

Section 5
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
Part I: Academic Programs

5.0 Types of Programs (see also, Section 2-A) (SB)

In determining the curricula and programs to be offered in each college under the jurisdiction of the State Board, the State Board shall take cognizance of the varying needs of the communities served through the Virginia Community College System and the substantiated requests of interested local governing bodies, employers, and individuals. These programs shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

5.0.0 Career/Technical Education

Career/technical education programs shall be designed to meet the increasing demand for technicians, semiprofessional workers, apprentices, and skilled crafts persons for employment in industry, business, the professions, and government. These programs normally require two years or less of training beyond high school. They may include preparation for agricultural, business, engineering, health and medical, industrial, service, and other technical and occupational fields. The curricula shall be planned primarily to meet the needs for workers in the region being served by the community college, but the State Board may designate certain community colleges as centers to serve larger areas of the state in offering expensive and highly specialized occupational and technical education programs. See Section 5.1.0 for types of career/technical curricula.

5.0.1 College Transfer Education

College transfer programs shall include courses the first two years of a baccalaureate program in arts and sciences and preprofessional programs meeting standards acceptable for transfer to baccalaureate degree programs. These programs shall be of equal content and quality to those provided in the four-year, degree-granting institutions to facilitate the transfer of students from the community college to four-year colleges and universities. See Section 5.1.0 for types of college transfer curricula.

5.0.2 General Education

5.0.2.0 General education is that portion of the collegiate experience that addresses the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values characteristic of educated persons. It is unbounded by disciplines and honors the connections among bodies of knowledge. VCCS degree graduates will demonstrate competency in the following general education areas: communication, critical thinking, cultural and social understanding, information literacy, personal development, quantitative reasoning, and scientific reasoning.

5.0.2.1 The associate degree programs within the Virginia Community College System support a collegiate experience that focuses on the above definition and attendant areas. The general education outcomes shall be included in the catalog of each college.

VCCS GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

VCCS degree graduates will demonstrate competency in the following general education areas:

1. Communication: A competent communicator can interact with others using all forms of communication, resulting in understanding and being understood. Degree graduates will demonstrate the ability to:

- a. understand and interpret complex materials;
- b. assimilate, organize, develop, and present an idea formally and informally;
- c. use standard English;
- d. use appropriate verbal and non-verbal responses in interpersonal relations and group discussions;
- e. use listening skills;
- f. recognize the role of culture in communication.

2. Critical Thinking: A competent critical thinker evaluates evidence carefully and applies reasoning to decide what to believe and how to act. Degree graduates will demonstrate the ability to:

- a. discriminate among degrees of credibility, accuracy, and reliability of inferences drawn from given data;
- b. recognize parallels, assumptions, or presuppositions in any given source of information;
- c. evaluate the strengths and relevance of arguments on a particular question or issue;
- d. weigh evidence and decide if generalizations or conclusions based on the given data are warranted;
- e. determine whether certain conclusions or consequences are supported by the information provided,
- f. use problem solving skills.

3. Cultural and Social Understanding: A culturally and socially competent person possesses an awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the interconnectedness of the social and cultural dimensions within and across local, regional, state, national, and global communities. Degree graduates will demonstrate the ability to:

- a. assess the impact that social institutions have on individuals and culture-past, present, and future;
- b. describe their own as well as others' personal ethical systems and values within social institutions;
- c. recognize the impact that arts and humanities have upon individuals and cultures;
- d. recognize the role of language in social and cultural contexts;
- e. recognize the interdependence of distinctive world-wide social, economic, geo-political, and cultural systems.

4. Information Literacy: A person who is competent in information literacy recognizes when information is needed and has the ability to locate, evaluate, and use it effectively. (adapted from the American Library Association definition) Degree graduates will demonstrate the ability to:

- a. determine the nature and extent of the information needed;
- b. access needed information effectively and efficiently;
- c. evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into his or her knowledge base;
- d. use information effectively, individually or as a member of a group, to accomplish a specific purpose;
- e. understand many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and access and use information ethically and legally.

5. Personal Development: An individual engaged in personal development strives for physical well-being and emotional maturity. Degree graduates will demonstrate the ability to:

- a. develop and/or refine personal wellness goals;
- b. develop and/or enhance the knowledge, skills, and understanding to make informed academic, social, personal, career, and interpersonal decisions.

6. Quantitative Reasoning: A person who is *competent* in quantitative reasoning possesses the skills and knowledge necessary to apply the use of logic, numbers, and mathematics to deal effectively with common problems and issues. A person who is quantitatively *literate* can use numerical, geometric, and measurement data and concepts, mathematical skills, and principles of mathematical reasoning to draw logical conclusions and to make well-reasoned decisions. Degree graduates will demonstrate the ability to:

- a. use logical and mathematical reasoning within the context of various disciplines;
- b. interpret and use mathematical formulas;
- c. interpret mathematical models such as graphs, tables and schematics and draw inferences from them;
- d. use graphical, symbolic, and numerical methods to analyze, organize, and interpret data;
- e. estimate and consider answers to mathematical problems in order to determine reasonableness;
- f. represent mathematical information numerically, symbolically, and visually, using graphs and charts.

7. Scientific Reasoning: A person who is competent in scientific reasoning adheres to a self-correcting system of inquiry (the scientific method) and relies on empirical evidence to describe, understand, predict, and control natural phenomena. Degree graduates will demonstrate the ability to:

- a. generate an empirically evidenced and logical argument;
- b. distinguish a scientific argument from a non-scientific argument;
- c. reason by deduction, induction and analogy;
- d. distinguish between causal and correlational relationships;
- e. recognize methods of inquiry that lead to scientific knowledge.

5.0.3 Developmental Programs

Developmental or preparatory programs shall be offered to prepare individuals for admission to the college transfer programs and the career/technical programs in the community college. These developmental programs shall be designed to develop the basic skills and understandings necessary to succeed in other community college programs.

5.0.4 Workforce Development Programs

Workforce Development Programs help Virginia businesses and industries to be globally competitive by supporting the economic development goals of the Commonwealth and local governments. Such programs may provide credit and non-credit customized training, general education and special skill building programs, and services such as organizational consulting, applicant assessment, career placement or any related service within the capabilities and financial resources of each college individually, collectively or with external partners.

5.0.5 Continuing Adult Education

Adult education programs shall be offered to enable adults to continue their learning experiences. This may include both credit and non-credit work.

5.0.6 Community Services

Community services include various programs and activities that provide public service to the citizens and organizations of the region. This service includes programs such as cultural events, workshops, meetings, lectures, conferences, seminars, and special community projects which are designed to provide needed cultural and educational opportunities for the citizens of the region.

5.1 Curricula

5.1.0 Curricular Design for Degrees

The State Board shall establish minimum standards and shall authorize community colleges to award appropriate associate degrees, diplomas, certificates, and career studies certificates, to individuals who satisfactorily complete course and program requirements.

5.1.0.0 Curricular Design (SB)

The curricular design for degree programs in the VCCS consolidates all present and currently anticipated curricula into five degrees. The degrees are organized into College Transfer and Career/Technical programs.

College Transfer Education

Associate of Arts (AA)
Associate of Science (AS)
Associate of Arts and Sciences (AA&S)

Career/Technical Education

Associate of Applied Arts (AAA)
Associate of Applied-Science (AAS)

- Agricultural & Natural Resources Technology
- Arts & Design Technology
- Business Technology
- Engineering & Industrial Technology
- Health Technology
- Public Service Technology

Degrees include one or more "Majors," some of which may be further divided into appropriate "Specializations." The minimum requirements for associate degrees are outlined in Table 5-1 on the following page.

