Faculty Guide to Course Development, Revision, Transferability, and General Education

Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to assist faculty in developing new courses and revising existing courses while considering statewide transfer, articulation, and general education expectations.

Faculty are the disciplinary experts and retain primary responsibility for determining course content, objectives, assignments, methods of evaluation, and academic rigor. Curriculum is approved locally through the curriculum committee, the governing board, and the Chancellor's Office. External systems such as C-ID, UCTCA, and Cal-GETC should inform curriculum development, but they should not replace faculty expertise or local curriculum needs. When designing or revising curriculum, faculty should consider three major systems:

1. C-ID (Course Identification Numbering System)
2. UCTCA (University of California Transfer Course Agreement)
3. Cal-GETC (California General Education Transfer Curriculum)

These three systems serve different purposes and should be reviewed in sequence during the curriculum development process. Common Course Numbering (CCN) also applies to some courses and is described under C-ID.

Understanding the Three Systems

C-ID

The Course Identification Numbering System (C-ID) is a statewide faculty-driven system used to establish course comparability across California Community Colleges.

C-ID supports:

- Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADT)
- Course articulation
- Common Course Numbering
- Statewide course comparability

Key Principle

C-ID is a baseline, not the final Course Outline of Record. A descriptor establishes the minimum expectations for:

- Content

- Objectives
- Units
- Prerequisites
- Corequisites
- Academic rigor

Faculty may exceed descriptor requirements when appropriate to meet local program, disciplinary, transfer, or workforce needs.

Understanding Transferability: CSU vs UC

When developing or revising curriculum, faculty should understand that transferability is evaluated differently by the California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) systems.

CSU Transferability

For California Community Colleges, CSU transferability is designated by the college during its own local curriculum approval process and recorded in the Chancellor's Office Curriculum Inventory (COCI). Faculty should confirm with the Articulation Officer how the college applies CSU transferability criteria. Chancellor's Office approval of a course does not by itself establish CSU transferability.As a result, faculty typically do not submit courses directly to CSU for transferability review. Instead, faculty should ensure that courses are developed at the appropriate transfer level and meet applicable Chancellor's Office requirements.

UC Transferability

UC transferability is reviewed separately through the University of California Transfer Course Agreement (UCTCA) process. Unlike the CSU system, a course is not automatically transferable to the University of California simply because it is CSU transferable or because it is approved by the Chancellor's Office.

Courses intended for UC transfer must be submitted for UC review and approved through the UCTCA process. This process is completed by the institution's Articulation Officer.

The University of California evaluates courses according to its own standards, including:

- Degree applicability
- Academic rigor
- College-level reading and writing expectations
- Critical thinking requirements
- Discipline-specific standards
- Appropriate course materials and assignments

Why This Matters

Faculty often assume that transferability is a single designation. In reality, transferability should be viewed as a progression:

1. Step 1: Determine whether the course is appropriate for transfer-level credit and CSU transferability.
2. Step 2: If UC transferability is desired, ensure the course satisfies UCTCA requirements and is submitted for UC review.
3. Step 3: If General Education certification is desired, pursue Cal-GETC review after UCTCA approval has been obtained.

The following table demonstrates the relationship between the systems:

Course Status	CSU transferable	UC transferable	Cal-GETC Eligible
Transfer-level course approved by Chancellor's Office	Transfer-level course approved by the college (CSU transferability designated locally)	Not necessarily	No
UCTCA approved course	Yes	Yes	Not Necessarily
Cal-GETC approved course	Yes	Yes	Yes

For this reason, faculty should design curriculum with the highest intended level of transferability in mind from the beginning of the development process. Doing so reduces the need for future curriculum revisions and maximizes transfer opportunities for students.

Cal-GETC

Cal-GETC establishes lower-division general education requirements for students transferring to the California State University and University of California systems. Cal-GETC evaluates whether a transferable course fulfills General Education learning outcomes within one of the approved General Education areas. To be considered, a course must be both CSU transferable and UC transferable (Cal-GETC Standards v1.4, §5.3).

A course may be:

- C-ID approved but not Cal-GETC approved.
- UCTCA approved but not Cal-GETC approved.

Each review process evaluates different criteria.

