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Administrative Procedure  
Chapter 4 – Academic Affairs

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**AP 4025 PHILOSOPHY AND CRITERIA FOR ASSOCIATE DEGREE  
AND GENERAL EDUCATION (NEW)**

**References:**

Title 5 Section 55061;

ACCJC Eligibility Requirement 12;

ACCJC Accreditation Standard II.A

**NOTE:** *This procedure is **legally required**. The following language in **red ink** reflects the Title 5 and accreditation standards information. Local practice may be inserted.*

**I. The Associate Degree**

Napa Valley College (NVC) awards the Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Science (AS), and Associate Degree for Transfer (AA-T or AS-T) consistent with the standards set forth in Title 5 section 55063 of the California Code of Regulations under the authority of the Board of Trustees. At NVC, an associate degree documents students' educational achievement and provides them with a foundation for future learning. The associate degree symbolizes a successful attempt to lead students through patterns of learning experiences designed to develop certain capabilities and insight, including:

- the ability to think and communicate clearly and effectively orally and in writing;
- use mathematics;
- understand the modes of inquiry of the major disciplines;
- be aware of other cultures and times;
- achieve insights gained through experience in thinking about ethical problems; and
- to develop the capacity for self-understanding.

An associate degree at Napa Valley College consists of two main elements:

1. General education, which gives students a broad base of knowledge and
2. An academic program, in which a student specializes in a particular field of study. Depending on the academic program selected, the student will be awarded an Associate of Arts (A.A.), Associate of Science (A.S.) Degree, or Associate Degree for Transfer (AA-T or AS-T)

At NVC, the A.S. degree is typically earned in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics, or in career technical programs (as defined in the California Community Colleges Taxonomy of Programs). The A.A. Degree is typically earned for all other academic areas. The AA-T or AS-T is earned in programs designed for transfer preparation to specific majors in the California State University system. AA-T and AS-T degrees are aligned with transfer model curricula developed jointly by the Academic Senates and discipline faculty in the California Community College and California State University systems.

Napa Valley College ensures that all educational programs are consistent with the institutional mission and in alignment with the needs of the community through the curriculum review and approval process, ongoing program review, and the regular review of the Napa Valley Community College District Educational Master Plan.

## **II. Statement of General Education Philosophy**

General education is the foundation of the Associate Degree. General education is an integrated program of learning designed to introduce students to the variety of means through which people comprehend the modern world in courses that introduce students to the achievements, the methods of inquiry, and the major principles and concepts in the humanities, the social sciences, mathematics, and the natural sciences. General education provides an opportunity for students to develop intellectual skills, information technology facility, affective and creative capabilities, social attitudes, and an appreciation for cultural diversity. Graduates possess a common foundation of knowledge for understanding their physical environment, culture and society and the skills of inquiry, reflection, and expression for personal growth and lifelong learning.

At Napa Valley College, general education is defined in the following categories, consistent with the requirements in Title 5 and accepted standards in higher education which indicate a minimum of 18 units in Areas A-D.

### **A. Natural Science**

Courses in the natural sciences are those that examine the physical universe, its life forms, and its natural phenomena. These courses will help the student develop an appreciation and understanding of the scientific method and also impart to the student an understanding of the relationships between science and the world around them. This category will include introductory or integrative courses in astronomy, biology, chemistry, general physical science, geology, meteorology, oceanography, physical geography, biological anthropology, physics, and other scientific disciplines.

### **B. Social and Behavioral Sciences**

Courses in the social and behavioral sciences are those that focus on people as members of society. These courses will develop an awareness of the method of inquiry used by the social and behavioral sciences. It should stimulate critical thinking about the ways people

act and have acted in response to their societies and should promote an appreciation of how societies and social subgroups operate. This category will include introductory or integrative courses in cultural anthropology, cultural geography, economics, history, political science, psychology, sociology, and related disciplines.

### **C. Humanities**

Courses in the humanities are those that study the cultural activities and artistic expressions of human beings. The courses will 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 with artistic and cultural creation and help the student develop aesthetic understanding and an ability to make value judgments. This category will include introductory or integrative courses in the arts, foreign languages, literature, philosophy, religion, and related disciplines.

### **D. Language and Rationality**

Courses in language and rationality are those that develop the principles and applications of language, whether it be written, spoken or symbolic. These courses will explore language toward logical thought, clear and precise expression, and critical evaluation of communication. Three components of this area will be required.

#### **D1. English Composition**

Courses fulfilling the composition requirement will focus on written language. The course includes substantial instruction and practice in both expository and argumentative writing.

#### **D2. Mathematical Concepts and Quantitative Reasoning**

Courses fulfilling the mathematical concepts and quantitative reasoning requirement will focus on symbolic language. The course will help a student successfully process information requiring quantitative analysis, calculation, and the ability to use and criticize quantitative arguments.

