

**College of San Mateo Curriculum Committee
General Education Handbook**

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OVERVIEW

General Education is designed to introduce students to the variety of means through which people comprehend the modern world. It reflects the conviction of colleges that those who receive their degrees must possess certain basic principles, concepts and methodologies both unique to and shared by various disciplines. College-educated persons must be able to use this knowledge when evaluating and appreciating the physical environment, the culture and the society in which they live.

At College of San Mateo the general education curriculum is designed to lead students through patterns of learning experiences designed to develop certain capabilities and insights. Among these are the ability to think and 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 diverse cultural and temporal/historical perspectives; to critically engage complex ethical issues; and to develop the capacity for self-understanding.

THE COLLEGE OF SAN MATEO'S GENERAL EDUCATION STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completion of the General Education requirements at College of San Mateo, the student should be able demonstrate the following abilities:

Effective Communication

The ability of students to write, read, speak, and listen in order to communicate effectively.

Students will be able to:

- Comprehend, interpret, and analyze written and oral information;
- Express ideas and provide supporting evidence in writing and in speaking;
- Communicate effectively as part of a group or team situation.

Quantitative Skills

The ability of students to perform quantitative analysis, using appropriate resources.

Students will be able to:

- Solve a variety of problems that require quantitative reasoning;
- Interpret graphical representations of quantitative information.

Critical Thinking

The ability of students to analyze information, reason critically and creatively, and formulate ideas/concepts carefully and logically from multiple perspectives and across disciplines.

Students will be able to:

- Develop and evaluate arguments;
- Assess the validity of both qualitative and quantitative evidence;
- Apply diverse disciplinary approaches and perspectives;
- Employ the scientific method.

Social Awareness and Diversity

The ability of students to recognize cultural traditions and to understand and appreciate the diversity of the human experience, past and present.

Students will be able to:

- Identify the benefits of diversity and respect the range of diversity;
- Work effectively with others of diverse backgrounds;

- Recognize the importance and analyze the interconnectedness of global and local concerns, both past and present.

Ethical Responsibility/Effective Citizenship

The ability of students to make judgments with respect to individual conduct, based on systems of values.

Students will be able to:

- Recognize ethical principles
- Identify possible courses of action in response to ethical dilemmas and evaluate their consequences;
- Behave ethically and respectfully when working with students, instructors, and the campus community.

Any course that fits within the general education pattern at College of San Mateo will meet some portion of the narrative statement above, as well as the narrative for the general education section it satisfies. Additionally, the course will address a significant number of learning outcomes indicated in the specific area which it satisfies.

COLLEGE OF SAN MATEO GENERAL EDUCATION GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The requirements for the Associate in Arts or Associate in Science Degrees include completion of the following

1. No fewer than 60 units in prescribed courses, a minimum of 12 units taken at the College of San Mateo.
2. Cumulative GPA of 2.0
3. Demonstration of Math/Quantitative Reasoning as defined in Title V - 5 CA ADC § 55063
4. Demonstration of current English competency standards Title V - 5 CA ADC § 55063
5. Information Literacy proficiency as demonstrated by curriculum committee approved methods.
6. Major requirements: minimum of 18 units; either 12 units or 50 percent of the units applied to the major, whichever is fewer, must be completed in the San Mateo Community College District. For major requirements, please refer to the College Catalog.
7. General Education area requirements listed below.

General Education Areas

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

Area 1A: English Composition

Area 1B: 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

Area 7: Wellness, Kinesiology Activity, and Personal Development

Area 7A: Wellness & Kinesiology Activity

Area 7B: Personal Development

Area 8: American History & Institutions, CA State and Local Government (AH&I)

NOTE: Courses approved for the Cal-GETC will be automatically placed into the corresponding CSM GE Area.

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

Courses in language and rationality are those which develop for the student the principles and applications of language toward logical thought, clear and precise expression and critical evaluation of communication in whatever symbol system the student uses.

Area 1A: English Composition

Courses fulfilling the written composition requirement shall be designed to include both expository and argumentative writing.

