



Advisory Committee Handbook

Academic Year 2026–2027

Office of Career Education & Workforce Development
1501 Mendocino Avenue • Santa Rosa, CA 95401



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Purpose of Advisory Committees

Today's workforce requires educational institutions and the communities they serve to work closely together, especially in Career Education (CE) programs. CE is an organized system of programs directly related to preparation, upgrading, or retraining for careers. To achieve this goal, it is vital that SRJC align CE programs with the needs of our industry partners.

Program advisory committees are organized to provide advice and assistance to the instructors and administrators of CE programs. They are composed of a representative group of industry partners whose experience, abilities, and diversity reflect a cross-section of a particular occupational area or discipline. The primary purpose of the local CE advisory committee is to assist and provide recommendations to SRJC in establishing, operating, and evaluating programs which serve the needs of students, the community, business, and industry.

We are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the representation of programs. In support of the SRJC Strategic Plan, we aspire to be an inclusive, diverse, and sustainable learning community that engages the whole person.

Legal Basis

Local schools and institutions that operate Career Education programs and receive state and federal funds are required by the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (CTEA) to establish and operate Program Advisory Committees. Each Career Education program advisory committee is required to meet, with quorum, a minimum of once per academic year.

Committee Functions

Why Advisory Committees Matter

- Ensure students are trained with the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by employers
- Ensure curriculum design and improvements are industry-informed and aligned to current industry standards
- Maintain a continuous connection with industry for the benefit of students and growth of a diversified student pipeline
- Provide an opportunity for discussion among educators and industry on improving Career Education opportunities
- Provide expertise by reviewing curriculum, technology, facilities, budget, student competency, and job placement

The primary functions of Career Education Industry Advisory Committees are:

1. To study the educational needs of a specific occupational program and to make recommendations to the College program faculty and administration. Such recommendations may be included in the program's academic program review.
2. To interpret the program to the communities served and the communities' needs to the College.
3. To furnish specialized information and advice on technical requirements for the effective operation of the program.
4. To provide channels of communication between SRJC and various organizations and agencies within the community.

5. To further a cooperative relationship between SRJC and the resource agencies of the community in support of the program.
6. To monitor, document, and discuss how students are progressing toward the competencies, objectives, and student learning outcomes identified for the program(s).
7. To support a diverse workforce through the development and maintenance of a strong student pipeline from education and training to employment.

Committee Structure

The membership of each committee needs to be large enough to be representative of the discipline and function effectively. Generally, a membership of five to seven industry partners representing all aspects of the discipline is optimal. You may invite technical experts to individual meetings to assist in addressing specialized topics.

Each advisory committee should strive to reflect the composition of the community's business, industry, or government sectors in the following categories:

- Company size: large, medium, and small companies.
- Various employment levels: executive management, middle management, supervisory, technicians, and labor representatives.
- Ethnicity and gender: reflective of the diverse student body.

Required Representation

Advisory Committees must maintain representation from the following required groups:

- Industry representatives (may include industry associations, regional or subregional directors, or subject-matter experts)
- Employers currently working in the field
- Student(s) and/or alumni

Educational partners (strongly recommended):

- K-12 representatives
- Four-year institution representatives
- Professional associations or education organizations
- Noncredit or adult education faculty
- Grant partners

Stakeholders to be Invited to All Meetings

The following stakeholders shall be invited to all advisory committee meetings:

- Dean of cluster
- Department Chair, faculty (full- and part-time), and instructional support staff
- Workforce Development representatives
 - Dean bdavis@santarosa.edu
 - Director rsmith@santarosa.edu
 - Internship amerkel@santarosa.edu
 - Job Developer amansfield2@santarosa.edu and mrhodes@santarosa.edu
 - Work Experience kkinahan@santarosa.edu
- Student Outreach oguajardo@santarosa.edu
- CE Counselor mgalindo@santarosa.edu
- Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Planning jsmotherman@santarosa.edu

Multi-Discipline Committees

If a department chooses to have one advisory committee that represents multiple disciplines, each discipline should have members serving on the committee. For example, if the Agriculture/Natural Resources department has one advisory committee, membership should include representation from Animal & Equine Science; Floral Design; Horticulture; Natural Resources; Sustainable Agriculture; Veterinary Technician; Viticulture; and Wine Studies. The membership list submitted to the CE office must indicate which discipline each member represents.

Membership Eligibility & Conflict of Interest

To avoid potential conflicts of interest, committee membership shall be non-instructional representatives of the community, and industry. If it becomes necessary to use part-time instructional faculty as committee members, said members shall recuse themselves from any vote that creates a potential conflict of interest.