Table 5-1A
VCCS Degree Requirements

Area	Distribution				
<p>GENERAL EDUCATION General education is that portion of the collegiate experience that addresses the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values characteristic of educated persons. It is unbounded by disciplines and honors the connections among bodies of knowledge. The associate degree programs within the VCCS support a collegiate experience that focuses on seven goal areas: <i>communication; critical thinking; cultural and social understanding; information literacy; personal development; quantitative reasoning; scientific reasoning.</i>) The general education goal areas outlined below are to be introduced in the foundational courses and enhanced in program and elective courses. (NOTE: Some of the categories include two goal areas when a single course may provide foundations in both goal areas.)</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td> <p>I. Foundations In Communication: Courses designed to enable students to interact with others using all forms of communication, resulting in understanding and being understood.</p> </td> <td> <p>II. Foundations In Critical Thinking And Information Literacy: Courses designed to enable students to evaluate evidence carefully and apply reasoning to decide what to believe and how to act, and to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use it effectively.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <p>III. Foundations In Cultural And Social Understanding: Courses designed to enable students to have an awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the interconnectedness of the social and cultural dimensions within and across local, regional, state, national, and global communities.</p> </td> <td> <p>IV. Foundations In Personal Development: Courses designed to enable students to strive for physical well-being and emotional maturity.</p> </td> </tr> </table> <p>V. Foundations In Quantitative And Scientific Reasoning: Courses designed to enable students to possess the skills and knowledge necessary to apply the use of logic, numbers, and mathematics to deal effectively with common problems and issues, and to adhere to a self-correcting system of inquiry (the scientific method) and rely on empirical evidence to describe, understand, predict, and control natural phenomena.</p>	<p>I. Foundations In Communication: Courses designed to enable students to interact with others using all forms of communication, resulting in understanding and being understood.</p>	<p>II. Foundations In Critical Thinking And Information Literacy: Courses designed to enable students to evaluate evidence carefully and apply reasoning to decide what to believe and how to act, and to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use it effectively.</p>	<p>III. Foundations In Cultural And Social Understanding: Courses designed to enable students to have an awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the interconnectedness of the social and cultural dimensions within and across local, regional, state, national, and global communities.</p>	<p>IV. Foundations In Personal Development: Courses designed to enable students to strive for physical well-being and emotional maturity.</p>	<p>Minimum 15 credits (Students must take at least one course in each of the five areas listed, to total at least 15 credits.)</p>
<p>I. Foundations In Communication: Courses designed to enable students to interact with others using all forms of communication, resulting in understanding and being understood.</p>	<p>II. Foundations In Critical Thinking And Information Literacy: Courses designed to enable students to evaluate evidence carefully and apply reasoning to decide what to believe and how to act, and to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use it effectively.</p>				
<p>III. Foundations In Cultural And Social Understanding: Courses designed to enable students to have an awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the interconnectedness of the social and cultural dimensions within and across local, regional, state, national, and global communities.</p>	<p>IV. Foundations In Personal Development: Courses designed to enable students to strive for physical well-being and emotional maturity.</p>				
<p>PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS Major Field Core Related/Specialization Courses Electives</p>	<p>Minimum 15 credits* Maximum 15 credits 0-15 credits</p>				
<p>TOTALS</p>	<p>AA/AS/AA&S: 60-63 credits**</p>				
	<p>AAA/AAS: 65-69 credits***</p>				

*Language in Section 5.1.0.0.1 of the VCCS Policy Manual states 25% of the courses in the degree program (15-18 credits) must be common across majors within a degree. The shared courses must be major or related/specialization courses.

**Credit range for engineering programs is 60-72 semester hour credits.

***Credit range for AAA/AAS programs is 65-69, including nursing. For other programs in the Health Technologies, the range is 65-72 semester hour credits.

Table 5-1B
Minimum Requirements for
Associate Degrees in the VCCS

General Education:	Minimum Number of Semester Hour Credits			
	(1) <u>AA</u>	(2) <u>AS</u>	(3) <u>AA&S</u>	(4) <u>AAA / AAS</u>
Communication ^(a)	6	6	6	3
Humanities / Fine Arts	6	6	6	3
Foreign Language (Intermediate Level)	6	0	0	0
Social / Behavioral Sciences	9	9 ^(b)	9	3 ^(c)
Natural Sciences / Mathematics	7	7	7	0
Personal Development ^(e)	2	2	2	2
Other Requirements for Associate Degrees:				
Major field courses and electives (columns 1-3)	18-21	24-27	24-27	49-53 ^(f)
Career/technical courses (column 4)	—	—	—	—
Total for Degree^(g) =	60-63	60-63^(h)	60-63^(h)	65-69^(h)

Notes: The VCCS Policy Manual, Section 2-IV-C, defines general education within the VCCS. Sections 2.7.3, 3.4.10, and 3.5.1 of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Principles of Accreditation specify general education requirements. Colleges must address all SACS requirements, the SCHEV Core Competencies, and the general education goal areas listed in this VCCS Policy Manual.

- (a) Must include at least one course in English composition.
- (b) Only 6 semester hours of social/behavioral sciences are required for engineering majors who plan to transfer to a baccalaureate degree engineering program that requires 6 or fewer hours in this category, provided that the college/university publishes such requirements in its transfer guide.
- (c) While general education courses other than those designed for transfer may be used to meet portions of these requirements, SACS principles require that general education courses be general in nature and must not "...narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures peculiar to a particular occupation or profession."
- (d) Only 3 semester hours of mathematics are required for the General Studies major.
- (e) Personal development includes health, physical education, or recreation courses that promote physical and emotional well being and student development courses. Must include at least one student development course.
- (f) AAA/AAS degrees must contain a minimum of 15 semester hours of general education. Students should plan to take at least 30 hours in the major; the remaining hours will be appropriate to the major.
- (g) All college-level course prerequisites must be included in the total credits required for each program.
- (h) Credit range for engineering programs is 60-72 semester hour credits. Credit range for AAA/AAS programs is 65-69, including nursing. For other programs in the Health Technologies, the range is 65-72 semester hour credits.

5.1.0.0.0 Degree Program

A degree program is a broadly structured curriculum leading to the award of an associate's degree; is identified by a six-digit CIP code used for reporting purposes to external agencies; and is listed on the student's diploma.

5.1.0.0.1 Major

A major is a grouping of 100 and 200-level courses that define a discipline or interdisciplinary specialty; listed under a common CIP code; and identified by a VCCS curriculum code. All curricula under a CIP code share a common core of courses, defined as 25% of total credits required for the degree, excluding the general education core.

5.1.0.0.2 Specialization

A specialization is an area of concentration within an approved major, varying from the parent major by 9-15 credit hours.

5.1.0.1 Computer Competency Requirements (SB)

Each college must ensure that students are able to demonstrate college entry-level computer skills necessary for academic success and discipline-specific skills necessary for successful transfer or employment.

5.1.1 Diploma and Certificate Programs (SB)

Virginia community colleges may offer diploma, certificate and career studies certificate programs. The diploma and certificate curricula shall differ from associate degree curricula in that they may be presented at a different educational level.

5.1.1.0 Diploma

A diploma program is defined as a two-year curriculum of study that consists of a minimum of 60 and a maximum of 72 semester hours with an emphasis in a career/technical area. Exceptions to credit hour limits must be justified on the basis of documented business and industry requirements or standards. Diploma curricula may include any appropriate courses numbered 10-299. A minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of a diploma's credit hour requirement shall be in general education. The general education requirements must include one (1) three (3) credit hour English class. Existing programs (as of 2009) that exceed the 72 semester hour maximum are grandfathered in at their current length.

5.1.1.1 Certificate

A certificate program is defined as a curriculum of study less than two years in length that consists of a minimum of 30 and a maximum of 59 semester credit hours. Certificate curricula may include any appropriate courses numbered 10-299. A minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of a certificate's credit hour requirement shall be in general education. The general education requirements must include one (1) three (3) credit hour English class.

5.1.1.2 Career Studies Certificate

A career studies certificate program is defined as a program of study of not less than 9 nor more than 29 semester credit hours which may include courses numbered 10-299. Career studies certificate programs are not required to include general education.

**Table 5-2
Minimum Requirements for
Diplomas, Certificates, and Career Studies Certificates**

	Diploma	Certificate	Career Studies Certificate
Definition	A two-year curriculum with an emphasis in a career/technical area	A curriculum that consists of a minimum of 30 semester credit hours	A program of study of not less than 9 nor more than 29 semester credit hours
Course Requirements	May include any appropriate courses numbered 10-299	May include any appropriate courses numbered 10-299	May include any appropriate courses numbered 10-299
General Education Requirements	A minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of credit hour requirements shall be in general education, including 1 three-credit English course.	A minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of credit hour requirements shall be in general education, including 1 three-credit English course.	There are no general education requirements.
Graduation Requirements	See p 5-8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 25% of courses must be taken at home institution. ▪ 2.0 GPA ▪ Graduation honors eligible 	See p 5-8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 25% of courses must be taken at home institution. ▪ 2.0 GPA ▪ Graduation honors eligible 	See page 5-8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 25% of courses must be taken at home institution. ▪ 2.0 GPA ▪ Not eligible for graduation honors
Approval	State Board for Community Colleges	Chancellor	Local College Board

5.1.2 Graduation Requirements (SB)

Each college shall ensure that students who receive associate degrees, diplomas, certificates or career studies certificates have completed the established graduation requirements.

To be eligible for graduation with an associate degree, diploma, certificate, or career studies certificate from a Virginia community college, students must:

- a. Fulfill all of the course and credit-hour requirements of the curriculum with at least 25% of credit semester hours acquired at the college granting the award;
- b. Be certified by an appropriate college official for graduation;
- c. Earn a grade point average of at least 2.0 in all studies attempted which are applicable toward graduation in their curricula;
- d. Meet any other competency requirements established by the local college;
- e. File an official application for graduation, which may be waived in the case of the General Education Certificate; and
- f. Resolve all financial obligations to the college and return all library and college materials.

