

New Welding Student's Most FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Why choose the Cerritos Welding Program?**

- Cerritos College is the Largest Welding Program in California.
- The Program has an awesome facility with all brand new Miller welding equipment.
- The Program offers 24 different welding classes.
- The Program's instructors are highly qualified and multi-certified.
- The facility is a Los Angeles City Department of Building & Safety Licensed Welding Certification Testing Laboratory and also provides hands on weld testing under American Welding Society codes.
- The Program has instructors that are both American Welding Society Certified Welding Inspectors as well as L.A. City Welding Test Laboratory Managers and Deputy Inspectors.

2. **Can Instructors help register students?**

- No. Instructors have nothing to do with the registration process.
- Students must register themselves at www.cerritos.edu
- The computer controls all aspects of the registration process.
- Instructors have no control over any part of the registration process.
- If an instructor wants to take a class, they can't even help themselves, they must be patient and wait until the computer tells them they can register just like everyone else.
Computers aren't going to take over - They Already Have!!!

3. **Do I need a high school diploma or GED to take welding classes or attend Cerritos?**

- No. You do not need a high school diploma or GED to take welding classes.
- Students may become certified and licensed welders without a high school diploma.

4. **I do not have any experience in welding, what classes should I start with?**

- Students should start the Program by enrolling in WELD 160, WELD 100, WELD 120 or WELD 130.
- See the link titled: **[New Welding Student Information.](#)**

5. **I have some welding experience, what classes should I start with?**

- Regardless of experience, most students must start the Program with WELD 120.
- If you have several years of experience, were previously certified, or have completed an apprenticeship program or another college or trade school program, you may take the following classes that do not have prerequisites. (WELD 149, 159, 220 these are Lecture Only classes)
- WELD 149 – Welding Shop Math
- WELD 159 – Blueprint Reading for Welders
- WELD 220 – Certification & Licensing for Welders
- WELD 120 – Beginning Arc Welding (This is a hands-on laboratory class)
- Because of prerequisites, even experienced students must start the Program with WELD 120. If you have several years of experience and have previously been certified, you may want to speak with a Technology Division Qualified Counselor or the Welding Department Chair, Albert Allen to see if you qualify for a prerequisite waiver. Prerequisite waivers are very rarely issued. Students must provide counselors and or the department chair with transcripts of completed college welding classes and or previous records of welding certifications and licenses. This is a long process and may take several months to make appointments and meet with counselors to possibly get approval for a prerequisite waiver.
- Instructors do not hold students back. If a person with a lot of welding experience takes WELD 120, they could get certified in that class. Students' progress at their own rate.

6. **If I don't get into a class, is there a list I can be put on for the next upcoming semester?**

- No, there are no lists for upcoming semesters.
- The computer will email to your "MyCerritos" account your personal registration date.

7. Is there anything Instructors can do to help with a student's registration?

- No, absolutely nothing.
- F.Y.I., Instructors can't even help themselves get into a class. The computer controls everything.

8. What does it cost to take a welding class?

- The cost of a class depends on how many units the class is.
- Classes are \$46.00 per unit and classes range from 1 to 5 units.
- Students must also pay the following additional fees:
 - Student I.D. fee, health fee, and an optional parking fee.
 - Costs for these additional fees vary per semester.
- Financial Aid is available for students that qualify.
- Contact the Financial Aid Office for more information. (www.cerritos.edu/finaid)
- Welding Instructors cannot help, advise, or answer financial aid questions.

9. What personal equipment do I need to have before starting the Welding Program?

- Students must furnish their own personal safety equipment.
- New students will need approximately \$120 to \$200 worth of personal welding equipment.
- This equipment will be usable for several years.
- Instructors will give each student a list of equipment needed at the first class meeting.
- Students will need all equipment by the start of the second week of the semester.
- See link titled: **[New Students Equipment List](#)**

10. Do students have to pay a laboratory fee?

- Yes, every laboratory class in the Welding Program has a lab fee.
- Laboratory fees are \$100 per class.
- What is covered by the laboratory fees?

