

# **CURRICULUM PROCEDURES MANUAL**



**Revised Fall 2016**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1. Purpose**

This manual describes procedures for the development, approval, modification, evaluation, and discontinuance of programs and courses at Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA); mechanisms for providing credit for prior learning opportunities for students; procedures for the articulation and evaluation of credit programs; and procedures for advisory committees. The term *curriculum* includes credit courses, certificates, degrees, and other areas related to the college instructional programs. These procedures are designed to implement programs that reflect not only the highest academic standards, but also the college's commitment to enhance educational opportunities through cooperative relationships with community, regional, and state businesses and industries, as well as secondary and four-year institutions.

### **1.2 College Constituencies with Curricular Responsibility**

Curricular actions must pass through several internal steps. The college constituencies described below often participate in curriculum development.

#### **Discipline Clusters**

The faculty discipline cluster provides curricular coordination of the discipline, its development, and delivery. Faculty discipline clusters are composed of all full-time faculty within a specific discipline. Adjunct faculty may be included in Cluster work, but cannot be required to attend. One academic dean from a campus that has full-time faculty in the discipline serves as a coordinating academic dean to oversee the functions of the faculty discipline cluster. Every three years, responsibility for cluster coordination rotates to the next campus (alphabetically) that has full-time faculty in the discipline and that has the full program if one exists with the discipline as its core. The Associate Vice President for Academic Services prepares a list of cluster coordination assignments each year. The Academic Deans Council reviews this list and may suggest changes. The *Faculty Handbook* includes more information on the roles of faculty discipline clusters.

#### **Campus Administration**

The provost is the chief academic officer of a given campus and as such is responsible for the approval and implementation of programs offered by the campus. Academic deans are responsible for the administration of academic programs and credit courses. The coordinating academic dean and his/her provost review proposals for new or revised curricula to be forwarded to the Curriculum Committee.

#### **College Administration**

The Executive Vice President of Academic and Student Services (EVP) is the college's chief academic officer. Reporting to the EVP, the Associate Vice President for Academic Services provides leadership for and coordination of academic policy including policies related to credit for prior learning; credit curricula; credit course and program development, modification and discontinuance; dual enrollment; placement; and transfer to senior institutions. The Curriculum Committee reviews all curricular proposals and program reviews. The President and the Administrative Council review and approve proposals for new academic policies, new programs and courses; proposals for major revisions to existing programs; proposals to discontinue programs; and program review action plans.

### **Curriculum Advisory Committees**

Local advisory committees must be utilized in the establishment, development and evaluation of career/technical curricula and courses. Faculty nominate the members. The Academic Curriculum and Workforce Development Committee of the NVCC Board reviews all nominations. The President appoints nominees approved by the Board. See Section 8 of this manual for more detailed information on the membership, roles, and responsibilities of curriculum advisory committees or see the brochure, *Procedures for Curriculum Advisory Committees: Maintaining the Connection*.

### **NVCC College Board**

The NVCC Board reviews all proposals to initiate or discontinue programs. The Academic Curriculum and Workforce Development Committee of the Board considers matters pertaining to instructional programs, curriculum advisory committees, and community service programs. The Board typically holds five regular meetings per year at which curricular issues may be presented. The Associate VP for Academic Services and the Vice President for Workforce Development serve as staff to this committee.

## **1.3 State and Regional Constituencies with Curricular Responsibility**

As part of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), NOVA must abide by VCCS policies. The VCCS is part of the state system of higher education, which is coordinated by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV).

### **VCCS (Virginia Community College System)**

State policies with regard to instructional programs are found in Section 5 of the *VCCS Policy Manual*. Placement and admission policies are in Section 6.

### **Academic Services and Research**

Academic Services and Research is the unit of the VCCS central office that deals with system-wide review of academic policy, curricula, and courses. This unit is headed by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Services and Research and staffed by individuals who assist with planning for academic programs and assist with major initiatives such as dual enrollment, articulation with senior institutions, and projects such as system-wide review of placement testing. Staff in this unit maintains the Master Course File (MCF), which is an online list of all courses approved for current use by any VCCS institution. A separate Workforce Development unit is headed by a different vice chancellor; however, the two units collaborate frequently.

### **Academic and Student Affairs Council**

The Academic and Student Affairs Council (ASAC) advises the Vice Chancellor for Academic Services and Research on policy issues. The Council includes the academic and student services vice presidents, their associate vice presidents, and provosts. ASAC has several subcommittees whose work may influence NOVA curricular decisions. The Educational Programs Committee considers academic policy issues. The Course Review Committee, which includes academic deans from each general curricular area (e.g., allied health, natural sciences, humanities) and the chair of the Educational Programs Committee, reviews proposals for new and revised courses. The Faculty Issues Committee, the Student Services Committee, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, and the Educational Technology Committee also may make recommendations that affect NOVA's educational programs. NOVA often has representatives on all ASAC committees.

### **State Board for Community Colleges**

The State Board for Community Colleges is the regulatory board for the VCCS. New diploma, certificate, and associate degree programs must be approved by the State Board.

### **SCHEV (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia)**

Degree programs new to the College must be approved by SCHEV, which also requires periodic evaluation of all programs and assessment of student learning. SCHEV also promotes articulation among VCCS institutions and senior institutions in Virginia. SCHEV staff members and VCCS colleagues coordinate the State Committee on Transfer. NOVA's Coordinator for Transfer Services is the college's Chief Transfer Officer and a member of the State Committee on Transfer. The AVP for Academic Services often sits on SCHEV's Instructional Programs Advisory Committee (IPAC).

### **Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and U.S. Department of Education**

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is the regional accrediting body in the Southern states (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia) and Latin America for those institutions of higher education that award associate, baccalaureate, master or doctoral degrees. NOVA is accredited by SACSCOC. In order to maintain this accreditation, the college must comply with the standards for educational programs as specified in the *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, which include compliance with the policies of the Commission on Colleges. For example, the Commission must be notified of all new programs, program discontinuances, off-campus sites where the college offers 25% or more of any educational program, and other substantive changes to the college's academic offerings.

Once SACSCOC notifies us of approval of a new or discontinued program, the AVP notifies the Director of Collegewide Financial Aid, who notifies the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE). Once she has received a response from USDOE, students placed in a new program may apply for federal financial aid.

### **Program Accreditation**

Some career/technical programs participate in specialized accreditation offered by professional organizations. In some cases, this accreditation is required in order to enable graduates of the program to enter the work force and/or be eligible for certification and licensure. Specialized accreditation does not relieve a program of the state, college, and regional requirements.

## 2.0 Curriculum Structure and Requirements

### 2.1 Curriculum Structure and Terminology

SCHEV and the VCCS structure curricula on several levels. A degree or a certificate may be a major, and each has a separate VCCS code number. Sometimes curricula that the College considers separate programs, such as Accounting and Business Management, share the same CIP code and so are considered as one program for SCHEV productivity purposes.

#### 2.1.1 Degree Types

A **degree program** is a general discipline structure normally identified by a six-digit CIP [Classification of Instructional Programs from the National Center for Education Statistics] code number and used for reporting purposes to external agencies. Under each of the programs there may be one or more majors. NOVA offers four types of degrees: AA, AS, AAA, and AAS. AFA (Associate of Fine Arts coming soon)

##### **Associate of Arts (AA)**

The AA degree is awarded for the completion of two-year curricula in Fine Arts, Liberal Arts, and Music. The 60-63 credit<sup>1</sup> degree is designed for students who plan to **transfer** to four-year degree-granting institutions for completion of a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree. A significant portion of the AA degree is in general education, includes foreign language to the intermediate level, and is typical of the first two years of a BA program.

##### **Associate of Science (AS)**

The AS degree is awarded for completion of two-year curricula in a variety of pre-professional programs. The 60-63 credit<sup>1</sup> degree is designed for students who plan to **transfer** to four-year degree-granting institutions for completion of a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree. A significant portion of the AS degree is in general education that is typical of the first two years of a BS program. NOVA's General Studies AS does not count as an approved transfer degree for Guaranteed Admissions purposes except to George Mason, although the program may transfer very well on a case-by-case basis.

##### **Associate of Applied Arts (AAA)**

The 60-69 credit<sup>2</sup> degree is awarded for completion of two-year curricula designed to prepare students to work in the arts and/or music. These **applied** degrees have specific occupational objectives. Although the AAA is primarily an occupational program, it may transfer to institutions that offer the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree.

##### **Associate of Applied Science (AAS)**

The 60-69 credit<sup>2</sup> (up to 72 for some health technologies) AAS degree is awarded for completion of two-year **career/technical** curricula that are designed to prepare students for employment immediately following graduation. Some AAS degree programs require a summer term and in exceptional cases two summer terms may be required. In no case can the program extend beyond 24 calendar months of full-time study. The general education requirements for AAS degrees are less than for the transfer (AA and AS) degrees; however, in some cases transfer agreements may be arranged that articulate academic pathways into four-year degree programs.

##### **Associate of Fine Arts (AFA)**

The 60-63 credit AFA degree is awarded for completion of an arts-related program that includes portfolio development. It is designed to transfer as the first two years of a BFA.

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<sup>1</sup> The VCCS Chancellor prefers 60–61 credits for A.S. and A.A. degrees.

<sup>2</sup> The VCCS Chancellor prefers 60–67 credits for A.A.A and A.A.S. degrees.



### **2.1.2 Major**

A major is a curriculum composed of 100 and 200 level courses that leads to a degree in a discipline or interdisciplinary specialty and is identified by a VCCS curriculum code.

### **2.1.3 Specialization**

A specialization is an area of concentration within an approved major, varying from the parent major by 9-15 credit hours of core courses. Specializations are only permitted within an existing major program and are designed to provide students with a special emphasis within a degree major. Data on specializations are not reported to the VCCS separately from the major, so when the VCCS or SCHEV review productivity, they view a parent degree and its specializations as one curriculum.

### **2.1.4 Plan of Study**

A plan of study is a curriculum in Technical Studies. Like specializations, data on plans of study are reported with the parent program. Unlike specializations, plans of study are to be used for no more than three years, after which they are either expanded into a separate major or discontinued. NOVA has no plans of study and no longer offers the Technical Studies program.

### **2.1.5 Certificate**

A certificate is awarded for the completion of a career/technical curriculum less than two years (30-59 credit) in length. Except for the General Education certificate (see 2.1.7), certificates prepare students for a specific job or aspect of a job. Some certificates are essentially the first year of an associate degree, in which case the credit earned in the certificate may be used toward the degree.

### **2.1.6 Career Studies Certificate**

A career studies certificate is awarded for a short (9-29 credit) program of study, typically of less than one year. Career studies programs may be designed to develop and enhance job and life skills; retrain existing employees for career change; or facilitate the investigation of career possibilities. A career studies certificate should be developed from an existing program and should consist primarily of existing courses.

### **2.1.7 General Education Certificate**

The General Education certificate is awarded to recognize a milestone of achievement for students pursuing an AA or AS degree. The curriculum provides a solid foundation in the VCCS and NOVA general education core competency areas. It is not designed to transfer by itself, but may be combined with an AAS to facilitate transfer to some senior institutions. Students are not program placed in this program; it is awarded administratively.

## 2.2 Degree, Certificate, and Career Studies Certificate Requirements

The office of the Associate VP for Academic Services is responsible for entering graduation requirements into the computer. These requirements are used as part of the college graduation system and the student curriculum progress review system.

### 2.2.1 Degree Requirements

Only courses numbered 100 and above may be used to meet degree requirements. AA and AS degrees should only include courses commonly accepted for transfer by Virginia public senior institutions. The following NOVA requirements incorporate the requirements specified in the *VCCS Policy Manual*, SACSCOC requirements, and those requirements defined by the College.

#### NOVA Degree Requirements (will add AFA once NOVA has permission to use it)

Component	Credits Required by Degree Type			
	AA	AS	AAA	AAS
College Composition	6	6	3	3
Oral Communication	3	3	3	0
Humanities/fine arts	6	6	3	3
Foreign Language	6	-	-	-
Social Sciences	9	9 <sup>1</sup>	3	3
Mathematics	6	6 <sup>2</sup>	0-3 <sup>3</sup>	0-3 <sup>3</sup>
Natural/physical Sciences	8	8	0-3 <sup>3</sup>	0-3 <sup>3</sup>
Minimum Total General Education Requirements	44	38	15	15 <sup>4</sup>
SDV elective	1	1	1	1
Major Area and Elective Requirements	15-18	21-24	44-53	44-53
Total (minimum and maximum allowed)	60-63	60-63 <sup>5</sup>	60-69	60-69 <sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> VCCS and NOVA policies allow the Engineering AS to require only 6 credits of social science.

<sup>2</sup> General Studies is allowed to require only 3 credits of math.

<sup>3</sup> AAA and AAS degrees must include at least 3 credits of math or a lab science. They may include both.

<sup>4</sup> Although the minimum number of credits required for each General Education component only adds up to 14 for AAS programs, to meet SACS and VCCS requirements, any given degree program must include at least 15 credits in general education courses; the additional credit may be in any of the general education areas.

<sup>5</sup> VCCS and NOVA policies allow the Engineering AS to require up to 72 credits.

<sup>6</sup> VCCS and NOVA policies allow allied health programs to require up to 72 credits.

### General Education Requirements

The *VCCS Policy Manual* states: “*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**
- Scientific Reasoning**

*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.”*

See Appendix A for the complete text of the VCCS Student Learning Outcomes for each of the general education goal areas. Note that in Fall 2018 we probably will start also requiring that degrees address soft skills (leadership, teamwork, oral communication and critical thinking—the latter 2 of which are already part of NOVA’s requirements). In addition, transfer degrees should consider the global understanding and/or non-Western core requirements of many senior institutions.

### **Written and Oral Communication**

Each degree must contain courses that ensure competence in oral and written communication. Because ENG 111 is a foundation course in each degree curriculum, it must appear in the first semester.

AA and AS degrees must require ENG 111 College Composition I, as well as ENG 112 College Composition II or ENG 125 Introduction to Literature. A 3-credit oral communication course is also required.

AAA and AAS degrees must require 3 credits in English composition (usually ENG 111 College Composition I, or ENG 131 Technical Report Writing). AAA degrees also require 3 credits in oral communication. Except in rare cases, AAS degrees also require 3 credits in oral communication.

