Curriculum Handbook

Approved by the Curriculum Committee April 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

This handbook aims to provide support in the development and modification of courses and programs (degrees and certificates) by outlining procedures and promoting best practices to ensure compliance with Title 5 criteria.

The California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) has delegated the responsibility of course and program approvals to local colleges. Guidelines for approval and development criteria are contained in the Program and Course Approval Handbook (PCAH).

Curriculum Approval Process:

1. Utilizes curriculum experts (Curriculum Chair, Articulation Officer, Curriculum Specialist) who understand Title 5 and other regulatory standards.
2. Tasks curriculum experts with reviewing all courses and programs to ensure regulatory standards are met.
3. Includes the major functions of the Curriculum Committee: technical review and quality assurance of all courses and programs.
4. Designates the Curriculum Committee as the evaluating body who makes final recommendations of all courses and programs to the Board of Trustees.

(Academic Senate Approved 5/9/18)

The Curriculum Chair reviews the handbook content annually and shares revisions with the Academic Senate and the Curriculum Committee. The Sierra College Faculty & Staff webpage provides access to this handbook, forms, and resources.

Committee meeting dates, agendas and recollections, and current membership can be found on the Sierra College board management software.

Curriculum Committee Parameters for Academic Senate

The mission of Sierra College is to ensure that all our students have access to an equitable, high-quality education where they are welcomed, supported, and empowered to achieve their goals. Institutional outcomes for communication, technology and information competency, critical and creative thinking, and citizenship represent the values of the college and comprise the diverse student experience through access to courses, programs, and student services. The Curriculum Committee works to uphold the mission and values of the College by assuring academic integrity of all curricular matters.

Purpose

1. Provides guidance, advocacy, and oversight for Sierra College's curriculum by ensuring depth, breadth, rigor, and relevance of courses and programs in response to the evolving and diverse needs of our students and the community we serve.
2. Maintains a commitment to the Sierra Community College District mission and institutional outcomes.
3. Submits proposals regarding academic and professional matters to the Sierra College Academic Senate.

Responsibilities

The Curriculum Committee's primary role is to ensure academic excellence by confirming that the curriculum is thoroughly vetted by way of its regular and comprehensive review and approval process.

The Committee applies its evaluative criteria to each new course or program as well as to substantial changes in existing programs: appropriateness to mission, need, quality, feasibility, and compliance with Title 5, state and local regulations and guidelines.

Evaluative criteria are addressed for the following:

- New, reactivated, or revised credit and noncredit courses
- New or revised programs (local, transfer, or CTE degrees and certificates)
- Course assignment to appropriate discipline and program of study
- Stand-alone courses
- Independent Study courses
- Course requisites
- Course method of instruction and delivery (distance education)
- Course additions or removals from local and Cal-GETC General Education lists
- CSU and UC Transfer lists and course-to-course articulation
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Course and program student learning outcomes
- Active participatory courses (Families)
- Related petitions, policies, or procedures

Membership

The Sierra College Curriculum Committee was established by mutual agreement between the college administration and the Academic Senate. The Committee's membership is designed to represent a diverse range of disciplines.

Voting Members

17 Faculty

Two representatives from each Instructional Division and Student Services.
Five At-Large positions representing campus perspectives (Career and Technical Education, Student Learning Outcomes, etc.).
Faculty representatives appointed by the Academic Senate will serve 2-year, renewable terms. Positions may be shared.

3 Management

Area Educational Administrators who represent academic and career technical education areas appointed by the Management Senate.

1 Articulation Officer

Representative whose job relates to curriculum, articulation, and general education appointed by the Classified Senate.

2 Classified

Representatives whose jobs relate to curriculum matters appointed by the Classified Senate.

1 Student

Representative appointed by the Associated Students of Sierra College (ASSC). Position may be shared.

Non-Voting Members

2 Ex Officio Members

Vice President of Instruction and Distance Learning Faculty Coordinator

1 Curriculum Specialist

Support staff who prepares agendas, recollections, materials and other correspondence. Position provided by the Office of Instruction.

Leadership

Curriculum Committee Chair

A faculty member, elected in October by the committee for a two-year renewable term beginning the following fall. Preference for Chair position will be given to current committee members; a non-member faculty voted into the position must join the Committee on election.
Position includes 40% reassigned time.