Committee members shall have recent related experience to the program of study, be committed to attending all meetings, and have an interest in the education of students. Current and former students now employed in the field, or members as required by external licensing/accrediting organizations, may also be appointed.

Board of Trustees Approval

The advisory committee membership list is submitted to the SRJC Board of Trustees for approval at the September board meeting. This becomes the final, official list for the academic year and is used to determine quorum for 2026–2027 meetings.

Quorum is defined as 50% + 1 of the official membership. A quorum must be present for a meeting to be official and to conduct business. Proxy voting is allowed with confirmation of the proxy shown in the minutes. The proxy shall not be another voting member or an SRJC employee.

Chairperson

Each advisory committee must include an industry or employer chair. The chairperson is responsible for facilitating the meeting and, in collaboration with the SRJC program coordinator, preparing the agenda and minutes. The SRJC program coordinator shall not facilitate the meeting or prepare the agenda on their own.

Roles & Responsibilities

Industry & Employer Representatives

Industry and employer representatives are expected to:

- Attend meetings, participate in committee discussions, and serve on subcommittees as appropriate
- Carefully study any problem that comes before the committee prior to committing to a final decision
- Be available for consultation between meetings

Primary responsibilities of industry advisory committee members:

1. Curriculum Content Advisement

- Provide insight regarding curriculum and training needed from potential employers of our students
- Assess whether graduates possess the entry-level job skills needed by employers

- Advise on content (not teaching method)
- Forecast trends in the field so curriculum can be created or updated to reflect those trends
- Provide insight for the local program review process

2. Career Guidance

- Engage in Work-Based Learning activities within the curriculum and outside the classroom
- Help design opportunities for students to gain career experience while enrolled
- Sponsor or assist with career events and activities (Career Days, job fairs, etc.)
- Serve as guest speakers regarding job opportunities and employer expectations
- Conduct mock interviews
- Provide insights regarding internships, job shadowing, externships, mentoring, and apprenticeships

3. Public Relations & Recruitment

- Assist in obtaining effective media coverage for the program
- Be visible in support of programs during public and special events
- Recommend technical resource personnel and provide classroom speakers
- Secure additional funding and donations for materials and equipment
- Assist in recruiting part-time and full-time instructors and new students
- Assist in recruiting new advisory committee members and technical resource personnel

4. Job Placement

- Assist students with cooperative workforce training opportunities and internships
- Communicate potential job openings and employer needs
- Provide information and data related to employment demands, trends, and needs
- Assist job developers in developing employment opportunities and supporting continued employment for students

5. Program Evaluation

- Review goals, learning objectives, topics, and scope of the CE course/program
- Examine learning outcomes relating to competency, quality of graduates, and job placement
- Participate in program evaluation teams
- Assure that programs are current and meet the needs of the industry

Management & Faculty Responsibilities

SRJC management and faculty in the discipline(s) covered by the advisory committee are expected to:

- Submit items for advisory committee meeting agendas
- Attend advisory committee meetings, participate in discussions, and complete committee assignments
- Review curriculum changes recommended by the advisory committee
- Assist in the development and revision of curriculum
- Prepare the meeting agenda in collaboration with the committee chair
- Record and distribute meeting minutes within two weeks following the meeting
- Submit minutes and any food-related invoices to the CE office

Meetings

Frequency & Format

Each committee is required to meet at least once per academic year, with quorum. All committees are strongly encouraged to convene at least once per semester. Additional meetings may be called when needed. For 2026-27, fall semester meetings may be held between September 9, 2026 and December 18, 2026 and spring semester meetings may be held between January 19, 2027 and April 30, 2027.

Meetings may be held in person or through video conferencing platforms (Zoom, Teams, etc.). The schedule and length of meetings should accommodate employer and industry schedules and time constraints. Meetings may take place outside of regular business hours, but must avoid dates when the District is closed. [Click here for a District calendar](#).

If possible, at least one advisory meeting per academic year should be hosted at an industry partner site. Meeting on campus is preferable when reviewing or discussing facilities, equipment, or technology.

Meeting Invitations & Notice

Meeting invitations with the agenda shall be sent to all committee members and stakeholders no less than two weeks prior to the meeting. A “Save the Date” notice should be distributed well in advance to accommodate busy industry calendars.

Meetings are open to all interested faculty, staff, administrators, college officials, educational partners, and the general public.

Meal Reimbursement

The CE office will fund lunch for Board of Trustees-approved committee members when meetings are held in-person, at a maximum cost of \$200.00 per meeting. Invoices for payment and receipts for reimbursement must be submitted to the CE office (rsmith@santarosa.edu) for processing.