### **Humanities/Fine Arts**

Humanities requirements in AA, AS, and AAS degrees may be met by survey courses in American Sign Language (ASL), art (ART), literature (ENG), humanities (HUM), music (MUS), philosophy (PHI), religion (REL), or 200-level foreign languages. A few history (HIS) courses may be used as humanities as well as social science courses (this will no longer be allowed as of Fall 2017). Skill-based courses such as studio art or applied music courses may NOT be used to meet the humanities requirement. SACS has stated that 100-level foreign language courses may not be used to meet the humanities/fine arts requirement in a degree program. The catalog includes a list of courses that may be used to meet humanities and other general education requirements.

The major field in AAA degrees is usually one of the humanities or fine arts but a separate humanities elective not specific to the degree field should be included.

### **Foreign Language**

The VCCS requires that AA degrees include at least 6 credits in a foreign language at the intermediate (201-202, 6 credits) level, which is consistent with the lower academic requirements for many BA degrees. Students who must take the introductory 101-102 sequence in the language to qualify for intermediate level courses may use this credit as general (but not general *education*) electives in their degree.

Students for whom English is not the first language may have the foreign language requirement waived by the responsible academic dean and may substitute electives for the required 6 hours of foreign language. Alternatively, these students may obtain credit for their foreign language proficiency through CLEP exams if such exams exist for their language. The reason for the waiver must be documented and linked to the student’s record.

Certain American Sign Language (ASL) courses may be used to meet the foreign language requirement; these are identified in the catalog.

The following information should be included in footnotes accompanying foreign language requirements in AA degrees:

Intermediate level (201-202) proficiency in a foreign language is required. Waivers or credit by exam (through CLEP or other standardized exams) for previous experience may be available for *some* languages.

### **Social Sciences**

The social science requirement may be met by courses in economics (ECO), geography (GEO), history (HIS), political science (PLS), psychology (PSY), sociology (SOC) and social science (SSC). The catalog includes a list of courses that may be used to meet social science and other general education requirements

Most AA and AS degrees require 9 credits of social science. Unlike other transfer degrees, the Engineering AS degree requires only 6 credits of social science.

### **Mathematics**

Only mathematics courses with a MTH prefix meet the general education math requirement.

AA and AS degrees require a minimum of 6 credits in *MTH* (not, for example, BUS 125 or PHI 111-112) at or above the 100 level. At NOVA, this translates as MTH 151-152 or higher for transfer degrees. Many four-year institutions have a minimum math requirement of pre-calculus or statistics. If this represents a higher level course than the NOVA faculty wish to require in a degree program, a footnote should be added to encourage students to consider the math requirements of the institution to which they intend to transfer and make appropriate substitutions in the NOVA degree program. Unlike other transfer degrees, General Studies requires only 3 credits of MTH.

AAA and AAS degrees must include at least one MTH or natural science course numbered at or above 100. A minimum of 3 credits must be earned in mathematics/natural sciences. AAA and AAS degrees that have a science requirement need not include a mathematics course, but competency in fundamental mathematics skills must be developed and demonstrated elsewhere in the curriculum. Per SACSOC, as of 2003-04 NOVA's degree programs cannot use MTH 120 to meet the general education requirement unless the program also requires a natural science course.

### **Natural Sciences**

AA and AS degrees require 8 hours of natural science courses which include laboratories. Courses may be chosen from biology (BIO), chemistry (CHM), geology (GOL), environmental science (ENV), natural science (NAS) (non-science majors only) and physics (PHY).

AAA and AAS degrees must include at least one MTH or natural science course numbered at or above 100. Degrees that require a math course need not require a natural science course, but the curriculum must still help students develop scientific reasoning skills. A minimum of 3 credits must be earned in mathematics/natural sciences. The inclusion of at least one course in a science (laboratory or non-laboratory) is strongly encouraged.

The catalog includes a list of courses that may be used to meet the math/natural science and other general education requirements

### **SDV Elective**

All degrees require a minimum of 1 credit of SDV. Because students must complete an SDV course prior to registering for their 16<sup>th</sup> credit, SDV should be listed in the first semester. VCCS policy specifies that only SDV 100, 101 and 108 can be used to meet the general education SDV requirement.

### **Major Area Requirements**

The major area requirements include both courses within the major discipline and courses in other disciplines that support studies in the major. In the AAS and AAA degree, courses in the major discipline should account for approximately 50% of the total requirements for the degree.

### **Minimum/Maximum Credit Hours**

Transfer degrees (AA, AS and AFA) must require between 60 and 63 credits. Career/technical degrees (AAA and AAS) must require between 60 and 69 credits, although health technologies programs other than nursing may be between 60 and 72 credits. The Engineering AS may require 60-72 credits. Requests for exceptions to the maximum or minimum credits for a degree must be approved by the chancellor.

No single fall or spring semester may require more than 18 credits except for semesters that contain SDV 100 where the total may be as high as 19 credits. No summer term should require more than 10 credits.

### **2.2.2 Certificate Requirements**

VCCS policy states that certificates may include courses numbered 10 through 299. Those certificates that are part of a degree program may only include courses numbered 100 through 299. At NOVA, certificates include only 100 and 200 level courses. That is so all credits can be applied to an associate degree.

#### **General Education Requirements**

A minimum of 15% of the total credits in a certificate must be in general education and must include at least one 3-credit English course and one SDV course chosen from SDV 100, 101, or 108. Other general education may be chosen from those disciplines that are specified as general education under degrees and should be from disciplines outside of the major discipline.

#### **Minimum/Maximum Credit Hours**

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. No single fall or spring semester may require more than 18 credits except for semesters which contain SDV 100 where the total may be as high as 19 credits. No summer term may require more than 10 credits.

## 2.2.3 Career Studies Certificate Requirements

### General Education Requirements

As of 2010-11, career studies certificates are not required to include any general education courses.

### Minimum/Maximum Credit Hours

A career studies certificate must contain at least 9 credits but not more than 29 credits. Career studies certificates should be as short as possible since their purpose is to provide quick training. However, students placed in programs of fewer than 16 credits are not eligible for federal financial aid. Career studies certificates must lead to gainful employment.

## 2.3 Format for *Catalog* Entries

Each degree, certificate, and career studies certificate should include the following information in the format specified here.

### Title

The title contains the following elements:

- major area listed on the first line in capitalized bold letters
- **name of a specialization** (if any) listed on the second line in bold letters ending in "specialization"
- **award** (degree, certificate, career studies certificate) listed on the third line

**Example:**     **HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT**  
                  **Food Service Management Specialization**  
                  Associate of Applied Science Degree

### Description

The introductory description of the program includes the following items:

- **Purpose**--a general statement of the objectives of the curriculum and the competencies to be obtained; may include occupational titles for which the student may be qualified upon completion of the program.
- **Recommended Preparation for the Curriculum**--describes the recommended academic preparation and/or personal characteristics for entry into the curriculum.
- **Admission Requirements (for selective admission programs only)**--describes the required academic background and admissions criteria for selective admissions programs.
- **Curriculum Completion Requirements (few programs have these)**--describes requirements for continuation and completion of a program. This may include such things as course sequencing and minimum grade requirements.
- **Accreditation Status (for programs accredited or with special approval by external agencies)**--describes categories of accreditation granted to the program by professional organizations. Care must be taken in using wording approved by the accrediting body.
- **Other Student Requirements (optional)**--describes required equipment, supplies, travel, and other additional expenses to the student that may affect the student's ability to participate in the program.
- **Information for students who intend to transfer (optional)**--describes special guidance to students who expect to use a NOVA program to transfer to a four-year degree program. This will take on new life with guided pathways.

## Curricular Format

The curriculum must list the recommended sequence of courses by year and, within the year, by semesters. Courses for each semester are listed in alphanumeric order. The total number of credits for each semester are indicated and the total minimum number of credits for the degree or certificate must be indicated. There may be no more than 18 credits per semester except when a one-credit SDV course is included, when the total may be 19.

## Sequencing Course Requirements

The order in which courses are listed in a curriculum is a primary advising tool for students. The following should be considered when planning the order in which courses are specified in a curriculum.

- **Foundation Courses** should be listed in first or second semesters. ENG 111 and an SDV course must be listed in the first semester of the curriculum of degrees and certificates (but not career studies certificates).
- Courses developing **math, computer** and **oral communication** competencies lay the foundations for many other courses and should be planned early in the curriculum.
- Courses with **prerequisites** should be listed in a semester *after* the semester in which the prerequisites are required. No program may have hidden prerequisites.

## Footnotes

Footnotes should be used sparingly to provide information about the **required or recommended selections** for electives. Footnotes may also list approved **alternatives** to a required course. See standard footnotes for foreign language and social science electives. Where appropriate, guidance to students concerning course selection to facilitate transferring to specific programs or institutions may be included. Reference to options for transfer in occupational programs should be carefully worded so as not to imply that the degrees are *primarily* designed to transfer to four-year degree programs.

## 2.4 Curriculum Codes

Each degree and certificate is assigned a code by SCHEV, VCCS and the College. The office of the Associate VP for Academic Services enters these codes into the NOVA student information system. Several curriculum code numbers may be associated with a curriculum.

### SCHEV Code

The code used by SCHEV is the same as the **CIP** (Classification of Instructional Programs from the **NCES**, National Center for Education Statistics) code. This is a six-digit number that consists of a two-digit prefix (defining the program category) and a four-digit extension (defining the specific educational program).

### VCCS Code

VCCS assigns a unique three-digit code for each degree or certificate. These are identified as "majors" under the SCHEV program code. Career studies programs are assigned longer codes to show the general area to which they are related (accounting, engineering technology) and still provide a unique code.

### NOVA Codes

The NOVA code is the VCCS code with an additional digit at the end. Thus, while the VCCS and SCHEV see Liberal Arts and its specializations all as 480, NOVA codes the parent program as 6480 and specializations as 6482, 6484, and so on.

## **3.0 Developing, Revising, Discontinuing, and Evaluating Curricula**

### **3.1 Proposals for New or Revised Curricula**

Proposals for new or revised degree majors, specializations, or certificates may originate with any faculty member, dean, provost, or curriculum advisory committee or NVCC Board member. The initiator of a proposal should begin by determining whether a curricular need can best be met by revising an existing curriculum or by developing one or more new curricula.

#### **3.1.1 Process for Establishing New Curricula**

The curriculum development process is outlined below. The initiator should be aware of the approximate length of time required for the new or revised curriculum to be fully approved. Please refer to section 3.1.2 for specific content and format requirements for proposals for different types of curricula.

1. Identify a local educational need NOVA is not addressing. Only propose a new curriculum in response to an identified need in our community; we cannot develop a curriculum just because “it won’t cost anything” or to create a “stackable credential” that has no external value. Programs may not duplicate those at other VCCS colleges in the region; since NOVA is its own region, this generally is not a problem unless the new program closely resembles another NOVA program. When proposing new specializations in degree programs, avoid spreading a limited potential student population over too many courses, and, therefore, reducing the productivity of all courses.
2. Consult with the Associate VP for Academic Services and your provost early in the process.
3. Decide which type of new curriculum best meets the identified need. If it is designed to facilitate transfer, consider developing a specialization of an existing AA or AS, or developing an entirely new AA or AS (and soon, AFA). If it is designed to prepare students for immediate employment, consider developing a specialization of an existing AAA or AAS, or developing a new AAA, AAS, certificate, or career studies certificate. Document the need to offer the new program for credit rather than through the Workforce division.
4. Develop the curriculum. Based on the desired student learning outcomes, decide which courses are needed, and in which order.
5. Describe the purpose of the proposed program. In addition to noting transfer versus employment preparation, be specific about careers.
6. Recommend an implementation date. Implementation dates are indicated on VCCS 102 forms and in cover memos forwarding curricular proposals. When selecting a term for implementation, consider
  - The period of time between the submission and implementation of new curricula and any revision to existing curricula may be up to one year if they must be approved by SCHEV. SCHEV prefers that we implement new programs 3-6 months after they approve them. That allows time to obtain US DOE approval so that students placed in the program may be eligible for federal financial aid.
  - Should a proposal not gain approval by the time of the requested implementation



date, it will be implemented at the next available date (next semester or Catalog as appropriate).

- New programs should be implemented in the Fall semester in which they will first appear in the catalog. Exceptions to this guideline may be made, but tend to cause confusion for graduation clerks and others who track new programs.
  - Any approved revision must be implemented within 18 months of approval or will require reconsideration.
7. Obtain approval or support from appropriate faculty clusters, deans and provosts, advisory committees, or senior institutions.
    - Obtain faculty cluster approval. If the curriculum is likely to impact more than one cluster, gain approval of all affected. Email the proposed curriculum to all academic deans and provosts with responsibility for the core discipline. Respond to any concerns they express.
    - If the proposed new curriculum is career/technical in nature, obtain the approval of the proposing program's curriculum advisory committee. If no curriculum advisory committee exists, obtain industry input. A curriculum advisory committee must be identified for completely new career/technical degrees and certificates; this is a SCHEV requirement. Degree specializations and career studies certificates are not required to have advisory committees but may choose to do so.
    - If the new curriculum is to be a transfer program, obtain written support from target receiving institutions. At least 3 must be Virginia public institutions.
  8. Document need for the proposed curriculum. You must provide solid evidence that the program will:
    - Fill documented student needs in the region and state. SCHEV requires surveys to indicate likely student interest.
    - Attract sufficient numbers of new students and produce enough graduates to meet NOVA, VCCS, and SCHEV productivity standards.
    - Produce graduates who will fill current and future employer needs in the region and state. For career-technical programs, workforce data and current job openings must provide evidence of a real and sustainable need for employees with the proposed credential.
    - Not produce a severely negative effect on existing programs.
    - Meet section 3.1.2.1 format and content requirements.
  9. Evaluate the funding and resources needed to initiate and continue to offer the proposed curriculum. See section 3.1.2.1 for format and content requirements.
  10. Email the proposed curriculum to all academic deans with responsibility for the core discipline. Respond to any concerns they express.
  11. When you are nearly ready to submit the program proposal, email it to the Associate VP for Academic Services. Include a cover memo from the lead dean (or cluster chair, through the coordinating dean), through the provost, briefly describing the proposed program (major area, type of degree or certificate to be awarded, why it is needed, names of person/persons developing the proposal, campus(es) that will offer it initially, semester to be initiated). Note support from the discipline faculty cluster, academic deans, and advisory groups. Explain why this should be a credit program, rather than one offered through Workforce

Development. Please see section 3.1.2.1 for required contents of every program proposal.

12. To help you prepare for presentation to the Curriculum Committee, the Associate VP reviews all materials and emails suggested/required revisions back to you.
13. Once all documents are revised and complete, the Associate VP emails the proposal to the Curriculum Committee. This must occur at least a week and preferably ten days before the meeting. The Curriculum Committee usually meets in September, October, early December, late January or early February, March, and late April or early May. Proposing faculty and their academic dean should plan to attend the Curriculum Committee meeting at which the proposal will be presented.
14. If a new curriculum is approved by the Curriculum Committee, the Associate VP forwards it to the Administrative Council for approval.
15. If the Administrative Council approves the program, the Associate VP forwards it to the NVCC Board for approval. The administrative assistant in Academic Services assigns curriculum codes to new specializations approved by the NVCC Board. New degree specializations and career studies certificates are forwarded to the VCCS for information. Remember that new degree programs must be approved by the State Board for Community Colleges and SCHEV, so the approval process is complex. New certificates must also be approved by the State Board for Community Colleges. New specializations and career studies certificates receive final approval from the NVCC Board.
16. Using the VCCS Degree Program Proposal Checklist, the Associate VP forwards degree and certificate proposals approved by the NVCC Board to the VCCS System Office. System Office staff work with SCHEV staff to review proposals. Once both staffs are satisfied, the VCCS staff takes the proposal to the State Board for Community Colleges (SBCC). New degrees must be approved by SCHEV as well. The System Office assigns codes for other new programs after final approval.
17. Once any new program is approved, Academic Services notifies SACSCOC. Once SACSCOC acknowledges the program, Academic Services notifies the Director of College-wide Financial Aid who in turn notifies USDOE.
18. Academic Services works with College Information Systems to program the new curriculum into the Student Information System. Academic Services then puts it in the Catalog.

### 3.1.2 Format for Proposals for New Curricula

Proposals for new degree and certificate programs are long and detailed in order to provide all the information the State Board for Community Colleges might need. Proposals for specializations and career studies certificates may be a little shorter.

#### 3.1.2.1 Format and Content Requirements for Proposals for New Degree Programs

The following format requirements are adapted from SCHEV's requirements for approval of academic programs at public institutions and follow the format required by the VCCS. All proposals for new programs *must* be submitted in this format.

##### Proposal Format – General Formatting Requirements

- Use word-processing software compatible with Microsoft Word. Type the document in the Times New Roman or Arial 12 font. *Always send documents in Word* – not as PDFs.
- Insert any forms or attachments in a labeled appendix. If attachments such as signed letters are submitted, please scan them and insert them electronically in an appendix. Fuzzy, low resolution scans will not be accepted. VCCS requires that scans must be legible.
- Submit everything electronically as *one* document. Provide a table of contents and number *all* pages of the proposal consecutively, including the appendices.

##### Proposal Components

Proposals for new programs *must* follow the format described below:

- If the proposal will be sent to the VCCS, the Associate VP must submit it along with a signed VCCS Degree Program Proposal Checklist Cover Sheet (not part of the proposal itself and so not listed in the Table of Contents).
- Cover letter from the Executive VP is the first page of any proposal sent to the VCCS (so needed for any new degree or certificate). The letter should contain the following information:
  - NOVA's commitment to the proposed program (faculty, funding, physical resources)
  - How the proposed program fits with our mission and strategic plan (assuming we have one)
  - Funding plan, including what NOVA will stop doing or do differently in order to initiate the program (such as discontinuing related programs).
  - When the proposal is first submitted to NOVA's Curriculum Committee, a cover memo from the proposer through the lead dean and provost to the Associate VP goes here.
- SCHEV Program Proposal Cover Sheet (the Associate VP completes this after NVCC Board approval of a proposed new degree or certificate).
- Title Page
  - Include NOVA's name, campuses that will offer the program (and ELI if appropriate), and proposed initiation date (semester/year)
- Table of Contents with all pages numbered consecutively, including appendices. Use the headings as listed below.

- Description of Proposed Program

- Program Purpose

What is the purpose of the proposed program? Is it designed to transfer to a senior institution or to prepare students for immediate employment? A very brief history of the evolution and/or a description of the program are may be provided.

- Relation to Mission and Strategic Plan

How does the program align with NOVA's mission? How does it address NOVA's strategic plan? If we are between plans (as in Fall 2016), explain how it helps address the VCCS strategic plan.

- Number of Credit Hours

How many credit hours are required for the proposed degree? **Note:** Strong educational justification must be provided for requiring more than 60 credits for [AA, AS, AA&S, AAA, AFA, and AAS](#) degrees. Engineering and allied health programs (other than nursing) may contain up to 72 credit hours but they must be justified. -In an appendix, include the curriculum in two formats, detailing the required number of credit hours in core/foundation courses, clinical, internship/experiential work, and electives (if applicable). In one format, list courses by category (general education, core, electives). In the other format, present the curriculum exactly as it should appear in the catalog (title, purpose, transfer or special admission notes if any apply, campuses, courses listed in alphanumeric order by semester, total number of credits, and footnotes). In another appendix, use the General Education Curriculum Objectives Matrix to show where each general education objective is covered in the proposed curriculum.

- Program Accreditation

If a program will seek accreditation, which accrediting organization will be used? When (in which year) will accreditation be sought? Some programs seek approval (such as ABA approval of our Paralegal Studies AAS) rather than true accreditation but that too should be noted here (but call the section "Program Approval by XXX Organization" instead of "Program Accreditation").

- Admission Criteria

What are the admission criteria for the proposed program? For most programs, this section will just state that students must meet NOVA's general admission requirements.

- Target Population

What is the intended audience for this program? It may just be students in general, but some programs such as the Cybersecurity AAS especially target military veterans.

- Time to Completion for Full-time and Part-time Students

What is the typical time to completion for full-time and part-time students?

- Retention Plan

Describe the student retention plan and what specific processes, requirements, or activities will be established to ensure students are retained and supported to graduation.

- Distance Learning  
If all or part of the curriculum will be offered online and/or as a hybrid, what resources will be needed? Since we already have a large online/hybrid presence, this is nothing new for us and we can tout ELI's experience. However, do note if courses will have to be developed for online/hybrid use that currently are only offered on campus. If that's the case, be sure to explain we have instructional designers to assist with such course development.
  
- Program Learning Outcomes and Assessment
  - 1) General Education Outcomes  
Refer to the NOVA General Education Goals and include them in an appendix.
  
  - 2) Program-specific Learning Outcomes  
List the 5-8 program-specific learning outcomes (knowledge and skills) graduates are expected to demonstrate. Number them so it's easy to use the chart below.
    - a. Employment Skills/Workplace Competencies  
Applied degrees must list, in addition to program-specific learning outcomes, specific competencies graduates will have.
  
  - 3) Assessment  
General education information typically will be assessed as part of the program review process and via the core competency assessments conducted per VCCS requirements.  
  
Program-specific learning usually is assessed by final projects, exams, presentations, and portfolios. Programs leading to outside licensure/certification may use exam pass rates as evaluation data. Complete the chart below to show when and how program-specific student learning will be assessed.  
  
Explain how the assessment plan fits into NOVA's overall program review plan. State when NOVA will first assess the proposed program and who will conduct the review. **Note:** The assessment plan must be systematic, rigorous, and provide for external validation by a third party.

Use the chart below to provide assessment information.

Outcome	Evaluation Methods	Assessment Criteria
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

- Benchmarks  
List the benchmarks by which the program will be deemed successful, when they will be applied, and what we will do if the program does not meet the benchmarks. These benchmarks may include meeting projections for enrollment, job placement,

or acceptance rates into transfer institutions, and satisfaction of employees and graduates with the program.

- Administration of the Program  
How will the proposed program be administered? Who will be responsible for administering the program?
- Relationship to Existing Programs  
Is this program an expansion of an existing degree, certificate or specialization? If so, what courses or faculty will be added? Will approval of the program result in closure of the existing degree, certificate or specialization? For example, we had to provide this information when we developed the AS in IT while retaining the AAS in IST.
- Collaboration  
Is this a collaborative program with another institution of higher education or with business and industry, what is the extent of the collaboration? Describe resources available from each partner and how those resources will be allocated to support the program. Also describe how the program will be administered and which institution(s) will award the degree.

#### Need for the Proposed Program

Provide a succinct narrative describing the program that addresses the following:

##### *Justification*

- Provide background information for program development. What is occurring in the field that warrants the program? Why does the Commonwealth need this program now or why will we need it in the near future (for example, to address emerging disciplines such as biotechnology or new aspects of IT)? How was future need determined? Provide complete citations for all referenced information. Include in-text citations for all quoted information.
- All spin-off proposals must include the current curriculum (major course requirements only) of the existing program. Since spin-off proposals are much like those for new programs, we treat them all as new; even System Office staff cannot explain when we might call a new program a spin-off.

##### *Employment Demand*

Provide evidence of employer demand for graduates, including current and future need for such graduates.

- For **career/technical** programs, include:
  - Local and statewide labor market information. Do not rely on national data but do include information on national trends if that helps show the future of the industry supported by the proposed program.
  - Statistics from the U.S. Department of Labor's *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, the Bureau of Labor Statistics and/or the Virginia Employment Commission.(requested by the NVCC Board) to reflect future employment demand. Provide full citations (use –in-text citations for reference list) for sources of information.
  - Position announcements from professional journals, numbers of positions posted to

employment websites, or other sources of information about jobs. There must be a minimum of 15 job announcements featured in the proposal and they must indicate that the positions require an associate degree (or certificate if your proposal is for a certificate). The job announcements must feature the source of the job announcement and the posting date. Positions must have been advertised within six months of submitting the proposal to SCHEV and MUST show that an associate degree is needed (per SCHEV).

- Letters of support from prospective employers that include a statement of need for these graduates. Each letter of support must show a) how the business will benefit, b) what the author's connection is to the business, and c) the number of future job openings that business could fill with program graduates. Do not use form letters of support that differ only in signature (include letters in the Appendix). Employer support letters should be referenced in the narrative.
- List of Advisory Committee members and a description of their involvement in developing the program (attach meeting minutes to proposal in the Appendix).
- For **transfer** programs, include:
  - 1) Letters of support from target transfer institutions. These should show how the needs of the transfer institution will be met by the proposed curriculum. They should also state that the program will transfer without a loss of credits. Each letter must clearly list the program(s) of study at the receiving institution for which your program graduates are eligible. Letters must indicate that students can transfer the degree with little or no loss of credit. Do not use form letters of support that differ only in the signature.
  - 2) Evidence that job opportunities are available to graduates of the baccalaureate programs into which the proposed program transfers. This need not be extensive for transfer programs.
- If we have offered the proposed program or a similar program that was discontinued, explain why today's market demand now makes it viable.

### *Student Demand*

Provide evidence of student demand to support projected enrollments. Include at least two of the following types of data:

- Estimated headcounts, including sources for the projection. If we offer the core discipline for the proposed program, provide *Fact Book* data on Fall FTES for the discipline for the past 5 years. If the program is an expansion of an existing certificate or career studies certificate, include *Fact Book* data on numbers of program placed students and graduates over the past 5 years.
- Enrollment in similar programs at other institutions.
- A descriptive narrative/full report of student survey results. Provide a copy of any surveys administered and survey results in numerical form. Surveys **must** reflect information obtained within 12 months of submitting the proposal to SCHEV.
- Letters and/or emails of support from prospective students that include a statement of need for the program and indicate likely enrollment in the program. The VCCS wants to see at least 15 student emails.
- Projected numbers of program enrollees from high school pipelines, Continuing Education courses, or other NOVA programs that are likely to contribute students.

- A summary, with citations, of any other sources that document student demand.



*Summary of Projected Enrollments in Proposed Program*

Complete the chart below.

Projected Enrollment								
Year 1 20xx-20xx+1		Year 2 20xx+1-20xx+2		Year 3		Target Year		
HDCT	FTES	HDCT	FTES	HDCT	FTES	HDCT	FTES	GRADS

HDCT – fall headcount enrollment

FTES – annual full-time equivalent student enrollment

GRADS – annual number of graduates of the proposed program

*Program Duplication*

- If the proposed degree is likely to draw students from existing NOVA programs, explain how this will affect that program’s viability.
- Include evidence that the proposed program is not unnecessarily duplicating programs at other institutions in our service area, including those offered at technical institutes and local universities.
- Discuss the number of such programs in the area, the average number of students enrolled (headcount), and the average number of graduates over the past five years.
- If the program will be part of a consortial agreement, explain how students will be recruited.

Projected Resource Needs for Proposed Program

**Part A: Answer the following questions about general budget information.**

- Has or will the institution submit an addendum budget request to cover one-time costs? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- Has or will the institution submit an addendum budget request to cover operating costs? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- Will there be any operating budget requests for this program that would exceed normal operating budget guidelines (for example, unusual faculty mix, faculty salaries, or resources)? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- Will each type of space for the proposed program be within projected guidelines? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- Will a capital outlay request in support of this program be forthcoming? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

**Part B: Fill in the number of FTE positions needed for the program.**

Note that FTE means full-time equivalent, NOT headcount.

	Program initiation year		Total expected by target enrollment year	
	On-going and reallocated	Added (New)	On-going and reallocated	Added (New)
Full-time Faculty				
Part-time Faculty				
Graduate Assistants	0	0	0	0
Classified Positions				
<b>TOTAL</b>				

If most or all courses will be taught by existing full-time or adjunct faculty as part of their regular teaching load, so state. If it is anticipated that increasing enrollments will justify the need for an additional full-time faculty member by the target year, say so. Be sure that information presented in this chart is consistent with that in Part C.

**Part C: Estimated \$\$ resources to initiate and operate the program.**

	Program initiation year	Total expected by target enrollment year
Full-time faculty		
Part-time faculty		
Graduate assistants		
Classified positions		
Fringe benefits		
Total personnel costs		
Targeted financial aid		
Equipment		
Library		
Telecommunication costs		
Other resource needs (specify) Professional development Pay faculty to evaluate CPL Program accreditation (These are just examples.)		
<b>TOTAL</b>		

Explain how the above figures were calculated.**Part D: Certification Statement**

The institution will require additional state funding to initiate and sustain this program.

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Chief Academic Officer (at NOVA this is the EVP)  
 (for NOVA, check “No” because we are *not* going to ask for more funds)

**If “no,” please complete Items 1, 2, and 3 below.**

**1. Estimated \$\$ and funding source to initiate and operate the program.**

Funding Source	Program initiation year (use same year as in Part B)	Target enrollment year (use same year as in Part B)
Reallocation within the department (Note below the impact this will have within the department.)		
Reallocation within the school or college (Note below the impact this will have within the school or college.)		
Reallocation within the institution (Note the impact this will have within the institution.)		
Other funding sources (Specify and note if these are currently available or anticipated.)		

**Statement of Impact/Funding Sources**

Provide a brief narrative covering each of the following:

- Overall
- Faculty Salaries
- Equipment, Supplies and Facilities
- Professional Development
- Accreditation (only include this if it will be an ongoing cost)
- Advanced Standing Evaluation (only include this if it will be an ongoing cost)

**Secondary Certification**

If resources are reallocated from another unit to support this proposal, the institution will not subsequently request additional state funding to restore those resources for their original purpose.

\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_  
 (check here) Signature of Chief Academic Officer (at NOVA this is the EVP)

## **Appendices**

- A. VCCS 102 Form Request for New Curriculum (signed and scanned into document— Associate VP will take care of getting it signed and scanned but proposer does the rest)
- B. Courses Required for the Proposed Program
- C. Curriculum Catalog Layout
- D. General Education Curriculum Objectives Matrix (see next two pages for format)
- E. Program SLO Matrix (see page 30 for format)
- F. Letters of Support from Employers (for CTE programs)
- G. List of Advisory Committee Members and Minutes (for CTE programs)
- H. Job Announcements (for CTE programs, and a few for transfer programs)
- I. Student Demand Survey (questions and results)
- J. Letters/emails of Support from Students
- K. Letters of Support from Senior Institutions (for transfer programs)

## General Education Curriculum Objective Matrix

Program:	Courses															
Date:	List all required courses (general education and core) that help address these objectives.															
<b>Area 1: Communication</b>																
Degree graduates will demonstrate the ability to:																
1.1 understand and interpret complex materials;																
1.2 assimilate, organize, develop, and present an idea formally and informally;																
1.3 use standard English;																
1.4 use appropriate verbal and non-verbal responses in interpersonal relations and group discussions;																
1.5 use listening skills; and																
1.6 recognize the role of culture in communication.																
<b>Area 2: Critical Thinking</b>																
Degree graduates will demonstrate the ability to:																
2.1 discriminate among degrees of credibility, accuracy, and reliability of inferences drawn from given data;																
2.2 recognize parallels, assumptions, or presuppositions in any given source of information;																
2.3 evaluate the strengths and relevance of arguments on a particular question or issue;																
2.4 weigh evidence and decide if generalizations or conclusions based on the given data are warranted;																
2.5 determine whether certain conclusions or consequences are supported by the information provided;																
2.6 use problem solving skills.																
<b>Area 3: Cultural and Social Understanding</b>																
Degree graduates will demonstrate the ability to:																
3.1 assess the impact that social institutions have on individuals and culture—past, present, and future;																
3.2 describe their own as well as others' personal ethical systems and values within social institutions;																
3.3 recognize the impact that arts and humanities have upon individuals and cultures.																
3.4 recognize the role of language in social and cultural contexts.																
3.5 recognize the interdependence of distinctive world-wide social, economic, geo-political, and cultural systems																

## General Education Curriculum Objective Matrix

Program:	Courses															
Date:																
<b>Area 4: Information Literacy.</b> Degree graduates will demonstrate the ability to:																
4.1 determine the nature and extent of the information needed;																
4.2 access needed information effectively and efficiently;																
4.3 evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into his or her knowledge base;																
4.4 use information effectively, individually or as a member of a group, to accomplish a specific purpose; and																
4.5 understand many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and access and use information ethically and legally.																
<b>Area 5: Personal Development.</b> Degree graduates will demonstrate the ability to:																
5.1 develop and/or refine personal wellness goals; and																
5.2 develop and/or enhance the knowledge, skills, and understanding to make informed academic, social, personal, career, and interpersonal decisions.																
<b>Area 6: Quantitative Reasoning.</b> Degree graduates will demonstrate the ability to:																
6.1 use logical and mathematical reasoning within the context of various disciplines;																
6.2 interpret and use mathematical formulas;																
6.3 interpret mathematical models such as graphs, tables and schematics and draw inferences from them;																
6.4 use graphical, symbolic, and numerical methods to analyze, organize, and interpret data;																
6.5 estimate and consider answers to mathematical problems in order to determine reasonableness; and																
6.6 represent mathematical information numerically, symbolically, and visually, using graphs and charts.																
<b>Area 7: Scientific Reasoning.</b> Degree graduates will demonstrate the ability to:																
7.1 generate an empirically evidenced and logical argument;																
7.2 distinguish a scientific argument from a non-scientific argument;																
7.3 reason by deduction, induction and analogy;																
7.4 distinguish between causal and correlational relationships; and																
7.5 recognize methods of inquiry that lead to scientific knowledge.																

### Student Learning Outcomes Matrix

SLO	Courses								
	These can be general education courses, but mostly will be core courses.								
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									

### **3.1.2.3 Format and Content Requirements for Proposals for New Specializations**

Specializations of existing degree programs receive final approval from the NVCC Board. Thus, the approval process is faster than for a new degree program.

Proposals for specializations should follow the same general format as that outlined for new degree programs, but without the resource charts required by SCHEV (but you must still supply cost information). Two letters of support are sufficient.

The program purpose and list of competencies should make it clear how the knowledge and skills developed by students completing the specialization will differ from those of students completing the parent degree.

### **3.1.2.4 Format and Content Requirements for Proposals for New Certificate Programs**

Because certificates must be approved by the State Board for Community Colleges, proposals must include the same types of information as required for new degree programs, but without the resource charts required by SCHEV and the general education matrix.

### **3.1.2.5 Format and Content Requirements for Proposals for New Career Studies Certificate Programs**

Career studies certificates receive final approval from the NVCC Board. Thus, the approval process is faster than for full certificates or completely new degrees. Proposals for career studies certificates should follow the same general format as that outlined for new degree programs, but without the resource charts and without the General Education Matrix. Two letters of support are sufficient.



### 3.1.3 Revising Existing Programs

#### Major Revisions to Existing Programs

Proposals that change the intent of a degree or certificate program require state review. If the award granted (type of degree or major) is to be changed, the existing program must be discontinued and a new program requested. The following materials must be submitted as one comprehensive electronic document through the Associate VP for Academic Services to the Curriculum Committee for a major revision to a curriculum:

1. **Cover Memo** from the coordinating dean through the provost, including:
  - a. **General description** of the proposal (summary of changes, names of person/persons developing the proposal).
  - b. **Justification** for the proposal--describe support from faculty discipline clusters and advisory groups where appropriate.
  - c. **Effect on transfer or employment** opportunities, as appropriate.
  - d. List of any new **resources required** including faculty, equipment, supplies, classrooms, laboratories, support services, external affiliations, and other resources as appropriate.
2. Proposed **Curricular Layout**. Show additions in **bold red** and show deletions in ~~strikethrough~~.
3. For multi-campus programs the initiating campus should email the draft curriculum layout to each campus with the program. A majority of campuses must approve, as signified by email from the academic dean.
4. **VCCS 102** Request for New Curriculum.
5. **VCCS 103** Request for New or Revised Course and course content summary for **each new** course.
6. **SCHEV Discontinuation Form** if programs are combined. (The Associate VP prepares this.)

#### Minor Revisions to Existing Programs

Substitutions of *program-specific* courses for other *program-specific* courses that do not change the total number of credits and that have support of all campuses offering the program may be approved by the Executive Vice President.

For other revisions that do not change the intent of the program, the award, or the total credits by more than six credits, the Administrative Council has final approval. The coordinating dean should submit the following through the provost to the Associate VP for Academic Services:

1. **Cover Memo** describing the proposal (summary of changes, names of person/persons developing the proposal, reason for change).
2. **Proposed Curricular Layout**. Obtain the electronic *Catalog* layout from Academic Services. ~~Strike through~~ deletions and print additions in **bold red**.
3. For multi-campus programs the initiating campus should email the draft curriculum layout to each campus with the program. A majority of campuses must approve, as signified by email from the academic dean.
4. **VCCS 103** Request for New or Revised Course and course content summary for **each new** course.

### 3.1.4 Expanding Existing Programs to Additional Campuses

1. When a campus intends to request expansion of an existing program, the provost must notify the Administrative Council before the intended expansion. The Administrative

Council will determine if the campus should continue with the development of a full proposal for the expansion. Agreement that a proposal for expansion may be developed does not constitute approval of the expansion.

2. If the Administrative Council agrees that the campus may continue with the development of the proposed expansion, the Executive Vice President will request that OIR staff develop data which will allow campuses with the program to assess the impact of the expansion. The data will include:
  - a. Fall FTES and number of full-time faculty in the discipline at each campus for the last five years,
  - b. Distribution of current program placed students by campus area zip codes, and
  - c. Employment and placement rates of current graduates, along with any projections for employment opportunities available from Employment Commission or other literature.
3. Before the proposed expansion, the Executive VP will forward this impact data to all provosts and to the Associate VP for Academic Services. The Associate VP will forward the data to all academic deans with responsibility for the program and to the chair of the appropriate faculty discipline cluster. Each academic dean will be asked to email the Associate VP to indicate approval or disapproval of the expansion. It is the responsibility of the faculty cluster chair to see that all faculty in the discipline cluster have an opportunity to comment on the proposed expansion. All comments must be sent to the Associate VP for Academic Services before the proposal is brought to the Curriculum Committee. The Associate VP will forward all comments to the campus proposing the expansion.
4. The academic dean and appropriate campus faculty prepare and forward to the provost a justification for the expansion of a given curriculum to that campus. This justification should include the following:
  - a. Projected enrollment in the program at the campus for the first three years including a rationale for the projections. The data should support the allocation of at least one full-time faculty member at each campus that offers the program within three years of the expansion.
  - b. Faculty, equipment, facilities and other resources needed to offer the program.
  - c. Summary of and response to comments from other campuses and the responsible discipline cluster faculty.
  - d. Evidence of community support.

The proposal and justification are forwarded to the Associate VP for Academic Services through the campus provost.

5. The Associate VP forwards the OIR data, proposal, and justification and any comments received to the Curriculum Committee for review.
6. The Curriculum Committee considers the proposed expansion, and forwards its recommendation to the Administrative Council for final action.
7. Approved expansions are reflected in the subsequent edition of the *Catalog*.

## 3.2 Discontinuing an Existing Program

### 3.2.1 Discontinuation at All Campuses

A proposal to discontinue a program should be submitted from the coordinating dean through his/her provost to the Associate VP for Academic Services. The proposal is in the form of a memo justifying the discontinuation.

The memo includes data from OIR on the number of students placed in the program and the number of graduates for the past 3 years. The coordinating academic dean or a provost should request this data from OIR at least 2 months prior to the Curriculum Committee meeting at which the proposal will be presented.

The sponsoring discipline cluster must approve the discontinuance and their approval must be noted in the memo.

Advisory committee support must be obtained for applied degrees, certificates and career studies certificates, and noted in the memo.

For multi-campus programs, the initiating campus should email the proposal to discontinue to each campus with the program. A majority of campuses must approve, with emails from the academic deans appended to the memo. If the majority of deans approve, the lead dean's provost will seek approval from all affected provosts; their emails of support also will be appended to the memo.

If most provosts approve, the proposal will be considered by the Curriculum Committee.

If approved by the Curriculum Committee, the request for discontinuance is submitted to the Administrative Council and the NVCC Board.

If discontinuance of a *degree* program is approved by the NVCC Board, the Associate VP completes a SCHEV Discontinuation Form. If a degree program to be discontinued has the same CIP code as other NOVA degree programs that we do NOT want to be discontinued, the Associate VP must say so on the discontinuance form. If discontinuance of a certificate or career studies certificate program is approved by the NVCC Board, the Associate VP completes a **VCCS Request for [Program Discontinuation Form](#)**.

In accord with the SACSCOC policy statement on Closing an Institution or Program, NOVA must make a good faith effort to assist affected students, faculty, administrative and support staff so that they experience a minimal amount of disruption in the pursuit of their course of study or professional careers. In all cases, individuals should be notified of the decision to close a program as soon as possible so that they can make appropriate plans. Students who have not completed their programs should be advised by faculty or professional counselors regarding suitable options including transfer to comparable programs.

The Director for Academic & Student Services Policy Compliance will draft a letter for the EVP to notify SACSCOC of all program discontinuances. The Director also notifies the Director of College-wide Financial Aid.

### 3.2.2 Discontinuation at One of Multiple Campuses

The academic dean intending to discontinue a program that is also offered at other campuses

must inform the other academic deans before requesting discontinuation. The campus discontinuing the program should explain how currently placed students will complete the program and what, if any, the personnel implications are. The academic dean at the campus wishing to discontinue the program should request data from OIR on program placed students and recent graduates, and send a justification memo to the Curriculum Committee through the Associate VP for Academic Services. Any implications for personnel reallocation will be the prerogative of the Administrative Council.

### **3.3 Program Productivity Requirements**

#### **VCCS Program Productivity Requirements**

The following are program productivity standards set by the VCCS:

- AA and AS programs must average at least 24 FTES and/or 17 graduates per year over the most recent 3 years.
- Requirements for AAA and AAS programs vary by program category. Those in Agriculture & Natural Resources, Business, Arts & Design, and Public Service Technologies must average at least 18 FTES and/or 12 graduates per year over the most recent 3 years. Those in Engineering, Mechanical & Industrial Technologies must average at least 13 FTES and/or 9 graduates per year for the most recent 3 years. Degree programs in the Health Technologies must average at least 10 FTES and/or 7 graduates per year for the most recent 3 years.
- Certificate programs must average at least 10 FTES and/or 7 graduates per year.

The VCCS views program FTES, not discipline FTES. This means they look at the number of credits in any course taken by students placed in a given program. They do not consider FTES generated by students who are not placed in the program but who take courses in the core discipline.

#### **NOVA Program Productivity Requirements**

- Career Studies Certificates  
Career studies certificates that include only courses that are required in a degree program have no separate productivity requirements. Career studies certificates including courses that are not part of a degree major shall meet VCCS standards for certificate programs.
- Multi-campus Programs  
For multi-campus programs, each campus should strive to meet the productivity guidelines listed above for degree, certificate, and career studies certificate programs.

### **3.4 Curriculum Offering Requirements**

Programs listed in the catalog must be readily available at each campus listed as offering them. All courses listed in a program's curriculum layout as required must be *offered* at least once each academic year. If a course has insufficient enrollment to *run* in three consecutive years, it will be removed from the catalog. Program administrators must replace such courses with courses that run reliably if they wish to keep the program.

### **3.5 Program and General Education Discipline Evaluation**

The periodic and systematic review of academic programs is the primary activity through which we determine that the academic programs are effective and that our students are learning. All degree programs along with their related certificates and career studies certificates, as well as "stand-alone" certificates, career studies certificates, and general education disciplines, are reviewed according to a schedule approved by the Curriculum Committee and the Administrative Council. Degree programs, certificates, and career studies certificates are to be evaluated every five years. General education disciplines are to be evaluated on a ten-year cycle. Programs that are accredited or approved by external agencies are reviewed on a cycle that mirrors their accreditation or approval schedule. Program and discipline reviews culminate in a report that includes an action plan. The Curriculum Committee accepts these reports, sometimes with modifications to the action plan. The Administrative Council approves action plans for implementation. Cluster chairs submit implementation reports to the Curriculum Committee approximately one and two years after their action plan was approved. The Curriculum Committee may recommend additional implementation reports if action plans have not been implemented satisfactorily.

Programs accredited by external agencies submit a modified evaluation report to the Curriculum Committee including the recommendations of the accrediting agency and an action plan based on those recommendations. The program and general education discipline evaluation process is detailed in *Guidelines for Program and Discipline Review*.

## 4.0 Requirements for Courses

### 4.1 VCCS Master Course File (MCF)/VCCS Online

The VCCS maintains the *Master Course File (MCF)*, which lists all approved courses offered in the VCCS. The VCCS Online version (<http://courses.vccs.edu/>) lists all courses that are available for any given semester. It also provides a searchable database for courses and programs. NOVA may use any course listed in the *MCF*. If faculty want to use a VCCS course that is new to NOVA, they must obtain Cluster support for doing so. The cluster coordinator should request that the Associate VP for Academic Services add the course to the catalog. New classes may not be taught until the faculty develop a course content summary and submit it electronically to the Associate VP for Academic Services.

### 4.2 Proposals for New or Revised Courses

#### 4.2.1 Process for Establishing New-to-the-VCCS Courses

The course development process is outlined below. The initiator should be aware of the approximate length of time required for the new or revised course to be fully approved. The process for revising the Course Description, which is VCCS-approved, is identical, as is the process for reactivating a course that is inactive at the VCCS level. Please refer to section 4.2.2 for specific content and format requirements for proposals for different types of curricula.

1. A faculty member, dean, provost, advisory committee member, or Board member may have an idea for a new course.
2. Before developing a new course, search VCCS Online to see if a course that will meet your needs already exists. You can type in a particular discipline or you can search based on a key word. It is a good idea to do both, because sometimes a course exists, but in a prefix you would not expect.
3. If you see a VCCS course that comes very close to meeting your needs, but is one credit more or less than you need, we can submit a proposal to make the course variable credit in the VCCS, then use the new number of credits. Courses may only vary by 1 credit in the VCCS, so if you want a course that differs by more than that amount, we will need to propose a new course.
4. Share your idea with your dean and discipline cluster. If they support it, continue.
5. Inform the Associate VP for Academic Services that you are considering developing a new course. This is helpful because sometimes someone in another discipline is developing a similar course; the Associate VP can help you work together.
6. Draft a course content summary. See section 4.12 for required elements.
7. Email the proposed course content summary to your cluster colleagues and the Associate VP for review and comment.
8. Once they are satisfied, email it to colleagues in your discipline at other VCCS colleges and request their suggestions and support. If you do not know whom to contact at other VCCS colleges, the Associate VP will help you with this step.
9. If the course is designed for transfer, also share the draft course content summary with colleagues at Virginia public universities and request their emailed agreement that the course will transfer (preferably as equivalent to a specific course, but at least as a *discipline* elective versus a *general* elective). The AVP can also help with this step.
10. If the course is designed for use in a career/technical program, ask the program's curriculum advisory committee to approve it.
11. Offer the course once or twice as a 93, 193 or 293 "Studies in \_\_\_\_\_" course to test

- its viability.
12. Complete the new course template that the AVP for Academic Services will send you. It includes a place for the cover memo, the VCCS 103 Request for New, Revised, or Reactivated Course form, the VCCS 104 Course Content Summary form and a place for emails of support all in ONE document. With the coordinating dean, draft a cover memo from the dean through the provost to the AVP justifying the need for the new course, outlining the steps you have taken in its development, and requesting that the Curriculum Committee consider the proposal. Be sure to say that a course will be repeatable if that is your intent. If the course should be designated as meeting general education requirements, please also note that and justify it.
  13. Email the completed template to the Associate VP for review and comment. This is important because it is not always obvious how to complete the 103 form correctly. The AVP also will review the course content summary to be sure objectives are phrased as SLOs and to check formatting.
  14. Submit the proposal officially by emailing it to the Associate VP and copying the dean and provost (or the dean may choose to email the proposal). Do this at least 10 days before the Curriculum Committee meeting at which you hope to present the proposal.
  15. The course proposer and his/her dean should plan to attend the Curriculum Committee meeting to present the proposal. It may be helpful to invite other cluster members for support.
  16. Once the Curriculum Committee approves the course proposal, the Associate VP forwards it to the Administrative Council.
  17. Once the Administrative Council approves the proposal, the Associate VP forwards it to the VCCS System Office for final approval by the VCCS Deans' Course Review Committee (DCRC). Proposals for new IT courses are reviewed by the VCCS IT Leads before they are given to the DCRC. The DCRC typically meets 4-6 times each year. Thus, when new courses are proposed, the length of the approval process must be considered when requesting the initiation semester.
  18. If approved, the VCCS will assign a course number and will enter the course in the online Master Course File and into the VCCS Course Catalog maintained in PeopleSoft.
  19. The Associate VP will inform the proposer and his/her dean and cluster that the course was approved and given a number. Academic Services staff will also add the course to NOVA's catalog and to PeopleSoft so that you will be able to schedule it. New courses will be added to the next printed catalog in accordance with VCCS policy, which states, "All courses to be offered by a college shall be listed in the college catalog." If the course will be effective in the spring or summer, and so before the next catalog is printed, it will also be added to the current online catalog.
  20. If the new course is to be repeatable, the Associate VP will ask the programmer to do the requisite programming and, once the programming has been completed, will inform registrars and discipline faculty that this is the case.



#### 4.2.2 Course Proposal Requirements

To create a course that is new to the VCCS or to make revisions to existing course title, credit, description, prerequisites, or contact hours requires NOVA and VCCS approval. The Associate VP has a single-document format that includes all of the required elements of a course proposal, so let her know when you plan to proposal a new or modified course and she will email the format to you. The document includes:

1. Cover memo including:
  - a. Summary of proposed change or new course
  - b. Justification
  - c. Cluster faculty and academic dean support
  - d. Support from discipline faculty at other VCCS colleges
  - e. Effect on transferability (for a transfer course)
  - f. Curriculum advisory committee review/comments (for career/technical courses)
  - g. New courses must include information showing how they differ from related courses in the same or other disciplines
2. VCCS 103 Request for New or Revised Course
3. Course content summary in proper VCCS/NOVA format
4. Emails documenting support by academic deans and other VCCS colleges
5. If this is a transfer course, it also is helpful to have emails of support from senior institutions.

#### 4.3 Course Discontinuation

To discontinue use of a course, the chair of the discipline cluster emails the Associate VP for Academic Services and copies the coordinating academic dean. Unless the course is required by one or more programs, it will be removed from the catalog.

Courses that were not taught for three years or which do not have a current course content summary on file *will be removed from the Catalog* and PeopleSoft database. Courses that have not been taught for three years at any VCCS college are discontinued by the VCCS. Courses discontinued just at NOVA may be reactivated by submitting a current course content summary to the Associate VP for Academic Services through the cluster chair. If the course has been discontinued at the VCCS level, the cluster chair also provides a VCCS 103 form to the Associate VP who forwards the form and the new course content to the VCCS for approval by the Deans' Course Review Committee.

#### 4.4 Approval to Offer Courses at Campuses not Approved to Offer a Complete Program

(*Faculty Handbook* 3.8500) A campus not authorized to offer a given program may offer introductory courses in the major discipline which are **required** in that program only with prior email approval of the academic dean at a campus authorized to offer that program. The Associate VP for Academic Services must be copied on the email so that Academic Services staff can add the new campus to the course information in PeopleSoft. Upper-level required courses may not be offered by campuses that are not authorized to offer the program. Campuses without the program may offer general usage courses in the discipline but the academic dean should inform the academic dean(s) of the campus(es) that offer the program. The content of these courses in the major or discipline shall be under the instructional control of a campus authorized to offer the program. Instructional control encompasses faculty qualifications, course syllabus, textbooks, and special equipment.

When the campus requesting the specialized course offering receives a negative response from the campus authorized to offer the program, the requesting campus may appeal that response to the

Executive VP of Academic and Student Services for resolution.

If a campus is authorized to offer a certificate only in a program that has an associate degree, the campus may offer all required courses in the certificate without approval from the campuses offering the degree. However, elective courses in the discipline must be approved.

#### **4.5 Course Numbers**

Courses numbered 1-9 are developmental courses. The credits earned in these courses are not applicable toward a degree or a certificate. Courses numbered 10-99 may apply to certificate programs (by VCCS policy; NOVA does not do this). The courses are not applicable toward an associate degree. ESL courses are also numbered 10-99, but are treated more as developmental courses; like the other 10-99 courses, they cannot be counted toward a degree or certificate. Courses numbered 100-299 are applicable toward associate degrees and certificate programs.

#### **4.6 General Usage Courses**

The *Catalog* specifies several categories of "general usage" courses--course numbers that may be used by any discipline. Most should not be included as specified courses in a degree or certificate program because students may experience difficulty in transferring courses that lack a defined content. Disciplines may use the general usage courses to test new courses and to respond quickly to requests for rapid implementation of courses.

General usage courses may be implemented with an academic dean's approval. College-wide review and course content summaries are not required.

The 93 and 95 series courses are used for regular class sections, whereas the other series are used for individual students.

#### **90-190-290 Coordinated Internship (1-5 CR.)**

Supervised on-the-job training in selected business, industrial, or service firms coordinated by the College. Credit/work ratio maximum 1:5 hrs. May be repeated for credit.

#### **93-193-293 Studies In (1-5 CR.)**

Experimental courses to test their viability as permanent offerings. An experimental course may be offered twice, after which the course must be approved following VCCS processes for adding new courses to the Master Course File. Credit/work ratio maximum 1:5 hrs. May be repeated for credit.

#### **95-195-295 Topics In (1-5 CR.)**

Exploration of topical areas of interest to or needed by students. May be used also for special honors courses. May be repeated for credit.

#### **96-196-296 On-Site Training In (1-5 CR.)**

Career orientation and training program without pay in selected businesses and industry, supervised and coordinated by the College. At NOVA, we use this mostly in health technology programs. Credit/work ratio not to exceed 1:5 hrs. May be repeated for credit.

#### **97-197-297 Cooperative Education (1-5 CR.)**

Supervised on-the-job training for pay in approved business and government organizations. See eligibility requirements in the catalog. Credit/work ratio not to exceed 1:5 hrs. May be repeated for credit.

**98-198-298 Seminar and Project****(1-5 CR.)**

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. May be repeated for credit.

**99-199-299 Supervised Study****(1-5 CR.)**

Assignment of problems for independent study incorporating previous instruction and supervised by the instructor. May be repeated for credit.

**4.7 Course Titles**

VCCS guidelines state that:

1. Course titles should not exceed six words or 55 characters, including spacing. Wording of the title should indicate a clear relationship to the prefix or discipline.
2. Courses should not be cross-listed with other disciplines. Course titles cannot be duplicated except in sequence courses.
3. Abbreviations should not be used.
4. References to specific machinery or software should not be included in the title.
5. References to licensure or certification should be avoided.

**4.8 Course Descriptions**

Course descriptions for existing courses should be identical to the description in the MCF (although we may add prerequisites). In addition:

1. All sentences in the course description must begin with present tense verbs (examples: covers, focuses, studies, introduces, presents, teaches, exposes, applies, surveys).
2. Course descriptions should not exceed 8 lines of type with 55 characters per line (approximately 50-60 words).
3. Course descriptions must be written for system-wide use and should contain minimum standards for content and competencies taught in the course. The description should be a summary rather than a comprehensive list of topics covered, and should be general enough to allow flexibility for individual colleges to include unique competencies, requisites, and prerequisites to meet local needs.
4. Course descriptions must contain the following four parts:
  - a. Course prefix, number, title and credit hours.
  - b. Summary of course content.
  - c. Minimum course prerequisites or co-requisites stated in terms of specific course(s), knowledge required, or academic approval.
  - d. The specific number of course lecture hours, lab hours, and total contact hours per week of a standard 16-week semester.
5. Effective October 2007, sequences of two courses (I-II) should be listed separately, each with its own description. Courses with I-II-III in their titles are assumed to be sequential unless otherwise stated.
6. Courses designed to assist students in meeting licensure or certification requirements should contain the phrase "preparation for" licensure or certification. Colleges do not certify or license, they only prepare students for the process.
7. Course content should be distinct and of sufficient depth and purpose to merit a separate course.

## 4.9 Course Credits

### 4.9.1 Contact Hour Definition

Course credits are defined in terms of an academic or contact hour--50 minutes of formalized, structured instructional time scheduled for a particular course. Ratios of academic hours to credit hours are defined as follows:

### 4.9.2 Lecture Credit Hour

One academic hour per week for 15 weeks plus one hour final exam time of lecture, seminar, and similar experiences is equivalent to one semester credit hour. In non-standard terms (shorter or longer) an equivalent amount of time (800 minutes, including final exam) must be provided for each lecture credit hour.

### 4.9.3 Laboratory Credit Hour

One laboratory credit hour is equivalent to three hours of laboratory, clinical training, supervised work experience, coordinated internship, or other similar experiences per week for 15 weeks plus a one hour examination period.

In some disciplines each laboratory period consists of two hours of structured class experience plus a minimum of one hour practice, research, or other out-of-class assignment. Examples of this would be music classes that require additional out-of-class practice time and HRT classes that require students to spend additional time outside of scheduled classes to complete projects.

During non-standard terms, a total of 46 academic hours (2300 minutes) of instruction is required for three contact hour laboratories and 31 academic hours (1550 minutes) of instruction is required for two contact hour laboratories. These time requirements include a one hour final exam period.

### 4.9.4 Variable Credit

Some courses are listed in the VCCS Master Course File as having variable credit. This means variable across the VCCS, not within a given college. When NOVA adopts a course from the MCF, it *must* be offered for a *fixed* amount of credit. The exceptions to this policy are the General Usage courses.

If a course exists in the MCF for a fixed credit value and NOVA wishes to offer it for 1 credit more or less, NOVA may submit a VCCS 103 form to revise the credit to make it variable. Course credits may not vary within the VCCS by more than one semester hour.

## 4.10 Prerequisites and Corequisites

Course descriptions may include prerequisites and/or co-requisites. Prerequisites are designed to improve student success and provide **minimum** background knowledge necessary for a course. The college must adhere to any prerequisites listed in the *Master Course File* and NOVA may add prerequisites. Co-requisites must be completed prior to or concurrent with a course.

## 4.11 Course Content Summaries

### 4.11.1 Purpose and Contents

A course content summary is a concise, general purpose document that must be followed by **all faculty** teaching a given course as a common basis for describing the major elements of the course. The course content summary is designed by the faculty within the discipline at NOVA (there are very few state-wide course outlines or summaries). It is used in the preparation of course syllabi and for various administrative purposes including description of course content to external parties and students who are seeking credit for prior learning. Course content summaries are emailed from the discipline cluster chair to the Associate VP for Academic Services. The Office of Academic Services maintains a paper file of many old course content summaries and posts current summaries to the Academic Services web site.

Course content summaries must contain each of the following:

- **Course Description**--Full College *Catalog* entry including prefix, number, title, credits, description, contact hours, and prerequisites. This must be identical to the course description as it appears in the *Catalog* and the *MCF* (unless it includes additional prerequisites).
- **General Course Purpose**--The broad over-all goal of a course including for whom the course is designed and where it fits into a curriculum or course sequence, if appropriate.
- **Entry Level Competencies**--Minimum level of knowledge and/or skill necessary for participation in the course. Skills may include reading, writing, and mathematics skill levels.
- **Course Objectives**--Exit level competence, knowledge and/or skill to be achieved by students completing the course. These should be written in a format which completes the sentence: "Upon completion of this course the student will be able to..." Objectives express student learning outcomes and should be **specific and measurable**.
- **Major Topics to be Included**--The broad content areas required for **attainment of the course objectives** regardless of the textbook selected must be listed. **For sequence courses, the delineation of the content of each course in the sequence is essential.**
- **Extra Topics (optional)**--Additional content areas that may be offered at the faculty member's discretion may be listed.
- **Date**—Date created or most recently reviewed by discipline faculty. This goes in the upper right corner.

### 4.11.2 Revising and Updating Course Content Summaries

Course content summaries **must be reviewed by discipline faculty every five years** and revised as needed. They are reviewed as part of the program and discipline evaluation process and at any other time the faculty deem necessary. Course content summaries must be updated when revisions are made to *Catalog* entries or VCCS course descriptions. If the discipline clusters do not review the content summaries within five years, the Associate VP for Academic Services reminds the coordinating academic dean that a review is required. Members of the discipline faculty, academic deans, and provosts may initiate a request for the review and updating of a course content summary. Such requests should be directed to the academic dean responsible for the appropriate discipline cluster with a copy to the Associate VP for Academic Services.

#### **4.12 NOVA Course Catalog (in NovaConnect)**

The NOVA course catalog is a database listing all currently offered courses at NOVA. It specifies the campuses on which each course may be offered. In order to enter a course into the *Schedule of Classes*, a academic must be approved to offer that course. The Office of Academic Services maintains the course catalog in NovaConnect.

## **5.0 Curriculum Committee Policies and Procedures**

### **5.1 Function/Membership**

The function of the Curriculum Committee is to study the instructional programs of the College, to consider proposals for the development of new programs and their assignment to campuses, to consider proposals for course changes, and to make recommendations for improvement of curricula and related academic policies. Appropriate recommendations are made to the president.

The committee is appointed annually by the president for staggered two-year terms and consists of the following members:

- Executive VP of Academic and Student Services (CS), chair
- Associate VP for Academic Services (CS), executive secretary
- 11 Teaching Faculty--including at least 1 from each campus and at least 3 CTE faculty
- 3 Provosts
- 3 Academic deans
- 1 Workforce Development representative
- 1 Professional faculty learning resources representative
- 1 Professional faculty student services representative

### **5.2 Types of Committee Actions**

The Curriculum Committee is an advisory committee to the president in matters of curriculum development and evaluation, including but not limited to:

- New and Revised Courses
- New, Revised, and Discontinued Curricula
- Basic Skills and Placement Policy
- Credit for Prior Learning Policies
  - ABLE (Assessment By Local Exam)
  - PLACE (Portfolio for prior learning)
  - External Credit-by-Exam (CLEP, AP, etc.)
  - Transfer Policies (credit transferred to NOVA)
- *Faculty Handbook* Policies Regarding Curriculum Development and Coordination
- Curricular Elements of the *College Catalog*
- Program & Discipline Evaluation
- Student Outcomes Assessment

### **5.3 Meeting Rules**

Unless otherwise specified in these policies and procedures, meetings will generally be conducted according to *Robert's Rules of Order--Newly Revised*.

### **5.4 Quorum and Voting Procedures**

A simple majority of the total committee membership is needed to conduct any vote. The chair votes only in case of a tie. The executive secretary has no vote. For a vote on college policy or new programs to pass, a majority of those members present must vote in favor. Abstentions are not counted as affirmative or negative votes.

Meetings are open to all NOVA faculty. Visitors who are not College employees may be invited to attend meetings at which items about which they are knowledgeable will be discussed. However, visitors who do not work for NOVA must leave the room while the committee completes debate and votes on those items.

## **5.5 Minutes**

The Associate VP for Academic Services is the executive secretary for the Curriculum Committee and records, distributes and maintains a permanent record of the minutes of committee actions. Final minutes are attached to the Academic Services web site upon approval by the committee.

## **5.6 Meeting Notices**

A tentative schedule of meetings for the academic year is developed by the Associate VP for Academic Services and distributed prior to the first meeting of the year. The approved meeting schedule is posted on the Academic Services web page and published in the Intercom.

Approximately two weeks prior to each meeting reminders are distributed to committee members, academic deans, and persons submitting proposals.

## **5.7 Agenda Items**

Agenda items may be submitted by any member of the NOVA faculty. Items must be forwarded to the Associate VP for Academic Services through the faculty member's academic dean or supervisor and campus provost. Items that affect more than one campus must include evidence that the other affected campuses have been consulted; this evidence is usually in the form of email from other academic deans. Agenda items must be **emailed** to the Associate VP for Academic Services at least 10 days prior to the meeting, including all supporting materials. In most cases, the final agenda item is the result of several drafts edited by the Associate VP. Agenda items lacking complete supporting material generally will be tabled until a future meeting.

## **5.8 Catalog Deadlines**

Typically, the November/December meeting of each academic year is the last meeting at which curricular items not requiring state approval may be submitted for the following year's catalog (example: November 2006 was the last meeting for the 2007-08 *Catalog*). This includes new and revised courses, new specializations and career studies certificates, program discontinuances, and revisions of existing curricula.

The last spring semester meeting of each academic year is generally the last meeting at which curricular items requiring state approval may be submitted for the catalog for two academic years later (for example, April 2005 was the last meeting for state-approved items for the 2006-07 *Catalog*). This includes new degree majors and certificates.

## **5.9 Guidelines for Readers of Program & Discipline Evaluation Reports**

Two members of the Curriculum Committee are appointed to read and review each program or discipline evaluation report. Readers will receive a copy of the complete report. After reviewing the report, readers should compare impressions and recommendations. They should then discuss their impressions and specific concerns with the chair of the cluster being evaluated and the chair of the cluster.

Readers should present a single, joint report to the full Curriculum Committee. They should provide all committee members and representatives of the program with a copy of their comments. Except for the readers, committee members will have only the executive summary and action plan portions of the report. If the readers wish to suggest an addendum to the report, this should be sent to the office of the Associate VP for Academic Services for inclusion with agenda materials.

The chair of the evaluation committee and appropriate academic deans, assistant academic deans, and assistant dean/program heads will be invited to attend the meeting to respond to the questions and comments of the readers. It is important that the reviews be presented in an objective and constructive manner.



Readers should refer to the *Program and Discipline Review Guidelines* to see what the review committees are expected to do.

Readers should provide the committees with a **written summary** of the information indicated below. Information in the body of the report that supports any recommendations should also be provided in the readers' report (remember, members won't have the full report). **Written comments of the readers should be forwarded to the chair of the evaluation committee and the coordinating academic dean prior to the review at the meeting.**

### **Points to be Addressed in a Reader's Report**

#### **1. Overview and goals and objectives**

Determine if the report adequately describes the essential functions of the program.

#### **2. Student Outcomes (IMPORTANT)**

List major tools employed to assess student achievement and satisfaction and describe important positive and negative findings. Identify any significant outcomes that have not been fully investigated. Determine if the program meets SCHEV productivity guidelines.

#### **3. Curriculum (IMPORTANT)**

Identify major strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum.

#### **4. Resources**

Summarize the adequacy of resources and support services and any positive or negative effects the report describes on the program or discipline.

#### **5. Faculty**

Summarize faculty strengths and areas in which they need professional development.

#### **6. Action Plan (EXTREMELY IMPORTANT)**

Comment on each recommendation or suggestion in the action plan.

Are recommendations essential to the program or discipline?

Do rationales support the actions?

Are responsible parties and due dates appropriate?

If appropriate, describe other recommendations and suggestions the readers would advise *adding* to the action plan.

### **5.10 Guidelines for Readers of Evaluation Action Plan Implementation Reports**

Programs and disciplines must submit an implementation report in the spring semester of the two years following the action plan approval. One Curriculum Committee member serves as reader, reviewing each implementation report and providing a written critical summary to the committee. This review of implementation reports is very important to assure that the loop is closed and that change resulting from evaluation is documented as required by SACSCOC and SCHEV.

A response to each recommendation is **required**. Responses to suggestions are strongly encouraged, but not required. Readers should review the approved action plan to make sure that all recommendations have been addressed. In some cases, the respondent may be able to make a case that conditions have changed and no longer warrant the recommendation, or that the recommended action needed to be modified. If the reader wishes to refer to the initial evaluation report to understand more fully what conditions warranted each recommendation, she/he should request the report from the Associate VP for Academic Services.

The written **summary of the reader's comments** is for the committee and should include:

- the major actions taken,
- any recommendations that have not been addressed,
- any significant changes that are reflected in the implementation report, and
- any recommendations for continued action or follow-up to assure full implementation.

The information in the reader's summary and the implementation report become part of the college permanent files for future reporting to VCCS, SCHEV, and SACSCOC.

### 5.11 Parliamentary Procedure Guide List

TO DO THIS	SAY THIS:	May You Interrupt a Speaker?	Must it be Seconded?	Debate?	Able to Amend?	Vote Required?
Object to procedure or personal affront	"Point of order"	Yes	No	No (1)	No	(2)
Ask for a vote by actual count to verify voice vote	"Academic of the House"	Yes	No	No	No	None
Object to consideration of some undiplomatic or improper matter	"I object to the consideration of this question"	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
To take up a matter that was previously tabled	"I move we take this from the table"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider something disposed of	"I move we reconsider our action"	Yes (3)	Yes	Yes (4)	No	Majority
Reconsider something out of scheduled order	"I move we suspend the rules"	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Vote on a ruling by the chairman	"I appeal the chairman's decision"	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Adjourn meeting	"I move that we adjourn"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Complaint or when motion is not in order	"Point of privilege"	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Suspend further consideration of something	"I move we table it"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
End debate	"I move the previous question"	No	No	No	No	2/3
Postpone consideration	"I move we postpone this matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority (5)
Having something studied further	"I move we refer this matter to a committee"	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move this be amended by..."	No	Yes	Yes (6)	Yes	Majority
Introduce business	"I move to..." or "I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

(1) Unless chairman submits question to assembly.

(2) Decision of the chairman, unless chairman submits question to assembly.

(3) When the other person has not begun to speak.

(4) If the original motion as debatable

(5) Unless a special order

(6) If motion to be amended is debatable.

Please Note: The motions or points listed above are in an established order of preference. When any one of them is pending, you may not introduce another that is listed above it.

## PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE...AT A GLANCE

Here are some motions you might make, how to make them and what to expect of the rules.

TO DO THIS:	YOU SAY THIS:	May you interrupt the speaker?	Do you need a second?	Is it debatable?	Can it be amended?	What vote is needed?	Can it be reconsidered?
Adjourn Meeting	"I move that we adjourn"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
Call an Intermission	"I move that we recess for..."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
Complain About Heat, Noise, etc.	"I rise to a question of privilege"	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote	No (usually)
Suspend Further Consideration of an Issue	"I move to table the motion"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
End Debate and Amendments	"I move the previous question"	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No (1)
Postpone Discussion for a Certain Time	"I move to postpone the discussion until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Give Closer Study of Something	"I move to refer the matter to committee"	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes (2)
Amend a Motion	"I move to amend the motion by..."	No	Yes	Yes (3)	Yes	Majority	Yes
Introduce Business	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes

**THE MOTIONS LISTED ABOVE ARE IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE...  
BELOW THERE IS NO ORDER...**

Protest Breach of Rules or Conduct	"I rise to a point of order"	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote (4)	No
Vote on a Ruling of the Chairman	"I appeal the chairman's decision"	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority (5)	Yes
Suspend Rules Temporarily	"I move to suspend the rules so that..."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
Avoid Considering an Improper Matter	"I object to consideration of this motion"	Yes	No	No	No	2/3 (6)	-- (7)
Verify a Voice Vote by Having Members Stand	"I call for a academic" or "Academic!"	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote	No
Request Information	"Point of information"	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote	No
Take up a Matter Previously Tabled	"I move to take from the table..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
Reconsider a Hasty Action	"I move to reconsider the vote on..."	Yes	Yes	-- (8)	No	Majority	No

- NOTES**
- (1) Unless vote on question is not yet taken.
- (2) Unless the committee has already taken up the subject.
- (3) Only if the motion to be amended is debatable.
- (4) Except in doubtful cases.
- (5) A majority vote in negative needed to reverse ruling of chairman.
- (6) A 2/3 vote in negative needed to prevent consideration of main motion.
- (7) Only if the main question or motion was not, in fact, considered.
- (8) Only if motion to be reconsidered is debatable.

## **6.0 Credit for Prior Learning Policies and Procedures**

### **6.1 Credit for Prior Learning Committee Membership/Function**

Formerly known as the Advanced Standing Committee, the Credit for Prior Learning Committee is a subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee. It reviews all requests for credit for prior learning and develops recommendations for acceptance and course credit equivalencies, in conjunction with the faculty and in accordance with college policy. The Credit for Prior Learning Committee also hears requests for new or revised policies and procedures for credit for prior learning credit. Items approved by the Curriculum Committee are forwarded to the Administrative Council for final approval. The Credit for Prior Learning Committee also monitors the implementation of the policies and procedures to assure consistent application throughout the college.

The Executive VP of Academic & Student Services appoints the committee. Appointments are for staggered two-year terms. The committee consists of the following members (to change soon):

- Associate VP for Academic Services
- Associate VP for Student Services and Enrollment Management
- Director of Central Records Office
- College Transcript Evaluator (from Central Records Office)
- Registrar of each campus
- 3 Counselors
- 6 Instructional Faculty (1 from each campus)
- 1 Academic Dean
- 1 Dean of Students

The chair of the committee is elected at the first meeting and is responsible for calling all subsequent meetings, assembling the agendas, and conducting meetings. The Associate VP for Academic Services assists the chair as needed. The Office of Academic Services posts the minutes to its web site.

### **6.2 Procedure for Submitting Requests to Credit for Prior Learning Committee**

Requests to the Credit for Prior Learning Committee come from a variety of sources. Faculty, students, administrators, and other schools and training facilities can request that the subcommittee consider a proposal for granting credit to a student or students. Requests to this subcommittee are made in writing and submitted electronically to the chair of the subcommittee, who then places the proposal on the agenda for discussion and consideration at a subsequent committee meeting. The individual, institution, or agency should submit supporting documentation so that committee members can make as informed a recommendation as possible.

When deemed necessary by the subcommittee, a request may be referred to the appropriate faculty discipline cluster for review and recommendation before it is further considered by the subcommittee.

Once the subcommittee has reviewed and discussed the request, including any input from an involved discipline, a proposal is made and voted upon. If the subcommittee recommends the proposal, then the chair of the Credit for Prior Learning Subcommittee writes a proposal to the Associate VP for Academic Services, requesting that the proposal be placed on the agenda for a subsequent Curriculum Committee meeting. Proposals for college policy from the Credit for Prior Learning subcommittee are referred by the Curriculum Committee to the Administrative Council for final disposition. If approved, the proposal then becomes a change, addition, or exception to college policy.

### **6.3 Procedures by Which Committee Decisions Are Made**

College policy for the evaluation of transfer credit is outlined in the publication *College Credit Through*

*Credit for Prior Learning.* The committee's interpretation of that policy forms the basis for making recommendations. The committee follows guidelines for credit for prior learning recommended by the American Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO). The committee also relies on recommendations made by the American Council on Education (ACE) regarding credits earned in non-traditional educational/training programs (military, industry, state and federal government). Students may be granted credit for courses or programs offered by employers, professional organizations and other agencies only if those courses or programs have been evaluated by NOVA faculty or by the American Council on Education (ACE) College Credit Recommendation Service (which can be found at <http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=CCRS>). Final determination for acceptance of specific course credit rests with the specific academic discipline faculty. Once approved, discipline faculty may determine how a course is to be used in a student's curriculum, but they may not refuse to accept the credit. At times, more detailed information about a course or training experience, or close review of an examination for which credit is granted is in order before endorsement is given.

#### **6.4 Appeals Procedures**

When a student seeks to meet a specific program requirement by using credit from a course that has been successfully completed at another college or university, and that course has been evaluated as one which is not equivalent to one in the *College Catalog*, the student's advisor should initiate the online Course Substitution form (NOVA form 125-32). When the faculty advisor submits the form, it is sent simultaneously to the academic dean for the student's program and the academic dean for the course for which a substitution is requested.

Should approval for the substitution be denied, the student has the right to appeal his or her petition to the next higher authority, i.e., from faculty advisor to academic dean to provost. As with any request of this nature, presentation of supporting documentation - a course description, syllabus, or course outline - is helpful in making a fair and reasonable decision.

#### **6.5 Student Eligibility**

The general policies listed below apply to students seeking credit for prior learning:

1. To be eligible to apply for credit for prior learning, a student must be placed in a program and must have completed at least one credit course at NOVA.
2. Total credits possible through all forms of credit for prior learning must conform to the residency requirements for the particular curriculum, as stated in the current *NOVA Catalog*. A minimum of 25% of the total number of credits for any degree or certificate must be earned at NOVA.
3. An unlimited number of credit hours may be accepted from CLEP, AP, IB, ABLE and other nationally standardized exams. However, the residency requirements listed above still apply.
4. The student's curriculum academic dean or designee is responsible for final determination of the use of credits in the student's curriculum.
5. All accepted credit for prior learning credits will be acknowledged and recorded on the student's permanent record, with the transferring agency identified. No unsuccessfully attempted credit for prior learning applications or examinations results will be recorded on the student's permanent record.
6. No grades, scores or grade points will be recorded on the student's permanent record for credits earned through credit for prior learning procedures.

## 6.6 Assessment by Local Exam (ABLE) Procedures

### 6.6.1 Development of ABLE Exams

ABLE exams are used to allow students to show their mastery of the course objectives of a particular course. These exams are only used when no CLEP exam is available.

1. Development of a new ABLE may be requested by faculty in the field, counselors, registrars, or others who believe there is sufficient interest in testing out of a course to warrant ABLE development.
2. If faculty are willing to develop an ABLE, they must obtain the approval of the academic dean with responsibility for the discipline. The academic dean will inform the other academic deans with the discipline and the Associate VP for Academic Services. Faculty should be encouraged to seek funding for reassigned time to allow them to develop the ABLE in a timely manner.
3. Exam items must be based on course objectives. If some of the course objectives are performance objectives (e.g., remove a wheel from a car), then part of the exam must test performance. Comprehensive final exams may be used as a starting point for ABLE exam construction.
4. The Associate VP for Academic Services will provide technical advice on the construction and validation of the exam.
5. Prior to submission of the exam, the exam-writing faculty must:
  - a. Review relevance of **each** test item to course objectives. Each test item must correlate with a course objective, and a sufficient number of items must be prepared to evaluate the objectives.
  - b. Demonstrate that the content of the exam is appropriate to the course for which credit is to be granted by one or more of the following mechanisms:
    - 1) Review by college discipline faculty (if multi-campus)
    - 2) Review by curriculum advisory committee
    - 3) Review by related faculty at another college
  - c. Demonstrate that the level of difficulty/minimum passing score is appropriate by one of the following:
    - 1) Use of the ABLE exam as a comprehensive final exam in the course, checking to see that exam results correlate with expectations (do students who have done well throughout the course perform well on the exam?).
    - 2) Administration of the ABLE exam to students completing a similar course at another college.
    - 3) Administration of the ABLE exam to students entering a course which has a prerequisite of the course for which the ABLE exam was written.
    - 4) Other appropriate mechanisms.
6. The exam-writing faculty will submit the test materials to the Credit for Prior Learning Committee together with a completed cover sheet checklist.
7. If approved by the Credit for Prior Learning Committee, the examination will be

recommended to the Curriculum Committee for approval. If approved, the examination will be forwarded to the Administrative Council for final approval.

8. Upon Administrative Council approval, the exam will be listed in the *College Credit Through Credit for Prior Learning* manual. A copy of the approved exam will be maintained in the Office of Academic Services.
9. ABLE exams will be administered by the sponsoring academics, using procedures outlined in the *College Credit Through Credit for Prior Learning* manual.

#### **6.6.2 Review of ABLE Exams**

ABLE exams must be reviewed at least once every five years to determine relevance to course objectives. Exams that are not reviewed within five years will be deleted from the approved list after the Associate VP notifies the coordinating academic dean that the exam must be reviewed or discontinued.

#### **6.6.3 Revision of ABLE Exams**

1. Faculty who believe that an existing ABLE exam requires significant revision should make the request to the coordinating academic dean for that discipline.
2. The coordinating academic dean will determine if the other discipline faculty agree to the need for change.
3. In the case of a complete revision, those who are revising the exam should follow steps 4 and 5 of section 6.1.1 **Development of ABLE Exams**. Minor revisions may be accomplished upon the agreement of the discipline faculty without repeating the procedures in Step 4.

#### **6.6.4 Suggestions on Exam Writing**

1. All directions for completing the exam should be explicit and succinct.
2. Include only those test items that are clearly tied to course objectives.
3. The number of test items on any topic should reflect the relative importance of the corresponding objective.
4. For a test of objective format items, a minimum of 100 questions is recommended.
5. Statements and questions should be posed in a positive manner. Negative statements should be carefully worded, if used, and negative words underlined.
6. Use of quantifying words should be avoided or at least used with extreme care (e.g., "always," "all," "never," "nothing," and "none").
7. Trivial or isolated fact items should be avoided. Test items should measure competence in an area, not knowledge of a specific textbook.
8. Items may be placed in the context of a situation (described, pictured, or presented in some appropriate format) about which questions are asked. Such items lend themselves well to application of knowledge and problem-solving techniques.



### **6.6.5 Coversheet-Checklist and Endorsements for ABLE Exams**

A coversheet with checklist and endorsements must be completed and submitted to the Credit for Prior Learning Committee at the time of submission of test materials (see next page).

### **6.6.6 Administration of ABLE Exams**

Students wishing to be awarded college-equivalent credit through an established ABLE exam must submit a written request to the academic offering the ABLE exam. The academic may establish prerequisites that must be met prior to allowing an attempt at an ABLE exam. If the academic dean or her/his designee approves the request to take the exam, the academic is responsible for administering and scoring the exam.

A student may normally only attempt an ABLE exam for a particular course **one time**.

There is no charge to a student for the request for or the administration and scoring of an ABLE exam or for recording course equivalent credit in the student's permanent record if a satisfactory score is earned.

### **6.6.7 Recording ABLE Exam Credit on the Student Record**

The academic administering the ABLE exam completes a **NOVA 125-33** form for each student who satisfactorily completes an ABLE exam. The form is forwarded to the campus registrar.

The registrar enters the credit as credit for prior learning credit earned through ABLE for the appropriate course. After the student is program placed, this credit is reflected on the student's transcript and will count toward graduation requirements. The credit is not reflected on the transcript as course credit earned at NOVA; it is listed with a grade of "P." Credit earned through ABLE also **does not** count toward the residency requirement.

Unsuccessful attempts at an ABLE exam are not recorded in the student's permanent records.

### 6.6.8 Able Exam Proposal Coversheet

Course Prefix and Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Course Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_

The following items have been included (please check that each is included):

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. List of course objectives written in student performance terms and specific enough to allow analysis of each test item's relation to the objectives.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Test items keyed to objectives - each test item must have a reference to a supportive objective.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Correct response key.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Level of acceptable performance. Minimum acceptable score = \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Content determined to be appropriate by (list mechanism(s) used):
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Level of difficulty determined to be appropriate by (list mechanism(s) used):
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Cross-campus coordination: The academic dean at each campus approved to teach the course must review and sign a copy of the endorsement below.

#### ENDORSEMENTS

\_\_\_ recommend approval    \_\_\_ do not recommend approval

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Academic dean

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## 7.0 Transfer Policy Guidelines

Many senior institutions ask NOVA to enter into guaranteed admission or articulation agreements with them. Many now depend on transfer students to complete their fall freshman class or re-build their enrollment in the spring term as they lose students returning to their home or transferring to another institution. Some rely on the agreements as a way to recruit a diverse group of well-prepared students or a specific subset such as online, military or veteran, or international students. Some agreements attract students from particular NOVA program majors. Occasionally institutions pursuing regional accreditation request the initiation of an agreement with NOVA in order to take advantage of NOVA's good reputation. Guaranteed admission and articulation agreements imply that NOVA recommends the other institution to our students. Students, parents, and advisors use them as advising and career planning tools. NOVA agrees to develop high quality guaranteed admission and articulation agreements only with other *regionally* accredited institutions of higher education that provide pathways for the continued education of its students.

Guaranteed admission and articulation agreements are negotiated over a period of months, requiring much attention to detail, and requiring periodic revisions over the years. With over 100 current agreements, NOVA must carefully prioritize all new agreements on which to focus. Agreements with public senior institutions in Virginia are the highest priority, followed by any other institutions to which a large number of NOVA students transfer. Program-specific agreements for graduates of AAS programs are also a high priority.

NOVA does not enter into agreements with Colleges and universities that lack regional accreditation. Such institutions also are not allowed to participate in NOVA transfer events or market their programs on NOVA campuses. However, members of the Virginia Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (VACRAO) that are on the VACRAO tour may attend a NOVA transfer fair that is part of the tour.

### 7.1 Committee Roles

Two groups play major roles in the development and implementation of transfer policy.

#### 7.1.1 Transfer Policy Committee

The Transfer Policy Committee reviews and recommends policies and procedures on guaranteed admission and articulation agreements. Recommendations for changes to articulation policies are sent through the Curriculum Committee to the Administrative Council for approval and implementation. The committee oversees and resolves course and program transfer equivalency problems and challenges between our institution and senior institutions. The committee does not usually participate in the development of guaranteed admission or articulation agreements as described in Section 7.2 below. The membership of the committee is:

- Associate VP for Academic Services

- Coordinator for Transfer Policy

- Chair, Transfer Counselors Working Group

- Director of College-wide Financial Aid

- Academic Dean (appointed for a 2-year term)

- Two Teaching Faculty members in disciplines that tend to have transfer challenges; others should be invited to specific meetings as needed to participate in discussions about transfer of their disciplines (appointed for a 2-year term)

### 7.1.2 Transfer Counselors Working Group

All NOVA transfer counselors and staff in related positions at campuses that have no transfer counselor meet regularly to discuss details of the implementation of guaranteed admission and articulation agreements. Concerns and suggestions for improvements to specific agreements or to policy in general are referred to the Coordinator for Transfer Policy. Annual reports of activities are submitted to the Deans of Students Council.

## 7.2 Guidelines for Developing Guaranteed Admission and Articulation Agreements

To facilitate the development of these agreements, the following guidelines were approved by the 1997-98 Curriculum Committee.