#### **D3. Communication and Analytical Thinking**

Courses fulfilling the communication and analytical thinking requirement will focus on spoken or symbolic language. Courses fulfilling the requirement include oral communication, mathematics, logic, computer languages and programming, and related disciplines. The course will help the student achieve an understanding of the relationship between language and logic, developing an ability to communicate ideas, analyze and solve problems, and identify the assumptions upon which particular conclusions depend.

In addition to the GE areas, an Ethnic Studies graduation requirement, as well as additional graduation requirements specific to NVC, must be fulfilled as defined in AP 4100.

### III. Procedures for General Education

Procedures to determine which courses implement this philosophy of general education are developed by the Academic Senate through the Curriculum Committee and are documented in the Curriculum Handbook and in the records of the Academic Senate. The specific courses approved for General Education through the curriculum process are published in the NVC catalog and updated yearly.

Students awarded an Associate Degree for Transfer (AA-T or AS-T), complete either the CSU-GE or IGETC patterns, consistent with intersegmental agreements between the California Community Colleges and the California State University and University of California Systems. These general education patterns include additional requirements and a different distribution among GE categories, but meet the minimum requirements for General Education set forth in Title 5 and are consistent with the NVC Philosophy of General Education. The procedures to determine placement in the CSU-GE and IGETC patterns are developed and maintained by the Curriculum Committee and documented in the Curriculum Handbook and records of the Academic Senate.

~~The philosophy and criteria for the associate degree and general education should address the considerations contained in the references listed above. These include, but are not limited to:~~

- ~~• The programs of the District are consistent with the institutional mission, purposes, demographics and economics of its community;~~
- ~~• The philosophy and criteria regarding the associate degree references 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:~~
  - ~~○ the ability to think and communicate clearly and effectively orally and writing;~~
  - ~~○ use mathematics;~~
  - ~~○ understand the modes of inquiry of the major disciplines;~~
  - ~~○ be aware of other cultures and times;~~
  - ~~○ achieve insights gained through experience in thinking about ethical problems; and~~
  - ~~○ to develop the capacity for self-understanding.~~

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

- ~~• 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 facility, affective and creative capabilities, social attitudes, and an appreciation for cultural diversity.~~

**NOTE:** The procedures **should also include** the process used to determine which courses implement the District's philosophy on the associate degree and general education.

**NOTE:** The **blue ink** below is additional sample language about the process to consider.

#### **Sample Language to Consider:**

~~In addition, the District will ensure that its educational programs are consistent with its institutional mission and in alignment with the needs of the community. Procedures to determine which courses implement this philosophy are developed by each college and are documented in the respective curriculum handbooks.~~

~~Also see AP 4021 Program Discontinuance as well as BP/AP 4100 Graduation Requirements for Degrees and Certificates.~~

**(NOTE: See additional sample language from other Districts included in the notebook)**

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**NOTE:** The **red ink** signifies language that is **legally required** and recommended by the Policy & Procedure Service and its legal counsel (Liebert Cassidy Whitmore). The Policy & Procedure Service issued legal updates to this procedure in February 2008 and November 2014. The language in **blue ink** is included for consideration. The language in **yellow highlighting** is included to draw the reviewers' attention, and this language will be removed upon final approval.

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**Approved:**

**(This is a new procedure)**

## Legal Citations for AP 4025

Title 5. Education  
Division 6. California Community Colleges  
Chapter 6. Curriculum and Instruction  
Subchapter 1. Programs, Courses and Classes  
Article 6. the Associate Degree

5 CCR § 55061

### § 55061. Philosophy and Criteria for Associate Degree and General Education.

(a) The governing board of a community college district shall adopt a policy which states its specific philosophy on General Education. In developing this policy governing boards shall consider the following policy of the Board of Governors:

The awarding of an Associate Degree is intended to represent more than an accumulation of units. It is to symbolize a successful attempt on the part of the college to lead students through patterns of learning experiences designed to develop certain capabilities and insights. Among these are the ability to think and to communicate clearly and effectively both orally and in writing; to use mathematics; 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. In addition to these accomplishments, the student shall possess sufficient depth in some field of knowledge to contribute to lifetime interest.

Central to an Associate Degree, 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 possess in common certain basic principles, concepts and methodologies both unique to and shared by the various disciplines. 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 importantly, General Education should lead to better self-understanding.

In establishing or modifying a general education program, ways shall be sought to create coherence and integration among the separate requirements. It is also desirable that general education programs involve students actively in examining values inherent in proposed solutions to major social problems.

(b) The governing board of a community college district shall also establish criteria to determine which courses may be used in implementing its philosophy on the associate degree and general education.

(c) The governing board of a community college district shall, on a regular basis, review the policy and criteria established pursuant to subdivisions (a) and (b) of this section.

Note: Authority cited: Sections 66700 and 70901, Education Code. Reference: Sections 66701, 70901 and 70902, Education Code.