Newest and most advanced technology welding machines in the industry, high tech fabrication equipment, electricity, all welding and cutting gases (oxygen, acetylene, argon, helium, carbon dioxide, and propylene), all metals required for laboratory projects (steel, aluminum, stainless steel, plate, angle iron, channel, and pipe), and all welding electrodes (AAC electrodes, SMAW electrodes, FCAW electrodes, GMAW electrodes, GTAW electrodes).

- What is NOT covered by the laboratory fees?

Students must purchase their own Personal Protective Equipment (Flame resistant clothing, safety glasses, gloves, welding hood / clear lens, hard leather safety boots, etc.

11. Should a New Student buy their text books before the first day of class?

- No, never buy text books before attending the first day of class.
- Instructors will give each student a syllabus with the required text books and or reference books if required. The majority of welding classes do not require text books.
- Some books can be purchased online or thru the American Welding Society at a discount.
- Used books may also be purchased from other students or former students.
- Most welding classes use a specialized handout curriculum package in place of a traditional text book.

12. Do students need all of their personal welding equipment on the first day of the semester?

- No, the first week of school is dedicated to orientation and safety.
- Students should bring safety glasses and gloves the first week.
- Instructors will give safety demonstrations on metal sheers, iron workers, and grinders.
- Intermediate and advanced students may cut and shear metal at the end of week one.

13. Do students get to weld during the first week of the semester?

- No, there is no welding during the first week of school.
- The entire first week is dedicated to safety handouts, safety lectures, and live demonstrations.

14. If I don't get into a welding class what are my options?

What other classes will help me with my welding career?

- Try to get into any class you can. This will give you earlier registration for the next semester.
- The Welding Department recommends that you take the following Technology Division classes, which are also very helpful for welding students and will help advanced your welding career and earning potential. These classes are recommended for all welding students. Just like students in other Technology Programs should cross train themselves by taking at least Weld 100 in the Welding Department.
- If all welding classes are full take one of these fun classes:
 - Machine Tool Technology-----MTT 100 Setup and Operation of Manual Machines
 - Machine Tool Technology-----MTT 52 Setup and Operation on CNC Mills
 - Machine Tool Technology-----MTT 56 Setup and Operation on CNC Lathes
 - Engineering Design Technology----ENGT 131 Design Fundamentals Including Auto CAD
 - Engineering Design Technology----ENGT 138 Auto CAD – Computer Aided Drafting

15. What type of welding classes does Cerritos offer?

- Cerritos College offers classes and certifications in the most commonly used welding processes.
- Please see link titled: [**Welding Certification Road Map**](#) for a listing of welding classes.
- Please see link titled: [**Welding Class Descriptions**](#) for details on each class.
- Cerritos College offers the following special classes that are not offered at other colleges:
 - WELD 149 – Welding Shop Math
 - WELD 159 – Blueprint Reading
 - WELD 160 – Welding and Metal Fabrication Safety
 - WELD 153 – Pipe Layout
 - WELD 170 – Structural Fabrication
 - WELD 172 – Advanced Structural Fabrication
 - WELD 220 – Certification and Licensing for Welders

16. What type of welding certifications does Cerritos College offer?

- Cerritos College offers over a dozen different certifications.
- The most common and most important certification is the L.A. City Structural Certification And License.
 1. See link titled: [**Welding Certification Road Map**](#)
 2. See link titled: [**Welding Test Laboratory Information**](#)

17. How long does it take to become a certified welder?

- A person starting the Welding Program with no previous welding experience can normally get certified in 3 to 4 semesters.
- Classes required to get certified include: WELD 120, 200, 210L, 220.

18. What is the difference between a certified welder and a licensed welder?

- A certified welder has successfully passed a hands-on performance welding test.
- Certification tests are given with specific welding processes, metal alloys, metal thicknesses, joint designs, positions, and materials like structural steel plate or pipe.
- A licensed welder is a person that has passed a hands-on welding test and has also passed a written exam.
- The most common welding license is the L.A. City Structural Steel Welding License.
- The Welding Program has classes to prepare students to successfully pass both types of tests.