The following procedures must be followed.

- The initiating party informs the Coordinator for Transfer Policy of interest in developing or updating an agreement early in the process to solicit help and avoid duplicative efforts.
- The Coordinator will assure that all participants understand the process.
- The Coordinator and the Associate VP will review draft agreements.
- Program-specific agreements also must be reviewed by the faculty cluster and by academic deans and provosts with the program.
- After their comments, if any, are incorporated, the associate VP forwards the draft agreement to the Executive VP of Academic and Student Services for review and comment.
- When any suggestions made by the Executive VP have been addressed, the s/he signs the agreement.
- One original, signed agreement is retained by the receiving institution and one is retained by NOVA. These are stored in the Office of Academic Services and PDFs of them are posted to the Transfer website.
- The Coordinator and Associate VP inform the college at large of new college-wide articulation agreements.

## 7.3 Format

The Coordinator for Transfer Policy maintains a template articulation agreement. It may be modified, but agreements must include the following elements:

- The senior institution's official name and NOVA's official name
- Specific use of the term "guaranteed admission" if that is the document's intent; otherwise the document should be called an "articulation" agreement
- Whether the agreement is for the entire four-year institution or is with one of its colleges or departments and which NOVA programs are covered
  - Most agreements are for graduates of any NOVA AA or AS degree (except in some cases General Studies).
  - Some agreements are for graduates of specific programs such as Engineering.
  - Agreements may include AAA and AAS graduates or even be for them specifically
  - It is crucial to be sure the senior institution understands the difference in general education requirements of AA/AS and AAA/AAS degree programs.
- Agreements with universities may include special requirements for admission to individual schools or colleges within the university (for example, an agreement covering most AA/AS graduates transferring to VCU may specify that students applying for art programs must additionally submit portfolios).

- Criteria for eligibility:
  - GPA (specify whether cumulative or curriculum GPA and state how repeated courses will be treated)
  - Any age requirement
  - Whether students who completed the degree via dual enrollment are eligible
  - Whether General Studies graduates are eligible
  - Any immigration status restrictions
  - Any other restrictions such as for students convicted of felonies
  - How recently they must have graduated from NOVA
  - Whether students who attended other colleges/universities before NOVA, including the partner institution, are eligible
- Whether AA and AS graduates will receive junior status and whether their general education requirements will be considered as met
- What grade is needed for courses to transfer
- Any limit to the number of credits that may be transferred and applied to the baccalaureate
- Whether individual courses taken as dual enrollment course are accepted
- Explanation of whether and how credit for prior learning accepted by NOVA will transfer
- Whether the agreement is honored for students in the pipeline if degree requirements at the senior institution change or if a degree is discontinued.
- Signature of senior administrator from four-year institution, with his/her name and correct title printed below
- Signature of NOVA President or Executive VP with his/her name and title printed below
- Date on which the agreement becomes effective
- Review, revision and termination provisions

Avoid:

- Statements that we agree to be bound by the laws of another state
- Provisions for students who do not graduate from NOVA

The following elements are beneficial but are not required:

- Whether students may enroll at both institutions simultaneously, and if so, how this affects financial aid arrangements
- Special financial aid or scholarships for NOVA graduates
- Waiver of admission application fee
- Whether students may take NOVA courses after being admitted to the senior institution
- How recently applicants must have graduated from NOVA
- Acceptance of common courses that NOVA offers at the 200 level but which the other institution offers at the 300 level
- Advising sheets showing transfer equivalency of specific programs
- Agreement that the four-year institution will forward to NOVA transfer data for any year in which ten or more NOVA students transfer to that institution
- Permission for each institution to use the other's name in publications such as the catalog
- Permission for each institution to send out a press release announcing the agreement

#### **7.4 Reasons for desirable elements included in the agreements:**

**Accredited institutions:** NOVA will only negotiate articulation agreements with regionally accredited colleges and universities. An articulation agreement allows the receiving

institution to use NOVA's name in its literature and may represent an endorsement of the receiving institution in the eyes of NOVA students. Also, many students reverse transfer back to NOVA.

**Degree accepted by 4-year institution as a unit:** It is desirable for students to have the associate degree accepted as a whole. This encourages students to complete the degree prior to transfer. Students with an AA or AS degree should be able to enter with junior status at the receiving institution.

**General education met:** In conjunction with accepting the associate degree as a unit, it is desirable for the receiving institution to recognize that all lower division general education requirements have been met regardless of the general education required of native students. This is the case for most public Virginia institutions. Exceptions such as foreign language or math competency are listed in some agreements.

**Acceptance of common courses that may be offered at 300 level:** Where NOVA teaches a course at the 200 level that has an equivalent 300 level course at the receiving institution, it is desirable for students to receive credit for the 300 level course. This generally requires faculty from NOVA and the receiving institution to exchange information about their courses to assure that they are essentially the same. When a 200 level NOVA course is substituted for a 300 level course at the receiving institution, the student typically cannot use the NOVA course to meet the minimum upper division or residency credits required at the receiving institution.

**Admissions priority:** To market articulation to potential NOVA students, many receiving institutions give students who have completed an associate degree some priority in admissions or early registration opportunities. Many universities go so far as to guarantee admission for graduates with good GPAs.

**Program to program match:** Another effective strategy in attracting potential students is to create a specific articulation pathway from comparable programs at NOVA to the receiving institution. Where there are electives or options in the NOVA program, a transfer sheet directing students to courses that meet the requirements of the receiving institution may be helpful. For instance, if a program typically specifies MTH 151 Math for the Liberal Arts at NOVA, but the receiving institution requires a statistics course, the NOVA student can be directed to substitute the statistics course for MTH 151 if program faculty agree that this is an acceptable substitution. Transfer sheets for specific programs may be addenda or attachments to the main agreement.

**Financial aid:** Special financial aid opportunities are very helpful in attracting talented associate degree graduates to four-year degree programs. All of NOVA's students are commuter students. If the receiving institution is out of the geographic area, financial aid may provide the incentive for students to consider the additional cost of moving to the receiving institution.

**Unique Opportunities:** Other unique opportunities that students might enjoy while they are still students of NOVA may be listed in the articulation agreement. These also help the student decide early which receiving institution the student wishes to plan for. Some examples used in other agreements include allowing the student to participate in on-campus student activities, purchase sporting event tickets at student rates, or attend orientation activities prior to completion of the NOVA degree.

## **8.0 Curriculum Advisory Committee Procedures**

### **8.1 Purpose**

Curriculum advisory committees for career/technical programs at NOVA are an important link between NOVA and the community. Although these committees are only advisory, they perform an invaluable service to NOVA and can have considerable impact on future directions taken by the college.

Curriculum advisory committees assist the college in the planning of the curricula, help ensure that courses and programs continue to provide instruction in the skills suited for the job market in northern Virginia, and may assist the college in raising funds to support specific programs.

### **8.2 Committee Responsibilities**

Curriculum Advisory Committees:

- Serve as a communication channel between NOVA and business and professional groups.
- Provide a means for the college to inform the community of its curricula and specific courses and to improve public awareness of the high quality of these offerings.
- Advise in the evaluation of curricula and recommend such changes as are necessary to maintain vital and relevant education.
- Advise in the designing of courses and curricula by defining specific skills and essential knowledge related to a particular content area.
- Assist in identifying opportunities for faculty in-service training.
- Assess changes in labor market needs that may affect employment potential in current and proposed programs.
- Assist in acquiring internships, clinical experiences, and cooperative education opportunities.
- Assist in placing graduates in appropriate jobs.
- Recommend personnel from business and industry as potential instructors.
- Identify sources of financial support for programs and their students.
- Identify prospective committee members.
- Assist in other matters when requested by the college.

### **8.3 Appointment Process**

Members of curriculum advisory committees may be identified by college personnel, NVCC Board members, and/or present curriculum advisory committee members. Notification of prospective members is sent to the academic division having primary responsibility for the curriculum.

The executive secretary of the advisory committee, in cooperation with the chair of the committee, contacts the prospective member to inquire of the person's willingness to serve and completes an electronic 200-29 Curriculum Advisory Committee Nomination Form available on the college website ([www.nvcc.edu/forms](http://www.nvcc.edu/forms)); it can also be emailed by Academic Services staff as a Word document. The executive secretary forwards the completed form and the nominee's resume electronically to the Associate VP for Academic Services, who submits it to the Academic Curriculum and Workforce Development Committee of the Board and to the president for approval. All members are officially appointed by the president and are listed in the College *Catalog*.

### **8.4 Membership**

The membership consists of professionals broadly representative of organizations in the community and industry, with diverse experience and expertise within the related field. Membership may also include students, (secondary or post-secondary) representatives from the general public, and representatives from other educational institutions.

Members should be interested in and committed to excellence in education. When possible, the nine supporting jurisdictions in the northern Virginia region should be represented within the committee membership. In addition, the committee composition should be reflective of the diversity of the NOVA student body; this is monitored by the Associate VP for Academic Services. The committee should consist of five to 15 members (not including ex-officio members). The academic dean and assistant academic dean/program heads from the given curricular areas serve as ex-officio non-voting members of the committee. Other ex-officio members may be designated by the committee chair with concurrence of the committee.

Full-time faculty are encouraged to attend meetings but may not serve as committee members. Adjunct faculty may serve as members of the advisory committee, but should be on the committee primarily to represent constituencies external to the College. No more than half of the committee members should be adjunct faculty.

### **8.5 Term of Appointment and Resignations**

All advisory committee members serve a three-year term that commences with their appointment by the president. A member may be asked to serve more than one term. However, not more than two terms shall be successive unless the individual's position in the career area makes it essential. If a committee member cannot complete a term, the member should so state in writing, addressed to the president of the college. A copy of the letter should be sent to the executive secretary of the advisory committee.

The executive secretary will remind each committee member when a term is about to expire, and forward to the Associate VP for Academic Services names of members whose terms have expired and who will not be serving a second term. Former committee members will receive letters of appreciation from the president.

### **8.6 Meetings of the Advisory Committees**

Curriculum advisory committees must meet at least twice a year.

### **8.7 Advisory Committee Officers**

The committee officers consist of a chair, vice-chair, and executive secretary. The chair and vice-chair are elected from the committee membership and serve a term of one year. The coordinating academic dean for the discipline appoints a faculty member from the discipline to serve as executive secretary.

### **8.8 Duties of the Officers**

The chair shall:

- Preside at all meetings of the committee.
- Plan, with the executive secretary, the agenda of each meeting.
- Call the meetings of the committee.

The vice-chair shall:

- Preside in the absence of the chair.
- Fulfill any other duties designated by the chair.

The executive secretary shall:

- Assist the chair in establishing the schedule of committee meetings for the academic year, to include meeting date(s), place and time, to be forwarded to the Associate VP for Academic Services.
- Assist the chair in establishing the agenda and details for the committee meetings.
- Prepare all materials for distribution to committee members prior to meetings.



- Prepare and mail all announcements, minutes and other information to all committee members, the Associate VP for Academic Services, appropriate academic deans, and others who need to be informed of the committee functions.
- Inform the respective committees of action taken on recommendations.
- Keep an updated list of committee members that includes current home and business addresses and phone numbers.
- Forward any changes in this list to the Associate VP for Academic Services.
- Assist prospective committee members with submission of the NOVA 200-29 form and a resume.

### **8.9 College Services to Advisory Committees**

- Curriculum Advisory Committee members will routinely receive major college publications.
- Curriculum Advisory Committee members will be given a special parking permit to park in any "A" lot on the day of committee meetings. Further, members may receive library loan privileges.
- Coordinating academic deans may request the use of Provost contingency funds for light refreshments at meetings. Academic budgets may be used for duplicating expenses for meetings and communications.

### **9.0 Secondary School/Community College Articulation**

Due to a change in VCCS policy, NOVA has not had “articulation agreements” with schools for many years. Articulation agreements existed to enable students to move from high school to community college in related /technical programs without duplicating previous course work. Dual enrollment has replaced the use of articulation agreements. Some guidance for dual enrollment is provided by the VCCS Policy Manual. In addition, the VCCS periodically updates a Guidelines document that is not policy. Contact the Director of Dual Enrollment for more information.

## **Appendix A: Student Learning Outcomes for each of the General Education goal areas**

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

- 1.1 understand and interpret complex materials;
- 1.2 assimilate, organize, develop, and present an idea formally and informally;
- 1.3 use standard English;
- 1.4 use appropriate verbal and non-verbal responses in interpersonal relations and group discussions;
- 1.5 use listening skills; and
- 1.6 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

- 2.1 discriminate among degrees of credibility, accuracy, and reliability of inferences drawn from given data;
- 2.2 recognize parallels, assumptions, or presuppositions in any given source of information;
- 2.3 evaluate the strengths and relevance of arguments on a particular question or issue;
- 2.4 weigh evidence and decide if generalizations or conclusions based on the given data are warranted;
- 2.5 determine whether certain conclusions or consequences are supported by the information provided; and
- 2.6 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

- 3.1 assess the impact that social institutions have on individuals and culture—past, present, and future;
- 3.2 describe their own as well as others' personal ethical systems and values within social institutions; and
- 3.3 recognize the impact that arts and humanities have upon individuals and cultures.
- 3.4 recognize the role of language in social and cultural contexts.
- 3.5 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

- 4.1 determine the nature and extent of the information needed;
- 4.2 access needed information effectively and efficiently;
- 4.3 evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into his or her knowledge base;
- 4.4 use information effectively, individually or as a member of a group, to accomplish a specific purpose; and
- 4.5 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

- 5.1 develop and/or refine personal wellness goals; and
- 5.2 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

- 6.1 use logical and mathematical reasoning within the context of various disciplines;
- 6.2 interpret and use mathematical formulas;
- 6.3 interpret mathematical models such as graphs, tables and schematics and draw inferences from them;
- 6.4 use graphical, symbolic, and numerical methods to analyze, organize, and interpret data;
- 6.5 estimate and consider answers to mathematical problems in order to determine reasonableness; and
- 6.6 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

- 7.1 generate an empirically evidenced and logical argument;
- 7.2 distinguish a scientific argument from a non-scientific argument;
- 7.3 reason by deduction, induction and analogy;
- 7.4 distinguish between causal and correlational relationships; and
- 7.5 recognize methods of inquiry that lead to scientific knowledge.

**Soft skills (leadership, teamwork, oral communication, critical thinking)** will be required in 2018.