## **HISTORY**

1. New section filed 7-17-2007; operative 8-16-2007. Submitted to OAL for printing only pursuant to Education Code section 70901.5 (Register 2007, No. 35).

## **ACCJC Accreditation Standard II.A**

### **Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Support Services**

The institution offers instructional programs, library and learning support services, and student support services aligned with its mission. The institution's programs are conducted at levels of quality and rigor appropriate for higher education. The institution assesses its educational quality through methods accepted in higher education, makes the results of its assessments available to the public, and uses the results to improve educational quality and institutional effectiveness. The institution defines and incorporates into all of its degree programs a substantial component of general education designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and to promote intellectual inquiry. The provisions of this standard are broadly applicable to all instructional programs and student and learning support services offered in the name of the institution.

#### **A. Instructional Programs**

1. All instructional programs, regardless of location or means of delivery, including distance education and correspondence education, are offered in fields of study consistent with the institution's mission, are appropriate to higher education, and culminate in student attainment of identified student learning outcomes, and achievement of degrees, certificates, employment, or transfer to other higher education programs. (ER 9 and ER 11)
2. Faculty, including full time, part time, and adjunct faculty, ensure that the content and methods of instruction meet generally accepted academic and professional standards and expectations. Faculty and others responsible act to continuously improve instructional courses, programs and directly related services through systematic evaluation to assure currency, improve teaching and learning strategies, and promote student success.
3. The institution identifies and regularly assesses learning outcomes for courses, programs, certificates and degrees using established institutional procedures. The institution has officially approved and current course outlines that include student learning outcomes. In every class section students receive a course syllabus that includes learning outcomes from the institution's officially approved course outline.
4. If the institution offers pre-collegiate level curriculum, it distinguishes that curriculum from college level curriculum and directly supports students in learning the knowledge and skills necessary to advance to and succeed in college level curriculum.
5. The institution's degrees and programs follow practices common to American higher education, including appropriate length, breadth, depth, rigor, course sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning. The institution ensures that minimum degree requirements are 60 semester credits or equivalent at the associate level, and 120 credits or equivalent at the baccalaureate level. (ER 12)
6. The institution schedules courses in a manner that allows students to complete certificate and degree programs within a period of time consistent with established expectations in higher education. (ER 9)

7. The institution effectively uses delivery modes, teaching methodologies and learning support services that reflect the diverse and changing needs of its students, in support of equity in success for all students.
8. The institution validates the effectiveness of department-wide course and/or program examinations, where used, including direct assessment of prior learning. The institution ensures that processes are in place to reduce test bias and enhance reliability.
9. The institution awards course credit, degrees and certificates based on student attainment of learning outcomes. Units of credit awarded are consistent with institutional policies that reflect generally accepted norms or equivalencies in higher education. If the institution offers courses based on clock hours, it follows Federal standards for clock-to-credit-hour conversions. (ER 10)
10. The institution makes available to its students clearly stated transfer-of-credit policies in order to facilitate the mobility of students without penalty. In accepting transfer credits to fulfill degree requirements, the institution certifies that the expected learning outcomes for transferred courses are comparable to the learning outcomes of its own courses. Where patterns of student enrollment between institutions are identified, the institution develops articulation agreements as appropriate to its mission. (ER 10)
11. The institution includes in all of its programs, student learning outcomes, appropriate to the program level, in communication competency, information competency, quantitative competency, analytic inquiry skills, ethical reasoning, the ability to engage diverse perspectives, and other program-specific learning outcomes.
12. The institution requires of all of its degree programs a component of general education based on a carefully considered philosophy for both associate and baccalaureate degrees that is clearly stated in its catalog. The institution, relying on faculty expertise, determines the appropriateness of each course for inclusion in the general education curriculum, based upon student learning outcomes and competencies appropriate to the degree level. The learning outcomes include a student's preparation for and acceptance of responsible participation in civil society, skills for lifelong learning and application of learning, and a broad comprehension of the development of knowledge, practice, and interpretive approaches in the arts and humanities, the sciences, mathematics, and social sciences. (ER 12)
13. All degree programs include focused study in at least one area of inquiry or in an established interdisciplinary core. The identification of specialized courses in an area of inquiry or interdisciplinary core is based upon student learning outcomes and competencies, and include mastery, at the appropriate degree level, of key theories and practices within the field of study.
14. Graduates completing career-technical certificates and degrees demonstrate technical and professional competencies that meet employment standards and other applicable standards and preparation for external licensure and certification.
15. When programs are eliminated or program requirements are significantly changed, the institution makes appropriate arrangements so that enrolled students may complete their education in a timely manner with a minimum of disruption.
16. The institution regularly evaluates and improves the quality and currency of all instructional programs offered in the name of the institution, including collegiate, pre-collegiate, career-technical, and continuing and community education courses and programs, regardless of delivery mode or location. The institution systematically strives to improve programs and courses to enhance learning outcomes and achievement for students.