

# INFORMATION SHEET

Office of Correctional Education



**UPDATED:** August 2016

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## Voluntary Education Program (VEP) (VEP-College)

The purpose of the VEP is to offer inmates access to educational programming when an educational assignment is not available and/or to supplement traditional educational programming with opportunities for improvement in literacy and academic skills. Inmates are not assigned, but rather enrolled, and have no assigned hourly attendance requirements. The program is open entry/open exit.

The VEP includes literacy, adult secondary education, and/or college services. It offers participants the opportunity to continue progressing toward academic advancement and the attainment of a General Educational Development certificate, high school diploma, or college degree.

Currently CDCR works with 27 different college institutions, teaching close to 7,000 inmates. Senate Bill (SB) 1391 will have significant impact on incarcerated students, allowing colleges to offer classes inside prisons. This bill will allow California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's Office of Correctional Education (OCE) to expand college programs.

OCE is currently working with the leaders of our existing college partners to create a list of minimum standards, as well as proper training for new colleges. Training will include topics as follows: safety/security, working with custody, the criminal personality, academic rigor, and providing degrees with transferable credits.

Inmates/students who participate in college courses through VEP receive academic support as needed. This support includes teacher-assisted tutoring, peer tutoring at some institutions, test-proctoring, and limited access to used textbooks in some institutions. Inmate/student progress is monitored, and course completions are verified and reported. Inmates may earn milestone credits for college course participation.

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**Location(s):** All institutions

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**VEP Program Length:** The program is designed to provide inmates/students support, as needed, in order for them to be able to succeed in their academic program. This support may begin at the very basic level for some inmates/students and may last throughout their academic program, while other inmates/students may enroll in VEP for assistance in a college course and only use the program for a very short time.

**VEP College Program Length:** Program length is determined by college (i.e., quarter or semester system) and the number of units required to complete an Associate Arts, Bachelor, Masters or Doctoral Degree.

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**Enrollment:** All inmates/students are eligible to participate in VEP. Inmates/students are responsible for their own enrollment into college, tuition and fees, as well as text and course materials.

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**Eligibility Requirements:** Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) testing, if applicable. For college, any inmate/student who meets the college program standards may participate.

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*CDCR's Division of Rehabilitative Programs (DRP) manages adult inmate and parolee rehabilitative programs. Its top priority is to provide rehabilitative programming and life skills to offenders in an effort to reduce their likelihood of reoffending after their release from prison. DRP is comprised of the Office of Offender Services (OS), the Office of Correctional Education (OCE), and the Office of Program Accountability and Support (OPAS).*

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