
Graduation Requirements

Duty to Grant

The Governing Board of a community college shall award the appropriate diploma, degree, or certificate whenever a student has completed all requirements for the degree, diploma, or certificate without regard to the length of time actually taken by the student to complete such requirements. The Governing Board shall grant to any student who has satisfactorily completed the requirements of any course of study in less than the prescribed time, credit for the full number of semester hours scheduled for such course.

Students should plan the general direction of their educational careers as early as possible. Students wishing to transfer to a four-year college or university should select the transfer institution as early as possible. To assist with planning, requirements are described in this section for:

- The Associate in Arts for Transfer (AAT) degree;
- The Associate in Science for Transfer (AST) degree;
- The Associate in Arts degree;
- The Associate in Science degree; and
- Certificates of Achievement.

Petition to Graduate

It is the student's responsibility to file a Petition to Graduate no later than the eighth week of the semester in which he or she plans to complete the requirements of the certificate or degree program. The Petition to Graduate form is available to students within the [myWestHills](#) student portal, or in the counseling offices in Coalinga and Firebaugh. If using outside coursework, official academic records of college or equivalent work must be on file in the Admissions and Records Office at the time the petition to graduate is filed. Petitions to graduate are evaluated after grades are posted for the semester.

Students who have completed or enrolled in courses that meet the final requirements toward a certificate or degree must see a counselor. Students are advised to meet with a counselor two semesters before graduation to review their Student Educational Plan and complete an evaluation of their units to petition to graduate.

Commencement Exercises

Students who wish to be awarded the Associate in Arts degree, Associate in Science degree, Associate in Arts for Transfer, Associate in Science for Transfer, or a Certificate of Achievement are strongly urged to participate in the commencement exercises held at the end of the spring semester.

General Education Requirements: Philosophy Statement

The general education component of the associate degree introduces students to the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, applied sciences, and technology. It exposes students to different areas of study; demands the acquisition and use of reading, writing, and critical thinking skills; imparts a sense of our shared cultural heritage and how to function as responsible, ethical individuals in a complex society; and instills a level of intellectual curiosity and self-awareness conducive to lifelong learning and personal growth.

Together with the West Hills College Coalinga degree requirements, the general education component of the associate degree prepares students to:

- transfer to and function successfully in a baccalaureate degree granting institution or;
- enter the work force as a competent, productive citizen and;
- live a richer, more rewarding life.

General education is the distinguishing feature of higher education. It is a broad based core of knowledge and abilities, acquisition of which is the distinctive characteristic of the educated person. General education courses emphasize the ability to reason, to examine issues from different perspectives, to challenge authority, and to communicate ideas logically and confidently. They instill open mindedness, respect for differences among people, and knowledge of self. They provide an understanding of the human condition and of human accomplishments and encourage a lifelong interest in learning.

General education courses are not primarily skills based, nor are they limited to, or more appropriate for majors in a specialized field of study.

Courses that fulfill general education requirements must:

- Require reading, writing, computation, and critical thinking.
- Improve students' abilities to: communicate oral and written ideas effectively; define problems, design solutions, critically analyze results; work effectively and cooperatively with others; work independently; develop and question personal and societal values, make informed choices, and accept responsibility for one's decisions; function as active, responsible, ethical citizens; acquire the curiosity and skills essential for lifelong learning.
- Impart understanding, knowledge, and appreciation of: our shared heritage, including the contributions of women, ethnic minorities, and non-western cultures; the earth's ecosystem, including the processes that formed it and the strategies that are necessary for its maintenance; human social, political, and economic institutions and behavior, including their interrelationships; the psychological, social, and physiological dimensions of men and women as individuals and as members of our society.

Courses that fulfill general education requirements must fall into one of the content categories listed below:

Area A — Language and Rationality

Area B — Natural Sciences

Area C — Humanities

Area D — Social Science

Area E — Local District Requirements*

** Please note, Area E is not required for AA-T and AS-T degrees.*

The awarding of an associate degree symbolizes a successful attempt on the part of West Hills College Coalinga to lead students through learning experiences designed to develop certain capabilities and insights. Among these are the ability to think and to 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 other cultures and times, to achieve insights gained through experience in thinking about ethical problems, and to develop the capacity for self-understanding. In addition, the student shall acquire sufficient depth in a field of knowledge to contribute to lifetime interest.

