
Graduation Requirements

Duty to Grant

The Governing Board of a community college shall award the appropriate diploma, degree, or certificate whenever a student has completed all requirements for the degree, diploma, or certificate without regard to the length of time actually taken by the student to complete such requirements. The Governing Board shall grant to any student who has satisfactorily completed the requirements of any course of study in less than the prescribed time, credit for the full number of semester hours scheduled for such course.

Students should plan the general direction of their educational careers as early as possible. Students wishing to transfer to a four-year college or university should select the transfer institution as early as possible. To assist with planning, requirements are described in this section for:

- The Associate in Arts for Transfer (AAT) degree;
- The Associate in Science for Transfer (AST) degree;
- The Associate in Arts degree;
- The Associate in Science degree; and
- Certificates of Achievement.

Petition to Graduate

It is the student's responsibility to file a Petition to Graduate no later than the eighth week of the semester in which he or she plans to complete the requirements of the certificate or degree program. The Petition to Graduate form is available to students within the [myWestHills](#) student portal, or in the counseling offices in Coalinga and Firebaugh. If using outside coursework, official academic records of college or equivalent work must be on file in the Admissions and Records Office at the time the petition to graduate is filed. Petitions to graduate are evaluated after grades are posted for the semester.

Students who have completed or enrolled in courses that meet the final requirements toward a certificate or degree should see a counselor. Students are advised to meet with a counselor two semesters before graduation to review their Student Educational Plan and complete an evaluation of their units to petition to graduate.

Commencement Exercises

Students who wish to be awarded the Associate in Arts degree, Associate in Science degree, Associate in Arts for Transfer, Associate in Science for Transfer, or a Certificate of Achievement are strongly urged to participate in the commencement exercises held at the end of the spring semester.

General Education Requirements: Philosophy Statement

The general education component of the associate degree introduces students to the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, applied sciences, and technology. It exposes students to different areas of study; demands the acquisition and use of reading, writing, and critical thinking skills; imparts a sense of our shared cultural heritage and how to function as responsible, ethical individuals in a complex society; and instills a level of intellectual curiosity and self-awareness conducive to lifelong learning and personal growth.

Together with the Coalinga College degree requirements, the general education component of the associate degree prepares students to:

- transfer to and function successfully in a baccalaureate degree granting institution or;
- enter the work force as a competent, productive citizen and;
- live a richer, more rewarding life.

General education is the distinguishing feature of higher education. It is a broad based core of knowledge and abilities, acquisition of which is the distinctive characteristic of the educated person. General education courses emphasize the ability to reason, to examine issues from different perspectives, to challenge authority, and to communicate ideas logically and confidently. They instill open mindedness, respect for differences among people, and knowledge of self. They provide an understanding of the human condition and of human accomplishments and encourage a lifelong interest in learning.

General education courses are not primarily skills based, nor are they limited to, or more appropriate for majors in a specialized field of study.

Courses that fulfill general education requirements must:

- Require reading, writing, computation, and critical thinking.
- Improve students' abilities to: communicate oral and written ideas effectively; define problems, design solutions, critically analyze results; work effectively and cooperatively with others; work independently; develop and question personal and societal values, make informed choices, and accept responsibility for one's decisions; function as active, responsible, ethical citizens; acquire the curiosity and skills essential for lifelong learning.
- Impart understanding, knowledge, and appreciation of: our shared heritage, including the contributions of women, ethnic minorities, and non-western cultures; the earth's ecosystem, including the processes that formed it and the strategies that are necessary for its maintenance; human social, political, and economic institutions and behavior, including their interrelationships; the psychological, social, and physiological dimensions of men and women as individuals and as members of our society.

Courses that fulfill general education requirements must fall into one of the content categories listed below:

Area 1 — English Composition, Oral Communication, and Critical Thinking

Area 2 — Mathematical Concepts and Quantitative Reasoning

Area 3 — Arts and Humanities

Area 4 — Social and Behavioral Sciences

Area 5 — Natural Sciences

Area 6 — Ethnic Studies

The awarding of an associate degree symbolizes a successful attempt on the part of Coalinga College to lead students through learning experiences designed to develop certain capabilities and insights. Among these are the ability to think and to communicate clearly and effectively, both orally and in writing, to use mathematics; to understand the modes of inquiry of the major disciplines, to be aware of other cultures and times, to achieve insights gained through experience in thinking about ethical problems, and to develop the capacity for self-understanding. In addition, the student shall acquire sufficient depth in a field of knowledge to contribute to lifetime interest.

The Governing Board of West Hills Community College District shall confer the degree of Associate in Arts or Associate in Science upon a student who has demonstrated competence in reading, in written expression, and in mathematics, and who has satisfactorily completed at least 60 semester units of college work. Course work requirements must be fulfilled in a curriculum accepted toward the degree by Coalinga College as shown in the catalog.

An associate degree program can be planned to meet a variety of goals. It is important to keep the following information in mind in planning a program of study.

Specific Career Program or Major

Generally, students who pursue a specific career program or major do not intend to transfer to a four-year university. However, some transfer students prefer to complete as many specific career and/or major courses as they can as part of their associate degree program. It is important to note that some of these courses might not be transferable to four-year universities. If you intend to use this option, you should see a Coalinga College counselor for assistance in planning the most appropriate educational program.

This associate degree program requires:

- (a) A minimum of 60 semester units (90 quarter units) of degree-applicable lower division credit courses, including courses that apply to the major or area of emphasis in career technical fields and courses in composition, reading, and mathematics or quantitative reasoning not more than one level below transfer. #Below transfer level course requirements must align with Education Code section 78213.

