



Book	VCCCD Administrative Procedure Manual
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Philosophy and Criteria for Associate Degree

The philosophy and criteria for the associate degree and general education of the Ventura County Community College District address the considerations contained in the references listed above. These include, but are not limited to:

The programs of District colleges are consistent with the District mission, objectives, demographics and economics of its community.

The philosophy and criteria regarding the associate degree reference the policy of the Board of Governors that the associate degree symbolizes a successful attempt to lead students through patterns of learning experiences designed to develop certain capabilities and insight, including but not limited to:

- The ability to think, communicate, speak, and write clearly and effectively
- The ability to understand and apply mathematical concepts
- The ability to understand the modes of inquiry of the major disciplines
- Being aware of other cultures and time periods
- Achieving insights gained through experience in thinking about ethical problems
- Developing the capacity for self understanding

The Curriculum Committee of each District college establishes a curriculum proposal and review process that methodically and consistently validate the above principles within the college's course and program inventory.

At a secondary level, the District Technical Review Workgroup-Instructional (DTRW-I) provides technical oversight to ensure that the colleges' course and program curriculum are in regulatory compliance.

Philosophy and Criteria for General Education

The philosophy and criteria regarding general education reference the policy of the Board of Governors that general education should lead to better self-understanding, including:

- Understand the modes of inquiry and critique used in the natural, social, and behavioral sciences and the humanities
- Understand and appreciate the role of culture and the arts in society and in one's personal life
- Think logically and communicate effectively

- Understand and adopt the concepts of personal health and fitness to enhance the quality of life
- Recognize the multitude of diversities in the physical and human environments and how these diversities impact individuals and society
- Understand the connections among the various disciplines
- Use a variety of means to find information, examine it critically, and apply it appropriately
- Work ethically and effectively with others
- Apply the skills necessary for successful living in an ever-changing and global environment
- Become productive workers and life-long learners
- Meet the objectives of general education

General education is designed to introduce students to the variety of means through which people comprehend the modern world.

General education introduces the content and methodology of the major areas of knowledge and provides an opportunity for students to develop intellectual skills, information technology proficiency, affective and creative capabilities, social aptitude, and an appreciation for cultural diversity.

To meet the objectives of general education, each District college shall place GE courses in the following areas:

- (A) Natural Sciences: A minimum of 6 units including one course in Biological Sciences and one course in Physical Science.
- (B) Social and Behavioral Sciences: A minimum of 6 units including one course in American History/Institutions and one course in other Social and Behavioral Science.
- (C) Humanities: A minimum of 6 units including one course in Fine Arts/Performing Arts and one course in any other Humanities.
- (D) Language and Rationality: A minimum of 6 units including one course in English Composition and one course from Communication/Analytical Thinking.
- (E) Health and Physical Education/Kinesiology: No unit minimum. One Health Education course and one Physical Education/Kinesiology Activity course.
- (F) Ethnic/Gender Studies: A minimum of 3 units. Students who plan to earn an Associate in Arts degree in General Studies must complete a course in Ethnic/Gender Studies.

The Curriculum Committees of the colleges, as part of the curriculum proposal and review process, shall specifically address the placement of courses into the general education areas.

(A) Natural Sciences

Courses in the natural sciences are those which examine the physical universe, its life forms, and its natural phenomena. To satisfy the general education requirement in natural sciences, a course shall be designed to help the student develop an appreciation and understanding of the scientific method, and encourage an understanding of the relationship between science and other human activities. This category would include 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

Courses in the social and behavioral sciences are those which focus on people as members of society. To satisfy the general education requirement in social and behavioral sciences, a course shall be designed to develop an awareness of the method of inquiry used by the social and behavioral sciences. It shall be designed to stimulate critical thinking about the ways people act and have acted in response to their societies and an appreciation of how societies and social subgroups operate. This category would include introductory or integrative survey courses in cultural anthropology, cultural geography, economics, history, political science, psychology, sociology, and related disciplines.

(C) Humanities

Courses in the humanities are those which study the cultural activities and artistic expressions of human beings. To satisfy the general education requirement in the humanities, a course shall be designed to help the student develop an awareness of the ways in which people throughout the ages and in different cultures have responded to themselves and the world around them in artistic and cultural creation and help the student develop aesthetic understanding and an ability to make value judgments. Such courses could include introductory or integrative courses in the arts, foreign languages, literature, philosophy, and religion.

(D) Language and Rationality

Courses in language and rationality are those which develop for the student 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. Such courses include:

- (i) English Composition. Courses fulfilling the written composition requirement shall be designed to include both expository and argumentative writing.
- (ii) Communication and Analytical Thinking. Courses fulfilling the communication and analytical thinking requirement include oral communication, mathematics, logic, statistics, computer languages and programming, and related disciplines.

(E) Health and Physical Education/Kinesiology

Courses in Health and Physical Education/Kinesiology should help students develop an understanding of integrated wellness strategies and the skills necessary for designing, implementing, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

(F) Ethnic/Gender Studies

Courses in ethnic/gender studies should help students develop an awareness of the diverse historical roots and an appreciation of the cultural contribution of minorities and women; and/or should lead to an understanding of the causes and consequence of socio-economic inequality based on race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or ethnicity; and explore ways of eliminating such inequities.

Elements of the review process shall include, at a minimum, the following:

- The alignment of the course outcome to the general education outcome of the proposed area
- The rigor and comprehensive nature of the course as a lower-division introduction to the discipline
- Applicability of the course for fulfilling California State University General Education Breadth (CSU GE Breadth) or Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) for transfer.

Each college shall have student learning outcomes (SLO) to assess these GE courses.

Completion of the District College General Education pattern shall be required for all associate degrees except:

1. When prohibited by legislated transfer degrees (Associate in Arts for Transfer and Associate in Science for Transfer) that require completion of CSU GE Breadth, CSU GE Breadth for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), IGETC, or IGETC for STEM and forbid additional District graduation requirements.
2. General Studies Pattern II requires students to complete a transfer institution's own general education pattern while also meeting the 18 units of general education minimum established in Title 5. The additional District graduation requirements of Health/PE and Kinesiology and Ethnic/Gender Studies still apply.
3. General Studies Pattern III requires students to complete either CSU GE Breadth or IGETC. The additional District graduation requirements of Health and PE/Kinesiology and Ethnic/Gender Studies still apply.
4. When the degree is designed specifically for transfer and another general education pattern (such as CSU GE Breadth, IGETC, or a university's native general education pattern) more adequately serves the needs of the students.
5. When the program goal is "Career Technical Education (CTE) and Transfer" as required in the Program and Course Approval Handbook (PCAH) the degree may require CSU GE Breadth, IGETC, GE pattern for a four-year institution in an adjacent state, or a local GE pattern.
6. Nursing students who have already earned a baccalaureate or higher degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education. These students only need to complete the coursework required for completion of a registered nursing program, including prerequisites and nursing coursework.

See [Board Policy BP 4025](#).