District regulations do not allow use of CalCards to purchase food. Food purchased with a CalCard will not be paid for by the CE office.

Quorum & Voting

A quorum must be present in order for a meeting to be official and to conduct business. Quorum is defined as 50% +1 of the official Board of Trustees-approved membership.

The voting members of the committee consist of individuals from business, industry, or government who are currently employed in the occupational field or service. All full-time and part-time instructors, counselors, administrators, staff, and current students serve as non-voting consultants.

Proxy voting is allowed. The proxy must not be another voting member or an SRJC employee. Assignment of the proxy must be shown in the minutes.

Subcommittees

Ad hoc subcommittees may be established as needed and disbanded upon completion of their responsibilities. Subcommittees shall report to the full advisory committee.

Agendas & Minutes

Agendas

The agenda must be shared at least two weeks prior to the meeting with all committee members and all stakeholders listed on page 4. Agenda must be developed in consultation with or directed by the committee industry chair.

Agenda items should include:

- Industry updates and employer needs
- Labor market information review (LMI must be less than two years old per state standards)
- Essential knowledge, skills, and abilities for employment
- Work-Based Learning opportunities and programming
- Student success data: program completion, retention, and employment outcomes
- Changing occupational competencies and curriculum trends
- Legislation affecting workforce preparation and development
- Equipment needs
- Follow-up on recommendations and action items from prior meetings
- Committee self-assessment (accomplishments, action items, achievements)

Minutes

The SRJC program coordinator is responsible for preparing minutes of each meeting. Minutes must be submitted to the CE office (rsmith@santarosa.edu) within two weeks following the meeting, along with any food-related invoices or receipts.

Minutes must contain:

- Members in attendance
- Members not present
- Proxies in attendance, noting who they are representing
- Invited guests
- SRJC faculty, staff, and administrators in attendance
- Review of agenda items discussed
- Action items and outcomes
- Record of all recommendations

Effective Meeting Practices

Drawing on best practices from leading community college districts, the following guidance is provided to meeting conveners and facilitators to improve attendance, individual participation, and the quality of input collected.

Before the Meeting

- Establish clear goals and a well-planned agenda — a focused agenda communicates respect for members' time and sets expectations for productive discussion.
- Send notice early: Industry and employer representatives' calendars fill up quickly. Send the meeting notice well in advance and follow up with reminders as the date approaches.
- Research member hiring needs and skills gaps before the meeting to facilitate targeted, meaningful dialogue.

- Conduct a brief pre-meeting survey or virtual check-in with employer partners to understand their current priorities and what they hope to gain from the meeting.
- Assess advisory committee membership levels. Ensure you have sufficient industry representation (5–7 active industry members recommended).
- Identify potential new advisors based on industry needs, existing employer relationships, or through the Workforce Development Board.
- Identify industry and employer representatives to serve as meeting leaders. Meetings are more engaging when facilitated by an industry peer rather than a college representative.
- Distribute the agenda at least two weeks in advance so members come prepared for dialogue.

During the Meeting

- Promote dialogue over strict adherence to the agenda — allow productive discussion even when it goes slightly off-script.
- Value broad and diverse viewpoints. Ensure all committee members have an opportunity to contribute.
- Assign a dedicated note-taker (ideally a non-committee member) so all committee members can fully participate in conversation.
- Avoid placing value judgements on ideas. Create space for innovative thinking.
- Facilitators should introduce topics, turn the floor over to members, and allow for silent pauses while members collect their thoughts.
- Use labor market information (LMI) reports to ask employers for specific examples — bring actual job posting competencies to confirm understanding of employer needs rather than asking open-ended questions.
- Work with employers to review and align existing curriculum: start with employer skills needs and work backwards.

After the Meeting

- Set aside time immediately following the meeting to review notes and send a thank-you message acknowledging specific member contributions.
- Distribute a summary of action items directly following the meeting.
- Document and communicate to employer partners how their feedback has informed program structure or changes.
- Consider creating an action item registry and provide quarterly updates on progress.
- Ask employers to provide feedback about the success of program participants once they are hired.

Build Trust with Your Advisory Committee

- Be open with committee members about both the strengths and weaknesses of your program.
- Share the good data AND the bad data — and ask for help.
- Honesty about what is working and where improvement is needed builds trust and creates space for critical, constructive feedback.
- Recognize that it takes a village: administrative leadership, faculty, and staff all play a role in strengthening these relationships for student success.

Employer Engagement Guide

Formal advisory committee meetings are just one piece of an ongoing relationship. Intentional, strategic conversations are needed to build trust, increase alignment to employer needs, and best prepare students for the workforce. Employer engagement occurs on a continuum from general advising through co-designing and leading programs.