The Governing Board of West Hills Community College District shall confer the degree of Associate in Arts or Associate in Science upon a student who has demonstrated competence in reading, in written expression, and in mathematics, and who has satisfactorily completed at least 60 semester units of college work. Course work requirements must be fulfilled in a curriculum accepted toward the degree by West Hills College Coalinga as shown in the catalog.

An associate degree program can be planned to meet a variety of goals. It is important to keep the following information in mind in planning a program of study.

Specific Career Program or Major

Generally, students who pursue a specific career program or major do not intend to transfer to a four-year university. However, some transfer students prefer to complete as many specific career and/or major courses as they can as part of their associate degree program. It is important to note that some of these courses might not be transferable to four-year universities. If you intend to use this option, you should see a West Hills College Coalinga counselor for assistance in planning the most appropriate educational program.

This associate degree program requires:

- at least 18 semester units in general education courses;
 - a major area of study, with no grade lower than a C, and a grade point average of at least 2.0;
 - elective units to complete 60 units;
 - overall grade point average of at least 2.0. Of the required units, at least 12 semester units must be completed in residence at West Hills College Coalinga.
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Associate Degree Requirements

I. Major Requirements

At least 18 semester units of study taken in a single discipline or related disciplines.

II. General Education Requirements

Area A. Language and Rationality (6 units)

These courses emphasize both the content and form of communication. They teach students the relationship of language to logic, as well as how to analyze, criticize, and advocate ideas, to reason deductively and inductively, and to reach sound conclusions. Courses fulfilling this requirement provide understanding of the psychological and social significance of communication, focus on communication from the rhetorical perspective, reasoning, advocacy, organization, accuracy; the discovery, critical evaluation and reporting of information; reading, listening, speaking, and writing effectively, provide active participation and practice in written and oral communication.

1. English and Composition (3 units)
 - ___ English 001A
 - ___ English as a Second Language 001
1. Analytical Thinking (3 units)
 - ___ Math 001A, 001B, 002A, 002B, 010A, 010B, 016, 025, 039, 045, 063, 064

Area B. Natural Sciences (3 units for AA - 6 units for AS)

These courses impart knowledge about living and non-living systems, and mathematical concepts and quantitative reasoning with applications. Courses fulfilling this requirement promote understanding and appreciation of the methodologies and tools of science, emphasize the influence of scientific knowledge on the development of civilization, impart appreciation and understanding of basic concepts, not just skills and offer specific inquiry into mathematical concepts, quantitative reasoning and application;

- ___ Biology 001A, 001B, 010, 015, 032, 035, 038
- ___ Chemistry 001A, 001B, 002A, 012A, 012B
- ___ Crop Science 001, 002
- ___ Earth Science 002
- ___ Geography 001
- ___ Geology 001, 003
- ___ Physical Science 001, 002
- ___ Physics 002A, 002B, 004A
- ___ Psychiatric Technician 051/051L, 052/052L
- ___ Psychology 005
- ___ Soil Science 021

Area C. Humanities (3 units)

These courses cultivate intellect, imagination, sensibility, and sensitivity. They encourage students to respond subjectively as well as objectively, and to develop a sense of the integrity of emotional and intellectual responses. Courses fulfilling this requirement study great work of the human imagination, increase awareness and appreciation of the traditional humanistic disciplines such as art, dance, drama, literature, and music, impart an understanding of the interrelationship between creative art, the humanities, and the self, provide exposure to both Western and non-Western cultures, and include foreign language courses.

- ___ Art 002, 003 005A, 013A, 015A, 016A, 016B, 042
 - ___ American Sign Language 001, 002
 - ___ Communication 002
 - ___ English 002, 006, 007, 008, 025
 - ___ Foreign Language Spanish 011, 012, 051, 052, 054
 - ___ Geography 002, 003
 - ___ History 004A, 004B, 017A, 017B, 020, 021
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- ___ Humanities 001, 022
- ___ Linguistics 011
- ___ Music 042
- ___ Performing Arts 001, 003, 014
- ___ Philosophy 001, 002, 003
- ___ Political Science 005
- ___ Spanish 001, 002, 003, 004

Area D. Social Science (3 units)

These courses explore, at the micro and macro level, the social, political, and economic institutions that underpin society. Courses fulfilling these requirements promote understanding and appreciation of social, political, and economic institutions, probe the relationship between these institutions and human behavior, examine these institutions in both their historical and contemporary context, include the role of, and impact on, non-white ethnic minorities and women and include both western and non-western settings.

- ___ Administration of Justice 001, 029
- ___ Agriculture Business 040
- ___ Business 020
- ___ Child Development 002, 005, 006, 010, 021, 024
- ___ Communication 005, 006
- ___ Economics 001A, 001B
- ___ Geography 002, 003, 018
- ___ History 004A, 004B, 017A, 017B, 020, 021, 032, 044
- ___ Kinesiology 002
- ___ Linguistics 011
- ___ Political Science 001, 002, 004, 005, 010, 020
- ___ Psychiatric Technician 060, 070
- ___ Psychology 001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 029
- ___ Sociology 001, 002, 003, 005
- ___ Social Work 020

Area E. Local District Requirements (3 Units)

These courses facilitate an understanding of human beings as integrated physiological, social and psychological organisms. Courses fulfilling this requirement provide selective consideration of human behavior, sexuality, nutrition, health, stress, implications of death and dying, and the relationship of people to the social and physical environment.

- ___ Child Development 004, 005, 006, 018
- ___ Communication 005
- ___ Health Education 035
- ___ Health Science 040
- ___ Kinesiology 002
- ___ Nutrition 001
- ___ Psychology 001, 002, 003, 004, 029
- ___ Sociology 003
- ___ Student Development 001

III. Electives

Elective courses must be completed to reach the total of 60 units required for an associate degree.

IV. Competencies

Reading and Writing

- ___ Completion of English 001A or ESL 001 with a grade of C or higher, or
- ___ Transferring to West Hills College Coalinga from another accredited college with a C grade or higher in a course equivalent to English 001A or ESL 001.

Mathematics

- ___ Completion of Mathematics 063 or 064 with a grade of C or higher, or
- ___ Transferring to West Hills College Coalinga from another accredited college with a C grade or higher in a course equivalent to Mathematics 063 or 064.

V. Maintain a grade point average of 2.0 overall

VI. Maintain a 2.0 grade point within the major, with all grades of C or higher.

NOTE: While a course might satisfy more than one general education requirement, it may not be counted more than once for these purposes.

Associate Degree for Transfer Requirements (AA-T, AS-T)

The Associate in Arts (AA-T) and Associate in Science (AS-T) for Transfer Degrees are intended for students who plan to complete a bachelor's degree in an approved field of study in the California State University (CSU) system. Students completing the AA-T or AS-T degree are guaranteed admission to the CSU system, but not to a particular campus or major. Students transferring to a CSU campus that accepts this degree will be required to complete no more than 60 units after transfer to earn a bachelor's degree. Student must complete 60.0 transferable units which include fulfilling the CSU General Education (CSUGE) or Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) pattern, all listed major course requirements with a C or better and earn a minimum grade point average of 2.0.

Additional Associate Degree

Students desiring a further associate degree after completing all requirements for either the Associate Arts or the Associate Science degree may qualify for another degree by:

- Completing all requirements for the additional major.
- Completing necessary application forms for the degree.
- A minimum of 12 units for the additional degree must be completed in residence.

Certificate of Achievement Programs

Certificate of achievement programs are designed to give the student a concentration of skill courses adequate to provide immediate employment capability in a specialized field. The course content and course patterns have been developed after considerable study of industry and employer requirements and are approved at the state level. The advice and recommendations of several lay advisory councils and information obtained in occupational surveys were utilized in the development of these programs. Certificates of achievement require 18 units or more of degree-applicable credit coursework as defined in the college catalog, grades of C or higher, and a minimum of 12 semester units completed from West Hills College.

The courses required for a certificate of achievement are found in the college catalog under that major. Certificates of achievement are noted on the academic transcript of record.

Local Certificate Programs

- Local certificate programs are designed to prepare students to be job ready by satisfying industry needs of local employers. Local certificates are not noted on the academic record of record.