# Curriculum Handbook

## Chapter 6. Course Outline of Record

### 6.1 Purpose

The course outline of record (COR) is the primary course-level curriculum document at Napa Valley College. It provides the template for course syllabi, offers the students, community, and other educational institutions information about our courses and programs, and plays an integral role in program evaluation and accreditation review. It is also the primary vehicle for individual programs and departments to outline the scope, rigor, and direction of their curriculum.

The COR does the following:

- Meets all the rules and regulations governing curriculum from the following authorities: California Code of Regulations (title 5), *Program and Course Approval Handbook* (PCAH), Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior College (ACCJC) standards, and Napa Valley College policies and procedures
- Establishes a basis for articulation agreements with baccalaureate-granting institutions
- Provides faculty with a template indicating the objectives, content, evaluation standards, methods of instruction, and assignment types required in all sections of a given course and to be used to develop individual syllabi
- Serves as an educational contract between Napa Valley College and its student
- Supplies data for the review and revision of course and program sequence, rigor, and scope during Program Review
- Documents academic standards in the Accreditation Review process

*The Course Outline of Record: A Curriculum Reference Guide Revisited* (2017), published by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges and available on the Curriculum Committee website, provides a thorough explanation of course outline requirements.

### 6.2 Required COR Components

California Code of Regulations title 5 §55002 requires all courses (degree- and nondegree-applicable credit courses, as well as noncredit courses) to be described in a course outline of record that is maintained in official college files and made available to each instructor.

### 6.2.1 Credit CORs

Each credit course outline of record must specify the course's unit value, hours (contact hours, outside-of-class hours, and total student learning hours), any prerequisites, corequisites, or advisories on recommended preparation, the catalog description, objectives, and content in terms of a specific body of knowledge. It must also specify types or provide examples of required reading and writing assignments, assignments required outside of class, instructional methodology, and methods of evaluation for determining whether the stated objectives have been met by students. In addition, the Chancellor's Office requires each course outline to include specific data elements, which are listed below.

### 6.2.2 Noncredit CORs

Noncredit course outlines must specify the number of contact hours normally required for a student to complete the course as well as the catalog description, objectives, content in terms of a specific body of knowledge, instructional methodology, examples of assignments and/or activities, and methods of evaluation for determining whether the stated objectives have been met.

### 6.3 Integration Requirement

Title 5 requires course outlines to be integrated, which is explained in *The Course Outline of Record: A Curriculum Reference Guide Revisited* as follows:

> A course outline of record needs to be integrated, as each element of the COR should reinforce the purpose of the other elements in the course outline. An obvious relationship should exist between the objectives of the course, the methods of instruction, assignments, and methods of evaluation used to promote and evaluate student mastery of those objectives and outcomes.

> At the onset, every course should be developed with a purpose or goal in mind. The course must have sufficient and appropriate learning objectives that create a framework for students to develop their knowledge and abilities in order to demonstrate the overarching student learning outcomes and fulfill the intended purpose of the course. The course content items then define the elements of information, behavior, or capabilities for each objective to be mastered. Each content item and objective is then reflected in comprehensive assignments or lessons that are taught using appropriate and effective methods. Finally, in an integrated course outline of record, the methods for evaluation of student performance validate the acquisition and mastery of each content item and the attainment of each objective. These methods of assessment may also serve to measure student achievement of the defined student learning outcomes, or additional methods may be useful. Content should be the only subject-based element; the others specifically focus on what the student will be doing and will be able to demonstrate by successfully completing the course. (pg. 5)

## 6.4 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Curriculum

Where appropriate, faculty authors should consider explicitly including culturally responsive and anti-racist content in the course content, objectives, and assignments. Although diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) content that explicitly addresses racial inequities may be a stronger fit in some disciplines, almost every discipline will have debates, disagreements, or assumptions that can be challenged; the COR should include an acknowledgement and discussion of these issues in a manner consistent with the current scholarship and methodologies of the field. Opportunities should be built into the course for students to see themselves and their experiences represented.

Faculty should consider not just the content but also the language and terminology used in the course outline and be cognizant of where terms and topics may reflect Eurocentric or colonizing views, taking care to avoid deficit-minded language. The most student-facing parts of the COR (title, course description, student learning outcomes, assignments) should strive for welcoming, accessible, and inclusive language. The COR should include multiple methods of instruction and evaluation and provide examples of assignments that are culturally relevant and allow students to bring their own experiences to the course. Textbooks, manuals, and other materials should be affordable and reflect diverse representation in authorship and content.