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Step 1: Using C-ID During Curriculum Development

Locating a Descriptor

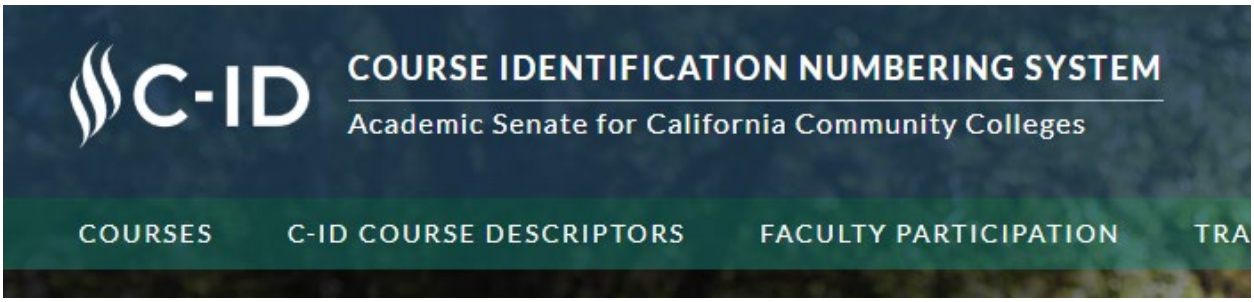
Faculty should begin by determining whether a course aligns with an existing C-ID descriptor.

Visit:

https://c-idsystem.org

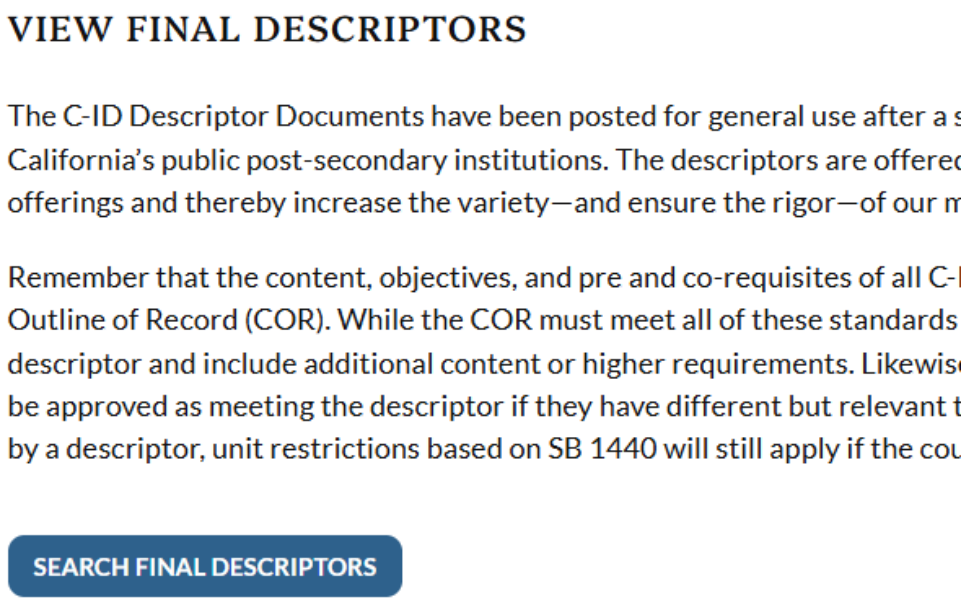
Select:

C-ID Course Descriptors



Then:

Search Final Descriptors

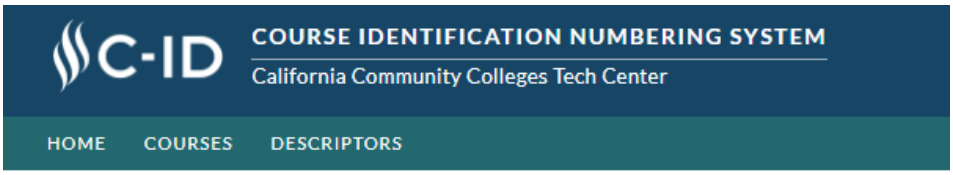


Choose:

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- Discipline
- Descriptor

Review the most current approved descriptor before developing or revising curriculum.





Content

The Course Outline of Record must address all content required by the descriptor. Faculty may add additional topics and content beyond the descriptor requirements. Required content should not be omitted simply because the discipline wishes to focus on a particular specialty area. Think of the descriptor as the minimum set of topics that must be addressed.

Objectives

Course objectives should clearly reflect the knowledge and skills identified within the descriptor. Faculty should verify alignment between:

- Course objectives
- Course content
- Assignments
- Methods of evaluation

All descriptor objectives should be represented within the COR.

Units

The COR should meet or exceed the minimum unit value identified by the descriptor. If a descriptor specified a minimum of 3 units, a local course of 3 or 4 units meets the expectation. A 2-unit local course does not.