Engaging Employers Before the Meeting

- Research the hiring needs and skills gaps of your industry advisory committee members. Consider using labor market intelligence (LMI) tools (e.g., Lightcast) or reach out to your regional Center of Excellence.
- Send the meeting agenda at least two weeks in advance so members come prepared.
- Gauge the willingness of employer partners to engage strategically outside of formal meetings.
- Identify potential new advisors through existing program relationships, local workforce investment boards, or your Employer Relations Liaison.

Engaging Employers During the Meeting

- Validate and verify employer skills needs — basic, technical/occupational, and soft/employability competencies for entry-level and incumbent workers.
- Request authentic workplace materials, scenarios, and examples from employers to help contextualize instruction.
- Ask employers to identify the credentials they value for occupations in the pathway.
- Ask employers to provide work-based learning experiences for students (job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships).
- Invite employer partners to participate in the job placement process: mock interviews, hiring graduates, assisting with placements at other businesses.
- Ask about company diversity initiatives and how SRJC can partner to meet those goals.
- Ask employers to provide support in the form of in-kind donations, equipment, or scholarships to reduce barriers to student persistence and completion.

Ongoing Engagement Between Meetings

- Provide members with updates on program activities, events, graduation, and news.
- Confirm approved funding based on recommended proposals.
- Solicit feedback: invite members to share job openings, internship opportunities, and changes in the field.
- Document employer recommendations made outside of formal committee meetings via email.
- Establish a program revision schedule to ensure content remains responsive to industry changes.
- Recognize employers for their input, support, and guidance as the program matures.

Maximize Employer Participation

- Treat advisory committee members similarly to nonprofit board members — make specific, meaningful asks.
- If they cannot donate equipment or funds, could they commit to hiring a student, providing an internship, or assisting with a capstone project?

- Provide a variety of ways employers can participate or lend a hand. You don't know unless you ask!
- When students enter the workforce and return to advise your program, celebrate that success — it validates the value of the partnership.

Required Documentation & Compliance

Required Committee Materials

The following materials must be maintained and made available for compliance purposes:

- Membership lists (updated no less than once every two years; must include first and last name and organization)
- Meeting agendas
- Meeting minutes
- Attendance records / evidence of participation (sign-in sheets, electronic records, or recordings)
- Degrees and certificates including course/program descriptions and learning outcomes — accessible to all committee members
- Student data including completions, success, and retention demographics
- Industry Member Responsibilities handout (provided to all members)

California State Requirements

The California Community College Program and Course Approval Handbook (8th Edition) requires:

- All new and modified career education programs must provide evidence of advisory committee recommendations, including committee membership, minutes, and summary of recommendations.
- Advisory committee membership lists must be submitted to the Board of Trustees.

Federal Perkins Requirements

- Advisory committee recommendation for funding proposals and requests (preferred evidence: meeting minutes).
- Evidence of annual meetings (required evidence: agendas and meeting minutes).
- Evidence of participation (required evidence: attendance records, sign-in sheets, voice recordings, or online recordings saved for audit purposes).

State Strong Workforce Program Requirements

- Advisory committee recommendation for proposals and requests for funding (preferred evidence: meeting minutes).

Record Retention

Each institution must identify and document:

- Location and process for electronic and/or hard copy maintenance of committee membership lists
- Location and process for storage of meeting agendas
- Location and process for storage of meeting minutes

Member Recognition & Appreciation

Participation on an SRJC Career Education Industry Advisory Committee is 100% voluntary. Committee members dedicate their time to provide guidance, advice, and industry insight that directly benefits students. Recognizing and appreciating their contributions is essential to building strong, lasting partnerships.

Ways to Honor Advisory Committee Members

- Post committee membership on program pages and the SRJC website
- Share committee member successes and news with the Dean of Career Education and the College’s Public Information Officer
- Send a personal thank-you note or letter of appreciation from the Dean or program coordinator following their service
- Acknowledge specific member contributions within post-meeting thank-you messages
- Highlight advisory committee accomplishments in appropriate college publications or newsletters
- Invite members to graduation and student achievement events
- Provide recognition certificates at the end of a member’s term of service

Contact the Career Education Office

For further assistance with advisory committee processes, membership, or compliance requirements, please contact:

Rachel Smith Director of Workforce Development rsmith@santarosa.edu	Brad Davis Dean of Career Education bdavis@santarosa.edu
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Appendix A – Sample Save-the-Date & Meeting Invitation

Sample Save-the-Date

Subject: SAVE THE DATE — [Program Name] Advisory Committee Meeting

Dear Advisory Member,

This email is to request that you SAVE THE DATE for the next [Program Name] Advisory Committee Meeting.