## 6.5 COR Writing Standards and Guidelines

The following section provides a general overview of the content and writing standards for the components of the Course Outline of Record. More detailed instructions will be provided on the course forms in the curriculum management system (CourseLeaf).

The elements of the COR express both the particulars of a given course and the broader instructional mission of the college. Faculty authors should develop courses and programs consistent with the mission, values, institutional learning outcomes, and academic freedom policy of Napa Valley College. The Curriculum Committee will honor the discipline expertise of course authors and other discipline faculty by remaining open to multiple approaches and perspectives in all areas of curriculum development. Likewise, the committee will work collegially with faculty authors in all discussions of course content or pedagogy while ensuring the high quality and rigor of curricula at NVC.

### 6.5.1 Course Data Elements

Credit Status

- Courses numbered 01-49 are noncredit courses in which students pay no enrollment fees and generally receive no college credit. Noncredit courses focus on skill attainment, not grades or units.

- Courses numbered 50-89 are non-transferable credit courses which are basic skills courses, college orientation and guidance courses, discipline-specific preparatory courses, precollegiate CTE courses that are not degree-applicable.
- Courses numbered 90-99 are non-transferable degree-applicable credit courses designated as appropriate for the associate degree.
- Courses numbered 100-299 are transferable degree-applicable credit courses designated as appropriate for the associate degree.
- Courses numbered 300-499 are degree-applicable credit courses designated as appropriate for the baccalaureate degree.
- Courses numbered C1000-C9999 are transferable degree-applicable credit Common Course Numbering courses as designated by the Chancellor's Office.

Subject Code: Subject codes are essentially abbreviations of subject areas or departments that are used to organize courses in the schedule and catalog. For credit courses, this is usually a 3-4 letter code; for noncredit, usually a 5-6 letter code that ends in "NC." New subject codes must first be approved by the Curriculum Committee before they can be used or added to CourseLeaf.

Course Number

| 01-49 | Noncredit courses, not transferable |
|---|---|
| 50-89 | Credit courses, not transferable, developmental; not intended for degree credit |
| 90-99 | Credit courses, not transferable, applicable for AA/AS degree |
| 100-199 | Credit courses, CSU transferable; generally taken during the 1st year |
| 200-299 | Credit courses, CSU transferable; generally taken during the 2nd year |
| 300-399 | Credit courses, applicable for baccalaureate degree; taken during 3rd year |
| 400-499 | Credit courses, applicable for baccalaureate degree; taken during 4th year |
| C1000-C9999 | Credit courses, CSU transferable; Common Course Numbering Course |

Discipline: Discipline in this context means academic areas listed in the Minimum Qualifications Handbook. This field determines what academic degrees or qualifications are needed to teach the course. Faculty may assign a course to more than one discipline. "OR" means either qualification will be accepted. "AND" means both qualifications are required.

Discipline placement should always involve discussions with department faculty, as well as faculty from other divisions if there is a potential that the course content overlaps with other disciplines or covers concepts and skills that are interdisciplinary in nature. Discipline placement may be challenged according to the Discipline Placement Review Process described in Chapter 4 of this Handbook.

Double Coding (Cross-Listing): Double-coded courses are credit courses that share a single Course Outline of Record but appear in the catalog under two different subject codes (e.g., PHOT-180/ARTH-180 History of Photography).

Dual Listing (Mirrored Credit/Noncredit): Dual-listed courses are mirrored credit and noncredit versions of a course that have two Course Outlines of Records that are essentially identical in all aspects, except units and grading (e.g., ESL-55/ESLNC-855 ESL Reading, Writing, and Grammar 1). Dual-listed courses are offered simultaneously and taught by the same instructor with a specific number of seats reserved for noncredit students.

Course Title: The course title should allow prospective students to easily identify the general purpose of the course and distinguish it from other courses in the catalog. Faculty should also consider how the title will read on a transcript to transfer institutions and potential employers.

Course titles should be unique, but related courses may use the same title with numbers to indicate the level (either Roman or Arabic numerals, as long as their use is consistent).

TOP Code: The Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) is a system of numerical codes used by the Chancellor's Office to collect and report information on programs and courses in different colleges throughout the state that have similar outcomes. Each course should be assigned the TOP code that comes closest to describing the course content. Codes with an asterisk (*) are designated as CTE areas. Please see the Taxonomy of Programs manual for more detailed descriptions of each of these codes.

Basic Skills: Basic skills courses, as defined in title 5 §55000(t) and (u), include courses in reading, writing, computation, and English as a Second Language which have been designated as nondegree-applicable credit courses (course number 1-89) or noncredit courses (course number 600-900). Title 5 regulations do not allow students to receive more than 30 units of credit for basic skills courses.

SAM Code: This code is used by the Chancellor's Office to indicate whether courses are occupational and identify course sequences within CTE programs. A more detailed description of each of these codes can be found here. Non-CTE courses are always E (Non-Occupational).

### 6.5.2   Course Description

The catalog course description offers a concise summary of the goals of the course and subject matter to be covered. This field is the most public-facing part of the course outline and should be written in clear, welcoming, and accessible language that addresses a broad audience, including both students and the general public. Discipline-specific terminology should be appropriately defined or explained through context. The goal is to ensure that every student, even before enrolling in the class, can read the description and understand what the course covers and how it may be relevant to them.

When the purpose of a course is to serve a special population (e.g., older adults, persons with substantial disabilities), the course description must also indicate that the course is designed to meet the interests and needs of this student group.

### 6.5.3 Conditions on Enrollment

Open Entry/Open Exit: Open Entry/Open Exit courses are defined in title 5 §58164 as credit or noncredit courses in which students enroll at different times and complete at various times or at varying paces within the semester.

When an open entry/open exit course provides supplemental learning assistance in support of another course or courses, the catalog course description must identify the course or courses it supports and the SLOs must align.

Credit open entry/open exit courses must be designed so that most students will be able to master the objectives and complete the course successfully in about 48-54 hours per unit of credit. Some students may need more hours to complete the course, whereas other students may need fewer hours to do the same. The number of units earned will be the same regardless.

Courses Designated as Repeatable: Repeatability refers here to a course that students may take multiple times for credit (even if they already took and earned credit for it). While all students may retake a course they failed or dropped in order to earn credit for it, Title 5 places very strict limits on courses designated as repeatable for credit. To be repeatable, a course must meet one of the following conditions:

1) repetition in the course is necessary to meet the major requirements of CSU or UC for the completion of a bachelor's degree
2) the course is designated as intercollegiate athletics as defined in title 5
3) the course's requirements involve participation in intercollegiate academic or vocational competition as defined in title 5.

There are no specific limitations on noncredit course repetition. For more a more detailed explanation of repeatability requirements, please see the Chancellor's Office Credit Course Repetition Guidelines. Courses designated as repeatable should be indicated as such in the catalog course description.

(Please note that AP 4225 provides for other specific circumstances under which students may retake a course which has not been designated as repeatable. These do not need to be included in the course outline.)

Prerequisites, Corequisites, Advisories, and Other Limitations on Enrollment

Course requisites are considered an exception to the California Community Colleges requirement of offering open enrollment courses. As a result, title 5 §55003 places strict limitations on how prerequisites and corequisite may be established or renewed. Prior to being

approved by the Curriculum Committee, prerequisites, corequisites, and advisories must be reviewed by faculty discipline experts according to the processes and level of scrutiny described below.

Existing prerequisites and corequisites must also be reviewed every 6 years (or every 2 years for CTE courses) as part of the Program Review process to assure that they remain necessary and appropriate. Changing, removing, or adding prerequisites or corequisites typically requires rearticulation of a course, which may delay implementation a full academic year.

> *Prerequisites:* Prerequisites are conditions that students must meet prior to enrolling in a course. Prerequisites are usually met by specific courses, but may also be non-course skills, concepts, or information. Assigning a prerequisite means that the skills or knowledge described in the prerequisite are essential to students' success in the course and that it is highly unlikely that a student who has not met this prerequisite will receive a satisfactory grade.

> *Corequisites:* A corequisite is a condition of enrollment consisting of a course that a student is required to simultaneously take in order to enroll in another course. Corequisites are usually courses that are clearly related in content, such as lab or support courses. Assigning a corequisite means that the skills or knowledge gained in the corequisite course are essential to students' success in the primary course and that it is highly unlikely that a student will receive a satisfactory grade without them.

> *Advisory Prerequisites:* Advisory prerequisites are conditions that a student is advised, but not required, to meet prior to enrollment in a course. Assigning an advisory means that the acquisition of a body of knowledge or course skills will be of great advantage to students' success in the course.

> *Advisory Corequisites:* Advisory corequisites are conditions that a student is advised, but not required, to meet in conjunction with enrollment in a course. Assigning an advisory means that the acquisition of a body of knowledge or course skills will be of great advantage to students' success in the course.

> *Limitations on Enrollment:* Limitations on enrollment are additional conditions of enrollment such as auditions or try-outs for performance courses, which may be established according to the processes described in AP 4260 and are subject to Curriculum Committee review.

To ensure that prerequisites, corequisites, advisories, and limitations on enrollment do not constitute unjustifiable obstacles to student access and success, faculty discipline experts must determine that the requisite is an appropriate and rational measure of a student's readiness to enter the course and document the level of scrutiny under which the requisite is allowed under Title 5. In most cases, this will be based on content review.

Content Review: As part of the process of content review, faculty discipline experts must document the body of knowledge or skills which are deemed necessary at entry (or, for corequisites, concurrent with enrollment). These entry skills should be documented in the COR and formatted as a numbered list starting with a verb to complete the sentence: "Upon entering the course, students should be able to…." In its simplest form, content review consists of comparing these entry skills with the objectives of the requisite course to verify that the prerequisite or corequisite develops the relevant body of knowledge or skills necessary to succeed in the course. Faculty may also examine student learning outcomes, assignments, and assessments, as described in the COR, or consider factors such as course syllabi, tests, related instructional materials, course format, the type and number of examinations, and grading criteria as part of this review.

As defined in title 5 §55003(e), a prerequisite or corequisite need not be scrutinized using content review, if it falls under one of these categories:

- it is required by statute or regulation
- it is part of a closely related lecture-laboratory course pairing within a discipline
- it is required by four-year institutions (for which NVC has transfer agreements)
- baccalaureate institutions will not grant credit for a course unless it has the particular communication or computation skill prerequisite (for CSU institutions, this will usually be indicated in the C-ID descriptor)
- it is a corequisite that has been recommended through placement guidelines approved by the Chancellor's Office.

For a more detailed explanation of these regulations and other considerations in establishing requisites, please see the Chancellor's Office Guidelines for Title 5 Regulations Section 55003.

### 6.5.4   Course Standards

Units/Hours: The relationship between units and hours is defined in AP 4029. One unit of credit is equal to 54 total student learning hours (lectures, activity, laboratory, and/or outside-of-class work). The minimum unit increment is 0.5 units.

Changing the number of units of an existing course is a substantive change that will require updating any related program outlines, rearticulating the course (if reducing the units), and resubmitting to the Chancellor's Office (for chaptering and a new Course Control Number).

Distance Education Approval: Any course for which a portion of instruction is to be provided through distance education must receive approval for each DE modality. Please see Chapter 5 of the Curriculum Handbook for a more detailed definition of these modalities. Faculty may propose a course for more than one DE modality. Courses approved for Emergency Only

authorization will only be offered through distance education in the case of a natural disaster or other emergency condition that shuts down the campus, as defined in [title 5 §58146](#).

### 6.5.5   Course Content

**Student Learning Outcomes:** Course SLOs are measurable and observable actions that a student will perform in order to demonstrate the skills and knowledge they gained from the course. SLOs should be formatted as a numbered list starting with a verb to complete the sentence: "Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to…."

Unless a set of specific SLOs are required by an outside accrediting body, it is recommended that faculty limit the number of outcomes to those that can be reasonably assessed and to make sure outcomes are specific and measurable. For more details and advice on writing SLOs, please consult with the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Coordinator.

**Course Objectives:** Course objectives are more comprehensive and discipline-specific goals of the course that should help prepare a student to meet the SLOs. They should serve as a bridge between the content, methods of instruction, and outcomes. Objectives should be formatted as a numbered list starting with a verb to complete the sentence: "Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to…." For examples and a more detailed description of the relationship between objectives and SLOs, please see the ASCCC's [recommendations](#).

**Course Content:** List the course content in outline form with major headings and minor subheadings (1., a., i., etc.) The outline should be detailed enough to give a clear picture of the topics covered, but not so lengthy as to limit instructors' ability to interpret the material. A page is fairly typical. The content listed in the course outline is required to be covered by all faculty teaching the course unless it is marked as optional. However, the listed content does not limit instructors from going beyond the topics in the outline.

**Methods of Instruction:** Methods of instruction describe the specific learning activities and environment of the course, with a focus on what the students will be doing. This list does not need to be comprehensive but should include discipline-appropriate methods that support the specific course content, objectives, and student learning outcomes. Faculty have the academic freedom to select instructional methods to best suit their individual teaching styles. The teaching methodologies used by each instructor are to be consistent with, but not limited by, the types and examples listed in the course outline. For more specific details and examples, please see the ASCCC's [recommendations](#).