Upon completion of a course satisfying the English Composition requirement, a student will be able to demonstrate three or more of the following outcomes:

1. Identify, develop, and evaluate arguments;
2. Comprehend, interpret, and analyze oral information;
3. Express ideas and provide supporting evidence in speaking;
4. Communicate productively in a group or team situation;
5. Solve challenging problems that require quantitative reasoning;
6. Interpret graphical representations of quantitative information;
7. Synthesize knowledge and draw accurate conclusions from qualitative and quantitative sources.

Area 1B: Oral Communication and Critical Thinking

Courses fulfilling the communication and analytical thinking requirement include oral communication, mathematics, logic, statistics, computer languages and programming, and related disciplines. Courses in this area develop logical thought and critical evaluation of communication in areas other than written composition.

Upon completion of a course satisfying the Communication and Analytical Thinking requirement, a student will be able to demonstrate three or more of the following outcomes:

1. Identify, develop, and evaluate arguments;
2. Comprehend, interpret, and analyze oral information;
3. Express ideas and provide supporting evidence in speaking;
4. Communicate productively in a group or team situation;
5. Solve challenging problems that require quantitative reasoning;
6. Interpret graphical representations of quantitative information;

7. Synthesize knowledge and draw accurate conclusions from qualitative and quantitative sources.

Area 2: Mathematical Concepts and Quantitative Reasoning

Courses fulfilling the mathematical concepts and quantitative reasoning requirement include college-level mathematics and quantitative reasoning courses, including logic, statistics, computer languages, and related disciplines. Courses in this area examine important mathematical concepts as tools for decision-making. Topics and applications will include identification, comprehension and interpretation of quantitative information, critical thinking skills, and verification of mathematical concepts. Students will also be able to read and interpret graphic models and tables, as well as solve problems.

Upon completion of a course satisfying the Mathematical Concepts and Quantitative Reasoning requirement, a student will be able to demonstrate three or more of the following outcomes:

1. Analyze and evaluate the reasonableness of a mathematical solution;
2. Make connections and analyses between numeric and graphic representations;
3. Interpret and communicate quantitative information using language appropriate to the context and intended audience;
4. Read and look for context to interpret relevant information and apply previous knowledge to find a solution relevant to the presented problem;
5. Utilize and manipulate mathematical models to describe real-world problems;
6. Recognize underlying patterns useful in problem solving or making predictions.

Area 3: Arts and Humanities

To satisfy the general education requirement in the arts and humanities, courses develop a student's awareness of the ways by which people have responded, throughout the ages, to themselves and the world around them, through artistic and cultural expression. These courses also help the student develop a critical aesthetic understanding of such artistic and cultural expression. Such courses may be introductory or integrative in the arts, media, foreign languages, literature, philosophy, and religion.

Upon completion of a course satisfying the Arts and Humanities requirement, a student will be able to demonstrate three or more of the following:

1. Understand the significance of historical and cultural context in human expression;
2. Demonstrate an appreciation of human values in artistic and cultural achievements;

3. Interpret and participate in social and cultural communities associated with artistic and literary endeavor;
4. Express ideas in a language other than English both verbally and in writing.

Area 4: Social and Behavioral Sciences

Courses in this area focus on people as members of societies and on how societies and social subgroups operate.

Upon completion of a course satisfying the Social and Behavioral Sciences requirement, a student will be able to demonstrate three or more of the following outcomes:

1. Understand and describe the behavioral and organizational structures within which societies and subgroups operate;
2. Understand and describe the ways in which individuals and groups are affected by and can influence their societies;
3. Analyze the interconnectedness of global and local concerns, past and present;
4. Understand and respect the range of diversity in societies, subgroups, and their members;
5. Acknowledge the value of divergent opinions and perspectives;
6. Understand and use multiple methods of inquiry and approaches to knowledge relevant to the social sciences;
7. Synthesize knowledge and draw accurate conclusions from qualitative and quantitative sources.

Area 5: Natural Sciences

Courses in the natural sciences are those which examine the physical universe, its life forms, and its natural phenomena. To satisfy the general education requirement in natural sciences, a course shall be designed to help the student develop an appreciation and understanding of the collection of tools, activities and protocols that are applied in the execution of the scientific method. In addition, attention should be given to the influence and impact which scientific knowledge has had on the development of the world's civilizations, and its relationship to human values and social goals.

Upon completion of a course satisfying the Natural Sciences requirement, a student will be able to demonstrate three or more of the following outcomes:

1. Comprehend, interpret, and analyze written and oral information relative to scientific knowledge;
2. Use scientific methodologies to solve challenging problems that require quantitative reasoning;
3. Evaluate the logic, validity, and relevance of information in fields of natural science;

4. Synthesize knowledge and draw accurate conclusions from qualitative and quantitative data;
5. Identify both individual and societal courses of action in response to ethical scientific issues and evaluate their consequences.

Area 6: Ethnic Studies

Courses satisfying this area analyze the socially-constructed categories of race and ethnicity and examine the processes whereby *social categories of identity and difference* are produced, resisted, inhabited, embraced, and transformed across historical time and geographic space. Courses in this group must be in the Ethnic Studies discipline.

Upon the successful completion of the Ethnic Studies requirement, a student will be able to demonstrate three or more of the following outcomes:

1. Analyze and articulate concepts of ethnic studies, including but not limited to race and ethnicity, racialization, equity, ethno-centrism, eurocentrism, white supremacy, self-determination, liberation, decolonization and anti-racism.
2. Apply theory to describe critical events in the histories, cultures and intellectual traditions, with special focus on the lived-experiences and social struggles of one or more of the following four historically defined racialized core groups: Native Americans, African Americans, Latina/o Americans and/or Asian Americans, and emphasizing agency and group-affirmation.
3. Critically discuss the intersection of race and ethnicity with other forms of difference affected by hierarchy and oppression, such as class, gender, sexuality, religion, spirituality, national origin, immigration status, ability and/or age.
4. Describe how struggle, resistance, social justice, solidarity and liberation as experienced by communities of color are relevant to current issues.
5. Demonstrate active engagement with anti-racist issues, practices and movements to build a diverse, just and equitable society beyond the classroom.

Area 7: Wellness, Kinesiology Activity, & Personal Development

Courses in this area support students' self-growth, intellectual exploration, physical and mental well-being, and lifelong learning. These courses will focus on the development of skills, abilities, and dispositions that will strengthen a student's success in school and beyond.

Area 7A: Wellness & Kinesiology Activity

Upon completion of a course satisfying the Wellness and Kinesiology Activity requirement, a student will be able to demonstrate three or more of the following:

1. An understanding of the importance of regular physical activity on wellness throughout one's lifetime;
2. A skill that enables participation in lifetime physical activity;
3. Make decisions which improve personal health;
4. Define behaviors and societal factors which can impact personal health.

Area 7B: Personal Development

Upon completion of a course satisfying the Self-development requirement, students will be able to demonstrate three or more of the following outcomes:

1. Describe career opportunities and professional pathways beyond the scope of a single discipline;
2. Use an inventory of lifelong learning or literacy skills (e.g. information literacy, financial literacy, contract literacy, etc.);
3. Develop skills necessary for college-level coursework;
4. Use technology and digital tools conducive to success in college, in personal development, and in employment;
5. Implement personal development strategies for maintaining financial, physical or mental well-being;

Area 8: American History and Institutions, CA State and Local Government

Courses in this area prepare students to participate in the civics and politics of the United States. These courses should provide an understanding of our representative variant of democracy, and how it, and we, fit into the larger system of nation-states comprising the modern world.

Group 1: American History and Institutions

History courses in this group address the historical development of American institutions and ideals, including the role of major ethnic and social groups. Events illustrate both the continuity, the diversity, and the contradictions of the American experience, considering the influence of politics, economics, geography and the racialized and gendered power structures of the era.

Courses addressing the U.S. Constitution deal with the political philosophies of the Constitution's framers, the nature and operation of U.S. political institutions and processes under the Constitution, and the rights and responsibilities of citizens under the Constitution.