5.1.2.0 Credits Applicable to Second Degree, Diploma, or Certificate (SB)

In awarding students an additional degree, diploma, certificate, or career studies certificate, the college may grant credit for all completed applicable courses which are requirements of the additional degree, diploma, certificate, or career studies certificate. However, the awards must differ from one another by at least 25% of the credits.

5.1.3 Graduation Honors (SB)

Students who have fulfilled the requirements of degree, diploma, or certificate programs (with the exception of career studies certificates), are eligible for graduation honors.

Appropriate honors based upon scholastic achievements are recorded on the student's permanent record as listed below:

Minimum Cumulative
Grade Point Average

Honor

3.2
3.5
3.8

Cum laude (with honor)
Magna cum laude (with high honor)
Summa cum laude (with highest honor)

5.1.4 Signatures on Awards (SB)

The signatures of the Chancellor of the VCCS, the President of the College, the Chair of the State Board, and the Chair of the College Board shall appear on the degrees, diplomas, certificates, and career studies certificates awarded to students in the VCCS.

5.1.5 Reissuance of Diplomas (SB)

VCCS colleges have the authority to issue replacement degrees, diplomas, certificates, and career studies certificates previously awarded to students. Signatures of current college officials may be used on reissued diplomas.

5.1.5.1 Diplomas will be reissued upon the graduate's request provided the graduate does not have any outstanding debt to the college, in which case, no diplomas will be re-issued until the debt is fully satisfied. However, if a bankruptcy court has issued an automatic stay preventing the collection of pre-bankruptcy petition debts at that time, or has discharged a student loan that the graduate had, then the outstanding debt may not be used as a basis for denying the request for a diploma reissuance. (Colleges may wish to consult with System Counsel if confronted with a bankruptcy issue.) The policies and procedures for requesting a reissued diploma shall be clearly stated on each college's website. Colleges may charge a fee for reissuing diplomas.

5.1.6 Honorary Degrees (SB)

The State Board authorizes the individual colleges to award honorary associate degrees of humane letters to individuals who have contributed significantly to the awarding college or the VCCS. Individuals are not eligible for this award if they are currently employed by the college, serving on the local College Board, or serving on the State Board for Community Colleges at any time between the date of the local College Board approval and the actual receipt of this award. A separation from such employment or service of at least one month is a prerequisite for eligibility. Recommendations for such honorary degrees shall be made to the Chancellor and to the State Board and approval granted by the Chancellor and State Board prior to the award being made.

5.1.7 Posthumous Degrees (SB)

The State Board authorizes individual colleges to award posthumous degrees for students. Criteria for these degrees shall be determined by individual institutions.

5.2 Development of Programs and Courses (SB)

Curricula generally shall be originated by the colleges. There must be ample justification for the creation of new curricula based upon the needs and opportunities of the state or region served by the college. In determining the curricula to be offered in the VCCS, the State Board shall take cognizance of the varying needs of the communities served throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia and the substantiated requests of interested local governing bodies, employers, and individuals.

5.2.0 Review and Approval Procedures (SB)

A new or modified degree program that includes content in a discipline or field not currently offered by the institution requires approval as a new degree program with a separate CIP code. Curriculum changes that result in a degree program that shares fewer than 25% of its courses (excluding the general education core) with an existing program require approval of a new major. VCCS approval is not required for new or modified specializations.

Procedures for the review and approval of degrees, majors, specializations, diplomas, certificates, career studies certificates, and courses are outlined in Table 5-3. These procedures are to be followed by all colleges in the VCCS and information on their implementation is available from the Academic Services and Research Division, VCCS System Office.

5.2.1 Procedures for Discontinuance of Programs (SB)

Procedures for the discontinuance of degrees, majors, specializations, diplomas, certificates, career studies certificates, and courses are outlined in Table 5-3. These procedures are to be followed by all colleges in the VCCS and information on their implementation is available from the Academic Services and Research Division, VCCS System Office.

5.2.2 Review of Programs

Institutions must review academic programs on a regular basis, as outlined in Section 8.2.1.0.

Student learning outcomes in all degree programs must be assessed systematically.

Table 5-3
Program Review & Approval Process

Key: R = Review/Recommend A = Approve N = Notification/Reported To	Courses	Career Studies Certificates	Certificates	Diplomas	Degree Programs	Majors	Specializations
Local Level							
Curriculum Advisory Committee	-	R	R	R	R ¹	R ¹	R ¹
College Curriculum Committee	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
College Administration	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
College Board	-	A	A	A	A	A	A
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools	-	N/A ⁴	N/A ⁴	N/A ⁴	N/A ⁴	N/A ⁴	N/A ⁴
State Level							
Deans' Course Review Committee Reporting to ASAC	R	-	-	-	-	-	-
VCCS AS&R Staff	A	N	R	R	R	R	N
Chancellor	-	-	A/N ²	-	-	-	-
Academic Services and Workforce SBCC Committee	-	-	R	R	R	R	-
State Board for Community Colleges	-	-	A/N ²	A	A	A	-
SCHEV	-	-	N	N	A ³	-	-
¹ Only for AAA and AAS degree programs ² Original requests must be approved; additional colleges' requests need only be reported ³ Must be approved by State Council of Higher Education at least 6 months prior to requested program implementation semester. "Spin-off" degree programs (such as turning a specialization of a current degree program into a stand-alone degree program) require SCHEV staff approval. ⁴ SACS must be notified if the new program is related to programs already approved at the college and does not represent a potential substantive change. If the new program does represent a substantive change from approved college programs, SACS approval is required.							

Program Discontinuance Process

Key: R = Review/Recommend A = Approve N = Notification/Reported To	Courses	Career Studies Certificates	Certificates	Diplomas	Degree Programs	Majors	Specializations
Local Level							
Curriculum Advisory Committee	--	R	R	R	R	R	R
College Curriculum Committee	--	R	R	R	R	R	R
College Administration	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
College Board	--	A	A	A	A	A	A
State Level							
VCCS AS&R Staff	A*	N	R	R	R	R	N
Chancellor	--	--	A	--	--	--	--
Academic Services & Workforce SBCC Committee	--	--	--	--	R	R	--
State Board for Community Colleges	--	--	--	A	A	A	--
SCHEV	--	--	N	N	N	--	--
*If being discontinued at the System level							

5.2.3 Course Listing in Master Course File (C)

All courses approved for the VCCS shall be listed in the Master Course File. Colleges must use the approved course title, credits, and description listed in the Master Course File. Courses shall be inactivated in the Master Course File when they have not been offered in the System for a three-year period, or for other justifiable causes. The System Office will generate a list of potential course inactivations every two years during the summer, and will notify colleges of intended inactivations to occur one year thereafter.

5.2.4 Local Curriculum Advisory Committees (SB)

Local advisory committees must be consulted for the establishment and review of all career/technical degree and stand-alone certificate programs. These committees shall be appointed by the community college president with the approval of the local college board. (See Section 2-A, IX.E., this Manual.)

5.2.5 Curricular Offerings (SB)

Approved curricular offerings shall be included in the college catalog and contain, as a minimum, the following elements of information:

Curriculum Description

- a. Curriculum title (as approved by VCCS);
- b. Type of award (degree, diploma, certificate, career studies certificates);
- c. Normal length of the curriculum (number of semesters/terms);
- d. Purpose and curricular objectives;
- e. Admission requirements;
- f. Special program or graduation requirements;
- g. Listing of required courses; and
- h. Total minimum credits.

5.3 Master Course File and College Catalogs (SB)

The Master Course File is maintained by the Academic Services and Research Division of the VCCS.

5.3.0 Courses (C)

The Master Course File shall include the following information for each course approved for the VCCS:

- a. Course prefix and number;

- b. Course title;
- c. Course credits;
- d. Course prerequisites and corequisites;
- e. Course description; and
- f. Course lecture, laboratory, and total contact hours per week.

Colleges shall use the course information (prefix, number, title, credits, prerequisites and corequisite, description, and number of hours) as listed in the Master Course File. Where appropriate, and as approved by the VCCS, courses may be cross listed in two or more prefixes. Course titles should indicate a clear relationship to the prefix or discipline. Course titles should not be duplicated except in sequenced courses. Abbreviations that are not universally understood, references to specific software packages, and references to licensure or certification should be avoided. Course descriptions should be written for system-wide use and should contain minimum standards for content and competencies taught in the course. Colleges may set additional prerequisites.

