teachers find time to create a few integrated lessons, units, or projects, but school and district support structures are not in place to encourage them as a regular practice.	Although the school schedule does not necessarily accommodate it, the team of CTE and academic pathway teachers make time to meet to plan integrated, interdisciplinary curriculum and program activities and to discuss student progress and strategies to support struggling students.	All CTE and academic pathway teachers are given ample, structured time during the regular school day to meet as a pathway team to plan integrated, interdisciplinary curriculum and program activities, discuss student progress, and develop strategies to support struggling students.	<input type="text"/>
<b>Scheduling<sup>6</sup></b>	Pathway staff has adjusted to the constraints of a six-period day or other schedule that does not meet program needs. Non-pathway students can take pathway courses.	In developing the school's master schedule, the needs of the pathway(s) are given special consideration. Some, but not all, pathway courses are "pure."	The school has adopted a 4x4 block or some other flexible schedule that accommodates the needs of pathways and other programs. CTE and some academic courses are "pure."	The pathway maintains a specialized, flexible schedule that meets its unique programmatic needs. All pathway courses are "pure," that is, made up of pathway students only.	<input type="text"/>
<b>Established Industry Partners<sup>6,G</sup></b>	One or two industry partners provide information, guest speakers, and field trip opportunities.	Some industry partners participate in pathway activities on an intermittent basis, but there is no long-term commitment to specific activities or ongoing pathway development.	Industry partners serve on an advisory board and provide work-based learning experiences, including job shadowing and internships. Some may be involved in other aspects of pathway development and implementation.	Industry partners are actively involved in all aspects of pathway development and implementation, which may include serving on an advisory board, assisting with curriculum development, offering substantial and frequent work-based learning opportunities, and advising students on projects.	<input type="text"/>

Elements of Model Multiple Pathways	Foundation Pieces 1	Emerging Pathway 2	Operational Pathway 3	Fully Developed Pathway 4	Score 0-4
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**PROGRAM EVALUATION**

**Systematic Program Evaluation<sup>1</sup>**  
 Program success is measured predominantly by anecdotal data. Pathway staff is considering more formal measures of evaluation, but no concrete plan has been developed.  
 Pathway staff examines enrollment, attendance, and anecdotal evidence such as student satisfaction to evaluate program success. Plans and systems are being developed to include standard measures of student achievement in program evaluation.  
 School or district has established a formalized protocol by which to evaluate quality indicators of pathway programs.

**Student Engagement and Motivation**  
 Most students are in the program by choice but seem indifferent about the program and coursework.  
 Students consider the program to be "fun" and like their classes and teachers, but few students can articulate how their learning is relevant to the world outside of the classroom or their postsecondary plans.  
 All students are consistently and actively engaged in projects and coursework, see a clear relationship between classroom learning and future education and employment opportunities, and freely express how much they value being part of the program.

**Postsecondary Tracking<sup>1</sup>**  
 The pathway program has identified a need to track the postsecondary success of its students, but has not yet garnered the resources and/or taken action to do so.  
 The pathway program requests alumni to self-report postsecondary data.  
 Pathway staff conducts a formal follow-up of students for at least four years after high school graduation and uses data collected to continuously improve the program. Evaluation ascertains postsecondary program completion, income, and other key indicators of success.

				TOTAL SCORE =	<input type="text"/>
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**CALCULATE YOUR PATHWAY AVERAGE SCORE (TOTAL SCORE / 19) =**

**Alignment with California Career Technical Education Foundation Standards**

- <sup>1</sup> Standards 1.0, 2.0
- <sup>2</sup> Standards 10.0
- <sup>3</sup> Standards 5.1, 5.2, 5.3
- <sup>4</sup> Standards 9.1, 9.3, 9.4
- <sup>5</sup> Standards 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4
- <sup>6</sup> Standards 3.1, 3.2, 3.3

**Alignment with 11 Elements of High Quality CTE System defined in the 2008-2012 California State Plan for Career Technical Education (Approved March 2008)**

- <sup>A</sup> Element: Leadership at all levels
- <sup>B</sup> Element: High quality curriculum and instruction
- <sup>C</sup> Element: Career exploration and guidance
- <sup>D</sup> Element: Student support and student leadership development
- <sup>E</sup> Element: Industry partnerships
- <sup>F</sup> Element: System alignment and coherence
- <sup>G</sup> Element: Effective organizational design
- <sup>H</sup> Element: Skilled faculty and professional development
- <sup>I</sup> Element: Evaluation, accountability, and continuous improvement

## Glossary of Terms

**Multiple Pathways**—Pathways are comprehensive, multi-year programs of academic and technical study, which are organized around a career theme, that prepare high school students for a full range of post-graduation options—including two- or four-year college, apprenticeships, formal job training, and military service. Pathways connect learning in the classroom with real-world applications outside of school by incorporating four core components:

A challenging **academic component** that prepares students for success—without remediation—in California’s community colleges and universities, as well as in apprenticeships and other postsecondary programs.

A demanding **technical component** that delivers concrete knowledge and skills through a sequence or cluster of four or more technical courses.

A **work-based learning component** that offers opportunities to learn through real-world experiences.

**Supplemental services** that include counseling as well as additional instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics to support students in a challenging program of study.

**Apprenticeship**—Multi-year, formalized programs that combine on-the-job training (OJT) with related classroom instruction and typically prepare individuals for occupations in the skilled trades and crafts.

**Articulation**—The practice of aligning curriculum from one educational segment to another to encourage a seamless transition between courses, grades, and/or educational institutions. Most commonly, high school courses articulate to community college courses so that high school students can earn college credit.

**Curriculum Frameworks**—Blueprints for implementing the state content standards; frameworks identify instructional programs, strategies, and materials, professional development, and assessments that are aligned with the standards.

**Dual Enrollment**—High school students enroll in college courses, which may be offered either on the high school or college campus, and earn college credit.

**Integrated Curriculum**—A series of conscious and informed strategies used to connect different academic subjects and career technical course content so that what is learned in one discipline is reinforced in the other disciplines over an extended period of time.

**Project-Based Learning**—A systematic teaching method that engages students by focusing on a complex question or problem and having them investigate answers to that problem over an extended period of time, often by creating presentations and products.

**Standards**—Statements that define what students should know and be able to do at each grade level.

**Tech Prep**—An educational program that typically combines at least two years of secondary career-technical education with two years of postsecondary education and leads to a postsecondary certificate or degree.

**Work-Based Learning**—An educational approach that links learning in the workplace to that which is learned in the classroom to engage students more fully in learning and to intentionally promote exposure and access to future educational and career opportunities.

### Multiple Pathways Program Assessment Rubric

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ConnectEd was founded with a grant from The James Irvine Foundation.

ConnectEd’s mission is to support the development of multiple pathways by which California’s young people can complete high school, enroll in postsecondary education, attain a formal credential, and embark on lasting success in the world of work, civic affairs, and family life.



Transforming today's education  
for tomorrow's economy

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