Responsibilities include:
1. Assisting departments in scheduling and organizing Curriculum Review Tasks;
2. Training faculty, committee members, and chair elect on curriculum standards and educational requirements;
3. Guiding the technical review chair in assisting faculty on curriculum review and development tasks;
4. Setting the Curriculum agenda and leading committee meetings;
5. Serving on committees as a representative of Curriculum;
6. Assisting with technical review of courses and programs;
7. Addressing and implementing policy changes at the state level;
8. Attending Statewide Academic Senate meetings and institutes; and
9. Steering and completing projects determined by either the chair or committee.

Technical Review Chair (as applicable)

A faculty member, elected by the committee for a two-year, renewable term.
Position includes 20% reassigned time.

Responsibilities include:
1. Reviewing and editing of curriculum proposals;
2. Working with proposal authors as necessary;
3. Working with the Chair to determine review responsibilities and develop agendas; and
4. Acting as meeting chair in the absence of the Committee chair.

Curriculum Development Roles and Responsibilities

Faculty

The faculty author is responsible for guiding the proposal through the curriculum process. Prior to proposal submission, faculty are expected to conduct research, collect related reports and data, complete all necessary forms, and draft the proposal while taking into consideration insights and suggestions of colleagues and the Curriculum Committee.

The following individuals should be resourced before proceeding with a new proposal or revision:

- Department Chair – ensure the department supports the proposal and meets the goals identified during Program Review.
- Dean/Associate Dean – determine feasibility (e.g. establish the maximum course capacity) of the course or program within the division structure.
- Interest Area Counselor – guidance on how the course or program will impact students as it relates to major requirements, transfer, employment, etc.
- Curriculum Committee Chair – direction on how to effectively compose high-quality proposals and for information on the curriculum approval process and timeline.
- Articulation Officer – general education, articulation, Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) considerations, etc.
- Subject Matter Experts – Advisory/Industry Partners, Associated Departments/Divisions, Career and Technical Education, Distance Learning, Equity Faculty Coordinator, Educational Effectiveness Committee, etc.

Division/Associate Dean

Consults with the department chair (or designee) to confirm that the department supports the proposal:

- Reviews all proposals, consulting with the proposal author and/or Curriculum Chair as needed.
- For new proposals, identifies possible challenges, determines feasibility and ensures that the proper planning has occurred.
- Supports the Curriculum Review and Late Curriculum processes.
- The Dean submits the proposal to the Curriculum Chair or returns it to faculty with suggestions for modifications.

Technical Review

Includes review of all proposals by the Curriculum Chair, Articulation Officer and Curriculum Specialist:

- Reviews each proposal to ensure it meets local, Chancellor's Office Program and Course Approval, transfer/articulation, and general education standards as necessary.
- Prepares the proposal to be reviewed by the Curriculum Committee, which may include proposal modifications and/or additional information by authoring faculty.
- Determines the proposal revisions as substantive or non-substantive and designates it as a Review Item or Consent Agenda Item.

Curriculum Committee

Determines the final recommendation for each proposal on the agenda after application of evaluative criteria and educational standards:

- Examines each new and revised course and program proposal to ensure appropriateness to mission, need, quality, feasibility, and compliance with Title 5, state and local regulations and guidelines.
- Verifies all courses and programs promote the development of broad knowledge, skills, and competencies related to student career and transfer goals.
- Suggests proposal modifications for technical accuracy, academic innovation, and student achievement and success.

Curriculum Review

Title 5 and ACCJC mandate periodic curriculum review. Sierra College establishes that each department will examine its course offerings and program (degree and certificate) patterns every six years.
The institution conducts systematic review and assessment to ensure the quality of its academic, learning support, and student services programs and implements improvements and innovations in support of equitable student learning and achievement.

It is the responsibility of full-time faculty to complete a comprehensive Curriculum Review of all department courses and programs within a six-year cycle. Proposal submissions must adhere to the timelines set forth by the Curriculum Committee. Failure to meet these expectations compromises the currency and relevancy of course and program offerings and directly impacts student success, achievement, and educational goals.