Prerequisites and Corequisites

Prerequisites and corequisites should align with descriptor expectations. A local course may be:

- Equivalent to the descriptor
- More restrictive than the descriptor

A local course generally should not be less restrictive than the descriptor.

Example

If the Descriptor Prerequisite is ENGL C1000, local COR may include ENGL C1000, C1000H, C1000E, plus an additional requirement. What would not be acceptable is no prerequisite.

Textbooks

C-ID descriptors often include textbook examples. Faculty are not required to use the texts listed in a descriptor, unless the descriptor indicates otherwise. Instead, faculty should select textbooks that:

- Support course objectives
- Reflect current disciplinary standards
- Demonstrate transfer-level rigor

Publication Date Expectations

Textbooks should generally be published within seven years of the date the course is submitted to UC for review. A text that was current at COR approval may be outdated by the time the course is submitted.

Classic or seminal texts may remain appropriate regardless of publication date. However, faculty should typically include at least one current textbook published within the seven-year expectation.

Methods of Evaluation

Methods of evaluation listed in a descriptor are examples and not mandated requirements, unless the descriptor indicates otherwise. Faculty may use other methods of evaluation provided they:

- Assess required objectives
- Demonstrate equivalent rigor
- Support student achievement of course outcomes

Examples may include:

- Exams
- Essays
- Research papers
- Projects
- Presentations
- Portfolios
- Laboratory activities

Step 2: Reviewing UCTCA Requirements

If a course is intended for transfer to the University of California, faculty should review UCTCA requirements during curriculum development. A common misconception is that C-ID approval automatically results in UC transferability. It does not. C-ID and UCTCA are separate review processes with different evaluation criteria.

Where to Find UCTCA Guidance

Visit:

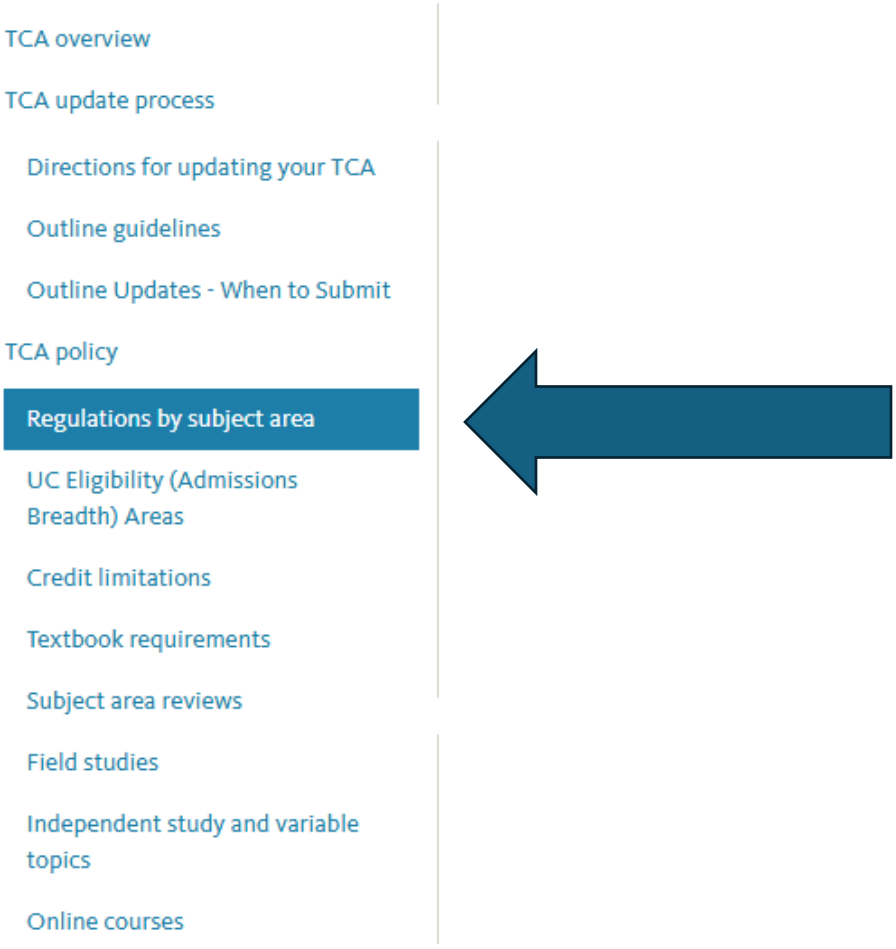
https://www.ucop.edu/transfer-articulation/transfer-course-agreements/tca-policy/

Select:

Regulations by Subject Area

Faculty should review all applicable discipline-specific guidance before developing or revising curriculum. The guidelines pertain to lower-division courses being evaluated for transfer credit to the University of California. These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the general criteria contained within UC's Statement of Transfer Credit Practices: https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/preparing-transfer-students/transfer-credit-practice.html

A course that is comparable to a lower-division course offered at one or more UC campuses is transferable. Alternately, a course may be transferable if it is appropriate for a university degree in terms of depth, scope, and rigor.



