

## 23 NCAC 02E .0204 COURSES AND STANDARDS FOR CURRICULUM PROGRAMS

The Combined Course Library and curriculum standards for associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs shall be as follows:

- (1) Combined Course Library Curriculum Courses.
  - (a) The Combined Course Library shall contain the following elements for all curriculum program credit courses approved for the North Carolina Community College System.
    - (i) Course prefix;
    - (ii) Course number;
    - (iii) Course title;
    - (iv) Classroom hours and laboratory, clinical, and work experience contact hours, if applicable;
    - (v) Credit hours;
    - (vi) Prerequisites and corequisites, if applicable; and
    - (vii) Course description consisting of three sentences.
  - (b) The numbering system for curriculum courses within the Combined Course Library is as follows:
    - (i) The numbers 050-099 shall be assigned to developmental courses.
    - (ii) The numbers 100-109 and 200-209 shall be assigned to certificate and diploma level curriculum courses. These courses shall not be included in associate degree programs.
    - (iii) The numbers 110-189 and 210-289 shall be assigned to associate degree level courses. These courses may also be included in certificate and diploma programs.
    - (iv) The numbers 190-199 and 290-299 shall be assigned to seminar or selected topic courses which may be offered for a single term and which courses offer content not found in existing courses. In order to offer the course content after the initial term, a new course must be approved for inclusion in the Combined Course Library.
  - (c) A college shall use the course information (prefix; number; title; classroom, laboratory, clinical, and work experience contact hours; credit hours; prerequisites and corequisites; and course description) as listed in the Combined Course Library.
    - (i) A college may add a fourth sentence to the course description to clarify instructional content or instructional methodology.
    - (ii) A college may divide courses into incremental units for greater flexibility in providing instruction to part-time students or to provide shorter units of study for abbreviated calendars. Each of the following criteria apply to courses divided into incremental units:
      - (A) A course may be divided into two or three units, which are designated with an additional suffix following the course prefix and number;
      - (B) The units shall equal the entire course of instruction, without omitting any competencies;
      - (C) The combined contact and credit hours for the units shall equal the contact and credit hours for the course;
      - (D) If the course is a prerequisite to another course, the student shall complete all component parts before enrolling in the next course;
      - (E) If the course is a co-requisite to another course it must be taken before or in conjunction with that course; and
      - (F) The components of a split course shall not be used to supplant training for occupational extension.
  - (d) The Community College System Office shall revise and maintain courses in the Combined Course Library.
  - (e) When a student receives credit for a Combined Course Library course, this credit shall be transferable to any college in the North Carolina Community College System.
- (2) Revision of Curriculum Standards. A revision of curriculum standard requires that two thirds of colleges approved to offer that curriculum program concur in writing with the revision. Upon their concurrence changes in curriculum standards become effective after approval by the State Board of Community Colleges.
- (3) Criteria for Programs. Each curriculum program shall be based on the following criteria established by the State Board of Community Colleges for the awarding of degrees, diplomas, and certificates.
  - (a) Associate in Applied Science. The associate in applied science program of study must consist of a minimum of 64 and a maximum of 76 semester hours of credit from curriculum courses at the 110-199 and 210-299 levels. Within the degree program, the college shall include opportunities for the achievement of competence in reading, writing, oral communication, fundamental mathematical skills, and basic use of computers. The requirements for the Associate in Applied Science Degree are as follows:
    - (i) The associate in applied science curriculum program shall include a minimum of 15 semester hours of credit from general education curriculum courses selected from the Combined Course Library, including six hours in communications, three hours in humanities/fine arts, three hours in social/behavioral sciences, and three hours in either natural sciences or mathematics.
    - (ii) The associate in applied science curriculum program shall include a minimum of 49 semester hours of credit from major curriculum courses selected from the curriculum courses in the Combined Course Library assigned numbers from 110-199 and 210-299. Major curriculum courses are those which offer specific job knowledge

or skills. Criteria for the major hours category are as follows:

- (A) Major Core Hours. The major hours category shall be comprised of identified curriculum core courses or subject areas or both which are required for each program. Subject areas or curriculum core courses shall be based on curriculum competencies and shall teach essential skills and knowledge necessary for employment. The number of credit hours required for the core shall not be less than 12 semester hours of credit;
  - (B) Major Concentration Hours. The major hours category may also include hours required for a concentration of study. A concentration of study is a group of curriculum courses required beyond the core for a specific related employment field. A concentration shall include a minimum of 12 semester hours, and the majority of the curriculum course credit hours shall be unique to the concentration;
  - (C) Other Major Hours. Other major hours shall be selected from prefixes identified on the curriculum standard. A maximum of nine semester hours of credit may be selected from any prefix listed, with the exception of prefixes listed in the core or concentration, or unique prefixes as noted on the standard; and
  - (D) Work Experience Hours. The major hours category may include up to a maximum of eight semester hours credit for work experience, including cooperative education, practicums, and internships. Under a standard specifically designed for select associate degree programs, work experience shall be included in a curriculum up to a maximum of 16 semester hours of credit. The select associate degree programs shall be based on a program of studies registered under the North Carolina Department of Labor Apprenticeship programs. Only eight semester hours of credit of work experience shall earn budget FTE.
- (iii) Other Required Hours. A college may require graduation or local employer requirements in order to complete an associate in applied science program. These requirements may be met through a maximum of seven semester hours of credit from curriculum courses. These curriculum courses shall be selected from the Combined Course Library and must be approved by the System Office based on the Curriculum Procedures Reference Manual prior to implementation of the program. Restricted, unique or free elective courses may not be included as other required courses.
- (iv) Selected topics or seminar curriculum courses may be included in an associate in applied science degree program up to a maximum of three semester hours of credit. Selected topics or seminar courses shall not substitute for required general education or major core courses. Such curriculum courses shall be listed on a program of study as other major hours. Selected topics and seminar curriculum courses shall not be used more than once in a program.
- (b) Associate in Arts Degree. The associate in arts program of study must consist of a minimum of 64 and a maximum of 65 semester hours of credit from approved college transfer courses at the 110-199 and 210-299 levels. Within the degree program, the college shall include opportunities for the achievement of competence in reading, writing, oral communication, fundamental mathematical skills, and basic use of computers. Certificates are not allowed under this degree program. The requirements for the Associate in Arts Degree are as follows:
- (i) The associate in arts curriculum program shall include a minimum of 44 semester hours of general education curriculum core courses selected from the Combined Course Library and approved for transfer to the University of North Carolina constituent institutions. The general education core shall include:
    - (A) Six semester hours of English composition;
    - (B) 12 semester hours of humanities/fine arts;
    - (C) 12 semester hours of social/behavioral sciences;
    - (D) Six semester hours of mathematics; and
    - (E) Eight semester hours of natural sciences.
  - (ii) The associate in arts program shall include a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 21 additional semester hours of credit selected from curriculum courses in the Combined Course Library which have been approved for transfer to the University of North Carolina constituent institutions. A non-college transfer curriculum course of one semester hour of credit may be included in a 65 semester hour credit associate in arts program. This course may receive transfer evaluation by the receiving institution.
  - (iii) A college may award a diploma under an approved associate in arts degree program for a series of curriculum courses taken from the approved associate in arts degree program of study. This diploma shall include a minimum of 44 and a maximum of 47 semester hours of general education curriculum core courses selected from the Combined Course Library and approved for transfer to the University of North Carolina constituent institutions. The diploma shall include a minimum of:
    - (A) Six semester hours of English composition;
    - (B) 12 semester hours of humanities/fine arts;
    - (C) 12 semester hours of social/behavioral sciences;
    - (D) Six semester hours of mathematics; and

(E) Eight semester hours of natural sciences.

A non-college transfer course of one semester hour of credit may be included in a 47 semester hour credit diploma program. This curriculum course may receive transfer evaluation by the receiving institution.

(c) Associate in Science Degree. The associate in science program of study must consist of a minimum of 64 and a maximum of 65 semester hours of credit from approved college transfer courses at the 110-199 and 210-299 levels. Within the degree program, the college shall include opportunities for the achievement of competence in reading, writing, oral communication, fundamental mathematical skills, and basic use of computers. Certificates are not allowed under this degree program. The requirements for Associate in Science Degree are as follows:

(i) The associate in science curriculum program shall include a minimum of 44 semester hours of general education curriculum core courses selected from the Combined Course Library and approved for transfer to the University of North Carolina constituent institutions. The general education core shall include:

(A) Six semester hours of English composition;

(B) Nine semester hours of humanities/fine arts;

(C) Nine semester hours of social/behavioral sciences; and

(D) 20 semester hours of mathematics and natural sciences that shall include a minimum of six semester hours in mathematics and a minimum of eight semester hours in natural sciences.