Six-Year Curriculum Review Cycle

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
ALH	ATHL	CHEM	ADMJ	AAD	ADVM
DFST	BIOL	ENGR	ART	ARHI	AGRI
FREN	ECON	ESL	COMM	AUTO	ANTH
GER	ENGL	ETHN	THEA	BUS	ASTR
HSCI	ESCI	IT	MUS	FASH	BI
ITAL	ESS	HUM	POLS	HDEV	CSCI
JPN	GEOG	LGBT		PHOT	EDU
KIN	HED	MECH		SKDV	FIRE
LIBS		PHIL			HIST
LRDS		PHYS			WELD
MATH		PSYC			
NRSA/NRSR		SOC			
NUTF		WMST			
PDEV					
RECM					
RISE					
SPAN					

Curriculum Review Checklist

Course and program additions and modifications should be informed by the Committee's evaluation criteria, institutional mission and goals, achievement, completion and equity data, labor market reports, Program Review goals, and insights from Sierra colleagues and local community/industry collaborators.

The following will be completed by department faculty and addressed with the Curriculum Committee:
1. Review, revise and update all Course Outlines of Record (COR) to meet current curriculum standards ensuring measurable and equitable attainment of student learning outcomes and objectives.
2. Review and revalidate course prerequisites, corequisites and advisories for equitable student achievement in adherence to Title 5 and legislative mandates.
3. Indicate course methods to ensure equitable opportunities for achievement of the stated student learning outcomes and objectives regardless of teaching methodology, location, or mode of delivery.
4. Review course and program student learning outcomes to ensure that they are designed with the appropriate breadth, depth, and rigor to meet general education, transfer, and/or industry standards.
5. Review course families with active participatory limitations.
6. Review degree and certificate offerings to ensure the most efficient time to completion for students in each program.
7. Where applicable, compare courses and degrees to transfer institutions and update articulation agreements.
8. Holistically review department course offerings to ensure student need and viability. It is recommended to inactivate courses not offered in the past three years; inactive courses may be reactivated in the future.
9. Review degree and certificate offerings to ensure the development of broad knowledge, skills, and competencies related to student career and transfer goals. Inactivate degrees and certificates that no longer address these goals.
10. Modifications to CTE degrees and certificates should be informed by labor market information, advisory meeting minutes, and North/Far North Consortium chaptering as determined by the CCCCO.
11. Faculty authors should plan to attend Curriculum Committee meeting(s) to present their proposal(s). Upon request, someone other than the author may present the proposal to the Committee. The proxy representative should receive all essential information for addressing and responding to the Committee's questions and suggestions.

Incomplete Curriculum Review

First Year after an Incomplete Curriculum Review
During fall Flex Week, the Curriculum Chair will contact the Department Chair. A meeting will be scheduled during the first four weeks of the semester to develop a timeline for completion of curriculum review. This timeline will not exceed the current academic year. This information will be shared with the Division Dean and Academic Senate. As necessary, support will be offered to the Department Chair to complete curriculum review under this new schedule.

Second Year after an Incomplete Curriculum Review
During fall flex week, the Vice President of Instruction will be notified as necessary support for completion of the review. The Department Chair and Curriculum Chair will meet during the first four weeks of the

semester to complete a timeline for curriculum review during the semester. This information will be shared with the Division Dean, Academic Senate, and Vice President of Instruction.

Following this semester, if the curriculum review is not complete, the matter will be referred to the Vice President of Instruction. The Curriculum Chair, Division Dean, and Academic Senate will continue to support the process of curriculum review as needed.

(Approved by Academic Senate 5/5/10)

Curriculum Approval Process

Meeting & Voting Guidelines

The Curriculum Committee meets twice a month on alternating Mondays throughout the academic year. The meeting schedule for the following academic year is approved each spring. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed.

The Chair and Curriculum Specialist will prepare, distribute, and publicly post the agenda in accordance with the Brown Act. The Chair will determine the placement of each proposal on the agenda (see Agenda Categories) and facilitate meeting presentations and discussions. Curriculum Committee members have access to all agenda proposals and documents prior to the meeting for individual review and comment.

Quorum
A quorum consists of 50% + 1 representation of faculty committee members and 50% of the remaining membership: including management, classified, and student representatives. A quorum is required to begin a committee meeting and must be retained for all voting actions.

Voting Rights
Designated faculty, management, classified, and student representative curriculum members have a vote. Shared positions are assigned one vote. Ex Officio members and the Curriculum Specialist are non-voting members who serve as resources for the voting members.

Voting Process
The establishment of a quorum is required prior to voting. The Curriculum Committee votes on each proposal by consensus. If consensus cannot be met, the Chair will conduct a roll call majority vote. In the case of a tie, the action does not pass.