19. How much do welders make an hour?

- A welder with limited experience and no certification will earn a pay rate of \$15+ per hour.
- A certified and licensed welder makes approximately \$20+ per hour.
- A multi-certified and licensed welder with blueprint reading skills and fabrication experience can earn \$20 to \$40 per hour.
- Certified Journey Level Union Welders can earn approximately \$50+ per hour.
- Some Program Graduates that are rig welders or self-employed earn \$65 to \$95 per hour.

20. How many classes must a student complete before they are likely to get a welding job?

- Some students can find a job after completing 3 to 4 classes. These are normally lower paying jobs in the \$10 to \$15 per hour range.
- Students that want to earn \$20 to \$48 per hour will need to take numerous classes and obtain multiple certifications. Just like in many types of careers and industries, a person's pay rate depends on education, certifications, and experience.
- The more you learn directly translates into how much you will earn.

21. If I want to make the most money as a welder, what should I do?

- Get as many certifications as you can.
- Learn skills in blueprint reading, shop math, and fabrication.
- Diversify by taking as many welding classes as possible.
- Diversify by taking Machine Tool Technology class MTT 100 and or an Engineering Design Technology class like ENGT 138 – which is a computer aided drafting class.
- Cross train to learn how to perform structural, aerospace, fabrication, and pipe welding.
- After you get certified in structural steel, continue your education and get certified in pipe.
- If you really want to be the best of the best – take all 24 welding classes offered at Cerritos.

22. How does a person become a certified pipe welder?

- Pipe welding requires some of the most advanced skills in the welding industry. For this reason, only students that have completed WELD 120, 200, 210L, 212L, and have obtained a structural steel certification, may take the WELD 252L Pipe Welding Level 1 and WELD 254L Pipe Welding Level 2.
- Pipe welding requires advanced skills that take years to develop. Pipe welders are like the heart surgeons of the welding industry and that is why pipe welders often earn over \$100,000 per year.

23. If I become certified, what companies would want to hire me?

- Graduates of the Welding Program work in many industries and with a variety of companies, unions, and city & state agencies including:
- Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (F.Y.I., these pipe welders all make over 100K per year)
- The Gas Company, Metropolitan Water District, Edison Power Company
- Honeywell and Boeing Aerospace Companies
- Disneyland, Magic Mountain, and Knott's Berry Farm
- Arco, Shell, Chevron, British Petroleum, Mobil, Union 76 etc.
- Government Organizations, City, County, State, and Municipalities.
- Local Unions, including: Iron Workers, Steam Fitters, Elevators, Pile Drivers, Mill Wrights, Electrical Union, Glaziers, Plumbers, and Boiler Makers, etc.
- See the Link on the Welding Website Title: Career Opportunities in the Welding Industry.

24. Does the Welding Program help students find and or get jobs?

- The Department is constantly being contacted by companies, unions, and organizations wanting to hire students & welders. When contacted, the Department posts these job opportunities and makes them available to all students.
- The Department cannot refer or recommend individuals students.
- The Department legally cannot write "Letters of Recommendation", "Resumes", or be used as a "Reference for Employment".
- When job offers come into the Department they are posted and it is up to students to pursue the opportunity independently. Students with the required qualifications and certifications must apply for and compete for the job.
- The Program has developed dozens of great relationships with companies, unions, and the local industry, all of which now rely on Cerritos to continually supply them with new certified welders.
- Successful students often find employment opportunities and start their welding careers each semester through these industry contacts and relationships.
- See the link on the welding website titled: **Welders Wanted - Position Announcement Form.**

25. Which industry hires the most welders?

- We are lucky to live in Southern California, because there are more welding career opportunities in California than in any other state. For example: Aerospace, Construction, Medical Industry, Petrochemical Industry, Oil, Gas, Power, Transportation, Recreation, Maintenance, Military, Shipyards, Naval Shipyards, Utilities, and numerous types of metal fabrication companies and the list goes on. The State of California is the World's 5th largest economy.