

San Luis Obispo County  
Community College District  
Cuesta College

## **AP 4020 Program, Curriculum, and Course Development**

**References:** Title 5 Sections 51021, 51022, 55000 et seq., 55100 et seq.;  
34 Code of Federal Regulations Part 600.2;  
ACCJC Accreditation Standard II.A;  
U.S. Department of Education regulations on the Integrity of Federal  
Student Financial Aid Programs under Title IV of the Higher  
Education Act of 1965, as amended.

### **The Curriculum Committee:**

The Curriculum Committee constitutes the highest-level decision-making body that provides recommendations through the Academic Senate Council to the District Board of Trustees regarding courses and instructional programs. This is a faculty committee, which, with advice from the administration, reviews and recommends course and program additions, modifications, and deletions. The Curriculum Committee is a subcommittee of the Academic Senate Council.

Curriculum Committee membership consists of voting faculty members, representing each instructional division and counseling, plus the Curriculum Chair. Non-voting members include the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Articulation Officer, the DSPS Director, an Admission and Records Technician, the Curriculum Specialist, a Financial Aid Representative, the Workforce Economic Development/Community Programs Director, a Library/Distance Education Representative, an officially appointed representative from the ASCC, and a CCFT representative. After selection by their division, the faculty members of the Curriculum Committee are appointed annually by the President of the Academic Senate, in consultation with the President/Superintendent. The Curriculum Chair is a faculty member that is appointed for a two-year term by the Academic Senate.

### **Subcommittees**

Standing subcommittees include: General Education/Liberal Arts, Distance Education, Diversity Requirement, Course Caps, Minimum Qualifications Discipline Designations, and Health Requirement. The Chair shall appoint additional subcommittees as needed.

### **Recorder**

The recorder is the Curriculum Resource Specialist in the office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The office of the Vice-President of Academic Affairs keeps an official copy of the minutes.

**Approval Criteria:**

The District must document that a proposed program or course meets all of the below criteria before approval.

1. **Appropriateness to Mission:** The stated goals and objectives of the proposed program, or the objectives defined in the Course Outline of Record, are consistent with the mission of the community colleges as established by the Legislature in the Education Code.
2. **Need:** There is a demonstrable need for a course or program that meets the stated goals and objectives, and in the region the college proposes to serve with the program. The proposed new program would not cause harmful competition with any existing program at another college.
3. **Curriculum Standards:** Course Outlines of Record for each course meet all the requirements of Title 5, especially Sections 55002 and 55002.5. The program is designed so that successfully completing the program requirements will enable students to fulfill the program goals and objectives. Courses and programs are integrated, with courses designed to effectively meet their objectives and the goals and objectives of the programs for which they are required. Title 5, section 55130(b)(8)(E), also requires that CTE credit programs must be recommended by CTE Regional Consortia, where applicable. The proposed program or course should also be consistent with requirements of accrediting agencies as applicable.
4. **Adequate Resources:** The District must demonstrate that it has the resources to realistically maintain the program or course at the level of quality described in the proposal. This includes funding for faculty compensation, facilities and equipment, and library or learning resources. Additionally, the District must demonstrate that faculty are available to sustain the proposed required course(s) and to facilitate student success. The District must commit to offering all of the required courses for the program at least once every two years, unless the goals and rationale for the particular program justify a longer time frame as being in the best interests of students.
5. **Compliance:** The design of the program or the course is not in conflict with any law. This includes both state and federal laws, and both statutes and regulations.