**Online Adaptation of Methods of Instruction:** Explain how the methods of instruction will be adapted for any portions of the course offered through distance education. Although all sections of a course must meet the same standards of course quality and support the same objectives, well designed online courses should adjust to the specific technologies and student learning needs of each modality. As in the examples above, the focus should be on describing

the activities the student will be doing that lead to learning. This list does not need to be comprehensive but should offer instructors teaching the course for the first time a good sense of effective online teaching methods for the particular discipline and course content.

Online Contact Types: Federal and state regulations require that courses conducted through distance education include regular and substantive interaction between the instructor and students either synchronously or asynchronously. Please choose the types of interaction most appropriate to the course.

Methods of Evaluation: The methods of evaluation define how students will demonstrate that they have met the student learning outcomes. These methods should align with the objectives and methods of instruction stated above and include an element of critical thinking. Courses should include authentic assessments that capture a more contextualized understanding of content and provide students a variety of methods to demonstrate their learning. The particular assessments used by each instructor are to be consistent with, but not limited by, the types and examples listed in the course outline. For more specific details and examples, please see the ASCCC's recommendations.

Assignments: Under each of the categories of assignments (Reading, Writing, and/or Other), describe at least two types or examples. Descriptions should be detailed enough to provide a clear understanding of the rigor of student work that is expected in the course and ideally include examples of both formative and summative assignments. The assignments used by each instructor are to be consistent with, but not limited by, the examples listed in the course outline. When writing is part of a sample assignment, indicate expectations for the writing and the length of the assignment. Examples of assignments might also include any supplemental reading beyond the required textbooks (especially if this is a requirement for UC transferability for the subject area). For further details, please see the ASCCC's guidelines.

### 6.5.6 Textbooks and Instructional Materials

List examples of typical college-level textbooks (for degree-applicable courses) or other print or OER sources and any required materials for the course. As a requirement for UC transferability, textbooks must be no more than 7 years old or designated as a classic text. Laboratory science courses must include a clearly identified lab manual. English composition courses must include a writing handbook. For more details, see the UC textbook requirements for transferable courses.

The Curriculum Committee encourages discipline faculty to select textbooks and course materials that include multiple perspectives and diverse representation from varied racial, ethnic, sex, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, religion, age, and abilities perspectives. Open educational resources and low-cost textbooks and materials should be considered when appropriate and feasible. If proposing an OER textbook, list either the ISBN or a stable URL

where the reviewer can find the content. For other considerations surrounding articulation, curriculum review, and OER, please see the ASCCC's [Open Educational Resources Initiative](#).

## 6.6    References and Resources

Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, [Course Identification Numbering System (C-ID)](#).

Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, *[The Course Outline of Record: A Curriculum Reference Guide Revisited](#)* (2017).

Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, *[DEI in Curriculum: Model Principles and Practices](#)* (2022).

Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, [Open Educational Resources Initiative](#).

Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior College (ACCJC), [Accreditation Standards](#)

California Code of Regulations, [title 5 §51006](#) Open Courses.

California Code of Regulations, [title 5 §55000](#) Definitions.

California Code of Regulations, [title 5 §55002](#) Standards and Criteria for Courses.

California Code of Regulations, [title 5 §55002.5](#) Credit Hour Definition.

California Code of Regulations, [title 5 §55003](#) Policies for Prerequisites, Corequisites and Advisories on Recommended Preparation.

California Code of Regulations, [title 5 §55005](#) Publication of Course Standards.

California Code of Regulations, [title 5 §55023](#) Academic Record Symbols and Grade Point Average.

California Code of Regulations, [title 5 §55035](#) Remedial Coursework Limit.

California Code of Regulations, [title 5 §55041](#) Repeatable Courses.

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, *[Credit Course Repetition Guidelines](#)* (2013).

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, [Common Course Numbering Project](#) (2025).

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, *[Guidelines for Title 5 Regulations Section 55003](#)*.

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, *[Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges](#)*, 19th edition (2025).

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, *[Program and Course Approval Handbook](#)*, 8th edition (2023).

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, Supplemental Learning Assistance and Tutoring Regulations and Guidelines.

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, *Taxonomy of Programs Manual* (2023).

Napa Valley College, Administrative Procedure 4029 Hours and Units.

Napa Valley College, Administrative Procedure 4225 Course Repetition.

Napa Valley College, Administrative Procedure 4260 Prerequisites and Corequisites.

Napa Valley College, Policies and Procedures

University of California President's Office, Transfer Course Agreement Regulations by Subject Area.

University of California President's Office, Transfer Course Agreement Textbook Requirements.

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