

The Associate Degree: Recent Revisions and Improvements

Presenters

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Why Renewed Interest in the Structure of the Associate Degree?

- Recent changes in Title 5 have reaffirmed the integrity, focus, and standards of an associate degree.
 - Enhanced interest and scrutiny in degree completions from external entities.
 - Opportunity to reflect upon the quality of all our degrees; their value and purpose within the curriculum; and their merit in recognizing students' achievement of a cohesive course of study.
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What Does an Associate Degree Mean to a Student?

- Represents more than an accumulation of units.
- Represents patterns of learning experiences which foster the **ability to think and to communicate** clearly and effectively, to **use mathematics**, to understand the modes of inquiry of the **major disciplines**, to be aware of **other cultures and times**, to achieve insights through experience in thinking about **ethical problems**, and to develop the capacity for **self-understanding**.
- Sufficient **depth in a field of knowledge**.

Components of an Associate Degree

- General Education
- Major or Area of Emphasis
- Competencies
- Local Requirements

T5, §55063

General Education

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**.

Pop Quiz Major or Area of Emphasis

A major or area of emphasis must consist of:

- a. A single discipline
 - b. A minimum of 18 semester (or 27 quarter) units
 - c. No more than 3 disciplines
 - d. Lower division and upper division courses
 - e. None of the above
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Major or Area of Emphasis

- 18 units (or 27 quarter units)
 - *Major*: Concentration in a **single discipline or related disciplines**. If transfer-oriented degree, then the major will prepare students for a specific baccalaureate major.
 - *Area of Emphasis*: **Broader grouping** of courses. Prepares students for a field of study or for a specific major at UC or CSU or may be as broad as social sciences or theme-based interdisciplinary coursework (e.g., Gender Studies).
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Competencies

May only confer the degree upon a student who has demonstrated competence in reading, written expression, and mathematics.

Pop Quiz

Competencies/Requirements

Associate degrees must require all of the following by Fall 2009 **EXCEPT**:

- a. Writing at the level of freshman composition
 - b. Physical education course
 - c. Mathematics at the level of intermediate algebra
 - d. Grade of C or better in all courses required for the major or area of emphasis.
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Local Requirements

- Represents areas of importance to the institution
 - For example:
 - *Physical education course*
 - *Information competency*
 - *Computer literacy*
 - *Cultural pluralism*
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Something Else New!

- Certificate of Achievement in recognition of completion of general education transfer patterns established by:
 - UC (e.g., IGETC)
 - CSU (e.g., CSU Breadth)
 - Accredited **public postsecondary institutions in adjacent states** which award the baccalaureate degree

T5, §55070

Pop Quiz What's New Recap

Recent changes to Title 5 affecting the associate degree include all of the following **EXCEPT**:

- a. Allowing colleges to tailor degrees using areas of emphasis
 - b. Strengthening competencies in written expression and mathematics
 - c. Requiring coursework in information literacy
 - d. Strengthening the grade requirement for all courses in the major or area of emphasis
 - e. Adding a certificate of achievement option in transfer general education patterns
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Examples and Opportunity

- Well designed degree with a **major**
- Well designed degree with an **area of emphasis**
- Certificate of Achievement: **General Education Transfer Pattern**

Opportunity to re-examine your associate degrees to ensure quality, academic integrity, and purpose.

Are your degrees meeting a compelling need?

Transfer prep

Career prep

Community need

Academic interest

Questions???

THANK YOU!