(ii) The associate in science curriculum program may include a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 21 additional semester hours of credit selected from curriculum courses in the Combined Course Library which have been approved for transfer to the University of North Carolina constituent institutions. A non-college transfer curriculum course of one semester hour of credit may be included in a 65 semester hour credit associate in science program. This curriculum course shall receive transfer evaluation by the receiving institution.

(iii) A college may award a diploma under an approved associate in science degree program for a series of curriculum courses taken from the approved associate in science degree program of study. This diploma shall include a minimum of 44 and a maximum of 47 semester hours of general education curriculum core courses selected from the Combined Course Library and approved for transfer to the University of North Carolina constituent institutions. The diploma shall include a minimum of:

(A) Six semester hours of English composition;

(B) Nine semester hours of humanities/fine arts;

(C) Nine semester hours of social/behavioral sciences; and

(D) 20 semester hours of natural sciences and mathematics that shall include a minimum of six hours in mathematics and a minimum of eight hours in natural sciences.

A non-college transfer curriculum course of one semester hour of credit may be included in a 47 semester hour credit program. This curriculum course may receive transfer evaluation by the receiving institution.

(d) Associate in Fine Arts Degree. The associate in fine arts program of study must consist of a minimum of 64 and a maximum of 65 semester hours of credit from approved college transfer curriculum courses at the 110-199 and 210-299 levels. Within the degree program, the college shall include opportunities for achievement of competence in reading, writing, oral communication, fundamental mathematical skills, and basic use of computers. Diplomas and certificates are not allowed under this degree program. The requirements for the Associate in Fine Arts Degree are as follows:

(i) The associate in fine arts curriculum program shall include a minimum of 28 semester hours of general education curriculum core courses selected from the Combined Course Library and approved for transfer to the University of North Carolina constituent institutions. The general education core shall include:

(A) Six semester hours of English composition;

(B) Six semester hours of humanities/fine arts;

(C) Nine semester hours of social/behavioral sciences;

(D) Three semester hours of mathematics; and

(E) Four semester hours from the natural sciences.

(ii) The associate in fine arts curriculum program shall include a minimum of 36 and a maximum of 37 additional semester hours of credit from curriculum courses in the Combined Course Library which have been approved for transfer to the University of North Carolina constituent institutions. A non-college transfer course of one semester hour of credit may be included in a 65 semester hour credit associate in fine arts program. This curriculum course may receive transfer evaluation by the receiving institution.

(e) Associate in General Education. The associate in general education program of study must consist of a minimum of 64 and a maximum of 65 semester hours of credit from curriculum courses at the 110-199 and 210-299 levels. Within the degree program, the college shall include opportunities for the achievement of competence in reading, writing, oral communication, fundamental mathematical skills, and the basic use of computers. Diplomas and certificates are not allowed under this degree program. The requirements for the Associate in General Education Degree are as follows:

(i) The associate in general education curriculum program shall include a minimum of 15 semester hours of credit from general education curriculum courses selected from the Combined Course Library, including six hours in communications, three hours in humanities/fine arts, three hours in social/behavioral sciences, and three hours in natural sciences or mathematics.