5.3.0.0 Course Numbering System (SB)

A uniform course numbering system shall be maintained by the Academic Services and Research Division of the VCCS for all courses approved for the VCCS. The following system shall be used:

- 1-9 Developmental courses. Credits earned in these courses are not applicable toward associate degree programs; however, upon approval by the Chief Academic Officer, some developmental courses may provide credit appropriate for diploma or certificate programs.
- 10-99 Basic non-degree courses for diplomas and certificate programs. Credits earned in these courses are applicable toward diploma and certificate programs, but will not be applicable toward an associate degree. ESL courses may also be numbered 10-99.
- 100-199 Freshman-level courses applicable toward associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs.
- 200-299 Sophomore-level courses applicable toward associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs.

5.3.0.1 Course Hours (C)

The teaching and application of theoretical concepts in lectures, seminars, discussions, and other similar activities are identified as "Lecture," and the application of principles through practical training in laboratories, clinical training, supervised work experiences and other similar classes is identified as "Laboratory."

The number of lecture hours in class each week (including lecture, seminar, discussion, and other similar activities) and/or the number of laboratory, supervised study, coordinated internship, and other similar activities are indicated for each course in the course description. The numbers of lecture and laboratory hours required each week are called "contact" hours.

Distance learning courses must include the same content and deliver the same student outcomes as do the same courses taught in the classroom. Although contact hours for distance learning courses may not refer to seat time, they do still indicate the amount of course time devoted to lecture and laboratory instruction.

5.3.0.2 Course Credits (C)

The credit for each course must be indicated after the title in the course description. One credit is equivalent to one collegiate semester-hour credit.

Each semester hour of credit given for a course is based on the "academic hour," which is 50 minutes of formalized, structured instructional time in a particular course weekly for fifteen weeks. This is a total of 750 minutes of instruction. In addition to this instructional time, appropriate evaluation will be required. If this evaluation is a final examination, a minimum of one hour will be scheduled for each semester hour of credit generated by the course, not to exceed three academic hours (150 minutes). Credits may be assigned to the activities as follows:

- a. Lecture – One academic hour of lecture (including lecture, seminar, discussion, or other similar activities) per week, generally for 15 weeks, plus the evaluation or examination period, equals one collegiate semester-hour credit.
- b. Laboratory – Two to five academic hours, depending on the discipline, of laboratory, clinical training, supervised work experience, coordinated internship, or other similar activities per week, generally for 15 weeks, plus the evaluation or examination period, equals one collegiate semester-hour credit.
- c. Asynchronous Distance Learning Courses – In the case of asynchronous distance learning course offerings or hybrid courses that employ a mix of traditional contact hours and

learning activities with students and faculty separated by time and place, colleges must demonstrate through faculty peer review that content and competency coverage and student outcomes are equivalent to those of traditional sections of the same class. In the event the only section of the course being taught in the VCCS is an asynchronous or hybrid course, faculty peer review will be employed to confirm that content and competency coverage and student outcomes are appropriate for the course credits awarded.

- d. General Usage Courses – Variable academic hours from one to five credits for general usage courses.
- e. Variable Credits – A college may request that a course vary from the existing credit value, but by no more than one credit. Existing variable credit ranges may not be extended. Credit variability will not be approved for purposes of deleting laboratory hours or of making laboratory hours optional. General usage courses and courses numbered 1-99 are exempt from this policy.

5.3.0.3 General Usage Courses (C)

General usage courses apply to multiple curricula and to all disciplines. The college catalog shall include course information (number, title, credits and description) as listed in the Master Course File. More specific titles, credits and course descriptions may be substituted in published class schedules to clarify topics and content covered in a given semester.

General usage courses may be repeated for credit, and may include lecture, laboratory, out-of-class study, or a combination thereof.

90, 190, 290 Coordinated Internship (discipline) (1-5 Cr.)

Supervises on-the-job training in selected business, industrial or service firms coordinated by the college. Credit/practice ratio not to exceed 1:5 hours. May be repeated for credit. Variable hours per week.

93, 193, 293 Studies In (discipline) (1-5 Cr.)

Covers new content not covered in existing courses in the discipline. Allows instructor to explore content and instructional methods to assess the course's viability as a permanent offering. A "Studies in" course is intended as an experimental course to test its viability as a permanent offering. Each offering of the course must be approved by the Chief Academic Officer or designee. An experimental course may be offered twice, after which the course must be approved under the appropriate discipline according to VCCS processes for adding new courses to the Master Course File. Variable hours per week.

95, 195, 295 Topics In (discipline) (1-5 Cr.)

Provides an opportunity to explore topic areas of an evolving nature or of short-term importance in the discipline. Variable hours per week. A "Topics in" course is intended to cover topics of an evolving nature or of short-term importance in the discipline. The course shall be approved by the academic VP or designee for a period up to two years. The Chief Academic Officer or designee may approve an extension of another two-year period, after which the course must be approved under the appropriate discipline according to VCCS processes for adding new courses to the Master Course File.

96, 196, 296 On-Site Training (discipline) (1-5 Cr.)

Offers opportunities for career orientation and training without pay in selected businesses and industry. Supervised and coordinated by the college. Credit/work ratio not to exceed 1:5 hours. Variable hours per week.

97, 197, 297 Cooperative Education In (discipline)(1-5 Cr.)

Provides on-the-job training for pay in approved business, industrial and service firms. Applies to all career-technical curricula at the discretion of the college. Credit/work ratio not to exceed 1:5 hours. Variable hours per week.

98, 198, 298 Seminar and Project In (discipline) (1-5 Cr.)

Requires completion of a project or research report related to the student's occupational objective and a study of approaches to the selection and pursuit of career opportunities in the field. Variable hours per week.

99, 199, 299 Supervised Study In (discipline) (1-5 Cr.)

Assigns problems for independent study outside the normal classroom setting under the guidance and direction of an instructor. Incorporates prior experience and instruction in the discipline. Variable hours per week.

Exceptions to the credit limit may be granted by the Chief Academic Officer.

5.4 Articulation (SB)

The State Board encourages articulation between the VCCS and other institutions of higher education and will adhere to the policies established by the General Assembly and coordinated by the State Council of Higher Education.

5.4.0 Community College Courses for Teacher Certification Programs (per Agreement with the Director of the Division of Teacher Education and Certification for the Virginia Department of Education, February 23, 1968)

Institutions may provide courses requested by the Virginia Department of Education. (Individual students needing courses for certification should be advised to consult with local superintendents for prior approval.)

5.5 On-Campus/Off Campus Definitions (SB)

“Off-campus” sites are those more than 25 miles from the campus administering them.

5.6 Academic Policies

5.6.0 Grading System for Credit Classes (SB)

In order to receive any letter grade, a student must have attended a minimum of one class meeting or the equivalent in the case of a distance learning course. In a distance learning course, initial student attendance is determined by course participation as measured by accessing and using course materials, completion of a class assignment, participation in a course discussion, or other evidence of participation. Students who enroll in a course but do not attend a minimum of one class meeting or the distance learning equivalent by the census date or earlier date as defined and published by the institution must be administratively deleted from the course by the college. Existing college policies regarding tuition refund shall remain in effect.

The grades of A, B, C, D, P, and S are passing grades. Grades of F and U are failing grades. R and I are interim grades. Grades of W and X are final grades carrying no credit.

The quality of performance in any academic course is reported by a letter grade, the assignment of which is the responsibility of the instructor. These grades denote the character of study and are assigned quality points as follows:

A - Excellent	4 grade points per credit
B - Good	3 grade points per credit
C - Average	2 grade points per credit
D - Poor	1 grade point per credit
F - Failure	0 grade points per credit
I - Incomplete	No grade point credit. The “I” grade is to be used only for verifiable unavoidable reasons that a student is unable to complete a course within the normal course time. To be eligible to receive an “I” grade, the student must (1) have satisfactorily completed more than 50% of the course requirements and (2) must request the faculty member to assign the “I” grade and indicate why it is warranted. The faculty member has the discretion to decide whether the “I” grade will be awarded. Since the "incomplete" extends enrollment in the course, requirements for satisfactory completion shall be established through

consultation between the faculty member and the student. In assigning the "I" grade, the faculty member must complete documentation that (1) states the reason for assigning the grade; (2) specifies the work to be completed and indicates its percentage in relation to the total work of the course; (3) specifies the date by which the work must be completed; and (4) identifies the default (B, C, D, F, P, R, or U) based upon course work already completed. Completion dates may not be set beyond the subsequent semester (to include summer term) without written approval of the chief academic officer of the campus. The student will be provided a copy of the documentation. Colleges will establish procedures to ensure that all "I" grades that have not been changed by the faculty member through the normal grade change processes are subsequently changed to the default grade assigned by the faculty member. An "I" grade will be changed to a "W" only under documented mitigating circumstances which must be approved by the Chief Academic Officer of the campus.