**Process for Curriculum Development and/or Modification:**

1. Training opportunities for all persons involved in curriculum development and

- approval processes are offered annually, and upon request.
2. Timelines and deadlines are determined annually, and included on all Curriculum Committee agendas.
  3. All curriculum shall be initiated by faculty. For new courses and programs, consultation with the appropriate Dean ensures that the new course/program fits within the department's program offerings and the College Mission.
  4. The Articulation Officer determines transferability of a course.
  5. All curriculum, new or modified, is submitted via the college's curriculum management system for review, recommended edits, discussion, and approval by the Curriculum Committee. The reviewers check for:
    - a. Overall completeness, clarity, and accuracy
    - b. Accurate numbering and credit status
    - c. Accurate transferability information
    - d. Hour (lecture/laboratory/activity) and unit consistency
    - e. Potential interdepartmental conflicts
    - f. Prerequisite/corequisite/advisory appropriateness
    - g. Consistency between the instructional category specified (lecture/laboratory/activity) and planned classroom activities
    - h. Distance Education Addendum meets College standards
    - i. Appropriate Minimum Qualification Discipline Designation
    - j. Appropriate Course Cap based on AP 4023
    - k. Compliance with Title 5 requirements, the Program and Course Approval Handbook, and current Board policies
  6. Curriculum approved by the Curriculum Committee is then forwarded to the Vice President of Academic Affairs for approval, and presented by the Curriculum Chair to Board of Trustees for consideration and final approval.
  7. After Board approval, courses and programs requiring additional approval are sent to the Chancellor's Office for such approval.
  8. Once a course or program has gone through the above processes, it can be published in the College Catalog and made available to students.

The District shall provide annual certification to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office pertaining to the approval of credit courses and credit programs as required under Title 5 Sections 55100 and 55130.

### **Maintenance of Records:**

A course catalog and inventory is maintained in the District's Banner Information System which serves as the reporting mechanism to the California Community College Management Information System (MIS). The Course Outline of Record (COR) and

program requirements are maintained in the college's curriculum management system. All approved courses and programs are also maintained in the Chancellor's Office Curriculum Inventory. The College Catalog is the official publication of college curriculum. The Schedule of Classes serves as the semester record of courses offered.

Courses and programs are reviewed and updated by faculty in the discipline area regularly. This review occurs, at a minimum, every five years for all courses and instructional programs and every four years for career technical education (CTE) courses and instructional programs as part of the Institutional Program Planning and Review process. Courses and programs are reviewed for their relevance, appropriateness to mission, achievement of learning objectives, currency, continued prerequisite need, and potential for future needs.

Nothing in this AP shall preclude Curriculum Committees from reviewing courses on a more frequent basis in order to meet legally mandated changes, or to reflect the input of advisory committees or, for other reasons related to the maintenance of high quality curriculum.

### **Course Outline of Record:**

#### 1. Legal Definition

The course is described in a course outline of record that shall be maintained in the official curriculum management system and made available to each instructor. For credit courses, the course outline of record shall specify the unit value, the expected number of contact hours, outside-of-class hours, and total student learning hours for the course as a whole; the prerequisites, corequisites, or advisories on recommended preparation (if any) for the course; the catalog description, objectives, and content in terms of a specific body of knowledge. The course outline of record shall also specify types or provide examples of required reading and writing assignments, other outside-of-class assignments, instructional methodology, methods of evaluation, and representative texts. For noncredit courses, the course outline of record shall specify the number of contact hours normally required for a student to complete the course, the catalog description, the objectives, contents in terms of a specific body of knowledge, instructional methodology, examples of assignments and/or activities, and methods of evaluation.

#### 2. Purpose of Course Outline

The course outline is the basis for approval of courses at the local and state level and for articulation review. It also defines the curriculum for which instructors are responsible and guides them in the development of their specific syllabi.

#### 3. Authorship of the Course Outline

- a. Where appropriate regular faculty are available, the Division Chair or Director of the relevant discipline will assign responsibility to develop or revise the course

outline.

- b. Where only temporary part-time faculty are available, the Dean in consultation with the Division Chair or Director will assign responsibility, and will authorize additional compensation where appropriate, to develop or revise the course outline.
- c. Where appropriate college faculty are not available, the Assistant Superintendent/Vice President/ Dean and Division Chair or Director shall recruit a qualified outside consultant to develop or revise the course outline.

