

# ctcLink at Highline College

## Frequently Asked Questions

### General Questions

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#### **What is ctcLink?**

ctcLink is the implementation of a single, centralized system of online functions to give faculty, staff and students access to a modern, efficient way of doing their college business. Commonly called an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, ctcLink will provide a set of interconnected software modules to help us streamline and standardize many of the things we do at our college today. The software modules will cover core administrative processes such as registration and course management, financial aid, financial services and human resources.

#### **What is the “ctc” in “ctcLink”?**

The “ctc” stands for community and technical colleges. ctcLink is the name that was chosen for the system replacement (actually running PeopleSoft software) by all of Washington’s community and technical colleges. The project involves more than just new software. As the existing legacy software is replaced with modern technology, colleges will also work to align current business processes, making for streamlined, standardized practices across the 34-college system.

#### **Why is this project necessary?**

The current administrative systems are old and outdated. They were developed in the early 1980s by the Washington community and technical college system, and use database and reporting tools that are no longer supported. These systems have no long-term support options, and are at risk of failing. While we have been able to keep them working this long, it becomes more and more expensive to do so over time, and is not a long-term solution to our needs.

#### **What are the benefits of ctcLink?**

ctcLink will be a massive upgrade for the entire community and technical college (CTC) system. Faculty, staff and students will have access to information from anywhere at any time. Students will use modern online tools for doing their college business, and they’ll have a more common experience across the CTC system, whether they transfer from one college to another or attend two or more CTCs at once. They will have one student ID and use common online tools for everything from admission to graduation. Among many other things, colleges — and the system as a whole — will benefit from a single source for accurate and timely data and the standardization of select administrative processes to support efficiency and effectiveness across the system.

#### **Which legacy software systems are being replaced by ctcLink?**

- **Financial Aid System (FAS/FAM):** The Financial Aid System administers and manages financial aid functions for Washington state community and technical colleges.
- **Financial Management System (FMS):** The Financial Management System administers and manages financial and accounting functions for Washington state community and technical colleges.

- **Payroll/Personnel Management System (PPMS):** The Payroll/Personnel Management System manages the human resources and payroll processing functions required by the colleges and collects the information necessary to manage this large group of employees.
- **Student Management System (SMS):** The Student Management System is used to administer and manage all student and curriculum related business functions for Washington state community and technical colleges.

Some applications that use the data from these back-end systems will also be replaced in the process. These include, but are not limited to, Degree Audit, Instructor Briefcase and TLR (time and leave reporting).

#### **Will we be able to access SMS/FMS/PPMS queries?**

DataExpress/ByRequest functionality will be replaced by PeopleSoft reporting tools. The college will identify and train a core group of users who will work with colleagues at the SBCTC and other colleges to develop these reports. Staff and faculty will be able to run the reports as needed to fulfill their job duties.

#### **How far back will the data in the new ctcLink system go?**

At this point, the plan is for the ctcLink system to include all enrollment data for students who have been actively enrolled during the past three years. Personnel and payroll data will be converted for employees who have been actively employed during the past year. Financial transaction data will be converted for the current fiscal year only. Older data will remain available in the legacy system in a read-only version, and some will be available in a data warehouse.

#### **What happens to the information in the legacy software system (SMS, FMS, etc.) when we Go Live?**

The legacy information will be put into a read-only mode and will be accessible through the legacy software for a time. Staff will be able to access the data, but will not be able to make changes after Go Live. At some point, after all colleges have migrated and the new system is stabilized, the legacy software will be retired, but the historical data will continue to be available (through other avenues) for reporting purposes.

### **Impact to Highline Faculty, Staff and Students**

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#### **When is this transition taking place at Highline?**

This is a very large, very complex project, with 34 institutions and the SBCTC office migrating to the new system. Due to the magnitude of the project, the implementation is happening in phases. Three pilot colleges (FirstLink colleges) have migrated and are continuing to optimize the system's functionality, to be followed by groups of other colleges in staggered phases. As with any project of this size, the exact timelines are somewhat fluid, with frequent review and monitoring. The Highline College ctcLink project team is keeping a close eye on project progress and will communicate timelines for various activities as they become clearer. At this time, it is expected that Highline will be included in the deployment group set to go live in October 2020.

#### **Who will be impacted by this change?**

All faculty, staff and students will be impacted to some degree by the change to the new system.

For some individuals, the impact will be minor and for others, it will change the bulk of their daily work processes.

Notably, everyone who is not already in the ctcLink system will receive a new account, which will require activation and will involve a new ID and password, as well as issuing a new ID card.

### **What tasks will I complete with ctcLink?**

Students will use the new system to

- Register for classes.
- Pay tuition and fees.
- Access unofficial transcripts.
- Review degree progress and more.

Faculty will use the new system to

- Enter grades.
- View earnings information.

Staff will use the new system to

- Submit timesheets.
- Request and report leave.
- Approve timesheets and leave (managers/supervisors).
- Perform a multitude of job-related duties, if applicable, such as register students, run payroll and enter financial transactions.

NOTE: Faculty, staff and students will continue to use their current myHighline username and password to access all campus-based resources, including Canvas, student and employee email, desktop computers in labs and offices, and print services.

### **When will I get my ctcLink account information?**

You will receive account information closer to the Go Live date. A transition team has been formed and will work on a plan to provide a smooth transition and to bolster support to ease us through the process.

### **What if I attend class or work at more than one college?**

The ctcLink system will contain only one account for all of your activities, no matter how many colleges you are associated with. Once you log in, you will be presented with a way to choose which college information you wish to access at that moment.

### **Will there be training on how to use the new system?**

Yes. For many, it will be required. A training plan is in the process of being developed, which will include on-site instructor-led training, online self-paced training, online job aids, learning labs and additional support as needed.

## **Business Process Mapping**

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### **What is business process mapping?**

Business process mapping (BPM) is the first step for us to be prepared to transition to ctcLink. BPM means describing exactly how we do things now in our day-to-day business operations. We

will describe and document the steps in the business processes that are essential parts of the college's work.

BPM is not about how we should be doing them or how we will be doing them in the future.

Some of these business processes include preparing financial reports, tracking student data, and approving time. The college has well over 200 such processes.

BPM will also help us make sure employees have the right security and access roles to do their jobs in the new system.

### **Why is BPM important?**

BPM will help the college in a number of ways. In addition to ensuring a smooth transition to ctcLink, BPM will help us train new staff members, identify redundancies and inefficiencies, and provide a clear understanding of how processes performed in one department impact others, among many other things.

### **Who is involved in BPM?**

There will be approximately 90 people directly involved in BPM on Highline's campus as subject matter experts (SMEs).

People will be chosen to participate because of their roles and expertise on campus. Participation in the BPM process is essential to ensuring the transition to ctcLink goes as smoothly as possible.

Highline has contracted with an experienced outside facilitator to lead and document our mapping process. This will reduce the amount of time that individual staff members spend on BPM.

Participants will attend mapping meetings and answer questions about the processes that their department "owns" or is responsible for.

### **Where Do I Learn More?**

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For information about the statewide ctcLink project, visit the [\*\*SBCTC's ctcLink page\*\*](#).

To find out more about Highline's ctcLink project, visit [\*\*highline.edu/ctcLink\*\*](#).

Send questions, suggestions or comments regarding this project to [\*\*ctcLink@highline.edu\*\*](mailto:ctcLink@highline.edu) or leave a voicemail at (206) 592-4200.