Upon the successful completion of the American History and Institutions group requirement, a student will be able to demonstrate three or more of the following outcomes:

1. Understand how federal systems of government compare with unitary variants;

2. Comprehend the U.S. Constitution as the framework of our federal governmental construct, and the civil rights and civic duties it confers upon U.S. citizens;
3. Analyze the interconnectedness of global and local concerns with a clear understanding of how and where the United States might fit into the global concert of nations socially, economically and politically
4. Clearly outline the basic institutions of our present federal system, and how the legislative, executive and judicial branches carry out their basic functions;
5. Effectively discuss basic theories underlying democratic systems of government verbally and in writing;
6. Acknowledge and value the range of diversity both within our own country and in the larger world beyond our borders;
7. Evaluate the logic, validity and relevance of information in the field of political science and or history.
8. Assess the relative importance of specific factors in historical causation as they apply to the development of the U.S. Constitution and representative democracy.
9. Explain the historical origins of major institutions of contemporary Western/American society.
10. Effectively use multiple sources and approaches to knowledge when studying different societies and their evolution.
11. Synthesize knowledge and draw accurate conclusions from primary and secondary sources of historical information.

Group 2: CA State and Local Government

Courses satisfying this area address the Constitution of the State of California within the framework of evolution of Federal-State relations, the nature and processes of State and local governments under California's Constitution, and contemporary relationships of State and local government with the Federal government including conflict resolution and cooperation.

Upon the successful completion of the CA State and Local Government group requirement, a student will be able to demonstrate three or more of the following outcomes:

1. Outline how and where the state of California fits into the larger federal system;
2. Comprehend the Constitution of the State of California as the framework of local governmental construct, and the civil rights and civic duties it confers upon California residents;
3. Analyze the interconnectedness of global and local concerns with a clear understanding of how and where California might fit into the global concert of nations socially, economically and politically
4. Effectively discuss some of the basic theories underlying democratic systems of government in writing and in speaking;
5. Evaluate the logic, validity and relevance of information in the field of political science/history.

6. Assess the relative importance of specific factors in historical causation as they apply to the development of the Constitution of the State of California and representative democracy.
7. Explain the historical origins of major institutions of contemporary Californian society.
8. Synthesize knowledge and draw accurate conclusions from both primary and secondary sources of historical information.

Information Literacy Graduation Requirement - Integrated Subject Courses

In May 2009, an Information Competency graduation requirement was approved effective Fall 2010. The requirement's name was changed to Information Literacy in 2025. The requirement can be satisfied in two ways: via specific courses in Library Studies and through integrated subject courses that meet certain criteria:

Integrated courses which satisfy this requirement will be denoted in both the Catalog and Schedule of Classes, and must include the Information Literacy learning outcomes in their official Course Outline. Librarian support is available and consultation is strongly suggested for faculty and departments who are considering submitting new course outlines, SLOs and activities to meet the requirement of the information literacy graduation requirement.

Required activities for Integrated Course acceptance/approval.

Each course outline must include student learning outcomes (SLOs) that address each statement listed in the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) position statement on Information Literacy. Those statements are:

- Determine the extent of information needed
- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate information and its sources critically
- Incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally

The ACRL site has standards, performance indicators and outcomes that can fully assist in creating the SLOs for the integrated courses.

- Each course must assess for at least one information literacy student learning outcome during each assessment cycle for the course.
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- It is strongly suggested that course instructors collaborate with librarians on at least one course assignment. That assignment should correspond to the Information Literacy student learning outcomes of the course.

PROCEDURES

Curriculum Committee

The CSM Curriculum Committee is charged with approving and placing courses in the local general education areas. Assigning courses to the general education areas should be informed by the above standards. Curriculum Committee members should keep the following in mind:

- Members of the Curriculum Committee are responsible for reviewing CORs and ensuring that they meet the requirements for each GE area they seek to fulfill.
- Check to ensure that the COR includes the minimum required number SLOs from each GE Area that the course aims to fulfill.
- Course SLOs do not need to be identical to those listed in this handbook, but they must reflect the priorities of those Area SLOs and competencies.
- Check to ensure that the entire COR substantively engages with all the Area SLOs that the course aims to fulfill. In other words, the Area SLOs should be woven throughout the COR, including the course objectives, lecture content, assessment, and representative texts.

Course Authors

All actions related to General Education, CSU GE Breadth or UC IGETC are initiated through actions/proposals through the CurricUNET curriculum system. More information about using CurricUNET for new or revised courses is available on the Committee on Instruction site - <http://collegeofsanmateo.edu/committeeoninstruction/>

PROCEDURE - Recommending a Course for General Education Area fulfillment at CSM

To recommend a course to satisfy a General Education area for an AA/AS at College of San Mateo, check the Transferability/GE option on the Checklist in CurricUNET. The option is available when creating a new course or modifying an existing course in the CurricUNET system.

The Curriculum Committee considers courses for General Education inclusion when the course is considered for approval. However, to have any changes included for the upcoming catalog, requests and approvals must meet the December catalog deadline. All requests after December will be included in the following year's catalog. Evaluation of a course for inclusion in the College of San Mateo AA/AS General Education pattern is based on the criteria stated in this document.

If a course which is currently part of the College of San Mateo GE pattern is being revised, any major revision should be reviewed for adherence to assigned GE area(s).

Tips for Faculty Seeking Course Approval for CSM GE

1. Refer to GE criteria to get an overview of requirements and philosophy, as well as the requirements of the various areas within the GE pattern.
2. Consult a member of Curriculum Committee if you have questions about the CSM GE pattern.
3. Identify the GE areas for which the course is being recommended.
4. Look at courses that have previously been approved.
5. Be sure that Course Description and Student Learning Outcomes reflect the criteria required for the GE area.

PROCEDURE: Recommending a Course for CSU GE-Breadth Area Fulfillment

New courses which are to be considered for inclusion in the California State University General Education Breadth requirement pattern must be submitted by the Articulation Officer to CSU in December and therefore must be submitted for the November meeting of the Curriculum Committee. It is advised that you review CSU GE-Breadth criteria and/or meet with the Articulation Officer while drafting your course. CSU GE-Breadth course criteria may be found at <http://www.calstate.edu/eo/EO-1065.html>

TRANSFERABILITY TO CSU

The CSM Curriculum Committee decides whether a course is CSU-transferable.

TRANSFERABILITY TO UC

Although the College of San Mateo Curriculum Committee approves courses as CSU transferable, for a course to be UC transferable it must go through the UC approval process. Every JUNE the Articulation Officer submits new or modified courses for UC approval. Results from that submission are usually available in early August and are UC transferable beginning the following fall semester.

If you are writing a course for which you want to secure UC transferability it is advisable to meet with the Articulation Officer while developing the course and prior to submission to the curriculum committee to make sure UC transferability guidelines are met.

***CSU GENERAL EDUCATION-BREADTH REQUIREMENTS (CSU GE) and
INTERSEGMENTAL GENERAL EDUCATION TRANSFER CURRICULUM (IGETC)***

CSU GE and IGETC general education pathways are retired beginning FALL 2025. They are replaced by a singular general education pathway for California Community College students to fulfill lower-division general education requirements necessary for transfer to both the California State University (CSU) and the University of California (UC) systems. **See Cal-GETC information below.**

CALIFORNIA GENERAL EDUCATION TRANSFER CURRICULUM (Cal-GETC)

Beginning Fall 2025 the Cal-GETC is the singular general education pathway as noted above. All courses submitted for Cal-GETC must first be approved as UC transferable (see UC Transferability and time line above). Once the course is approved as UC transferable it can be included in the annual Cal-GETC submittal in December.

It is likely that full general education articulation will take 2 years to achieve. **See example below.**

- **Step 1** - COURSE XXX approved by the College of San Mateo Curriculum Committee in September 2024 and the faculty member would like the course to appear on the Cal-GETC pattern.
- **Step 2** – COURSE XXX is submitted in JUNE 2025 for UC transferability. The course is approved and is UC transferable beginning Fall 2025
- **Step 3** – COURSE XXX is submitted in DECEMBER 2025 for Cal-GETC approval. The course is approved and is part of Cal-GETC beginning Fall 2026.

Articulation IS NOT retroactive. For the course to be applied to Cal-GETC it must first be approved for IGETC. **See example below.**

COURSE ZZZ is approved for Cal-GETC beginning Fall 2025. A student takes this course in SUMMER 2025. Because the course IS NOT approved for Cal-GETC at the time the student completed it, it is not applied to meet Cal-GETC requirements.

Transfer Information Resources

- ASSIST.org
- Cal-GETC Standards 1.2 or a more recent version
- College of San Mateo Articulation Officer

RESOURCES

California Code of Regulations Title 5

- [§ 55060. Philosophy and Criteria for the Associate Degree and General Education](#)
- [§ 55061. Associate Degree Course Requirements](#)
- [§ 55062. Conditions for Awarding the Associate Degree](#)