UC Eligibility (Admissions Breadth) Areas

Faculty should review expectations regarding:

- College-level reading
- College-level writing
- Critical thinking
- Analytical reasoning
- Transfer-level rigor

Questions to Ask:

- Does the course require critical analysis?
- Does the course emphasize higher-order thinking?
- Does the course reflect university-level expectations?

Credit Limitations

Some disciplines have restrictions related to:

- Duplicate content
- Course sequences
- Activity-based courses
- Similar courses

Questions to Ask:

- Does the course substantially overlap another course?
- Could duplicate credit issues arise?
- Are sequence requirements being considered?

Textbook Requirements

UCTCA reviews textbook appropriateness as part of transfer-level rigor. The "Textbook requirements" link provides more information for specific disciplines such as lab courses, English composition, and history. Faculty should ensure texts are:

- Collegiate in scope
- Academically rigorous
- Current within the discipline
- Appropriate for transfer-level learning

Subject Area Reviews

Many disciplines have additional requirements beyond general transferability standards. Faculty should carefully review any discipline-specific guidance applicable to their subject area. Special considerations may apply to:

- Arts
- Humanities
- Mathematics
- Social Sciences
- Physical Sciences
- Biological Sciences
- Career Education disciplines
- Foreign Languages

These requirements should be reviewed before curriculum is finalized.

Field Studies

Field study courses must maintain academic rigor. Faculty should demonstrate:

- Clear academic objectives
- Structured assignments

- Appropriate evaluation methods
- Alignment between field activities and course outcomes

Participation alone is generally insufficient for assessment.

Independent Study and Variable Topics

These courses receive additional scrutiny during UC review. Faculty should clearly identify:

- Learning objectives
- Assignments
- Contact expectations
- Methods of evaluation
- Student outcomes

Online Courses

Online courses are held to the same standards as face-to-face courses. Faculty should ensure:

- Regular and substantive interaction (the federal term; Title 5 uses “regular effective contact”, and both apply)
- Meaningful student engagement
- Transfer-level rigor
- Appropriate assessment practices

The instructional modality should not reduce academic expectations. A distance education addendum to the COR is required and is approved separately from the course itself.

Step 3: Reviewing Cal-GETC Requirements

Faculty seeking General Education approval should review the current Cal-GETC Standards before developing or revising curriculum. Cal-GETC evaluates whether a transferable course fulfills General Education learning outcomes within one of the approved General Education areas.

Cal-GETC Is an Evolving Standard

Unlike some curriculum requirements that remain relatively stable, Cal-GETC standards are periodically revised. Faculty should understand that Cal-GETC guidance continues to evolve as transfer policies are refined. At the time of this guide, colleges are utilizing Cal-GETC Standards Version 1.4 approved May 15, 2026.

UCTCA Approval Must Come First

Before a course can be considered for Cal-GETC certification, the course must first be approved through UCTCA. If a course is not UC transferable, it is not eligible for Cal-GETC review. Therefore, faculty should address UCTCA requirements before pursuing Cal-GETC approval.

Review Timeline

Colleges submit courses for Cal-GETC review through the Articulation Officer. UC and CSU review submissions jointly each year; decisions are announced each spring, and approved courses take effect the following fall. Faculty should confirm submission deadlines with the Articulation Officer before planning a course's start date.

