

III. COURSES: STANDARDS AND POLICIES

Overview

The following section contains standards and policies, established in Title 5 regulations and local policies, that are important in course development.

Course Outline of Record (COR)

As defined in Title 5 §55000, a course is “an organized pattern of instruction on a specified subject offered by a community college.” The course outline of record (COR) is the document that clearly lays out the expected content and learning objectives for a course regardless of any faculty member who teaches the course.

- The COR is a legal document that contains required elements outlined in §55002 of Title 5 including elements required by accreditation standards.
- The COR is a legal contract between the faculty, student, and the college.
- The COR establishes the content and rigor of a course and ensures consistency across all offerings of the course.
- The COR serves as the basis for articulation agreements.

To meet the requirements of Title 5 §55002 and accreditation standards, all courses have an official COR with the following components:

- Course title and discipline
- Units/hours
- Grading options
- Description
- Requisites
- Student learning outcomes
- Course objectives
- Course content
- Methods of instruction
- Methods of evaluation
- Reading and writing assignments
- Outside of class assignments
- Course materials

In addition, the State Chancellor’s Office requires the following Management Information System (MIS) data elements when the COR is submitted to the Chancellor’s Office:

- Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) code
- Credit status
- Transfer status
- Basic skills status
- Student Accountability Model (SAM) code (occupational status)
- Course classification code (CB11 – required by SB361 and AB1943)

- Special class status (CB13 – for disabled students Title 5 §56029)
- Prior to college level (CB21 – English/ESL courses prior to college level)
- Funding agency category (CB23 – funding for course development was an Economic Development Grant)
- Program status (CB24 – stand alone or in a program, AB1943)

**For detailed guidance on developing a COR, see the [RCCD Curriculum Handbook \(RCCDCH\) Part 2](#).*

Credit Courses

Credit courses are divided into two categories: degree credit and non-degree credit.

1. A degree credit course is one of the following types:

- All lower division courses accepted toward the baccalaureate degree by UC or CSU.
- Courses accepted for transfer to the UC or CSU systems.
- Courses within a TOP Code designated as vocational, which are part of a state approved CTE program.
- English composition or reading courses not more than one level below the first transfer level course.
- All mathematics courses above and including Elementary Algebra.
- Credit courses in English or mathematics taught in or on behalf of other departments that are at a level comparable to transferable freshman composition or comparable to Elementary Algebra.

2. A non-degree credit course is one of the following types:

- Basic skills courses.
- Courses designed to help students succeed in degree credit courses that integrate basic skills instruction throughout and assign grades partly upon the demonstrated mastery of those skills (e.g., support course for transfer level English and math).
- Pre-collegiate CTE preparation courses designed to provide foundational skills for students preparing for entry into degree-applicable CTE courses or programs.
- Essential career technical instruction for which meeting the standards of an associate degree is neither necessary nor required.
- “Stand alone” courses – not part of a degree, certificate, or GE pattern.

References

- [Title 5 §55000](https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California) (<https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California>)
- [Title 5 §55002](#)

Noncredit Courses

Noncredit courses are concerned primarily with skill attainment rather than grades or units. A noncredit course is required to fall within one of the ten instructional areas:

- English as a Second Language (ESL)
- Citizenship
- Basic Skills

- Health and Safety
- Disability
- Parenting
- Home Economics
- Older Adult Education
- Short-term Vocational
- Workforce Preparation

There are two important differences between noncredit and credit courses:

- Noncredit CORs list total contact hours instead of units.
- Noncredit courses are repeatable (unlike most credit courses).

References

- [Title 5 §58007 \(https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California\)](https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California)

Mirrored Courses

Mirrored courses are credit and noncredit courses that have identical CORs, except for credit status. After completion of a noncredit course, a student may seek to receive credit for the objectives achieved by implementing the Credit by Examination local policy.

