Victor Valley Community College District
Administrative Procedure 4025
Philosophy and Criteria for Degrees and General Education

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The philosophy and criteria for the associate degree and general education should address the considerations contained in the references listed above. These include, but are not limited to:

- The programs of the District are consistent with the institutional mission, purposes, demographics and economics of its community.

At Victor Valley College, degree and general education programs shall also be responsive to the educational needs of the communities served by the District and shall support student learning, achievement, transfer, employment, personal development, and responsible participation in a diverse society.

1. Philosophy of the Associate Degree

The philosophy and criteria regarding the associate degree references the policy of the Board of Governors that the associate degree symbolizes a successful attempt to lead students through patterns of learning experiences designed to develop certain capabilities and insight, including:

- the ability to think and communicate clearly and effectively orally and in writing;
- use mathematics;
- understand the modes of inquiry of the major disciplines;
- be aware of other cultures and times;
- achieve insights gained through experience in thinking about ethical problems; and to develop the capacity for self-understanding.

The associate degree at Victor Valley College represents more than the completion of a prescribed number of units. It signifies that a student has completed a coherent program of study designed to develop breadth of knowledge, depth in a chosen field, and the intellectual and practical skills necessary for lifelong learning.

Associate degree programs shall include both general education and focused study in a major or area of emphasis. Together, these components provide breadth of knowledge and depth of learning appropriate to the degree.

2. Philosophy of the Bachelor's Degree

The philosophy and criteria regarding the baccalaureate degree should address the considerations contained in the references listed above and reference the District's baccalaureate degree goals, which shall include addressing unmet local and regional workforce needs.

The bachelor's degree at Victor Valley College builds upon the foundation of the associate degree by providing advanced study in a specific discipline. It signifies that a student has achieved a higher level of critical thinking, specialized knowledge, applied learning, and professional competency.

Bachelor's degree programs emphasize the ability to analyze complex problems, engage in research or professional practice, apply and synthesize specialized knowledge, and communicate effectively within a discipline.

Programs may include applied learning experiences such as research, internships, fieldwork, clinical experiences, capstone projects, or other forms of professional practice aligned with workforce and educational expectations.

3. Philosophy of General Education

The philosophy and criteria regarding general education references the policy of the Board of Governors that general education should lead to better self-understanding, including:

- General education is designed to introduce students to the variety of means through which people comprehend the modern world.
- General education introduces the content and methodology of the major areas of knowledge and provides an opportunity for students to develop intellectual skills, information technology facility, affective and creative capabilities, social attitudes, and an appreciation for cultural diversity.

At Victor Valley College, general education supports the development of essential competencies, including:

- Effective written and oral communication;
- Critical thinking and analytical reasoning;
- Mathematical and quantitative reasoning;
- Information and technological literacy;
- Cultural, social, historical, and global awareness;
- Ethical reasoning and responsible citizenship;
- Affective and creative capabilities; and
- Personal growth and self-understanding.

General education provides a foundation for informed judgment, intellectual curiosity, continued learning, and responsible participation in the community. At the bachelor's degree level, general education and upper-division coursework further develop advanced analytical, research, communication, and professional competencies.

4. Breadth and Depth of Learning

All associate and bachelor's degrees awarded by Victor Valley College shall include both:

- Breadth of knowledge achieved through general education; and
- Depth of knowledge achieved through concentrated study in a major or designated field of study.

Bachelor's degrees shall additionally include upper-division coursework that demonstrates advanced learning, synthesis of knowledge, and application within a discipline or professional field.

5. Criteria for Degrees and General Education

Courses and programs designated as meeting associate degree, bachelor's degree, or general education requirements shall:

- Be consistent with the mission, purposes, and educational goals of the District;
- Reflect the educational, demographic, and economic needs of the communities served by the District;
- Demonstrate appropriate academic rigor, scope, and depth for the degree level;
- Support the competencies and learning outcomes described in this procedure;

- Contribute to a coherent and integrated educational experience;
- Be reviewed and approved through the District's established curriculum and shared governance processes; and
- Comply with applicable state law, regulations, accreditation standards, and District policies and procedures.

6. Alignment with Standards

All associate and bachelor's degree and general education requirements shall be consistent with:

- The California Education Code;
- Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations;
- Policies and regulations adopted by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges;
- ACCJC Accreditation Standards;
- The mission and educational goals of Victor Valley College; and
- Applicable District board policies and administrative procedures.

7. Curriculum Oversight and Shared Governance

The development, review, and revision of degree and general education requirements are the responsibility of the Curriculum Committee through the District's established curriculum approval and shared governance processes.

Faculty, acting through the Curriculum Committee and other appropriate collegial consultation processes, maintain primary responsibility for recommendations concerning curriculum, degree requirements, and general education.

Specific graduation requirements for associate and bachelor's degrees are outlined in AP 4100, Graduation Requirements for Degrees and Certificates, and in the Victor Valley College catalog.

8. Institutional Learning Outcomes and Continuous Improvement

The competencies developed through general education and degree programs are reflected in the District's Institutional Learning Outcomes.

The District assesses student achievement of these outcomes through established learning-outcomes assessment, program review, and institutional-effectiveness processes. Assessment results are used to support continuous improvement in curriculum, instruction, student services, and student learning and achievement.