



SAN DIEGO
Community College District

City College · Mesa College · Miramar College
College of Continuing Education

Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) Success Rate Update

Fall 2024

Institutional Innovation & Effectiveness



Context

This document includes section count and success rate data for Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) sections at San Diego City, Mesa, and Miramar Colleges in Fall 2024. This data is provided to inform a Distance Education report to the Chancellor’s Cabinet.

ZTC data in this briefing is sourced from a Campus Solutions query that identifies sections shown in the online course registration system with a ZTC logo; this functionality is not supported for the College of Continuing Education.

This document also includes survey data about student experiences with and attitudes towards ZTC classes and classes using Open Educational Resources (OER). This data is sourced from the Fall 2024 Student Distance Education Experience survey; full analysis of this data is under way as of the production of this briefing. The Fall 2023 Distance Education Experience survey is available [here](#).

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Definitions

- **On-ground:** Courses in which students and professors occupy the same physical location at the same time. These courses may be delivered on-campus at an SDCCD instructional facility or off-campus, such as at a high school under the CCAP program. These courses are not considered Distance Education.
- **Online & On-ground:** Courses that require students to participate both online and on-ground. Online & On-ground courses include hybrid and partially online sections. These courses are considered Distance Education.
- **Online:** Courses in which students and professors do not occupy the same physical location at the same time; at SDCCD, online coursework is often completed through the Canvas learning management system. Online courses include online-live (synchronous) and fully online (asynchronous) courses, as well as Hyflex courses (in which students have the option of attending each class meeting either online or in-person, and in which students may participate entirely online). These courses are considered Distance Education.
- **Success rate:** The percent of enrollments out of total census enrollments that receive a passing grade.
- **Zero Textbook Cost, ZTC:** Sections that either include no textbooks, textbooks available at no cost to the student, or supplementary material available at no cost to the student. Course materials available in ZTC sections are often available as Open Educational Resources (OER).

Methodology

- **Identify ZTC Sections:** Sections are labeled as ZTC or non-ZTC based on data available in the Campus Solutions query X_IR_ZTC_QUERY. This query reflects data shown in the online course registration system for courses offered at San Diego City, Mesa, and Miramar Colleges.
- **Inclusion criteria:** Section counts include active sections and exclude tutoring and credit-by-exam.
- **Success Rate Comparison:** Success rates are shown for “comparable courses” – i.e. courses which were delivered both across ZTC and non-ZTC formats across the credit colleges. This parameter is used to control for course-level effects on success rates, which can be significant. Additional parameters to control for course+modality variation were considered, but discarded as they resulted in a set of courses too small to be useable.
- **Survey Data:** In Fall 2024, all students enrolled in a distance education course at SDCCD were invited to complete a survey about their experiences online at the District. This survey included items regarding experience with and attitudes towards ZTC classes and classes using Open Educational Resources (OER).

About 36,000 students from San Diego City, Mesa, and Miramar Colleges and the College of Continuing Education (SDCCE) were invited to complete the survey, representing 65% of students enrolled at SDCCD in Fall 2024 (City: 66%, Mesa: 76%, Miramar: 64%, SDCCE: 53%). There were 1,338 student responses (City: 346, Mesa: 435, Miramar: 289, SDCCE: 578), 267 of whom enrolled at more than one college. These responses represent a 3.7% response rate (City: 4.9%, Mesa: 3.5%, Miramar: 3.5%, SDCCE: 7.0%).

- ZTC Sections:** There were 523 Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) sections in Fall 2024, 13% of all sections at the credit colleges. ZTC sections were most prevalent among online sections, accounting for 15% of all online sections, compared to 12% of on-ground sections and 9% of online & on-ground sections.

ZTC online sections were most prevalent at City College (22% of total sections) and accounted for similar percentages of sections at Mesa (13%) and Miramar (10%).

Table 1. Sections at Credit Colleges, Fall 2024, by Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) Status

		On-ground		Online & On-ground		Online		Total	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
City College	ZTC	89	13%	6	5%	84	22%	179	15%
	non-ZTC	576	87%	110	95%	295	78%	981	85%
	Total	665	100%	116	100%	379	100%	1,160	100%
Mesa College	ZTC	122	12%	13	8%	85	13%	220	12%
	non-ZTC	884	88%	157	92%	551	87%	1,592	88%
	Total	1,006	100%	170	100%	636	100%	1,812	100%
Miramar College	ZTC	63	12%	20	13%	41	10%	124	11%
	non-ZTC	478	88%	133	87%	368	90%	979	89%
	Total	541	100%	153	100%	409	100%	1,103	100%
Credit College Total	ZTC	274	12%	39	9%	210	15%	523	13%
	non-ZTC	1,938	88%	400	91%	1,214	85%	3,552	87%
	Total	2,212	100%	439	100%	1,424	100%	4,075	100%

Sections 2 and 3 of this document compare success rates between ZTC and non-ZTC courses for “comparable courses” – courses which were delivered in both ZTC and non-ZTC formats across the colleges. This parameter is imposed to control for course-level effects on success rates, which may be significant. Additional parameters to control for course+modality variation were considered but discarded as they excluded too many courses.

The “comparable courses” parameter resulted in a comparison of 390 ZTC sections and 1,372 non-ZTC sections, excluding 133 ZTC sections (that were not offered in non-ZTC formats) and 2,180 non-ZTC sections (that were not offered in ZTC formats). See Table 2 on next page for full section counts in comparable sections.

See pages 5 and 8 for success rate data of these comparable sections.

Table 2. Comparable Sections at Credit Colleges, Fall 2023, by Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) Status

		On-ground		Online & On-ground		Online		Total	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
City College	ZTC	62	21%	4	6%	60	29%	126	22%
	non-ZTC	227	79%	62	94%	147	71%	436	78%
	Total	289	100%	66	100%	207	100%	562	100%
Mesa College	ZTC	80	21%	9	18%	60	18%	149	20%
	non-ZTC	295	79%	42	82%	273	82%	610	80%
	Total	375	100%	51	100%	333	100%	759	100%
Miramar College	ZTC	60	36%	19	24%	36	18%	115	26%
	non-ZTC	107	64%	60	76%	159	82%	326	74%
	Total	167	100%	79	100%	195	100%	441	100%
Credit College Total	ZTC	202	24%	32	16%	156	21%	390	22%
	non-ZTC	629	76%	164	84%	579	79%	1,372	78%
	Total	831	100%	196	100%	735	100%	1,762	100%

Note. Data above reflect courses which were delivered in both ZTC and non-ZTC formats across the colleges.

2. **ZTC Growth by College:** The number of ZTC sections grew 13% from Fall 2023 (463) to Fall 2024 (523). ZTC sections accounted for 13% of all sections in Fall 2024, up 2% from Fall 2023.

Growth in the number of ZTC sections varied by college (City: +3%, Mesa: +15%, Miramar: +25%), although this is largely due to Mesa and Miramar, which had lower ZTC rates in Fall 2023, catching up to City College's ZTC rate.

Table 3. ZTC Section Counts and Percent of all Sections, Fall 2023 and Fall 2024

		Count			Percent	
		Fall 2023	Fall 2024	% Change	Fall 2023	Fall 2024
City College	Online	89	84	-6%	21%	22%
	OL & OG	8	6	-25%	6%	5%
	On-ground	76	89	17%	12%	13%
	Total	173	179	3%	15%	15%
Mesa College	Online	82	85	4%	12%	13%
	OL & OG	21	13	-38%	12%	8%
	On-ground	88	122	39%	9%	12%
	Total	191	220	15%	10%	12%
Miramar College	Online	41	41	0%	10%	10%
	OL & OG	16	20	25%	10%	13%
	On-ground	42	63	50%	9%	12%
	Total	99	124	25%	9%	11%
Credit Colleges	Online	212	210	-1%	14%	15%
	OL & OG	45	39	-13%	9%	9%
	On-ground	206	274	33%	10%	12%
	Total	463	523	13%	11%	13%

3. ZTC Growth by Subject: Compared to Fall 2023, the prevalence of ZTC materials in Fall 2024 grew most in Music (+38%), Philosophy (+18%), and Psychology (+16%).

In Fall 2024:

- 39% of all Music sections were ZTC. This was up from just 1% in Fall 2023.
- 33% of Philosophy sections were ZTC. This was up from 15% in Fall 2023.
- 27% of Psychology sections were ZTC. This was up from 11% in Fall 2023.