References

- [Title 5 §55002 \(https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California\)](https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California)
- [Title 5 §55050](#)

Cross-Listed Courses

Cross-listing allows a course to be placed in more than one discipline. If the content of a course falls within the expertise of more than one discipline, then the course may be offered as two separate cross-listed courses (e.g., both PHI-32 and MAT-32 are identical courses on Logic). The following guidelines on cross-listed courses apply:

- Cross-listed courses must have identical course outlines of record (COR).
- Any modification to a cross-listed course must have the approval/collaboration from all disciplines on the cross-listed courses.
- Modifications to cross-listed courses must go through the curriculum process simultaneously in order to maintain identical CORs.
- Cross-listed courses are submitted to the Chancellor's Office Curriculum Inventory (COCI) as separate courses.

Cross-Discipline Courses

Cross-discipline allows a course to be taught by faculty in more than one discipline. If the content of a course falls within the expertise of more than one discipline, then the COR may list the additional discipline. Not to be confused with cross-listed courses, the cross-discipline course resides in one discipline only. For example, ENG -91 has a cross-discipline with Reading and ESL, so it may be taught by any faculty in those two disciplines, as well as English.

additional times, for a total of three enrollments. Failing grades and withdrawals from the course count as enrollments. There are very few exceptions to the regulation. Military withdrawal (MW) is one of the few. For detailed information on repetition consult the reference documents below.

References

- [Title 5 §55042 \(https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California\)](https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California)
- AP 4225 <https://www.rccd.edu/administration/board/New Board Policies/4225BPAP.pdf>
- AP 4228 <https://www.rccd.edu/administration/board/New Board Policies/4228AP.pdf>

Articulation

Articulation is the process by which one college agrees to accept a similar course taught at another college for credit. Many California community college courses are designed to transfer to California's public four-year universities (CSUs and UCs) as well as to other in-state and out-of-state four-year colleges. Courses may articulate at three different levels:

- As elective credit toward a baccalaureate degree.
- Towards a general education requirement on the CSU-GE and/or IGETC transfer patterns.
- To meet a lower-division major requirement.

Courses intended for transfer and that have gone through the curriculum approval process are not automatically articulated. After curriculum approval, discipline faculty should contact the articulation officer (AO) to request the course be submitted for the appropriate articulation.

References

- BP 4050 <https://www.rccd.edu/administration/board/New Board Policies/4050BPAP.pdf>
- AP 4050 <https://www.rccd.edu/administration/board/New Board Policies/4050BPAP.pdf>

Prerequisites, Corequisites, Advisories, and Limitation on Enrollment

Prerequisites or corequisites may be established for a course for only one of the following purposes:

- The prerequisite or corequisite is expressly required or expressly authorized by statute or regulation.
- The prerequisite or corequisite will assure that a student has the skills, concepts, and/or information needed to receive a satisfactory grade for the course.
- The prerequisite or corequisite is needed to protect the health or safety of the student or others.

Briefly, there are two methods (level of scrutiny) for establishing requisites and advisories:

1. Content Review Alone. The requisite is determined to have a significant impact on student success by review of the course outline of record of the requisite course and the target course.
2. Content Review with Statistical Validation. With the assistance from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, data is obtained verifying the requisite has a significant impact on student success.

IV. COURSE APPROVAL PROCESSES

Overview

Any faculty member, or an administrator or community leader working in collaboration with a faculty member, may originate a course proposal. The following course approval processes were developed to allow for each college to have independent curriculum while maintaining uniformity in district-wide curriculum.

Course Development

Any proposed new course should satisfy the five criteria for curriculum development endorsed by the State Chancellor's Office:

- Be appropriate to the mission of the college.
- Fulfills a need, such as course for a degree, certificate, or transfer.
- Designed to effectively meet the defined objectives and outcomes.
- Adequate resources exist at the college to offer the course.
- Complies with Title 5 regulations and accreditation standards.

Also, the new course should not be too similar to an already existing course in the district.