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| P - Pass | No grade point credit; applies only to non-developmental studies courses. Stipulations for application of the "P" grade are outlined in Section 5.6.0.0 |
| R - Re-Enroll | No grade point credit; the "R" grade may be used as a grade option, in developmental and ESL courses only, to indicate satisfactory progress toward meeting course objectives. In order to complete course objectives, students receiving an "R" grade must re-enroll in the course and pay the specified tuition. |
| S - Satisfactory | No grade point credit. Used only for satisfactory completion of developmental studies courses and ESL courses. See Section 5.6.0.1 |
| U - Unsatisfactory | No grade point credit. Stipulations for application of the "U" grade are outlined in Sections 5.6.0.0, 5.6.0.1, and 5.6.0.2. |

W - Withdrawal

No grade point credit. A grade of "W" is awarded to students who withdraw or are withdrawn from a course after the add/drop period but prior to the completion of 60% of the session. After that time, the students shall receive a grade of "F" except under mitigating circumstances which must be documented and a copy of the documentation must be placed in the students' academic files.

For purposes of enrollment reporting, the following procedures shall apply:

- a. If a student withdraws from a class prior to the termination of the add/drop period for the session, the student is removed from the class roster and no grade is awarded.
- b. After the add/drop period, but prior to completion of 60% of a session, a student who withdraws or is withdrawn from a course shall be assigned a grade of "W". A grade of withdrawal implies that the student was making satisfactory progress in the course at the time of withdrawal, or that the withdrawal was officially made before the deadline date published in the college calendar, or that the student was administratively transferred to a different program.
- c. After that time, if a student withdraws or is withdrawn from a course, a grade of "F" shall be assigned. Exceptions to this policy may be made under mitigating circumstances; such circumstances must be documented and a copy of the documentation placed in the student's academic file. Only the chief academic officer of the campus or his/her designee can approve an exception to this policy under mitigating circumstances.

X - Audit

Students desiring to attend a course without taking the examination or receiving credit for the course may do so by registering to audit through the usual registration process and paying the normal tuition. Permission of the division dean or another appropriate academic administrator is required to audit a course.

Audited courses carry no credit and do not count as a part of the student's course load. Students desiring to change status in a course from audit to credit or from credit to audit must do so within the add/drop period for the course.

Students who desire to earn credit for a previously audited course must re-enroll in the course for credit and pay normal tuition to earn a grade other than "X." Advanced standing credit should not be awarded for a previously audited course.

5.6.0.0 Pass/Unsatisfactory Grading Option (SB)

Grades available under the Pass/Unsatisfactory option are "P" and "U." A student under this option receives one or the other of these two grades, except where an "R," "I," or "W" is appropriate, according to the conditions for these grades noted in 5.6.0. The pass/unsatisfactory grading option is used for non-punitive purposes. The use of this option requires the approval of the division dean responsible for the course or other designated academic administrator.

The P/U grading option may be used for an entire section of any course, but not for a single individual within a course. Pass grades are not included within GPA calculations. A maximum of seven (7) semester credit hours from courses for which the "P" grade has been awarded may be applied toward completion of a degree, diploma, or certificate. This maximum may be extended to fifteen (15) semester credit hours in experiential learning programs approved by the Chief Academic Officer.

5.6.0.1 Grading - Developmental Studies (SB)

A grade of "S" (Satisfactory) shall be assigned for satisfactory completion of a developmental studies courses numbered 1-9 and ESL courses. "S" grades are not included in grade point average calculations.

Students making satisfactory progress but not completing all of the instructional objectives for a developmental studies course (numbered 1-9) or an ESL course shall be graded with an "R" (Re-enroll). To complete the course a student must re-enroll.

Students not making satisfactory progress in a developmental studies course or an ESL course shall be graded "U" (Unsatisfactory). Counselors shall recommend consultation with the instructor to determine the subsequent sequence of courses for the student who receives a grade of "U."

The "I" and "W" grades may be utilized according to conditions noted in Section 5.7.0.

5.6.0.2 Grading – Student Development Courses (SB)

The method of grading in Student Development courses shall be a matter of local option, i.e., "P" or "U," or the other letter grades.

5.6.0.3 Grade Point Average (SB)

The grade point average (GPA) is determined by dividing the total number of grade points earned in courses by the total number of credits attempted.

5.6.0.3.0 Semester Grade Point Average (SB)

Semester GPA is determined by dividing the total number of grade points earned in courses attempted for the semester by the total number of credits attempted.

5.6.0.3.1 Cumulative Grade Point Average (SB)

Cumulative GPA, which includes all courses attempted, is computed each semester and is maintained on a continuing basis as a record of the student's academic standing. When students repeat a course, only the last grade earned is counted in the computation of the cumulative GPA and for satisfying curricular requirements unless the course is designated repeatable for credit in the Master Course File or is a General Usage course. In instances of courses designated as repeatable for credit or General Usage courses, all grades/credits are counted in the computation of the cumulative grade point average. Grades of "S," "P," "U," "W," "X," and "I" shall not count as first or subsequent attempts when calculating cumulative GPA. Courses that do not generate grade points are not included in credits attempted.

5.6.0.3.2 Curriculum Grade Point Average (SB)

A curriculum GPA, which includes only those courses applicable to the student's curriculum, is computed in order to ensure that the student satisfies the graduation requirement for that curriculum. When students repeat a course, only the last grade earned is counted in the computation of the curriculum GPA.

5.6.0.3.3 Grades from VCCS Colleges
GPA calculations only include grades earned at the home institution, unless specifically noted in an articulation agreement.

5.6.0.4 Academic Renewal Policy (SB)

Students who return to the college after a separation of five (5) years, or more, may petition for academic renewal. The request must be in writing and submitted to the Admissions and Records Office.

If a student is determined to be eligible for academic renewal, “D” and “F” grades earned prior to reenrollment will be deleted from the cumulative and curriculum grade point average (G.P.A.), subject to the following conditions:

- a. Prior to petitioning for academic renewal the student must demonstrate a renewed academic interest and effort by earning at least a 2.5 G.P.A. in the first twelve (12) semester hours completed after reenrollment.
- b. All grades received at the college will be a part of the student's official transcript.
- c. Students will receive degree credit only for courses in which grades of “C” or better were earned prior to academic renewal, providing that such courses meet current curriculum requirements.
- d. Total hours for graduation will be based on all course work taken at the college after readmission, as well as former course work for which a grade of “C” or better was earned, and credits transferred from other colleges or universities.
- e. The academic renewal policy may be used only once and cannot be revoked once approved.

5.6.0.5 Grades (C)

Final grades are available to students via the student information system. These final grades are a part of students’ permanent record for credit activities.

Mid-semester grade reports (optional) are informational in nature and are not recorded on official transcripts.

5.6.0.6 Grade Processing

The timely, accurate, and secure recording and maintenance of students’ grades are essential elements of an academic records system. All colleges have the responsibility to ensure that the processes for the initial recording of grades and any subsequent grade changes provide for integrity and confidentiality in the handling of student grades.

Each college shall develop and maintain a detailed “Grades Plan” for reporting and recording initial grades and for changing existing grades. The “Grades Plan” shall address the key control points in the process, including office responsibilities, maintenance and security of any forms, and computer security.

The “Grades Plan” for each college shall minimally include statements concerning the following procedures:

- a. When initial grades and grade changes are entered on the SIS by college personnel other than the instructor of record, the grades shall be verified by an individual other than the party who entered the grade initially, to ensure that they are as assigned by the faculty on the original data entry documents. Each college shall have a transaction document or access to appropriate on-line verification that will apprise the faculty of grade changes and provide an opportunity to verify their authenticity. Each college shall utilize available SIS audit trail support to monitor appropriateness of grade change transactions.
- b. Authorization to access SIS screens that allow for the initial recording of grades and grade changes shall be limited to those with an essential need to maintain the student academic record. Approval of SIS screen access shall be by the appropriate dean with responsibility for student records.
- c. Adequate controls shall exist regarding the maintenance and security of any forms used in the grade assignment process to ensure that only appropriate personnel have access throughout the process of grade entry and change.
- d. Grade changes (i.e., A, B, C, D, F, P, R, S, and U) initiated by college personnel other than the original faculty member, and grade changes for classes taken that are over one year old shall be reviewed and approved by a Chief Academic Officer. Colleges should follow VCCS Policy Manual, Section 5.6.0. (Grading System) in regard to grades of W and I.
- e. The college shall provide for periodic internal written reviews of the “Grades Plan” to ensure compliance with the plan and to determine if any revisions should be made to the plan.

