

An Academic Senate
Position Paper
GENERAL EDUCATION MODEL CRITERIA
FOR THE ASSOCIATE DEGREE
ADOPTED SPRING, 1981

Title 5 requires that the 15 semester units of general education mandated for the associate degree include at least one course in each of the following areas: natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and learning skills. A course, to fulfill the general education requirement, must satisfy both general education and area requirements. The Education Policy Committee recommends the following criteria.

- (1) **Natural sciences.** Courses in the sciences are those courses which study the physical universe, its life forms, and its natural phenomena. To satisfy the general education requirement in natural sciences, a course should help the student develop an appreciation and understanding of scientific method, require participation in laboratory activities or field studies, and encourage an understanding of the relationships between science and other human activities. Such courses would include introductory courses in general physical science, chemistry, physics, biology, astronomy, meteorology, geology, oceanography, and other scientific disciplines.
- (2) **Social sciences.** Courses in the social sciences are those courses which study people as members of society. To satisfy the general education requirement in social sciences, a course should help the student develop an awareness of the methods of inquiry used by the social sciences, stimulate critical thinking about how people act and have acted in response to their societies, and promote appreciation of how societies and social sub-groups operate. Such courses would include introductory courses in sociology, economics, history, political science, and related disciplines, and some courses in psychology and anthropology.
- (3) **Humanities.** Courses in the humanities are those courses which study the cultural activities and artistic expressions of human beings. To satisfy the general education requirement in the humanities, a course should 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 in artistic and cultural creation and help the student develop aesthetic understanding and an ability to make value judgments. Such courses would include introductory or general-interest courses in art, music, religion, and literature, and some courses in philosophy and foreign languages.
- (4) **Learning skills.** The Educational Policy Committee recommends the following specific requirements in English and mathematics.
 - (a) **English and speech.** At least one course of no fewer than 3 semester units which

emphasizes clear and accurate communication in standard written English should be required. Either a baccalaureate-level (transfer) English composition course or a course perfecting the following skills:**(1) Selection of a controlling idea appropriate to the given writing task, (2) the coherent development of that idea to a reasoned conclusion, (3) use of sentences that demonstrate some structural variety and that contain language appropriate to the audience and the purpose, and (4) control of the conventions of standard written English (relative freedom from such errors as fragments, run-together sentences, faulty agreement and improper pronoun reference) and of mechanics (capitalization, spelling and punctuation).

Any course below this level should be considered remedial and subject to a limitation of units of remedial work which can be applied to the associate degree. A committee designated by the local faculty senate should certify the level of any course offered to meet this requirement. The student's choice of course should be based, if possible, on a combination of counseling, academic advisement, placement testing, and the student's goals.

One course of at least 3 semester units which emphasizes clear and accurate communication in standard spoken English may be used to fulfill additional units in this area.

- (b) Mathematics. At least one course of no fewer than 3 semester units with skills in arithmetic as a prerequisite should be required. These prerequisite skills would include proficiency in arithmetical operations with whole numbers, fractions, decimals, percent, and measurement and metrics: or comparable accomplishment in skills beyond arithmetic may be established by examination or through high school articulation agreements.

The courses satisfying this requirement need not be of baccalaureate-level and ordinarily would be selected from the standard mathematics sequence; e.g., beginning algebra, but could be terminal courses designed to expose students to abstract thought and to equip them with suitable quantitative skills, such as statistical treatment of data, elements of algebra and geometry of common use, rudiments of personal accounting, and so on.

Any course taken to prepare to meet this requirement should be considered remedial and subject to a limitation of units of remedial work which can be applied to the associate degree. A committee designated by the local faculty senate should certify the level of any course offered to meet this requirement.

**The writing skills listed in this paragraph are the criteria included in the "Statewide Standard for Entrance to Freshman Composition Courses" adopted by the CPEC Blue Ribbon Subcommittee on Writing Standards (an intersegmental English faculty committee) and subsequently adopted by the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC).