



Book	VCCCD Administrative Procedure Manual
Section	Chapter 4 Academic Affairs
Title	AP 4100 Graduation Requirements for Degrees and Certificates
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As authorized by the California Code of Regulations, Title 5 (Education) section 55063 (credit coursework) and Title 5 section 55150 (noncredit coursework), the Ventura County Community College District (VCCCD) Governing Board confers the Associate in Arts degree, the Associate in Science degree, Associate in Arts for Transfer (AA-T) degree, the Associate in Science for Transfer (AS-T) degree, the Associate in Arts for UC Transfer (AA-UCTP) degree, the Associate in Science for UC Transfer (AS-UCTP) degree, Certificates of Achievement, Proficiency Awards (Title 5 section 55070), Certificates of Completion and Certificates of Competency (Title 5 section 55072) to students who:

1. provide required transcripts from any institutions attended, and
2. satisfy the respective major and/or area of emphasis requirements listed in this administrative procedure and the college catalog, and
3. for Associate degrees, satisfy the General Education (GE) requirements set forth by Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations to include the VCCCD GE, CSU GE Breadth, CSU GE Breadth for STEM, IGETC, IGETC for STEM, and GE pattern for intended transfer institution, and

4. file with the appropriate college office an application for a degree and/or Certificates of Achievement, and/or Proficiency Award.

Only those courses which have been designated as appropriate to the associate degree in accordance with Title 5, section 55062 and that meet the standards and criteria described in Title 5 section 55002, Title 5 section 55002.5, and Title 5 section 55064 and have been properly approved pursuant to this section, shall be applied to any degree or credit certificate awarded by the district. Degree-applicable credit courses completed at regionally accredited institutions other than a California community college are expected to meet or exceed the same standards of section 55002(a). District policies and procedures regarding general education and program requirements must be published in the college catalog (Title 5 section 55060) and courses and programs, with the exception of Proficiency Awards, must be chaptered or approved by the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO).

Graduation Requirements for Degrees, Certificates, and Proficiency Awards of the District Colleges must include the following:

#### Associate Degrees

For the Associate in Arts (AA) or Associate in Science (AS) degree, a student must:

- Demonstrate competency in reading, in written expression, and in mathematics as defined in Title 5 section 55063 for the appropriate catalog year.
- Satisfactorily complete at least 60-semester units of degree-applicable college credit coursework (as defined in section 55002(a)).
- Complete a minimum of 18 semester (or 27 quarter) units in a major or an area of emphasis selected by the community college. All courses in the major or area of emphasis must be completed with a grade of "C" or better or "P" if the course is taken on a "pass-no-pass" basis (Title 5, Section 55063).
- Complete the required specified subjects and units in general education as defined in AP 4025.
- Achieve a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or better in degree-applicable college credit coursework.
- Complete a minimum of 12 semester units in residence at the college granting the degree. Exceptions to the residence requirement can be made by the Board when an injustice or undue hardship would be placed on the student.

#### Associate Degree for Transfer

Pursuant to the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act, to obtain the Associate in Arts for Transfer (AA-T) or the Associate in Science for Transfer (AS-T) degree, students must meet the following requirements:

- Complete a minimum of 60 semester units or 90 quarter units that are eligible for transfer to the California State University (CSU), including both of the following:
  - A. The Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) or the California State University General Education-Breadth (CSU GE-B) Requirements.
  - B. A minimum of 18-semester units or 27 quarter units in a major or area of emphasis, as determined by the community college district. All courses in the major or area of emphasis must be completed with a grade of "C" or better or "P" if the course is taken on a "pass-no-pass" basis (Title 5, 55063). Even though a "pass-no-pass" is allowed, it is recommended that students complete their major courses with a letter grade (A, B, or C)
- Earn a minimum overall grade point average of 2.0 in all CSU transferable coursework.
- Complete a minimum of 12 semester units in residence at the college granting the degree.

#### University of California Transfer Pattern

In an effort to provide and enhance the transfer route to a four-year degree and to ensure timely degree completion, the University of California Transfer Pattern (UCTP) are pilot programs created jointly by the California Community College (CCC) and the University of California (UC), commencing in 2019-2020 academic year.

The students that earn these degrees have completed the lower division preparation in the specified major, met the specified requirements as stated in the Transfer Agreement Guarantee (TAG) for the available school and have a minimum grade point average of 3.5 in the major, are guaranteed admission to the participated UC and should be able to graduate within two years attending full time status. Similar to the Associate Degrees for Transfer created for the CSU system, guaranteed admission is to the system, not an individual campus. The Associate degree for UC Transfer are not subject to the limitations set forth by SB 1440/SB 440.

