

Coast Community College District
BOARD POLICY
Chapter 4
Academic Affairs

BP 4025 Philosophy and Criteria for Associate Degree and General Education

References:

Education Code Section 78213;
Title 5 Sections 55060 and 55061;
ACCJC Accreditation Standard 2.3

Courses that are designated to fulfill the general education and depth requirements shall meet the following philosophy.

The Associate Degree provides a framework within which students complete patterns of learning experiences designed to develop capabilities and insights to support their academic and career goals. Among these capabilities and insights are competencies that are germane to all aspects of higher education and comprise a “general education” curriculum, such as the ability to think critically and to communicate clearly and effectively both orally and in writing, to use quantitative reasoning, understand the modes of inquiry of the major disciplines, to be aware of other cultures and times, to achieve insights gained through experience in thinking about ethical problems, and to develop the capacity for self-understanding.

In addition to these accomplishments, the student shall possess sufficient depth in some field of knowledge to contribute to lifetime interest.

Furthermore, general education is designed to introduce students to the variety of means through which people comprehend the modern world. It reflects the conviction of colleges that those who receive their degrees must have mastered principles, concepts, and methodologies both unique to and shared by the various disciplines. A general education program should create coherence and integration among the separate requirements and involve students actively in examining values inherent in proposed solutions to major societal problems. College educated persons must be able to use this knowledge when evaluating and appreciating the physical environment, the culture, and the society in which they live. Most important, general education should lead to a better understanding of the environment, culture, and society.

The Board will approve only those Associate degrees that meet the course requirements set forth in Title 5 Section 55061.

Each College shall maintain a current listing of general education and discipline major requirements for the Associate in Arts (AA)/Associate in Science (AS) degrees and make them available in their respective College catalog and schedule of classes. All changes to the general education and discipline major requirements and to the AA/AS degrees shall be submitted by each College's Curriculum Committee for review and approval by the Board.

The Chancellor shall establish procedures to assure that courses used to meet general education and Associate degree requirements meet the standards in this Policy. The procedures shall provide for appropriate Academic Senate involvement.

Associate Degree Requirements

Associate degrees that meet the following requirements will be eligible for inclusion in the College catalogs:

- (a) A minimum of 60 semester units of degree-applicable lower division credit courses, including courses that apply to the major or area of emphasis in career technical fields and courses in composition, reading, and mathematics or quantitative reasoning not more than one level below transfer. Below transfer level course requirements must align with Education Code Section 78213.
- (b) A minimum of 18 semester units focused study in a major or interdisciplinary area of emphasis.
 - (1) A "major" is a focused program of study within a specific discipline, which may include some coursework outside the primary discipline. Programs designed to provide transfer preparation must be designed to meet specific lower-division requirements in comparable baccalaureate majors.
 - (2) An "area of emphasis" is an interdisciplinary program of study encompassing a broad range of courses from multiple related academic disciplines, providing the student with an academic pathway broader than a specific major but more focused than general education.
- (c) A minimum of 21 semester units of general education.
- (d) "Integrative baccalaureate-level courses" draw broad connections between multiple perspectives and methodologies and demonstrate relationships within or between disciplines.

General Education Requirements

Courses considered for inclusion in general education must align with the following minimum areas:

- (1) English Composition, Oral Communication, and Critical Thinking (minimum of 6 semester units) including:
 - (A) English Composition (minimum of 3 semester units). Courses fulfilling this requirement must be baccalaureate-level and include expository and argumentative writing.

- (B) Oral Communication and Critical Thinking (minimum of 3 semester units). Courses fulfilling this requirement must be baccalaureate-level and may include oral communication and critical thinking courses.
- (2) Mathematical Concepts and Quantitative Reasoning (minimum of 3 semester units). Courses fulfilling this requirement must be at least college-level and may include mathematics or quantitative reasoning courses, including logic, statistics, computer languages, and related disciplines.
- (3) Arts and Humanities (minimum of 3 semester units). Courses in the humanities study the cultural activities and artistic expressions of human beings. Such courses develop students' awareness of how people throughout the ages and in different cultures respond to themselves and the world around them in artistic and cultural creation, and develop students' aesthetic understandings and abilities to make value judgments. Courses fulfilling this requirement may include introductory or integrative baccalaureate-level courses in the visual and performing arts, art history, foreign languages, literature, philosophy, religion, and related disciplines.
- (4) Social and Behavioral Sciences (minimum of 3 semester units). Courses in the social and behavioral sciences focus on people as members of society and develop awareness of the methods of inquiry used by the social and behavioral sciences. They stimulate critical thinking about how people act and have acted in response to their societies and promote appreciation of how societies and social subgroups operate. Courses fulfilling this requirement may include introductory or integrative baccalaureate-level courses in cultural anthropology, cultural geography, economics, history, political science, psychology, sociology, and related disciplines.
- (5) Natural Sciences (minimum of 3 semester units). Courses in the natural sciences examine the physical universe, its life forms, and its natural phenomena, helping students appreciate and understand the scientific method and the relationships between science and other human activities. Courses fulfilling this requirement may include introductory or integrative baccalaureate-level courses in astronomy, biology, chemistry, general physical science, geology, meteorology, oceanography, physical geography, physical anthropology, physics, and other scientific disciplines.
- (6) Ethnic Studies (minimum of 3 semester units). Courses fulfilling this requirement may include baccalaureate-level courses in the four autonomous disciplines within Ethnic Studies: Black Studies; African American Studies; Africana Studies; Native American Studies; Chicano/a/x; Latino/a/x Studies/La Raza Studies; and Asian American Studies.

The general education requirements for the California State University system (CSU GE) and the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) should be published in each College's catalog and schedule of classes.

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