

# Basic Standards for the Associate Degree

# Setup

- When we review a proposed associate degree, what are we checking for?
- That depends on exactly what sort of associate degree is being proposed.
- Let's suppose that the faculty member is proposing an ordinary associate degree. What determines whether we should approve it?

# Setup

- The state has established some very basic requirements that a student has to live up to before they can be awarded any ordinary associate degree (see Title 5 §55063 - Minimum Requirements for the Associate Degree).
- In this training, let's go over what those basic requirements are.

# Requirement 1

In order to be awarded an ordinary associate degree, the student has to:

- **Complete at least 60 units of degree-applicable coursework.**

What counts as “degree-applicable” coursework?

- The definition is in Title 5 55062 and the PCAH pg 51.
- The vast majority of our credit courses are degree-applicable.
- Some are not, e.g, all of our ESOL courses numbered 250-299 are not degree-applicable.

# Requirement 2

In order to be awarded an ordinary associate degree, the student has to:

- **Complete at least 18 degree-applicable units within a major or area of emphasis.**

What does it mean to complete at least 18 units “within a major”?

- That means completing at least 18 units within a single discipline or a set of related disciplines, e.g., this is what our AS in Analytical Chemistry requires.

What does it mean to complete at least 18 units “within an area of emphasis”?

- “An area of emphasis is considered to be a broader group of courses and may be defined as 18 or more semester units in related fields intended to prepare the student for a single major or related majors at a baccalaureate institution or to prepare a student for a particular field as defined by the community college. Such a degree may be similar to patterns of learning that a student undertakes in the first two years of attendance at a baccalaureate institution in order to prepare for a major, area of emphasis, or field of study” (PCAH 80).
- This is what our AA degrees in Arts and Humanities, and in Social and Behavioral Sciences, require.

This requirement does not impose that much of a constraint, but it does rule out some things, e.g., “GE transfer patterns do not satisfy the requirement for a major or an area of emphasis” (PCAH 82).

# Requirement 3

In order to be awarded an ordinary associate degree, the student has to:

- **Complete at least 18 degree-applicable units of general education coursework in the following areas, with at least 3 units in each area (definitions for these areas are in Title 5 55063):**
  - Natural Sciences
  - Social and Behavioral Sciences
  - Humanities
  - English Composition
  - Communication and Analytical Thinking

Our students meet this requirement by completing the Peralta GE pattern (described in AP 4100, or pgs. 54-55 of the 22-23 BCC Catalog).

# Requirement 4

In order to be awarded an ordinary associate degree, the student has to:

- **Demonstrate competence in reading and written expression, and in mathematics.**
  - The former is demonstrated by completing a course in English at or above the level of Freshman Composition (or by doing something equivalent to that)
  - The latter is demonstrated by completing a course in Mathematics at or above the level of Intermediate Algebra (or by doing something equivalent to that).

Our students meet this requirement by completing the Peralta GE pattern (specifically Area 4a English Composition, and Area 4b Mathematics).

## Requirement 5 (effective fall 2024)

In order to be awarded an ordinary associate degree, the student has to:

- **Complete a transfer-level course of at least 3 units in Ethnic Studies.**

Completing the Peralta GE pattern already requires completing a course of at least 3 units in Ethnic Studies.

But it's not clear yet whether all the courses that we count as Ethnic Studies courses will count as Ethnic Studies courses for the purposes of meeting this requirement.



# Summing Up

In order to earn an ordinary associate degree, the student has to:

- Complete at least 60 degree-applicable units total.
- Complete at least 18 degree-applicable units within a major or area of emphasis.
- Complete at least 18 degree-applicable units of general education coursework (as further specified in Title 5 55063).
- Demonstrate competence in reading and written expression, and in mathematics.
- Complete a transfer-level course of at least 3 units in Ethnic Studies (effective Fall 2024).

So we couldn't approve a degree that did not require at least this much from the student.

However, even if a proposed degree requires this much from the student, that does not automatically mean we should approve it.

What else do we need to see? We'll come back to this next time.