



PHILOSOPHY AND CRITERIA FOR ASSOCIATE DEGREE AND GENERAL EDUCATION

Philosophy and Criteria for Associate Degree

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
- Achieving insights gained through experience in thinking about ethical problems
- Developing the capacity for self-understanding
- Being aware of multiple cultural perspectives, including an examination of the unique experience of traditionally disenfranchised groups, which may be defined by race, ethnicity, language, gender, or sexual orientation

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

The Curriculum Committee establishes a curriculum proposal and review process that methodically and consistently validate the above principles within the college's course and program inventory. The Curriculum Technical Review Committee provides technical oversight to ensure that the college's 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. The Institutional Student Learning Outcomes for Mendocino College are based on the General Education requirements and support the idea that a general education should equip students with knowledge that they can use when evaluating and appreciating the physical environment, the culture and the society in which they live. These include:

- Apply critical thinking and information competency skills to reach well-supported factual or judgmental conclusions which are effectively communicated in written and oral English
- Apply the scientific method, principles and concepts in order to test scientific hypotheses and theories
- Explain and apply mathematical concepts to solve problems through quantitative reasoning
- Express themselves subjectively as well as objectively when engaging with the creative arts and humanities in various cultural contexts
- Apply methods of social scientific inquiry to analyze key current and historical social, political, economic and individual issues in a variety of cultural contexts

- Continue their lifelong development by applying critical thinking, scientific inquiry and quantitative reasoning skills; and by their ability to express themselves subjectively as well as objectively when engaging with the creative arts and humanities

To meet the objectives of the general education, the District places GE courses in the following areas:

- Area A: Natural Science
- Area B: Social Science
 1. American Institutions
 2. Social and Behavioral Sciences
- Area C: Humanities
- Area D: Language and Rationality
 1. English Composition
 2. Communication and Rationality

In addition, Mendocino College requires that all graduates meet the following Institutional Requirements (state legislation exempts AA-T and AS-T students from these requirements):

- Studies in Culture
- Studies in Wellness

Competency Requirements

Also, under Title V, Section 55063, students who are planning to receive an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science Degree from Mendocino College must complete or demonstrate competency requirements in three specific areas:

1. Mathematics
2. Written Expression
3. Reading

The Curriculum Committee, 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.

Institutional Requirement of Studies in Culture. The goal of this requirement is to include the study of culture, including race, ethnicity, and gender in every student's curriculum. Further, the intent of the requirement is to encourage students to examine the dynamics of power within society in historical and contemporary contexts.

Institutional Requirement of Wellness The goal of this requirement is to foster the physical, social, mental and environmental wellness of the individual and of the community. Further, the intent is to encourage students to examine wellness concepts and adopt habits and attitudes that lead to personal wellness as a lifelong goal.

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.

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

References: Title 5 Section 55061;
ACCJC Accreditation Standard II.A (formerly II.A.3)