- (b) A minimum of 18 semester units (27 quarter units) of focused study in a major or interdisciplinary area of emphasis.
 - (1) A “major” is a focused program of study within a specific discipline, which may include some coursework outside the primary discipline. #Programs designed to provide transfer preparation must be designed to meet specific lower-division requirements in comparable baccalaureate majors.
 - (2) An “area of emphasis” is an interdisciplinary program of study encompassing a broad range of courses from multiple related academic disciplines, providing the student with an academic pathway broader than a specific major but more focused than general education.
- (c) A minimum of 21 semester units (28 – 31.5 quarter units) of general education in the areas described below.
- (d) “Integrative baccalaureate-level courses” draw broad connections between multiple perspectives and methodologies and demonstrate relationships within or between disciplines.

Associate Degree Requirements

I. Major Requirements

At least 18 semester units of study taken in a single discipline or related disciplines.

II. General Education Requirements

Area 1. English Composition, Oral Communication, and Critical Thinking (6 units)

1. English Composition (3 units)
 - ___ English C1000
 - ___ English as a Second Language 001
2. Oral Communication and Critical Thinking (3 units)
 - ___ Art 002, 003
 - ___ Communication C1000, 003, 004
 - ___ Education 005
 - ___ English C1001
 - ___ Philosophy 001, 002, 003
 - ___ Sociology 002

Area 2. Mathematical Concepts and Quantitative Reasoning (3 units)

- ___ Math 001A, 001B, 002A, 002B, 010A, 010B, 016, 039, 045
- ___ Statistics C1000

Area 3. Arts and Humanities (3 units)

- ___ Art 002, 003 005A, 013A, 015A, 016A, 016B, 042
- ___ American Sign Language 001, 002
- ___ Communication 002
- ___ English 002, 006, 007, 008, 025
- ___ Foreign Language Spanish 011, 012, 051, 052, 054
- ___ Geography 003
- ___ History 004A, 004B, 017A, 017B, 020, 021
- ___ Humanities 001, 022
- ___ Linguistics 011
- ___ Music 042
- ___ Philosophy 001, 002, 003
- ___ Political Science 005
- ___ Spanish 001, 002, 003, 004

Area 4. Social and Behavioral Sciences (3 units)

- ___ Administration of Justice 001
- ___ Agriculture Business 040
- ___ Child Development 002, 005, 006, 010

- _____ Communication 005, 006
- _____ Economics 001A, 001B
- _____ Ethnic Studies 001
- _____ Geography 002, 003, 016, 018
- _____ Health Science 040, 045
- _____ History 004A, 004B, 017A, 017B, 020, 021, 032, 044
- _____ Linguistics 011
- _____ Political Science C1000, 002, 004, 005, 010, 020
- _____ Psychiatric Technician 060, 070
- _____ Psychology C1000, 002, 003, 004, 006
- _____ Sociology 001, 002, 003, 005
- _____ Social Work 020

Area 5. Natural Sciences (3 Units)

- _____ Biology 001A, 001B, 010, 015, 032, 035, 038
- _____ Chemistry 001A, 001B, 002A, 002B, 012A, 012B
- _____ Crop Science 001, 002
- _____ Earth Science 002
- _____ Geography 001
- _____ Geology 001, 003
- _____ Physical Science 002
- _____ Physics 002A, 002B, 004A, 004B, 004C
- _____ Soil Science 021

Area 6. Ethnic Studies (3 Units)

- _____ Ethnic Studies 001

III. Electives

Elective courses must be completed to reach the total of 60 units required for an associate degree.

IV. Grade Point Average

A student must maintain an overall 2.0 grade point average and have no grade lower than a “C” in any major requirement courses.

V. Petition to Graduate

A student must submit a petition to graduate through the Student Portal to formally apply for Graduation. By petitioning, a student will receive important information regarding diplomas and graduation ceremonies.

NOTE: While a course might satisfy more than one general education requirement, it may not be counted more than once for these purposes.

Associate Degree for Transfer Requirements (AA-T, AS-T)

The Associate in Arts (AA-T) and Associate in Science (AS-T) for Transfer Degrees are intended for students who plan to complete a bachelor's degree in an approved field of study in the California State University (CSU) system. Students completing the AA-T or AS-T degree are guaranteed admission to the CSU system, but not to a particular campus or major. Students transferring to a CSU campus that accepts this degree will be required to complete no more than 60 units after transfer to earn a bachelor's degree. Student must complete 60.0 transferable units which include fulfilling the California General Education Transfer Curriculum (Cal-GETC) pattern, all listed major course requirements with a C or better and earn a minimum grade point average of 2.0.

Additional Associate Degree

Students desiring a further associate degree after completing all requirements for either the Associate Arts or the Associate Science degree may qualify for another degree by:

- Completing all requirements for the additional major.
- Completing necessary application forms for the degree.
- A minimum of 12 units for the additional degree must be completed in residence.

Certificate of Achievement Programs

Certificate of achievement programs are designed to give the student a concentration of skill courses adequate to provide immediate employment capability in a specialized field. The course content and course patterns have been developed after considerable study of industry and employer requirements and are approved at the state level. The advice and recommendations of several lay advisory councils and information obtained in occupational surveys were utilized in the development of these programs. Certificates of achievement require 18 units or more of degree-applicable credit coursework as defined in the college catalog, grades of C or higher, and a minimum of 12 semester units completed from West Hills College.

The courses required for a certificate of achievement are found in the college catalog under that major. Certificates of achievement are noted on the academic transcript of record.

Local Certificate Programs

- Local certificate programs are designed to prepare students to be job ready by satisfying industry needs of local employers. Local certificates are not noted on the academic record of record.