The course outline is to be written or revised in consultation with, whenever possible, all Cuesta College faculty who are qualified to teach the course. Other Cuesta College faculty whose courses would be affected by the new or revised course, as well as affected service faculty and staff, should also be consulted whenever possible.

#### 4. Relationship of Each Instructor's Syllabus to the Course Outline

The course outline is a general framework, which sets the standards that individual instructors must meet. It prescribes the objectives and the scope of the course, and it specifies the types or provides examples of course materials and texts, assignments and evaluations to be used in the course. A syllabus, on the other hand, is a specific application that presents each individual instructor's detailed plan for a course section. It normally contains the specific assignments from the selected course material and texts, the exact sequence and time frame for given topics, the teaching methods, and the evaluation methods and standards each instructor employs. These specifics must be consistent with the general types prescribed in the course outline.

#### 5. Specificity and Prescription

A course outline will be specific enough to guide instructors in the development of their courses as well as to guide those who evaluate and assess these courses. It should be general enough, however, to permit instructors freedom to create variations regarding content, methods, and course materials/texts which reflect their own teaching styles and subject expertise as well as meet special student needs.

This freedom to create variations may be restricted only when one or more of the following conditions apply:

- a. Existing licensing or accrediting bodies have dictated such restrictions.
- b. Subsequent courses, for which the course in question is a prerequisite, require a specific knowledge base and/or skill level.
- c. Articulation agreements for the transfer of credits for the course in question require such restrictions.
- d. The faculty in a department or division reach general consensus that such restrictions would best serve the department's, the division's or the college's academic program.

The course outline is the official document of record, and all instructors teaching the course must adhere to it.

6. Dissemination of Course Outline

The course outline must be made available to all instructors teaching a section of the course. The Division Chair or Director (or designee) shall meet with all instructors newly assigned to teach a particular course in order to ensure that each instructor's syllabus (or course design) is consistent with the course outline. This orientation shall include a discussion about the specificity of the course outline, including the selection of any required course material and texts.

7. Documentation File

Each division will establish and maintain a documentation file for every course. This file will contain at minimum one current syllabus from each instructor teaching a section of this course and other relevant materials per instructions in Cuesta College's curriculum handbook regarding course documentation. This file is to be updated at the beginning of each semester.

**Credit Hour Definition:**

Title 5 section 55002.5 establishes the minimum total student work (lecture, laboratory, activity, and/or outside-of-class hours) that is necessary to award one unit of credit. A minimum of 48 semester hours of total student work is required for one unit of credit regardless of term length. A course requiring 96 hours or more total student work shall provide at least 2 units of credit. Cooperative work experience courses shall adhere to the formula of credit hour calculations identified in Title 5 Section 55256.5. Credit for clock hour designated programs shall be awarded consistent with 34 Code of Federal Regulations Part 600.2.

In practice, the number of hours varies among credit courses but is generally within the range of 48-54 hours per unit. This section will define the specific relationship between hours and units at Cuesta College, which has a standard term length of 18 weeks.

1. Hour requirements for one, two, and three units of credit

One unit of credit is 54 hours of total student work (lecture, laboratory, activity, and/or outside-of-class hours). Two units of credit is 108 hours of total student work, and three units of credit is 162 hours of total student work.

2. Minimum unit increment and thresholds

The minimum unit increment is 0.5 units. As a result, the minimum number of units for a course is a multiple of 0.5 units.

The hours of total student work required to reach a unit value are treated as a

threshold. Examples of common thresholds are:

Units	Hour Threshold
0.5	27
1	54
1.5	81
2	108
2.5	135
3	162

If the hours of total student work are between thresholds, then the unit value for the course will be the unit value for the maximum crossed hour threshold. For example, if a course has 120 hours of total student work, then the maximum crossed hour threshold is 108 hours and the unit value would be 2.

