

Part 1

General Education & Basic Skills

General Education

Pueblo Community College recognizes the importance of general education as an essential element of programs offered at a comprehensive community college. The College embraces the philosophy that general education courses are a part of every student's course of study regardless of the major and that general courses are intended to impart common knowledge, intellectual concepts, and attitudes that educated persons should possess.

The State Board for Community Colleges and Occupation has defined, through State Board policy, the minimum number of general education credits required for each associate degree. The Associate of Applied Science degrees range from 60 to 75 credits and require a minimum of 15 credits of general education courses, which are determined by each community college. The program department chair, with input from an advisory committee, designs the degree program and identifies which courses will fulfill the general education component. These recommendations are reviewed and approved by the PCC Curriculum Committee and the CC of C staff. The final approval for the degree rests with the State Board.

Both the Associate of Arts (AA) and the Associate of Science (AS) degrees require a total of 60 credits. The AA degree requires 34 defined general education credits, and the AS degree requires 33. Courses that meet the general education credits in these two programs are the same for all colleges in the Community Colleges of Colorado System and are known as the State Core Transfer Program.

The Associate of General Studies (AGS) degree is designed to meet individual career goals that consist of a broad program of both career and traditional transfer courses without the constraints of specialization. The degree requires a total of 60-68 credits, including 30 credits of general education courses.

The general education requirements are summarized in the following table.

General Education Requirements for Degrees				
Subject Area	AA	AS	AGS	AAS
English/Speech	9	9	6	
Mathematics	3	4	6	
Natural Science	4	8	3	
Social/Behavioral Science	9	6	3	
Humanities	9	6	3	
Selected Gen Ed Electives	0	0	9	
Total	34	33	30	15*
*Includes courses from above categories SOURCE: Pueblo Community College Catalog				

The self-study process resulted in discussion about issues related to general education. Through this discussion, it was determined that PCC needed to enhance the general education component, including the development of a specific faculty committee (General Education Committee) with the responsibility of overseeing general education courses and other matters related to general education. The self-study committee also recommended that the College needs to establish general education guidelines for Department Chairs who are developing Associate of General Studies and Associate of Applied Science degrees. Although the degrees specify a minimum number of general education courses, the College needs to develop clear policies that address what courses/disciplines should be included in the general component of either degree. The General Education Committee is already addressing the AAS general education concern; after discussion about the AGS degree, it was decided that the AGS degree concerns would be forwarded to the General Education Committee.

Although the College has always addressed general education, the self-study process provided an opportunity for PCC to develop a faculty oversight committee for general education and to address the challenges identified in the self-study document. This new focus on general education has come about as the result of the self-study process.

Basic Skills

The College implements open-door admission, thus recognizing the importance of basic skills in math, English, and reading. Basic skills courses are designed for students deficient in the academic competencies necessary to succeed in a regular college curriculum.

Basic skills courses are offered through the English, reading, and math departments, and courses are integrated into the curriculum of these programs. This has been a strength of the basic skills programs. It provides an opportunity for faculty in these areas to address basic skills curriculum as they prepare students for higher-level courses within the discipline or courses that require an English, math, or reading pre-requisite.

A team of faculty and staff serve as an oversight team for the basic skills courses. The Chair of the English/ Communication Department, the Chair of the Reading Department, the Chair of Mathematics, and the Director of the Learning Center work as a team, in consultation with the Dean of Arts and Sciences, to address the educational delivery needs and the support services that are provided to students enrolled in basic skills courses.

All students who enroll in six or more credits take the Accuplacer Placement Test in English, reading, and math to determine whether or not they should enroll in basic skills courses. Based on their scores, they are placed in the appropriate level for each discipline. Approximately 25% of all PCC students enroll in a basic skills course during a given semester.

PCC also recognizes that courses emphasizing computer literacy and study skills are necessary and include these courses as necessary basic skills for success in college. Students who place into two or more basic skills courses are encouraged to enroll in a study skills course. All students must demonstrate computer literacy before graduation by taking a designated computer course or successfully passing the computer basic skills test.

During the self-study process, the College engaged in discussions regarding the timely completion of basic skills courses, particularly since it was noted that many students delay taking the basic skills courses. The discussions became more targeted and goal-specific when Colorado enacted House Bill 1464 that addresses issues related to basic skills courses. The Bill requires mandatory placement into basic skill courses for all first-time certificate/degree-seeking students beginning Fall

College Purpose

Prepare students for entry-level college courses.

2001 and requires that students complete their basic skill courses within the initial 30 credit hours. One provision of HB 1464 requires all community colleges to track students who are required to take basic skills courses and to compile data related to the students' success. This provision prompted the College to review policies and procedures related to the timely completion of basic skills enrollment. As a result, the Executive Vice President appointed, in Fall 2000, a Basic Skills Taskforce responsible for reviewing the PCC Basic Skills policies and procedures and addressing the requirements of House Bill 1464.

Basic skills courses are an important component of the College, particularly since they address the needs of the students who come to PCC with minimal preparation for college-level courses and provide an opportunity for lifelong learning, which is a central part of the College's mission statement.