These three subjects had the highest percentage of sections that were ZTC as well as showed significant growth in the percentage of sections that were ZTC compared to Fall 2023.

The subjects that showed the largest volume of ZTC growth in Fall 2024 compared to Fall 2023 (increase in number of ZTC sections) were:

- Music, +35 ZTC sections
- Psychology, +22 ZTC sections
- Chemistry, +17 ZTC sections

Table 4. Growth in ZTC Prevalence by Subject, Subjects with 50+ total sections in Fall 2024

	% of all Sections ZTC			Count of ZTC Sections			
	Fall 2023	Fall 2024	Change	Fall 2023	Fall 2024	# Change	% Change
ACCT	14%	5%	-9%	8	3	-5	-63%
ADJU	1%	1%	0%	1	1	0	0%
ANTH	24%	28%	4%	12	15	3	25%
ARTF	10%	15%	6%	14	22	8	57%
BIOL	3%	2%	-1%	6	4	-2	-33%
BLAS	2%	6%	4%	1	3	2	200%
BUSE	13%	2%	-11%	14	2	-12	-86%
CHEM	4%	14%	11%	6	23	17	283%
CHIC	19%	28%	8%	11	18	7	64%
CHIL	20%	28%	8%	12	17	5	42%
CISC	5%	5%	0%	4	4	0	0%
COMS	6%	13%	7%	8	19	11	138%
ENGL	16%	16%	0%	62	60	-2	-3%
HIST	16%	13%	-3%	15	13	-2	-13%
MATH	22%	23%	1%	64	61	-3	-5%
MUSI	1%	39%	38%	1	36	35	3500%
PERG	21%	13%	-8%	15	9	-6	-40%
PHIL	15%	33%	18%	8	17	9	113%
PHYS	18%	16%	-2%	10	9	-1	-10%
POLI	28%	10%	-17%	16	6	-10	-63%
PSYC	11%	27%	16%	16	38	22	138%
SOCO	9%	14%	4%	5	8	3	60%

4. **ZTC Enrollments by Ethnicity:** On average in Fall 2024, 14.8% of enrollments (duplicated) were in ZTC sections. The students mostly likely to enroll in ZTC sections were Asian (15.2% of all enrollments were in ZTC sections) and Latinx (15.1%).

The students least likely to enroll in ZTC sections were African American (13.3%) and Pacific Islander (12.6%). However, it should be noted that the difference between the group least likely to enroll in ZTC sections (Pacific Islander, 12.6%) and the group most likely to enroll in ZTC sections (Asian, 15.2%) was relatively small (2.6%).

Table 5. Percent of Enrollments in ZTC Sections, by Ethnicity, Fall 2024

	Total Enrollments	Enrollments in ZTC	
		#	%
African American	7,719	1,024	13.3%
Asian	12,240	1,855	15.2%
Filipino	2,894	426	14.7%
Latinx	45,248	6,843	15.1%
Multi-Ethnicity	8,224	1,222	14.9%
Native American	260	36	13.8%
Pacific Islander	507	64	12.6%
Unknown	1,053	124	11.8%
White	28,588	4,191	14.7%
Total	106,733	15,785	14.8%

5. **Overall ZTC Success Rates:** Overall success rates were similar in ZTC sections compared to non-ZTC sections in Fall 2024 (ZTC: 71.9%, non-ZTC: 71.4%). Compared to non-ZTC courses, ZTC success rates were higher at City College (ZTC: 72%, non-ZTC: 67%), but lower at Mesa College (ZTC: 70.6%, non-ZTC: 72.0%) and lower at Miramar College (ZTC: 73%, non-ZTC: 76%).

There was some variation in success rate comparison by college and modality, largely accounted for by differences in course offerings in each modality and outcomes of those courses. For example, low success rates in ZTC sections in the Online & On-ground modality at Mesa and Miramar colleges were largely reflective of lower success rates in ZTC math courses, which had lower success rates than the non-ZTC offerings in that modality at that college.

Table 6 below shows success rates in ZTC sections compared to comparable non-ZTC sections. The green-colored cell indicates the format of course (ZTC or non-ZTC) with the higher success rate in that modality at that college. For example, ZTC success rates were higher in online classes at City College than non-ZTC success rates.