#### Certificate of Achievement (Title 5 section 55070)

For a Certificate of Achievement (COA), a student must successfully complete a sequence of courses approved by the CCCCCO and that consists of 16 or more semester units of degree-applicable credit coursework. The COA shall be designed to demonstrate that the student has completed coursework and developed capabilities relating to career or general education. Certificate programs may also be approved for fewer units (a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 15.5 semester units of degree-applicable credit coursework), in this case, the same scholarship and residence standards would apply.

To earn a Certificate of Achievement, a student must:

- Complete all COA applicable major coursework, a minimum of 16 semester units (or between 8 and 15.5 units in a low-unit certificate), prescribed in a State Chancellor's Office approved Certificate of Achievement with a grade of "C" or better or a "P" (formerly "CR") in each course.
- Achieve a cumulative GPA of no less than 2.0 in all COA-applicable college coursework.

#### Proficiency Awards

Proficiency awards (PA) are programs with fewer than 16 semester units and are Board approved. Content and assessment standards for Proficiency Awards shall ensure that these programs are consistent with the District Colleges' mission, meet a demonstrated need that leads to employability, are feasible, and adhere to guidelines on academic achievement. Proficiency Awards cannot be memorialized on a student transcript because they are not approved by the CCCCCO.

For a Proficiency Award, a student must complete all applicable coursework in a Ventura County Community College District (VCCCD) Board approved Proficiency Award with a grade of "C" or better or "P" (formerly "CR") in each course.

#### Noncredit: Certificates of Completion and Certificates of Competency for Career Development and College Preparation (Title 5 section 55151)

1. Certificate of Competency: Pursuant to Title 5 section 55151 Colleges may offer a sequence of noncredit courses that culminate in a Certificate of Competency, a certificate in a recognized career field articulated with degree-applicable coursework, completion of an associate degree, or transfer to a baccalaureate institution. For students completing noncredit courses in a prescribed pathway, approved by the Chancellor's Office, that prepares students to take credit coursework including basic skills and ESL, a Certificate of Competency may be awarded. A noncredit Certificate of Competency means a document confirming that a student enrolled in a noncredit educational program of noncredit courses has demonstrated achievement in a set of competencies that prepares students to progress in a career path or to undertake degree-applicable or nondegree-applicable credit courses. The Certificate of Competency must include the name of the certificate and the date awarded, be identified by a TOP Code number and program discipline, and list the relevant competencies achieved by the student.
2. Certificate of Completion: Pursuant to Title 5 section 55151, colleges may offer a sequence of noncredit courses that culminate in a Certificate of Completion, a certificate leading to improved employability or job opportunities. For students completing noncredit courses in a prescribed pathway approved by the Chancellor's Office, leading to improved employability or job opportunities, a Certificate of Completion may be awarded. A noncredit Certificate of Completion means a document confirming that a student has completed a noncredit educational program of noncredit courses that prepares students to progress in a career path or to take degree-applicable credit courses. The Certificate of Completion must include the name of the certificate and the date awarded, be identified by a TOP Code number and program discipline, identify the goal of the program, and list the courses completed by the student.

For a Certificate of Completion and Certificate of Competency, a student must:

- Complete all applicable noncredit major coursework, as prescribed in the District College catalog with a passing grade of "C" or better or "P".
- Complete a minimum number of required hours, as prescribed in the District College catalog at the District College granting the Certificate of Competency or Certificate of Completion.

#### Graduation Application Procedure

1. Students must file a petition for a degree and/or a certificate, and/or a Proficiency Award through the appropriate college office granting the degree and/or certificate.
2. District Colleges offer three graduation dates: fall semester, spring semester, and summer term.
3. Graduation ceremonies are conducted at the end of the spring semester.
4. Graduation petition deadline dates are locally announced at each District College.

#### Course Substitution for Major and/or General Education Requirements

Occasionally, a student may have difficulty in completing exact major and/or general education requirements as specified in the college catalog due to circumstances of class schedule conflicts, class cancellation, related but nonequivalent coursework taken outside of this college district, or circumstances beyond the control of the student. Under such circumstances, a student may file a Petition for Course Substitution/Petition for Variance for Major and/or General Education Requirements to seek approval from the appropriate college officials to substitute one or more courses in a designated major, an area of emphasis, and/or in general education. The petition forms are available in the Counseling Office/Center.