- (ii) The remaining hours in the associate in general education curriculum program shall consist of additional general education and professional curriculum courses selected from the Combined Course Library. A maximum of seven semester hours of credit in health, physical education, and college orientation or study skills courses may be included.
- (iii) Selected topics or seminar curriculum courses may be included in an associate in general education program up to a maximum of three semester hours of credit. Selected topics and seminar courses shall not substitute for required general education or major core courses. Such curriculum courses shall be listed on a program of study as "Other Major Hours." Selected topics and seminar curriculum courses shall not be used more than once in a program. (See Sub-Item (3)(a)(iv)) of this Rule.
- (f) Diploma. A Diploma program of study must consist of a minimum of 36 and a maximum of 48 semester hours of credit from courses at the 100-299 level. The requirements for the diploma curricula are as follows:
  - (i) Diploma curricula shall include a minimum of six semester hours of general education curriculum courses selected from the Combined Course Library. A minimum of three semester hours of credit shall be in communications, and a minimum of three semester hours of credit shall be selected from curriculum courses in humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, or natural sciences and mathematics.
  - (ii) Diploma curricula shall include a minimum of 30 semester hours of major courses selected from curriculum courses in the Combined Course Library.
  - (iii) A diploma curriculum program shall include designated core curriculum courses or core subject areas within the major hours category.
  - (iv) Curriculum courses for other major hours in diploma curriculum program shall be selected from prefixes identified on the curriculum standard. A maximum of nine semester hours of credit may be selected from any prefix listed, with the exception of prefixes listed in the core or concentration or unique prefixes as noted on the curriculum standard.
  - (v) Work experience, including cooperative education, practicums, and internships, may be included in a diploma curriculum program up to a maximum of four semester hours of credit.
  - (vi) Other Required Hours. A college may require graduation or local employer requirements in order to complete a diploma program. These requirements may be met through a maximum of four semester hours of credit from curriculum courses. These curriculum courses shall be selected from the Combined Course Library and must be approved by the System Office based on the Curriculum Procedures Manual prior to implementation of the program. Restricted, unique or free elective courses may not be included as other required courses.
  - (vii) A college may award a diploma under an approved associate in applied science degree curriculum program for a series of curriculum courses taken from the approved associate degree curriculum program of study unless prohibited by the standard.
    - (A) A diploma curriculum program offered under an approved associate degree program shall meet the standard general education and major curriculum course requirements for the diploma credential.
    - (B) A college may substitute general education curriculum courses at the 100-299 level for the associate-degree level general education curriculum courses in a diploma program offered under an approved degree program.
    - (C) A diploma curriculum program offered under an approved associate degree curriculum program shall require a minimum of 12 semester hours of credit from curriculum courses extracted from the required curriculum core courses or core subject areas of the respective associate in applied science degree curriculum program.
    - (D) A diploma program offered under an approved associate degree concentration program shall require the utilization of all curriculum core courses and a minimum of 12 semester hours of credit from concentration courses.
  - (viii) Selected topics or seminar curriculum courses may be included in a diploma program up to a maximum of three semester hours of credit. Selected topics and seminar curriculum courses shall not substitute for required general education or major curriculum core courses. Courses must be on a program of study as other major hours.
- (g) Certificate Programs. A certificate program of study must consist of a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 18 semester hours of credit from curriculum courses at the 100-299 level. The requirements for the Certificate Programs are as follows:
  - (i) General education is optional in certificate curricula.
  - (ii) Certificate curricula shall include a minimum of 12 semester hours of major curriculum courses selected from curriculum courses in the Combined Course Library.
    - (A) A certificate program which is a stand-alone curriculum program title or which is the highest credential level awarded under an approved associate in applied science degree or diploma program shall include a minimum of 12 semester hours of credit from core courses or the required curriculum core subject areas within the major hours category.
    - (B) Curriculum courses for other major hours in a stand-alone certificate curriculum program shall be

selected from prefixes identified on the curriculum standard.

- (C) Work experience, including cooperative education, practicums, and internships, may be included in a certificate program up to a maximum of two semester hours of credit.
  - (iii) Other Required Hours. A college may require graduation or local employer requirements in order to complete a certificate program. These requirements may be met through a maximum of one semester hour of credit from curriculum courses. This curriculum course shall be selected from the Combined Course Library and must be approved by the System Office board on the Curriculum Procedures Manual prior to implementation of the program. Restricted unique or free elective courses may not be included as other required courses.
  - (iv) An institution may award a certificate under an approved degree or diploma curriculum program for a series of courses totaling a minimum of 12 semester hours of credit and a maximum of 18 semester hours of credit taken from the approved associate degree or diploma curriculum program of study.
  - (v) Selected topics or seminar courses may be included in a certificate program up to a maximum of three semester hours of credit.
- (4) Curriculum Standards Compliance. Each college shall select curriculum courses from the Combined Course Library in order to comply with the standards for each curriculum program title the college is approved to offer. The selected courses shall comprise the college's program of study for that curriculum program. The initial and revised program shall be filed with and approved by the System Office prior to implementation.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 115D-5; S.L. 1995, c. 625;  
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