Understanding the Purpose of the Cal-GETC Standards

The Cal-GETC Standards serve as the official guidance document used to evaluate whether a course is appropriate for General Education certification. The guide provides information regarding:

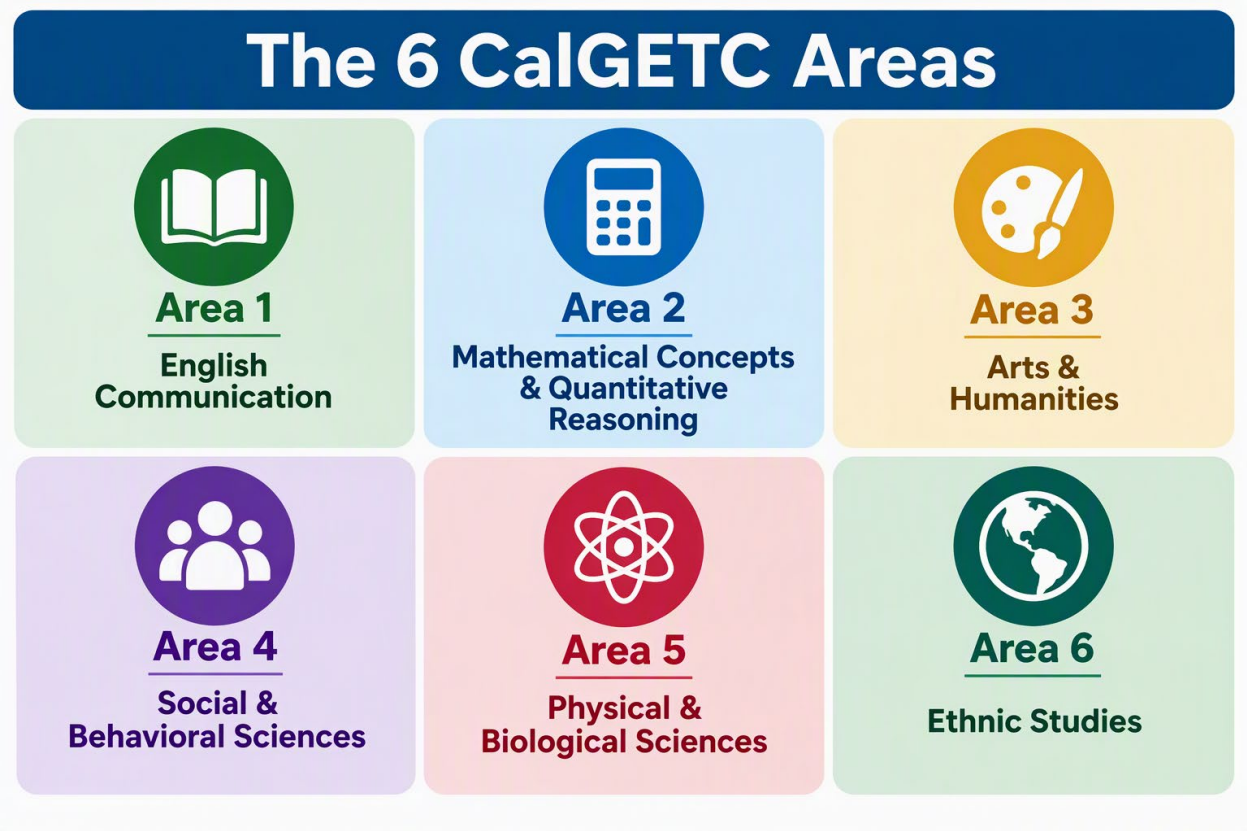
- Courses appropriate for General Education
- Courses not appropriate for General Education
- Area-specific standards
- Expected rigor
- Learning outcomes
- Course review criteria

Faculty should review these sections carefully before developing a proposal.

Subject Areas and Course Guidelines

This section identifies the standards used to evaluate whether a course qualifies for a specific General Education area. Faculty should review these requirements before curriculum is finalized.

The Six Cal-GETC Areas



Faculty Should Review

For the specific area being requested, faculty should examine:

- Course content expectations
- Breadth and depth requirements
- Learning outcomes
- Critical thinking expectations
- Methods of inquiry
- Evaluation standards
- Rigor requirements

The COR should clearly demonstrate alignment with the requirements of the proposed General Education area.

Local Approval and Faculty Responsibility

Faculty retain primary responsibility for course content and rigor, and the course must still complete the local approval path before any transfer review. In most colleges, that path is curriculum committee recommendation, governing board approval, Chancellor's Office chaptering (recorded in COCI), and then

the Articulation Officer's submissions for UCTCA and Cal-GETC. The Title 5 §55002 standards for courses apply throughout. Please add your college's own steps and timelines.

Questions Faculty Should Ask

C-ID

- Have I reviewed the most recent descriptor?
- Does the COR address all required content?
- Do the objectives align with the descriptor?
- Do units meet or exceed descriptor requirements?
- Are prerequisites and corequisites aligned with the descriptor?