#### Reciprocity for Local General Education Requirements

Colleges shall apply courses taken at other regionally accredited colleges or universities toward general education requirements in the areas where the student would have received credit at the institution where they were originally taken, or in the area where the college granting the degree places, or meets our GE criteria/description, or would place a comparable course, whichever best facilitates the student's degree completion. (ASCCC Resolution 09.02 spring 2010)

### Reciprocity for CSU GE-Breadth or Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) Requirements

Students who are required to complete CSU GE-Breadth or IGETC for their particular degree, such as General Studies Patterns II/ III, or Associate Degrees for Transfer, shall have their courses evaluated for reciprocity according to the rules set forth by either Executive Order (EO) 1065, EO 1100 Revised, or in the most recent version of the IGETC Standards.

### Course Substitution within approved Associate Degree for Transfer (AA-T/AS-T)

While the C-ID system establishes course-to-course reciprocity, where C-ID descriptors are not in place or where the substitution does not involve deeming two courses comparable, substitution decisions must be informed by the judgment of counseling faculty or discipline faculty. When an AA-T or AS-T degree is being conferred, any substitutions made must result in the awarding of a degree that is consistent with the parameters defined by the Transfer Model Curriculum (TMC). The colleges are encouraged to apply courses successfully completed as part of a TMC-aligned degree at one college for requirements within their own degrees to the greatest extent deemed possible and reasonable, but substitutions should only be made in instances where the TMC allows flexibility, as the local AA-T or AS-T degree awarded must remain consistent with parameters of the TMC for the specific discipline. (ASCCC Resolution 15.01 Spring 2011 and ASCCC Statements on Reciprocity, Course Substitution, and Credit by Exam - in light of AA-T and AS-T degrees September 2013, and [ADT Substitution Guidelines with Scenarios](#)).

### Double Counting for Credit Course

While a course might satisfy more than one general education requirement, it may not be counted more than once for these purposes within areas A- through D of the District general education pattern(s). A course may not satisfy more than one requirement within a major and/or area of emphasis, even if it is an option in more than one section of either a major and/or an area of emphasis. However, a course may be used to satisfy both a general education requirement and a major or an area of emphasis requirement. A credit course may also be used to satisfy requirements in two (2) or more different majors, whether for an Associate degree, Associate degree for Transfer, Certificate of Achievement, or Proficiency Award. The units, however, may never be counted more than once toward the units required for the specific degree, certificate, or proficiency award.

### Double Counting for a Noncredit Course

If a noncredit course is prescribed in more than one Certificate of Completion program, it may also be double counted to satisfy requirements in two (2) or more different Certificate of Competency or Certificate of Completion programs.

### Catalog Rights/Continuous Enrollment

A student remaining in continuous enrollment at one or more of the colleges of the Ventura County Community College District (VCCCD) or at any other regionally accredited college or university, may meet the VCCCD graduation requirements in effect at the time of his/her entering or at any time thereafter. This applies only to graduation requirements and not to policies, procedures, or other regulations. Catalog rights/continuous enrollment are defined as attendance in at least one term each calendar year. Any academic record symbol entered on a transcript (A-F, CRE, P, NP, SP, I, IP, RD, W, MW, EW and prior to fall 2009: CR and NC) shall constitute enrollment or attendance.

A student who has not maintained continuous enrollment is considered to be under new requirements when returning unless the student is granted a petition/waiver for extenuating circumstances. This petition must be initiated by the student through a college counselor and approved by the appropriate dean or designee.

Students should be made aware that other governing agencies may impose more restrictive limitations concerning the definitions of continuous enrollment or continuous attendance. Some agencies define continuous enrollment as remaining in attendance both fall and spring semesters. Some will not accept selected academic record symbols (such as Ws). Those who may be affected by more restrictive guidelines include students receiving financial aid, veterans and alien students.

### Academic Year

The fall semester is the first term of an academic year. A summer term, whether one or more sessions, constitutes the last term of an academic year.

### Guidelines for Additional Degrees, Certificates of Achievement, and Proficiency Awards

Any District College will award additional associate degrees, associate degrees for transfer, certificates of achievement, and proficiency awards, certificates of completion, and certificates of competency to students under certain criteria which follow below. Students seeking an associate degree(s) and who have a previous degree from regionally accredited institution will only be required to complete (1) residence, (2) competency, (3) general education minimum Title 5 requirements, (4) major, and (5) scholarship requirements. There will be no additional local GE or health/PE requirements (see below).

