

Proposed Associate Degree Regulatory Revisions
(approved by SC March 25, 2022)

§ 55060. Philosophy and Criteria for Associate Degree and General Education

(a) District governing boards shall adopt and maintain a policy which states their goals for offering associate degrees and their specific philosophy on general education. In developing this policy governing boards shall consider the following policy of the Board of Governors:

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 apply quantitative reasoning, to 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.

Furthermore, general education introduces 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 social problems.

(b) District governing boards shall establish criteria to determine which courses may be used to implement its goals for the associate degree and its philosophy of general education.

§55061. General Education Areas of Study

The associate degree requires a minimum of 18 semester units (27 quarter units) of general education coursework in the areas described in this section.

(a) Natural Sciences. Minimum of 3 semester units (4 quarter 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. This category includes introductory or integrative courses in astronomy, biology, chemistry, general physical science, geology, meteorology, oceanography, physical geography, physical anthropology, physics, and other scientific disciplines.

(b) Social and Behavioral Sciences. Minimum of 3 semester units (4 quarter 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 the ways people act and have acted in response to their societies, and promote appreciation of how societies and social subgroups operate. This category includes introductory or integrative survey courses in cultural anthropology, cultural geography, economics, history, political science, psychology, sociology, and related disciplines.

(c) Humanities. Minimum of 3 semester units (4 quarter units). Courses in the humanities study the cultural activities and artistic expressions of human beings. Such courses develop the student's awareness of the ways in which people throughout the ages, and in different cultures, respond to themselves and the world around them in artistic and cultural creation, and develop aesthetic understanding and an ability to make value judgments. This includes courses in introductory or integrative courses in the visual and performing arts, art history, foreign languages, literature, philosophy, religion and related disciplines.

(d) Language and Rationality. Minimum of 6 semester units (8 quarter units). Courses in language and rationality develop the principles and applications of language toward logical thought, clear and precise expression, and critical evaluation of communication in whatever symbol system the student uses. This includes courses in both English Composition, and Communication and Analytical Thinking as follows:

(1) English Composition. Minimum of 3 semester units (4 quarter units). Courses fulfilling the written composition requirement include both expository and argumentative writing, and may be taught in disciplines including, but not limited to, English, and English as a Second Language.

(2) Communication and Analytical Thinking. Minimum of 3 semester units (4 quarter units). Courses fulfilling the communication and analytical thinking requirement include, but are not limited to, oral communication, mathematics, and quantitative reasoning courses such as logic, statistics, computer languages, programming, and related disciplines.

(e) Districts may establish additional general education requirements not inconsistent with this subchapter 1.

§55062. Associate Degree Approval.

California community colleges are authorized to grant associate in arts and associate in science degrees. Associate degrees approved by district governing boards must conform to the following requirements:

(a) Completion of at least 60 semester units (90 quarter units) of degree applicable courses, which include:

(1) all transferable lower division courses; and

(2) non-transferable courses that apply to the major or area of emphasis in non-baccalaureate career technical fields; including composition, reading, and mathematics courses not more than one level below transfer;

(b) Satisfactory completion of at least 18 semester units (27 quarter units) of 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 course work from outside of 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, which provides the student with an academic pathway that is broader than a specific major, but more focused than general education.

(c) Completion of at least 18 semester units (27 quarter units) of general education.

(d) In addition to completing a major or area of emphasis and a pattern of general education, the governing board of a community college shall also require that students demonstrate competence in reading, written expression, and quantitative reasoning, and satisfactory completion of a course in ethnic studies, as follows:

(1) Satisfactory completion of a course in writing at or above the level of the course typically known as college Composition. This requirement may also be met by satisfactory completion of a writing course at a level at least equivalent to the course typically known as College Composition taught in another department or discipline, or by demonstrating competency that is comparable to satisfactory completion of a specified writing course. The equivalence of writing coursework, and the methods of demonstrating comparable competency in written expression are determined by the district.

(2) Satisfactory completion of a quantitative reasoning course at or above the level of the course typically known as Intermediate Algebra. This requirement may also be met by satisfactory completion of a quantitative reasoning course at a level at least equivalent to the course typically known as Intermediate Algebra taught in another department or discipline, or by demonstrating competency that is comparable to satisfactory completion of a specified quantitative reasoning course at or above the level of the course typically known as Intermediate Algebra. The equivalence of quantitative reasoning coursework, and the method of demonstrating comparable competency in quantitative reasoning are determined by the district.

(3) Requirements for demonstrating competency in reading shall be locally determined.

(e) Satisfactory completion of a baccalaureate level course in ethnic studies of at least 3 semester units (4 quarter units). This requirement may be satisfied by completing a course in ethnic studies taught in, or on behalf of, other departments and disciplines.

(f) For the purposes of this article 6, "completion" means the receipt of credit in a course; and "satisfactory completion" means earning a grade of "P" on a pass-no pass basis, or a grade of "C" or better.

§55063. Student Completion of Associate Degree Requirements.

(a) District governing boards shall confer the associate degree upon a student who has met all associate degree requirements and the following conditions:

(1) completion of at least 12 semester (18 quarter units) in residence at the degree-granting college, unless the governing board excuses this requirement to alleviate injustice or undue hardship;

(2) satisfactory completion of each course counted toward the major or area of emphasis requirement with a grade of "C" or better, or of "P" if the course is taken on a "pass-no pass" basis; and

(3) completion with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 in the degree-applicable courses. If units accumulated beyond those required for the degree lower a student's cumulative grade point average below 2.0, colleges shall compute the grade point average based solely on those courses used to satisfy the degree requirements.

(b) Courses that meet or exceed the standards of the California Community Colleges completed at other accredited institutions shall be counted toward associate degree unit requirements.

(c) Courses may meet multiple requirements, including general education, a major or area of emphasis, and additional requirements stated in section 55062, when courses are locally approved to meet multiple requirements. However, one course may not be counted for more than one general education area even if the course is approved in multiple general education areas. Students may use the same course to meet a general education requirement and to satisfy a general education requirement at the California State University or the University of California, if the course is accepted by that segment for this purpose.

(d) Students may seek to receive credit for knowledge or skills acquired through a district's procedures for awarding credit for prior learning, adopted pursuant to section 55050.