### 3. Standard formula (relationship) for hours and units of credit

Courses not classified as cooperative work experience use the following formula for calculating units of credit: Divide the hours of total student work (lecture, laboratory, activity, and/or outside-of-class hours) by 54, then round down to the nearest 0.5 units. Expressed as an equation:

$$\frac{(\text{Total Contact Hours} + \text{Outside of Class Hours})}{54} = \text{Units of Credit}$$

The result of this calculation is then rounded down to the nearest .5 increment. For example, if a course contains 180 hours of total student work (36 lecture, 72 lab, and 72 outside-of-class hours), then the unit calculation is as follows:

$$\frac{36 + 72 + 72}{54} = \frac{180}{54} = 3.33, \text{ which is rounded down to 3 units of credit}$$

The units calculated using this method are recorded in the COR. Definitions for terms used above:

- **Total Contact Hours:** The total time per term that a student is under the direct supervision of an instructor or other qualified employee as defined in §§58050 - 58051. This number is the sum of all contact hours for the course in all calculations categories, including lecture, recitation, discussion, seminar, laboratory, activity, clinical, studio, practica, to-be-arranged, etc. Contact hours for courses may include hours assigned to more than one instructional category, e.g. lecture and laboratory, lecture and activity, lecture and clinical.

- Outside-of-class Hours: Hours students are expected to engage in course work outside of the classroom. Federal and state regulations for credit hour calculations are based on the total time a student spends on learning, including outside-of-class hours. As a matter of standard practice in higher education, lecture and related course formats require two hours of student work outside of class for every hour in-class. All other academic work, including laboratory, activity, clinical, studio, practica, to-be-arranged, etc. must provide an equivalent total number of student learning hours as typically required for lecture, with the ratio of in-class to outside-of-class work prorated appropriately for the instructional category.

Total student learning hours are provided using common ratios of Total Contact Hours to Outside-of- Class hours. The terms that correspond to these ratios are below:

Instructional Category	In-class Hours	Outside-of-class Hours
Lecture (Lecture, Discussion, Seminar, and Similar)	1	2
Activity (Activity, Lab with Homework, Studio, and Similar)	2	1
Laboratory (Traditional Lab, Natural Science Lab, Clinical, and Similar)	3	0

#### 4. Short term and extended term courses

Since 54 semester hours of total student work are required for one unit of credit regardless of term length, the calculation methods described above also apply to short term and extended term courses.

#### 5. Cooperative work experience

Title 5 (§55256.5c) specifies the following relationship between hours of work experience and units of credit:

One unit of credit is 75 hours of paid work

experience. One unit of credit is 60 hours of non-

paid work experience.

#### 6. Clock hour courses/programs

Code of Federal Regulations Title 34 (§668.8k2iA) defines clock hour programs. Programs that meet this definition are required to use a federal formula for determining appropriate units of credit. This formula is outlined in the Code of Federal Regulation Title 34 (§668.8l):

One unit of credit is 37.5 clock hours of instruction.

7. Sample calculation tables (54 hours = 1 unit)

8. Lecture	0.5 units	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5
Contact Hours	9	18	27	36	45	54	63	72	81	90
Outside-of-class Hours	18	36	54	72	90	108	126	144	162	180
Total Hours	27	54	81	108	135	162	189	216	243	270
Activity	0.5 units	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5
Contact Hours	18	36	54	72	90	108	126	144	162	180
Outside-of-class Hours	9	18	27	36	45	54	63	72	81	90
Total Hours	27	54	81	108	135	162	189	216	243	270
Lab	0.5 units	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5
Contact Hours	27	54	81	108	135	162	189	216	243	270
Outside-of-class Hours	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Hours	27	54	81	108	135	162	189	216	243	270

For purposes of federal financial aid eligibility, a “credit hour” shall be not less than:

- One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately 15 weeks for one semester hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
- At least an equivalent amount of work as required in the above paragraph of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Methods for determining credit hours shall always be in compliance with state and federal regulations related to credit hour calculations. The Institution shall review such regulations annually, and shall update this Administrative Policy as needed.

Adopted: 12/06/2017

Reviewed: 04/09/2019

Revised: 9/10/2019