5.6.1 Examinations (SB)

Students shall be expected to take examinations at the regularly scheduled times. No exceptions shall be made without the permission of the Chief Academic Officer, or another appropriate academic administrator, and the instructor of the course.

5.6.2 Withdrawal from a Course (SB)

A student may withdraw from a course without academic penalty during the first 60% of a session. For purposes of enrollment reporting, the following procedures shall apply:

- a. If a student withdraws from a class prior to the termination of the add/drop period for the session, the student is removed from the class roll and no grade is awarded.
- b. After the add/drop period, but prior to completion of 60% of a session, a student who withdraws or is withdrawn from a course shall be assigned a grade of "W".
- c. After that time, if a student withdraws or is withdrawn from a course, a grade of "F" shall be assigned. Exceptions to this policy may be made under mitigating circumstances; such circumstances must be documented and a copy of the documentation placed in the student's academic file.

A grade of withdrawal implies that the student was making satisfactory progress in the course at the time of withdrawal, or that the withdrawal was officially made before the deadline date published in the college calendar, or that the student was administratively transferred to a different program.

5.6.3 Repeating a Course (SB)

Credit courses that are designated as repeatable for credit in the Master Course File or are identified as General Usage courses in the Master Course File may be repeated for credit. (General Usage courses: 90-190-290; 93-193-293; 95-195-295; 96-196-296; 97-197-297; 98-198-298; 99-199-299.) Other than the general usage courses, only those courses designed to develop and maintain proficiency in the visual and performing arts, or to meet requirements for certification or re-certification in allied health or applied technology fields, may be designated as repeatable for credit. Students should be limited to 10 credits earned through multiple enrollments in the same course.

A student should normally be limited to two (2) enrollments in a credit course that is not designated as repeatable for credit or is not a General Usage course. Should a college wish to make an exception to this policy on a student-by-student basis, the need should be documented and approved by the college's chief academic officer or designee.

5.6.4 Academic Load (SB)

The normal academic course load for students is 15-17 credits. The minimum full-time load is 12 credits and the normal maximum full-time load is 18 credits excluding Orientation (SDV 100). Students wishing to carry an academic load of more than 18 credits must have the approval of the Chief Academic Officer or designee. Students placed on academic warning or academic probation may be required to take less than the normal course load. No curriculum may officially list in any publication more than 18 credits per semester plus Orientation.

5.6.5 Waiver of Requirements (C)

Students having reason to believe that previous educational studies, training programs, or work experience may entitle them to an adjustment in the required courses in a particular curriculum should contact the Division Deans or Counselors at the college to determine procedures before registering for classes. Through subsequent interviews and tests, students may qualify for waiver of curriculum admission requirements, of course prerequisites, and of courses in a curriculum upon the recommendations of the counselor and the instructional division concerned.

Students may substitute equivalent or more sophisticated courses in the same field in any approved curriculum with the approval of the instructional division and the Chief Academic Officer or designee provided they can, by previous educational accomplishment or college administered examination, demonstrate the capability for success in the courses requested.

In addition, if students can demonstrate that previous educational study, training, work experience, or college administered examination results may entitle them to advancement in the courses required for a particular curriculum, upon request and with the approval of the instructional division and the Chief Academic Officer, they may receive advance placement and credit in the course or curriculum for which advancement was requested.

If requirements are waived, students must successfully complete other courses to compensate for the credit hours.

5.6.5.0 Waiver of Credits (C)

Credits waived are those normally required course credits for a particular program which are administratively exempted. Credits waived require election of additional credit courses to compensate for the credits waived.

5.6.5.0.0 Physical Education Requirement for Veterans (SB)

In accordance with Policy 5.6.5.1.e, the physical education requirements for the degree, diploma and certificate programs may be waived for veterans, and the college may grant up to 3 credits of physical education/health credits for basic military training to satisfy the physical education/health credit requirement of the veterans' curricula.

5.6.5.0.1 Substitution of requirements for students with documented disabilities, covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended

Otherwise qualified students with documented disabilities who are, by reason of their disability, unable to complete a requirement of the program pursued by the student, with or without reasonable accommodations, may request an approved course substitution. ^[1]Substitutions will generally not be granted for any course that is deemed essential to the program of instruction being pursued by such student, or to any directly related licensing requirement. If requirements are waived, students must successfully complete other courses to compensate for the credit hours.

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[¹] 34 C.F.R. 104.44(a) Academic requirements.

A recipient to which this subpart applies shall make such modifications to its academic requirements as are necessary to ensure that such requirements do not discriminate or have the effect of discriminating, on the basis of handicap, against a qualified handicapped applicant or student. Academic requirements that the recipient can demonstrate are essential to the program of instruction being pursued by such student or to any directly related licensing requirement will not be regarded as discriminatory within the meaning of this section. Modifications may include changes in the length of time permitted for the completion of degree requirements, substitution of specific courses required for the completion of degree requirements, and adaptation of the manner in which specific courses are conducted.

5.6.5.1 Advanced Standing (C)

Advanced standing is the administrative placement of a student that awards credit for subject matter competency based upon previous academic study or occupational experience. This may include, but is not limited to, college credit and advancement based upon individual college participation in the Advanced Placement Program of the College Entrance Examination Board; other placement examinations; training provided by non-collegiate institutions, such as armed forces and service schools; professional certification; or experiential learning.

- a. Credit by Examination is a means of achieving Advanced Standing through satisfactorily demonstrating subject-matter competency by means of an examination administered by the college.
- b. Credit by previous completion is a means of achieving Advanced Standing through an administrative determination by the college that equivalent course coverage has been satisfactorily completed at an accredited postsecondary institution.
- c. Credit by Equated Occupational Experience, including experiential learning and the submission of portfolios, is a means of achieving Advanced Standing through an administrative determination by the college that the occupational experience of an individual is at least equivalent to the course(s) to be exempted. *(See also Section 5.9.0, Apprenticeship Related Instruction)*
- d. Credit by Advanced Placement is a means of achieving Advanced Standing through the administration of the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB), advanced placement (AP) program, or the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, provided the college participates in this program and provided the examination scores are acceptable for credit. All Virginia community colleges shall accept a score of three (3) and higher for Advanced Placement (AP) courses and a score of five (5) or higher for higher level International Baccalaureate (IB) courses. The amount of credit awarded for each examination will be consistent with The College Board's recommendations.
- e. Credit may be granted as a means of achieving Advanced Standing through applicable armed service school experiences, and for successful completion of correspondence courses and subject standardized tests (SST) of the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Educational Support (DANTES), formerly the United States Armed Forces Institute (USAFI). Advanced Standing may also be awarded in accordance to the ACE Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services.

- f. Credit may be granted as a means of achieving Advanced Standing for previous non-collegiate education, training, and/or previous occupational experiences as recommended by the American Council of Education.

5.6.5.1.0 Administration of Advanced Standing (C)

- a. The procedures for awarding credit through Advanced Standing are as follows:
 - (1) The determination of such credit must be made by qualified faculty members at the institution or according to procedures and standards approved by qualified faculty ensuring that assessment procedures are appropriate for the credit awarded.
 - (2) If documentation and interviews are used in lieu of examinations, the institution must demonstrate that these methods provide assurances of academic comparability to credit earned by traditional means.
 - (3) Portfolio-based credit for prior experiential learning may be awarded for no more than 25 percent of the credit hours applied toward a degree.

In exceptional individual cases, however, the nature and content of the prior learning experience may be such that additional credit may be appropriately awarded. The institution must justify each such case.
 - (4) In awarding credit for prior experiential learning, the institution must:
 - a) award credit only for documented learning which ties the prior experience to the theories and data of the relevant academic field;

- b) award credit only to matriculated students, identify such credit on the student's transcript as credit for prior experiential learning, and upon request from another institution, document how such learning was evaluated and the basis on which such credit was awarded;
- c) adopt, describe in appropriate institutional publications, implement and regularly review policies and procedures for awarding credit for experiential learning; and
- d) clearly describe, and establish the validity of, the evaluation process and criteria for awarding credit for prior experiential learning.

5.6.5.1.0 Administration of Advanced Standing (C)

- b. Student records shall reflect Advanced Standing and applicable source.

5.6.6 Academic Standing (SB)

Students are considered to be "in good academic standing" if they maintain a semester minimum GPA of 2.00, are eligible to reenroll at the college, and are not on academic suspension or dismissal status.

5.6.6.0 Academic Warning (SB)

Students who fail to attain a minimum GPA of 2.00 for any semester shall be placed on academic warning. Students on academic warning should be encouraged to consult with their advisor/counselor and take advantage of academic support services provided by the college.