### U.S. Degree

A student who has earned an associate degree or higher at any regionally accredited institution in the United States may earn additional associate degrees. Institutions must be regionally accredited by one of the following accrediting bodies:

- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Higher Education
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Technical and Career Institutions
- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, The Higher Learning Commission
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior College
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities.

#### Foreign Degree

A student who already holds an associate degree or higher degree from any foreign institution accredited by one of the above accepted regionally U.S. accrediting bodies, or evaluated as equivalent to a regionally accredited institution by one of the member agencies of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services, or one approved by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing may also earn additional degrees at one of the colleges of the VCCCD.

Students with transcripts in either of the above categories must complete the following minimum Title 5 requirements for the catalog year covering the additional degree(s). These include:

- Residence requirements: Students must complete a minimum of 12-semester units at the community college granting the degree.
- Competency requirements in reading, written expression, and mathematics as defined by Title 5 section 55063. Students pursuing an AA-T or AS-T will have met these competency requirements by completion of either CSU GE-Breadth or IGETC.
- General Education: Title 5 minimums include 18 units of General Education with:
  - 3 semester units of Natural Sciences
  - 3 semester units of Social and Behavioral Sciences
  - 3 semester units of Arts and Humanities
  - 3 semester units in English Composition
  - 3 semester units in Communication and Analytical Thinking
  - 3 additional semester units in one of the five areas above.
- Major Requirements: Students must complete all required courses listed in the college catalog for the appropriate year for the specific major, Associate Degree for Transfer, area of emphasis or area of option for the additional degree(s).
- Scholarship: Students must meet the standards of scholarship in effect for the catalog year covering the additional degree(s) including the following:
  - Courses for Associate degree majors must have a grade of "C" or better or "P" beginning fall 2009.
  - Courses for Certificates of Achievement must have a grade of "C" or better or "P", beginning fall 2012.
  - Courses for Proficiency Awards must have a grade of "C" or better or "P", beginning fall 2012.

An additional degree can be in a specific major, General Studies with an area of emphasis, an Associate Degree for Transfer, or an additional option or emphasis within the major of the original degree.

Coursework taken for previously earned degrees may be used to fulfill the above requirements if deemed comparable by a counseling faculty and/or discipline faculty.

No additional general education or local graduation requirements may be required.

#### Exception to Requirements for Students in Nursing Programs

Nursing students who are admitted into the Nursing Program at a District College and who have already earned a baccalaureate or higher degree from a domestic regionally accredited institution of higher education are not required to take additional general education or local graduation requirements to earn an associate degree in Nursing per section 66055.8 of the Education Code.

#### Guidelines for Noncredit Certificate of Completion or Certificate of Competency

Any District College will award additional certificate of completion or certificate of competency to students under certain criteria which follow below. Students who have completed prior noncredit courses from other regionally accredited institutions will only be required to complete the remaining noncredit coursework and the attendance hours as prescribed within the program. A counseling faculty or a discipline faculty will use their best judgment to determine the comparability of the previously completed coursework.

Institutions must be regionally accredited by one of the following accrediting bodies:

- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Higher Education
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Technical and Career Institutions
- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, The Higher Learning Commission
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior College
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities

#### Exceptions to Graduation Requirements

Appeals to the above policy may be submitted to the Chief Instructional Officer or a designee. Exceptions may be granted under extenuating circumstances or when there has not been sufficient opportunity to enroll in required courses.

#### Transfer Limitations

Students should be aware that the conferring of additional degrees by any college within the VCCCD does not always guarantee admission or the accomplishment of general education or major requirements at receiving institutions.

Reference [Board Policy 4100 Graduation Requirements for Degrees, Certificates, and Proficiency Awards](#)

#### Governance Review

2021 04.13 Board of Trustees Meeting

2021 03.15 Chancellor's Cabinet

2021 03.11 DTRW-I

2021 02.11 DTRW-I

2020 06.16 Board of Trustees Meeting

2020 05.12 Board of Trustees Meeting (proposed)

2020 04.23 Policy, Planning and Student Success Committee

2020 03.19 Policy, Planning, and Student Success Committee (rescheduled)

2020 02.24 Chancellor's Cabinet

2020 02.13 DTRW-I

2020 01.09 DTRW-I

2019 12.12 DTRW-I

2019 11.14 DTRW-I