**For detailed guidance on developing a Course Outline of Record (COR), see the [RCCDCH Part 2](#).*

New Course Approval Process

Steps in the new course approval process:

1. **Proposal submission**
 - The originator submits the proposal to the discipline for review.
 - Members of the discipline from all the colleges will have the opportunity to view the course proposal and make comments.
 - For Honors courses, the proposal is sent to the honors committee for review.
 - For CTE courses, the appropriate dean or vice president of career-technical education will ensure the appropriate occupational advisory committee has reviewed the proposal.
2. **Discipline approval (10-day hold)**
 - The vote of the discipline is recorded and attached to the proposal.
 - If the course is a college-specific course (offered at only one college) the proposal only needs the discipline approval from the college offering the course.
 - If the course is a shared course (offered at more than one college) the proposal must have support from the majority of the colleges offering the course. One vote shall represent the majority vote of the discipline at each college.
3. **Department approval**
 - The vote of the department is recorded and attached to the proposal.
 - If the course is a college-specific course (offered at only one college) the proposal only needs the department approval from the college offering the course. The remaining college department chairs would enter N/A at this level in Curricunet.

4. Administrative review (2-day hold)
 - Administrative review for resource impact.
5. Technical review committee approval
 - If any technical problems are found, the proposal is sent back to the originator for edits.
6. College curriculum committee approval
 - If the course is a college-specific course the proposal is an information item for the other colleges.
 - If the course is a shared course the proposal needs approval from the majority of the colleges offering the course.
 - The proposal is made available to the articulation officer, representative librarian, and Dean of Institutional Reporting.
7. District curriculum committee approval
 - If the course is a college-specific course the proposal is an information item for the district curriculum committee.
 - If the course is a shared course the proposal needs approval from the district curriculum committee.
8. Board of Trustees approval
 - District Education Services submits the proposal to the Board of Trustees for approval.
9. State Chancellor's Office approval
 - The course is entered into COCI and receives a Course Basic (CB) number.
10. Implementation by Educational Services
 - The course may now be placed in the following catalog and scheduled.

Course Major Modification Approval Process

A major modification to an existing course is a change in the course outline of record to any of the following:

- Course title or number
- Course description
- Number of hours or units
- Requisites or entry skills
- SLOs or objectives
- Course content

Steps in the major modification approval process:

1. Proposal submission
 - The originator submits the proposal to the discipline for review.
 - Members of the discipline from all the colleges will have the opportunity to view the course proposal and make comments.
 - For Honors courses, the proposal is sent to the honors committee for review.
 - For CTE courses, the appropriate dean or vice president of career-technical education will ensure the appropriate occupational advisory committee has reviewed the proposal.
2. Discipline approval (10-day hold)
 - The vote of the discipline is recorded and attached to the proposal.
 - If the course is a college-specific course (offered at only one college) the proposal only needs the discipline approval from the college offering the course.

V. PROGRAM STANDARDS AND POLICIES

Overview

The following section contains standards and policies, established in Title 5 regulations and local policies, that are important in program development.

Credit Programs

As defined in Title 5, § 55000, a program is “an organized sequence of courses leading to a defined objective, a degree, a certificate, a diploma, a license, or transfer to another institution of higher education.” The primary goal of the program may be transfer, workforce preparation, basic skills, civic education, or lifelong learning purposes.

RCCD offers credit programs that fall into 3 basic categories:

- Locally approved certificates
- State approved certificates (known as certificates of achievement)
- Associate degrees
 - Local degrees (AA, AS)
 - Associate degrees for transfer (AA-T, AS-T)

Certificate programs are primarily business and technical programs for students desiring education beyond high school, where transfer is not the primary goal. Credit certificates are locally approved or state approved depending on the total number of units in their pattern:

- Up to 7.5 units requires local approval only.
- 8 to 15.5 units requires local approval with the option for state approval.
- 16 units and above requires state approval.

The associate degree requirements are the following:

- 18 semester units or more in a certificate pattern, major, or area of emphasis.
- Completion one of the three General Education patterns (RCCD GE, CSU breadth, or IGETC).
- Possible elective courses and basic skills competency requirements for a minimum of 60 units of college coursework.

Programs that are state approved will appear by name on a student transcript, whereas locally approved programs do not appear on a student transcript.

**For detailed guidance on how to create or modify a program, see the [RCCDCH Part 2](#).*

References

- [Title 5 §55000](#) (<https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California>)
- [Title 5 §55063](#)
- [Title 5 §55070](#)
- BP 4025 <https://www.rccd.edu/administration/board/New Board Policies/4025BPAP.pdf>