5.6.6.1 Academic Probation (SB)

Students who fail to maintain a cumulative GPA of 1.50 shall be on academic probation until such time as their cumulative average is 1.75 or better. The statement "Academic Probation" shall be placed on their permanent records. Students on probation are ineligible for appointive or elective office in student organizations unless special permission is granted by the Dean of Student Services or another appropriate college administrator. Students may be required to carry less than a normal load the following semester and are required to consult with their advisor/counselor. Students shall be placed on probation only after they have attempted 12 semester credits.

5.6.6.2 Academic Suspension (SB)

Students on academic probation who fail to attain a semester GPA of 1.50 or better shall be placed on suspension only after they have attempted 24 semester credits. Academic suspension shall be for one semester. The statement "Academic Suspension" shall be placed on the students' permanent records. Students who are placed on academic suspension and wish to appeal should follow the appeal process established by the college. Suspended students may be reinstated at the conclusion of the suspension period by following the process established by the college. Students who have been reinstated from academic suspension must achieve a 2.00 GPA for the semester of their reinstatement and must earn at least a 1.75 GPA in each subsequent semester of attendance. The statement "Subject to Dismissal" shall be placed on the students' permanent records. Students who have been reinstated from academic suspension will remain subject to dismissal until their cumulative GPA is raised to a minimum of 1.75. Reinstated students may be required to carry less than a normal course load the following semester and are required to consult with their advisor/counselor. Colleges are encouraged to make additional academic support available to students who have been reinstated following academic suspension.

5.6.6.3 Academic Dismissal (SB)

Students who do not attain at least a 2.00 GPA for the semester of reinstatement following academic suspension shall be academically dismissed. Students who achieve at least a 2.00 GPA for the semester of their reinstatement following academic suspension must earn at least a 1.75 GPA in each subsequent semester of enrollment. Failure to attain a 1.75 GPA in each subsequent semester until the cumulative GPA reaches 1.75 shall result in academic dismissal. The statement "Academic Dismissal" shall be placed on the students' permanent records. Academic dismissal is normally permanent. In exceptional circumstances, students may appeal and be reinstated following processes established by the college. Students who have been reinstated after academic dismissal will remain subject to dismissal until their cumulative GPA is raised to a minimum of 1.75. Reinstated students may be required to carry less than a normal course load the following semester and are required to consult with their advisor/counselor. Colleges are encouraged to make additional academic support available to students who have been reinstated following academic dismissal.

5.6.7 Satisfactory Progress

Students pursuing any credit programs are cautioned that, although an average between 1.50 and 1.99 may not result in formal academic probation, a minimum of 2.00 in their curriculum is a prerequisite to the receipt of an associate degree, diploma, or certificate.

5.6.8 Class Attendance (C)

Each college shall develop its own attendance regulations, to include policies for distance learning students. At a minimum, the college attendance policy must be in alignment with provisions of VCCS Policy Manual Section 5.6.0, which defines minimum attendance required to receive a letter grade.

5.6.9 Commencement (SB)

The community colleges shall have at least one formal commencement ceremony each year for students completing curricula. Attendance at this formal commencement ceremony shall be encouraged.

5.7 Academic Calendar (C)

The academic calendar for colleges within the VCCS may be determined by the colleges within the following guidelines:

- a. The contract year for faculty extends from August 16 through May 15.
- b. There shall be a minimum of 75 days of instruction in each semester for a total minimum of 150 days of instruction for the academic year.
- c. There shall be approximately 10 days of instructional evaluation (examinations, etc.) in the academic year.
- d. There shall be approximately 20 days of registration and faculty in-service days in the academic year.
- e. An academic calendar year shall consist of 180 working days.

Any deviations from these guidelines must be approved by the Chancellor, VCCS.

5.8 Developmental Studies

Developmental courses are designed to provide the basic skills and knowledge necessary for success in college-level courses.

5.8.0 Credits Earned

Credits earned in developmental courses are not applicable toward Associate Degree programs; however, upon approval of the Chief Academic Officer, or another appropriate academic administrator, some developmental courses may provide credit applicable to diploma and certificate programs.

5.8.1 Course Level (C)

For the purpose of eligibility for federal Title IV, Student Financial Aid (34 CFT 668.20), it is the responsibility of the college to validate the course level of its developmental courses.

Developmental Course Numbers

Developmental courses are those numbered 1–9.

Section 5
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
Part II: Workforce Development Services Policies

5.9 Types of Programs

In addition to those programs identified in Section 2-A as being the several educational components within the comprehensive community college system; i.e., occupational/technical, college transfer, general education, continuing education, special training, developmental programs, and specialized regional and community services, the following policy pertains to apprenticeship training and continuing education:

5.9.0 Apprenticeship Related Instruction (SB)

5.9.0.0 Definition

Apprenticeship Related Instruction is an organized and systematic form of instruction designed to augment on-the-job training for registered apprentices by providing knowledge of the theory and technical aspects of the trade. Related instruction usually consists of a minimum of 144 classroom hours for each year of apprenticeship.

5.9.0.1 Authority

Pursuant to Sections 23-218 (D) and 40.1-118 (10) of the Code of Virginia, the State Board for Community Colleges establishes policies to coordinate Apprenticeship Related Instruction delivered by state and local public education agencies. The Chancellor, with the approval of the State Board for Community Colleges, provides for the administration and supervision of related and supplemental instruction for adult and student apprentices. The Virginia Apprenticeship Council advises the State Board for Community Colleges on policies to coordinate apprenticeship related instruction. The Virginia Apprenticeship Council has the authority to determine whether an employer is eligible for services and conforms with the standards governing registered apprenticeship programs.

5.9.0.2 Administrative Guidelines

The VCCS shall oversee policies for the delivery of apprenticeship related instruction to registered apprentices through annual contracts with regional administrative agents based at community colleges or local school divisions. The contract, as well as the Apprenticeship Related Instruction Coordinator's Information and Procedures Handbook, housed in the office of the Coordinator of Apprenticeship Related Instruction, specifies the curriculum, supervisory, and administrative services necessary for coordinating and delivering related instruction for apprentices. The VCCS shall distribute funding for Apprenticeship Related Instruction from resources provided by the Commonwealth of Virginia based on a plan approved annually by the VCCS.

5.9.0.3 Financial Support of Apprenticeship Related Instruction

Tuition is set by authority of the State Board for Community Colleges and by local school divisions. Additional reimbursement, provided through the VCCS, is based on state general fund appropriations. Contracts shall not imply any requirement on the part of the state for reimbursement beyond the amounts appropriated annually for such purposes, or beyond the biennial period covered by any such appropriation.

5.9.0.4 Granting College Credit for Apprenticeship Work Experience and Related Instruction

College credit for apprenticeship related instruction delivered through local school divisions may be awarded based upon negotiated program agreements and dual credit agreements between local school divisions and community colleges. Colleges granting credit toward an associate's degree for apprenticeship related work experience will use validated evaluation measures and procedures for awarding experiential credit.

5.10 Continuing (Adult) Education and Community Services (SB)

5.10.0 Continuing Education (SB)

Continuing Education programs shall be offered to enable adults in the region to continue their learning experiences. Programs may include both credit and non-credit courses. Continuing Education is a purposeful and systematic process of lifetime learning for individuals who are not enrolled in a formally structured curriculum. It is implemented by programs to further develop existing knowledge, latent human resources, and new insights and skills. Continuing Education includes credit courses offered independent of a curriculum to enable individuals to continue their learning experiences and non-credit courses and specialized services provided for the educational needs of the region. These latter services may include offerings separate from formalized classroom instruction and may consist of conferences, institutes, workshops, seminars, and special training programs. In clarification of the above policy, it is noted that courses in the State Curriculum Guide may be offered for credit as continuing education courses. Non-credit courses designed by the college to meet area needs also may be offered as continuing education courses but do not require approval or listing in the State Curriculum Guide. As required in Section 4.3 of the Criteria for Accreditation, Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, (re: 1992-93 Edition), the continuing education unit (c.e.u.) is to be used as the basic unit of measurement for an individual's participation in, and an institution's offering of non-credit classes, courses, and programs sponsored by Virginia community colleges or the System Office of the VCCS. Appropriate records, as set forth below, must be maintained on all non-credit activities for which c.e.u. credit is awarded.

The following distinction is made between non-credit continuing education activities and community service activities: non-credit activities for which c.e.u. credit is awarded are considered to be continuing education; non-credit activities for which no c.e.u. credit is awarded are considered to be community services.

5.10.1 Definitions (SB)

Continuing Education Unit. The continuing education unit (c.e.u.) is defined as ten (10) contact hours in an organized continuing education (adult or extension) experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction. (A decimal fraction of a unit may be awarded for an offering of shorter duration.)