The [Program Name] Advisory Committee is scheduled to meet on [Date and Time] at [Location]. An agenda, parking permit, and directions will follow. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me.

Thank you for your continued support of our program.

Sample Meeting Invitation (with Agenda, Parking Permit, Map)

Subject: [Program Name] Advisory Committee Meeting — [Date] — Agenda Enclosed

Dear Advisory Member,

We appreciate your ongoing support of our program. The [Program Name] Advisory Committee Meeting will be held on [Date and Time] at [Location]. Attached please find the minutes of the last meeting, agenda, parking permit, and map.

Please RSVP by [Date] so that we can have an accurate count for determining quorum.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me. Thank you.

Appendix B – Meeting Agenda Template

The agenda should be shared at least two weeks prior to the meeting with all committee members and stakeholders.

[Program Name] Advisory Committee Meeting

Date • Time • Location

Purpose: The primary purpose of the local program advisory committee is to assist and provide recommendations to SRJC in establishing, operating, and evaluating programs which serve the needs of students, business and industry, and to provide expertise pertaining to technological and subject matter changes.

Objectives:

- To provide an opportunity for discussion among educators, business, and industry
- To focus on how to improve Career Education (CE) opportunities
- To strive to improve the alignment between CE, business, and industry
- To provide expertise to the program by reviewing curriculum, technology, facilities, budget, student competency, and student placement in related occupations

Time	Topic	Item Type	Responsible Person
	Call to Order		Committee Chair
	Welcome and Introductions		Committee Chair
	Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting	Action	Committee Chair
	Announcements	Informational	All
	Public Comments	Informational	All
	Unfinished Business	Informational / Consent	
	New Business / Discussion	Informational / Consent	All
	Industry Updates	Informational	Industry Members
	Department / Program Updates	Informational	Faculty / Staff
	Labor Market Information Review	Informational	Faculty / Staff
	Work-Based Learning Opportunities	Discussion	All
	Action Items	Consent	Committee Chair
	Next Steps / Wrap-Up	Informational	All
	Adjournment / Next Meeting		Committee Chair

Appendix C – Meeting Minutes Template

Minutes must be submitted to the Career Education office no later than two weeks after the meeting.

Minutes of the [Program Name] Advisory Committee Meeting

Date • Time • Location

Members in attendance:

Members attending as proxy (and who they represent):

Members absent:

Faculty, staff, and administrators in attendance:

Invited guests:

Quorum present: ☐ Yes ☐ No

(If no quorum, no official business shall be performed.)

Call to Order: [Name] called the meeting to order at [Time] a.m./p.m.

Welcome / Introductions

Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting — M/S/P to approve as submitted.

Announcements:

Public Comments:

Unfinished Business:

New Business / Discussion:

Labor Market Information Review:

Work-Based Learning Updates:

Industry Updates:

Department / Program Updates:

Action Items: M/S/P to approve as submitted.

List any action items noted:

Next Steps / Comments / Wrap Up:

Adjournment:

NOTE: The next [Program Name] Advisory Committee meeting will be held [Date].

Appendix D – Industry Member Responsibilities (Handout)

This one-page handout shall be distributed to all advisory committee members at the start of each academic year.

SRJC Career Education Industry Advisory Committee Member Responsibilities

Career Education Industry Advisory Committees play an essential role in ensuring program content, materials, and equipment are aligned with industry needs. The Industry Advisory Committee ensures the bridge from curriculum and student success to industry and employment is strong.

Advisory committee members are expected to be knowledgeable about the program and industry needs, advocate for regular improvements, and advise on all program elements.

You Are Expected To:

- Attend meetings, participate in committee discussions, and serve on subcommittees as appropriate
- Carefully study any problem that comes before the committee prior to committing to a final decision
- Be available for consultation between meetings

Your Primary Responsibilities Include:

Curriculum Content Advisement

- Share insight about the training and skills needed by employers in your field
- Evaluate whether graduates possess the entry-level skills employers expect
- Forecast trends so curriculum can stay current

Career Guidance

- Help design Work-Based Learning opportunities for students
- Sponsor or assist with Career Days, mock interviews, and guest speaking
- Provide insights on internships, externships, mentoring, and apprenticeships

Other Ways to Support

- Advise on equipment and software standards
- Help promote the program in the community to boost enrollment
- Support professional development for CE faculty
- Provide financial, legislative, or moral support where possible

Thank you for your generous contribution of time and expertise. Your involvement directly shapes the futures of our students and the strength of our community's workforce.