Table 6. Success Rates in ZTC and non-ZTC courses, comparable sections, Fall 2024

		On-ground	Online & On-ground	Online	Overall
City College	ZTC	73%	67%	72%	72%
	non-ZTC	69%	58%	68%	67%
	Total	70%	59%	69%	68%
Mesa College	ZTC	71%	74%	70%	71%
	non-ZTC	73%	78%	70%	72%
	Total	72%	77%	70%	72%
Miramar College	ZTC	78%	62%	72%	73%
	non-ZTC	76%	81%	74%	76%
	Total	77%	76%	74%	75%
Credit College Total	ZTC	73%	65%	71%	72%
	non-ZTC	72%	71%	71%	71%
	Total	72%	70%	71%	71%

Note. Excludes courses that were not offered in both ZTC and non-ZTC formats in Fall 2024.

Table 6 above shows success rates in courses that were offered in both ZTC and non-ZTC formats. The success rate for *all* ZTC sections in Fall 2024 (not shown above) was 73% (City: 75%, Mesa: 71%, Miramar: 73%).

- All ZTC sections on-ground: 75% (City: 77%, Mesa: 72%, Miramar: 78%)
- All ZTC sections online & on-ground: 66% (City: 71%, Mesa: 75%, Miramar: 62%)
- All ZTC sections online: 71% (City: 73%, Mesa: 70%, Miramar: 70%)

6. ZTC Success Rates by Ethnicity: In Fall 2024, success rates were higher in ZTC sections than non-ZTC sections for Latinx and Pacific Islander students, comparable for African American, Asian, and White students, and lower for Filipino, Multi-Ethnicity, and Native American students.

Table 7 below shows success rates in ZTC sections compared to comparable non-ZTC sections. The green-colored cell indicates the format of course (ZTC or non-ZTC) with the higher success rate in that modality. For example, ZTC success rates were higher for Latinx students than non-ZTC success rates.

Table 7. Success Rates in ZTC and non-ZTC courses by Ethnicity, comparable sections

		On-ground	Online & On-ground	Online	Overall
African American	ZTC	62%	55%	67%	64%
	non-ZTC	67%	59%	63%	64%
	Total	66%	58%	64%	64%
Asian	ZTC	82%	80%	81%	82%
	non-ZTC	82%	83%	84%	83%
	Total	82%	82%	83%	82%
Filipino	ZTC	77%	50%	74%	73%
	non-ZTC	82%	83%	76%	80%
	Total	81%	78%	76%	78%
Latinx	ZTC	69%	64%	69%	69%
	non-ZTC	68%	63%	67%	67%
	Total	68%	64%	67%	67%
Multi-Ethnicity	ZTC	75%	59%	71%	72%
	non-ZTC	72%	77%	75%	74%
	Total	73%	74%	74%	73%
Native American	ZTC	69%	---	47%	57%
	non-ZTC	49%	60%	68%	59%
	Total	54%	60%	63%	59%
Pacific Islander	ZTC	70%	80%	78%	75%
	non-ZTC	74%	76%	53%	63%
	Total	74%	77%	58%	66%
White	ZTC	80%	62%	70%	74%
	non-ZTC	79%	76%	71%	75%
	Total	79%	74%	71%	75%

Note. Excludes students with Unreported ethnicity. Excludes courses that were not offered in both ZTC and non-ZTC formats in Fall 2024.

7. **Student Experience with ZTC/OER:** In Fall 2024, about 1 in 4 students were aware of the ZTC class search, OER/low-cost course materials were important to almost 60% of students in their enrollment decisions, and 70% of students said the course materials in their OER or ZTC courses were representative of diverse perspectives, cultures, and backgrounds.

There was essentially no change in the percentage of students indicating awareness of the ZTC class search, importance of availability of OER/low-cost course materials, and representation of diverse perspectives in their OER/ZTC course materials.

Table 8. ZTC/OER Survey data Distance Education Student Experience Survey, Fall 2023 and Fall 2024

Question	Response	Fall 2023		Fall 2024	
		Count	% of Total	Count	% of Total
Are you aware of the Zero Textbook Cost filter when using the class search?	Yes	555	25%	314	25%
	No	1,225	55%	740	59%
	Not Sure	430	19%	191	15%
	Total	2,210	100%	1,245	100%
How important is the availability of free course materials (such as OER) or low-cost course materials (total cost less than \$30) in your decision to enroll in courses?	Extremely (5)	830	38%	444	36%
	Very (4)	561	25%	291	23%
	Moderately (3)	290	13%	196	16%
	Slightly (2)	145	7%	110	9%
	Not At All (1)	380	17%	202	16%
	Total	2,206	100%	1,243	100%
The course materials in my OER or ZTC class were representative of diverse perspectives- cultures- and backgrounds.	Strongly Agree (5)	528	38%	299	38%
	Agree (4)	493	35%	252	32%
	Neither Ag. nor Dis.(3)	335	24%	214	27%
	Disagree (2)	26	2%	13	2%
	Strongly Disagree (1)	14	1%	7	1%
	Total	1,396	100%	785	100%

See Table 9 on the next page for Fall 2024 data disaggregated by College Enrolled, Age Group, Major, Ed Objective, and Ethnicity for the largest groups of respondents.

Aware of ZTC filter in class search: In Fall 2024, students enrolled only at City College were slightly less likely to be aware of the ZTC filter in class search (26%) than students enrolled only at Mesa or Miramar (31% and 33%, respectively). Older students were less likely to be aware than younger students (18-24: 38% vs. 55-64: 17%).

Importance of free course materials in decision to enroll: The following groups were more likely to indicate the availability of free course materials as important to their decision to enroll in a class: Students aged 25-34; students in majors such as Child Development, ESL, Liberal Arts and Sciences, Psychology, and Social Work; students maintaining a certification.

Importance of free course materials in decision to enroll: All groups were generally likely to agree that OER/ZTC materials were representative of diverse perspectives, cultures, and backgrounds.

ZTC Fall 2024 Update, Credit Colleges

Table 9. ZTC/OER Survey data, Fall 2024 Distance Education Student Experience Survey, Disaggregated

		Average Online Sentiment			Total Respondents
		Aware of ZTC Class Search (0-100%)	Cost affects Enrollment (1-5)	OER Materials Representative (1-5)	
Overall Average		25%	3.53	4.05	1,338
College Enrolled	City Only	26%	3.75	4.10	135
	Mesa Only	31%	3.64	3.97	189
	Miramar Only	33%	3.41	3.92	103
	More than 1 Credit	34%	3.93	4.03	224
	SDCCE Only	12%	3.19	4.11	461
Age Group	18 - 24	38%	3.75	3.93	239
	25 - 34	34%	4.05	4.11	194
	35 - 44	23%	3.81	4.13	163
	45 - 54	18%	3.84	3.99	116
	55 - 64	17%	3.59	4.06	112
	65+	7%	2.49	4.07	244
Academic Area of Major	Accounting	20%	3.25	3.69	20
	Art/Graphic Design	25%	3.75	4.16	51
	Biology or Allied Health	37%	3.65	4.16	54
	Business	31%	3.81	3.83	74
	Child Development	29%	4.11	4.12	38
	Computer Science	13%	3.93	4.02	75
	CSU Gen. Ed./IGETC	25%	3.77	3.85	44
	Cybersecurity	24%	3.05	3.71	21
	ESL	23%	4.19	4.29	108
	Lib. Arts and Sciences	27%	4.45	4.25	22
	Psychology	21%	4.07	4.00	28
	Social Sciences	41%	3.62	3.75	37
	Social Work	24%	4.40	4.33	25
	Undeclared/Undecided	4%	2.35	4.04	205
	Unreported	15%	3.80	4.00	20
Ed. Objective	Ed. Development	8%	4.00	3.75	12
	Transfer/Associate	34%	3.86	4.07	303
	Prepare for a new job	6%	3.44	4.08	18
	Maintain cert.	36%	4.07	3.89	14
Race	White	20%	2.96	3.99	423
	Latinx	26%	3.99	4.08	340
	Asian	24%	3.56	4.01	165
	African American	22%	3.98	4.15	82
	Multi-Ethnicity	32%	3.47	4.14	59

Note. Student responses for “Cost affects Enrollment” and “OER Materials were Representative” are transformed into weighted averages for each item, with a score of 1.00 indicating the most negative response and 5.00 indicating the most positive response.

Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness

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