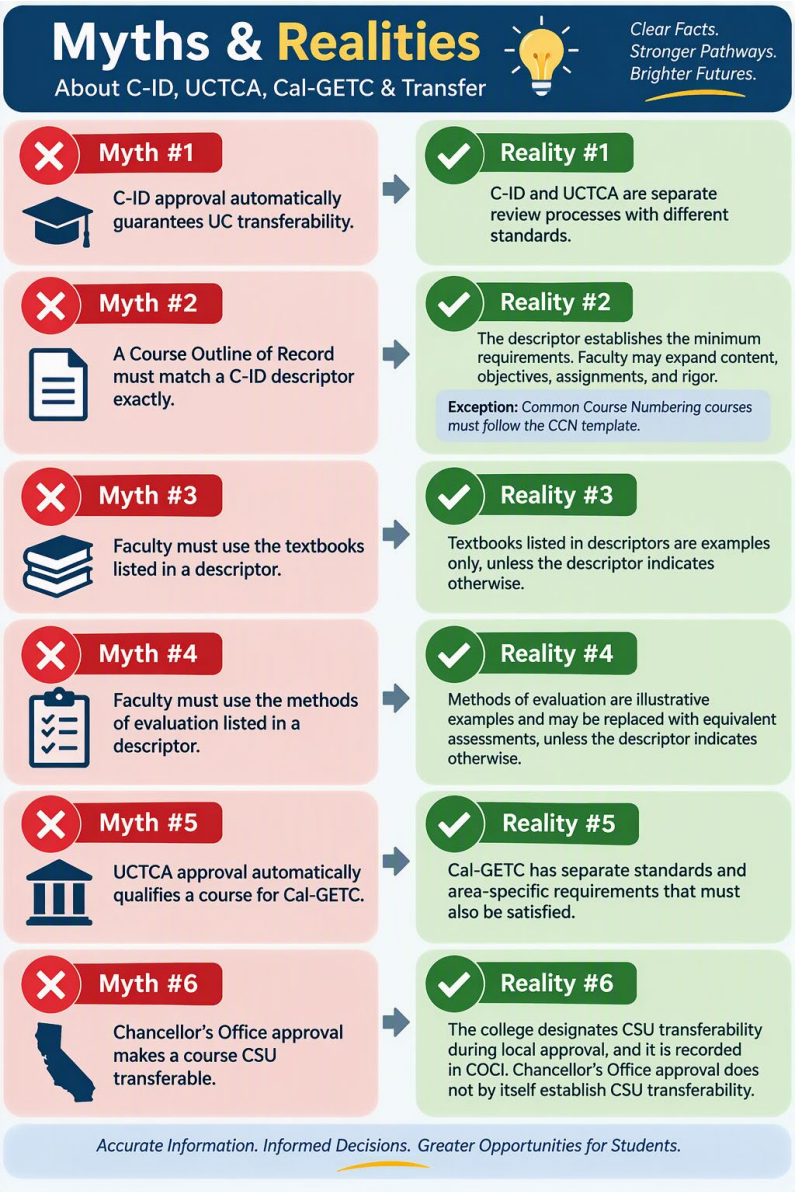
UCTCA

- Have I reviewed Regulations by Subject Area?
- Does the course demonstrate transfer-level rigor?
- Are textbooks appropriate for UC transfer?
- Are discipline-specific requirements addressed?
- Have any credit limitations been considered?

Cal-GETC

- Is the course UCTCA approved?
- Have I reviewed the current Cal-GETC Standards?
- Is the course appropriate for General Education?
- Does the course align with the requested area?
- Do the assignments and assessments demonstrate General Education learning outcomes?

Common Misconceptions



Key Principles

1. Faculty retain primary responsibility for curriculum development.
2. C-ID provides the minimum disciplinary baseline for course comparability.
3. A COR should meet or exceed C-ID expectations.
4. Common Course Numbering courses must follow the CCN template.
5. Transferable courses should be developed with UCTCA requirements in mind.
6. Faculty should review all applicable discipline-specific UC regulations.
7. UCTCA approval should be obtained before seeking Cal-GETC certification.
8. Cal-GETC standards evolve and should always be reviewed in their most current version.
9. The Subject Areas and Course Guidelines section is the most important section of the

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Academic Senate Information Item: 11/05/2026

10. Cal-GETC Standards for faculty seeking General Education approval.
11. Strong curriculum is designed intentionally with C-ID, UCTCA, and Cal-GETC requirements considered from the beginning of the curriculum development process.
12. The best Course Outline of Record balances local faculty expertise, transfer expectations, student success, and General Education outcomes.