

NEW RIVER COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Policy Number: B.1100

Effective Date September 15, 2006

TITLE: Standards for Degree Designations and General Education Requirements

RATIONALE: This policy establishes standards to determine the appropriate degree designation for academic programs and the general education requirements for the respective degrees.

POLICY STATEMENT

In preparing degrees and certificates, the college will meet the following guidelines.

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

The curriculum is the foundation of certificate and associate degree programs. For students to earn the degrees, the program must consist of a coherent and sequenced set of courses, including an evaluation procedure that assesses the outcomes of the learning process. The program must state the proficiency outcomes required for the students to transfer to baccalaureate institutions and/or achieve career goals.

Certificate and associate degree programs must include a full complement of general education requirements that define what constitutes an educated person, including essential communication and computation skills. In accordance with national standards, a strong foundation general education curriculum for associate degrees should include courses in the arts, the humanities, mathematics, the natural sciences, and the social sciences. There are three nationally recognized associate degree designations adopted for use. Each has specific purpose and declares the specific intent of those who framed the academic program requirements. The respective degree designations communicate clearly the primary, predetermined goal for the preparation of the student. All three associate degrees require a minimum of sixty-credit hours for completion of the degree, and the certificate degree requires thirty-credit hours for completion. Based on the respective purpose, intent and goal of certificate and associate degrees, the full complement of general education is established as follows:

- Associate in Arts Degree: The purpose and intent of this degree is to prepare the student to transfer to an upper-division baccalaureate degree program. It gives

emphasis to those majoring in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and similar areas. It is the goal of this degree to achieve successful transfer for completion of the bachelor's degree and acceptance at the junior level.

For successful transfer with program emphasis in arts, humanities, social sciences, and similar areas, a substantial component of this degree, at least 45 semester hours of coursework, shall be in general education.

- Associate in Science Degree: The purpose and intent of this degree are to prepare the student to transfer to an upper-division baccalaureate degree program. It gives emphasis to those majoring in the agriculture, engineering and technology, and the sciences with substantial undergraduate requirements in mathematics and the natural sciences. It is the goal of this degree to achieve successful transfer for completion of the bachelor's degree and acceptance at the junior level. While a student may enter directly into employment upon attainment of this degree, the goal of programs that award this degree is successful transfer with junior status.

For successful transfer with program emphasis in agriculture, engineering and technology, and the sciences with a substantial undergraduate requirement in mathematics and the natural sciences, a large component of this degree, at least 30 semester hours of coursework, shall be in general education.

- Associate in Applied Science Degree: The purpose and intent of this degree are to prepare the student to enter directly into employment in a specific career. It gives emphasis to those majoring in occupational programs designed with and through employer advisory committees. It is the goal of this degree to achieve acceptance as an employment credential. While a student may be able to achieve successful transfer of some or all of the courses within this degree, the goal of programs that award this degree is successful employment.

For successful entry directly into employment in a specific career and to provide a basic foundation for life-long learning and future career changes, at least 20 semester hours of coursework for this degree shall be in general education.

- Certificate Degree Program: The purpose and intent of the certificate degree program are to prepare the student to enter directly into employment in a specific career and meet the documented workforce needs of local employers. Generally, certificate programs provide the foundation for the associate in applied science (AAS) degree for occupational programs. Like the AAS degree, the goal of certificates is to achieve acceptance as an employment credential.

As the foundation of the Associate in Applied Science degree for successful entry into employment in a specific career, at least six (6) semester hours of coursework for the certificate shall be in general education.

ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESS

This policy shall be filed with the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education after New River's Board of Governor's approval. This policy addresses the college's vision for the common core of learning outcomes that are essential to the definition of an educated person regardless of the field of study undertaken. It also includes the minimum requirements for general education for each certificate and associate degree designation.

During the established five-year program review cycle for certificate and associate degrees, New River shall demonstrate compliance. Specifically, the institution shall document that the purpose, intent and goals of the program, are consistent with the degree designation and the full complement of general education courses support the program learning outcomes.

RELATED POLICIES:

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: Vice President for Academic Affairs