Full-time Equivalent Continuing Education Student. An annual full-time equivalent continuing education student is defined as forty-five (45) continuing education units. Conference A general type of meeting, usually of one or more day's duration, attended by a fairly large number of people. A conference may have a central theme, but is often loosely structured to cover a wide range of topics. The emphasis is on prepared presentations by authoritative speakers, although division into small group sessions for discussion purposes is often a related activity. Institute Generally similar to a conference, but more tightly structured to provide a more systematic development of its theme, with the emphasis more on providing instruction in principles and techniques than on general information. Participants are usually individuals who already have some competence in the field of interest. Institute programs may have certain continuity, meeting on a yearly basis for example:

Short Course A sequential offering, as a rule under a single instructor, meeting on a regular basis for a stipulated number of class sessions over a short period of time (e.g., one to three weeks, etc.). Quizzes and examinations may be given--depending upon the determination of requirements. The non-credit course under this definition may resemble the credit course in everything but the awarding of credit. It may also be more informal and more flexible in its approach in order to meet the needs of students. Workshop Usually meets for a continuous period of time over one or more days. The distinguishing feature of the workshop is that it combines instruction with laboratory or experimental activity for the participants. The emphasis is likely to be on skill training rather than on general principles. Seminar A small group of people with the primary emphasis on discussion under a leader or resource person or persons. In continuing higher education a seminar is more likely to be a one-time offering, although it may continue for several days. Special Training

Program A skill program which offers a combination of instruction and practice. The approach is usually on a more individualized basis than a workshop. Media Instruction Media instruction includes any form of instruction offered in special activities through television, radio, computer assisted instruction (CAI), telewriter, telelecture and other forms of media instruction which may develop.

5.10.2 Criteria for Applying the Continuing Education Unit (SB)

Continuing Education Units shall be awarded only for educational programs which meet the basic criteria presented below. Programs can be classified in either of the following areas.

Area I: Programs which are wholly structured to provide skills and/or knowledge for occupational improvements in fields, such as:

- Agriculture and food production
- Business and industry
- Clerical services
- Education
- Government
- Health services
- Law and law enforcement
- The professions
- Trades and technologies

Area II: Programs specifically organized to provide help in the solution of problems confronting the state, such as:

- Aging
- Agriculture and production
- Citizenship
- Community development and housing
- Criminal Justice
- Education
- Environment
- Health and safety
- Human relations and communications

Activities classified in the above categories for which Continuing Education Units are to be awarded shall meet at least the following standards:

- a. The non-credit activity is planned in response to an assessment of educational needs for a specific target population.
- b. There is a statement of objectives and rationale.
- c. Content is selected and is organized in a sequential manner.
- d. There is evidence of pre-planning which should include the opportunity for input by the target group to be served, the faculty having content expertise, and continuing education personnel.
- e. The activity is instructional and is approved by an academic or administrative unit of the institution best qualified to effect the quality of the program content and to approve the resource personnel utilized.
- f. There is provision for registration for individual participants.
- g. Evaluation procedures are utilized, and criteria are established for awarding Continuing Education Units to individual students prior to the beginning of the activity.

5.10.3 Required Records and Reports (SB)

The institution is responsible for establishing and maintaining permanent records of Continuing Education Units awarded. These records shall contain at least the following:

- a. For each individual student, a cumulative record showing:
 - The name of the student
 - Social Security Number of the student (or student number assigned by the college)
 - Title(s) of course(s)
 - Starting and ending dates of activity(s)
 - Number of C.E.U.s awarded
- b. For each activity, an activity description showing:
 - The title of the activity
 - Description of the activity and comparative level
 - Starting and ending dates of the activity

- Format of the activity
- Number of C.E.U.s to be awarded for completion of the activity
- The name of the instructor(s)
- Any cooperating sponsors, companies, associations, agencies, institutions, etc.
- Activity classification, i.e., professional, liberal education, vocational, job entry, in-service, etc.
- A roster of participants, showing at least the name and Social Security Number of each participant and whether the participant satisfactorily completed the activity

5.11 Non-Credit Grading Policy

5.11.0 Recognition (SB)

Local college boards have the authority to grant “awards of completion” for persons satisfactorily completing community service and workforce development non-credit courses. Community service courses are not occupational in content and do not award CEUs. As such, grades are not required for community service courses.

Grades are required for workforce development non-credit courses. Workforce development non-credit courses are occupational in content and suitable for Continuing Education Units (CEUs). CEUs do not have to be awarded.

5.11.1 Grading System for Workforce Development Non-Credit Courses

A grade of “S” demonstrates satisfactory course completion. The grade of “G” is used in unique circumstances and at the discretion of the college to recognize limited subject competency. The grade of “U” is a failing grade. “I” is an interim grade or a non-punitive final grade. Grades of “N” and “W” are non-punitive grades. “X” indicates that a course was completed (or taken) for content and no grade awarded.

No grade point credit shall be assigned to the following grades:

S – Satisfactory. Individual demonstrates subject competency (assignments, labs, tests, clinical, etc.) and fulfilled attendance requirements needed to pass the course. Individual is ready to progress to higher level course. CEUs can be awarded.

G – Progress. Optional grade used in unique circumstances and only at the discretion of the college for courses such as ESL, in which demonstration of progression toward subject competency is desired. Individual fulfilled attendance requirements but fails to demonstrate the level of subject competency needed to earn an “S” or CEUs. Individual is not ready to progress to a higher level course but would benefit from repeating the course. CEUs cannot be awarded.

U – Unsatisfactory. Individual fails to demonstrate subject competency and/or fulfillment of attendance requirements needed to pass the course and to move to a higher level course. CEUs cannot be awarded.

I – Incomplete. Individual, due to unavoidable circumstances, attended part but not all of a course. CEUs cannot be awarded. Courses for which the grade of “I” has been awarded must be successfully completed by the end of the subsequent semester for another grade (“S”, “U”, or “G”) to be awarded by the instructor. If “S” is awarded, CEUs can be awarded. If “U” or “G” is awarded, CEUs cannot be awarded.

N – No Show. Individual neither attends nor formally withdraws from a course for which registered.

W – Withdrawal. Individual formally withdraws from a course after the refund period but prior to the start of the course.

X – No Grade. No grade awarded. Course taken for purpose of learning the subject matter and not for a grade. CEUs cannot be awarded.

5.11.2 Grade Report

Final grades are available to students via the web or IVR systems. These final grades are a part of students’ permanent record of non-credit activities.

5.12.0 Community Services (SB)

Community services include meetings and special community projects which are designed to provide needed cultural and educational opportunities for citizens of the region. The following policies apply:

- a. These programs are designed to supplement the regular instructional program, shall be designated as community services, and shall not be regarded as part of the regular instructional program.
- b. No college credit shall be awarded for these programs.
- c. These programs shall not be listed on the student's permanent record card.

5.12.1.0 Types of Services (SB)

The facilities and personnel of the community colleges are available for community services such as:

- a. Faculty and staff speaking engagements for local organizations;
- b. Cultural events;
- c. Public affairs, lectures and forums;
- d. Newspaper articles on educational topics;
- e. Non-instructional radio and television programs;
- f. Special community (research and development) projects;
- g. Extension programs offered by four-year institutions;
- h. General interest films;
- i. Exhibits; or
- j. Special campus services for use by local citizens including the library, learning laboratory, and counseling center.

5.12.1.1 Administrative Guidelines (SB)

The president of each community college shall designate a director or an individual to be responsible for the programs of continuing education and community services and shall prescribe the director's duties and responsibilities in accordance with the policies and regulations of the State Board and the VCCS.

- a. The director of the programs shall utilize the assistance of other staff and faculty members and the services of relevantly involved citizens.

- b. The community college shall work cooperatively with other local and State agencies interested in developing such services.
- c. Whenever possible and practical, college facilities may be made available for community use. Community college facilities shall also be available to four-year colleges and universities desiring to offer programs at the upper-division and graduate levels.
- d. Periodic reports shall be provided to the local college board regarding specialized regional and community service programs. The local college board shall make recommendations to the college administration regarding the development and operation of such programs. The local college board may appoint a special committee of citizens to advise on the establishment, promotion, development, and evaluation of these programs.
- e. Reports for the continuing education and community service (non-credit) programs shall be filed semi-annually with the System Office (Reports Coordinator) of the VCCS and as requested by other appropriate agencies.

5.12.1.2 Financial Support (SB)

Community education and community service programs and non-credit courses are regarded as being self-supporting in the aggregate. The fees for community education and community service non-credit programs shall be established so as to provide funds to pay the direct costs plus an additional 30% to defray general overhead costs. Such programs are to be budgeted within the State Maintenance and Operation Budget of each college and all funds are to be received and disbursed through the State Treasury.