A passing vote is defined as 50% +1 of voting members present. Voting abstentions are discouraged and do not count in favor of the action; however, members who abstain are counted in the total number of voting members present.

Voting Actions
The following actions may be taken in response to the review and discussion of a submitted proposal:
- Approved, as submitted.
- Approved, with minimal edits completed during the meeting.
- Tabled and returned to the author for additional information, corrections, suggestions, etc.
- Tabled for further discussion.
- Disapproved, as submitted.

Minor edits to the proposal may be suggested and agreed upon during the meeting. If extensive edits and/or additional information are required, the proposal will be tabled and rescheduled. Tabled proposals should be revised and resubmitted by the predetermined timeline outlined by the Chair.
The Committee's resolution will be published in the meeting recollections. Member names and individual votes will be recorded for all roll call voting.

Implementation Timeline

Following Committee review and recommended action, proposals are presented at the will of the designee (Vice President of Instruction) to the Board of Trustees for final local approval. The Board convenes

monthly throughout the year. Thereafter, proposals are sent to the Chancellor's Office for further approval and/or chaptering. Applicable courses are submitted for the following review: CSU and UC transfer, Cal-GETC (transfer general education), and course-to-course articulation. Applicable degrees and certificates are submitted to ACCJC for review upon Chancellor's Office approval. The Sierra College Catalog reflects all approved curricular decisions.

Curriculum proposals are maintained through the curriculum management system and updated in the official Sierra College student information system. The District annually certifies credit and noncredit course and program approvals to the Chancellor's Office as required by Title 5.

Curriculum proposals submitted by **April 1st** will be considered for the following catalog year.
Ex: Proposals submitted by April 1, 2026, will be considered for the 2027-2028 catalog. Curriculum submission quality and author responsiveness may impact this timeline. Exceptions to this timeline are limited to matters of urgent need or legislation requirements that demand immediate attention and are subject to VPI approval. Curriculum proposals may be submitted year-round.

The spring term is designated for the review of new courses and early review of proposals for the following catalog year. By the end of the fall term, the review of all proposals submitted the previous April should be complete.

CSU, UC and Cal-GETC Transfer Timelines

California State University (CSU)
Courses proposed for transfer to CSU are locally reviewed and approved for inclusion into the Sierra College catalog by the Curriculum Committee per the established timeline.

University of California (UC)
Courses proposed for transfer to UC are reviewed by the UC Office of the President (UCOP) once each year in **August**. Courses must be approved for inclusion into the Sierra College catalog by the Curriculum Committee by the last meeting of the academic year (April) to meet the submission deadline. If a course is offered prior to UC transfer approval, students will not receive transfer credit.

California General Education Transfer Curriculum (Cal-GETC)
All proposed Cal-GETC courses must be approved for UC Transfer in August by the UC Office of the President (UCOP) prior to general education review in **December**. Approvals are effective the following academic year. If a course is offered prior to GE approval, students will not receive GE credit.

Curriculum Review & Approval Process

Faculty Submission
new or revised course or program proposal
Due April 1

CTE Program Requirements
Labor Market Information
Advisory Minutes
North/Far North Consortium

Curriculum proposals submitted by April 1st will be considered for the following catalog year.

Exceptions to this timeline are limited to matters of urgent need or legislation requirements that demand immediate attention and are subject to VPI approval.

Technical Review

Standard Workflow

Dean
Curriculum Chair
Articulation Officer
Curriculum Specialist
Committee

New Courses Workflow

Dean
Curriculum Chair
Articulation Officer
Curriculum Specialist
Committee (1st Hearing)
Faculty
Dean
Curriculum Chair
Articulation Officer
Curriculum Specialist
Committee (2nd Hearing)

Local Approvals
Curriculum Committee
Board of Trustees

External Approvals

UC Transfer submissions
Due August

Cal-GETC GE submissions
Due December

Submissions to C-ID, CCCCO, ACCJC, and Financial Aid

Local Updates
Student Information Systems
Catalog
Published April

Agenda Categories

Information Only (no vote required)

Include but not limited to the following: course and program deletions, title changes, and prefix/number changes. Items do not require discussion or voting.

Discussion Items (no vote required)

Include but not limited to the following: committee education and training, campus and committee policies and procedures, and other topics related to and of interest to the committee.

Action Items (vote required)

Include but not limited to the following: committee education and training, campus and committee policies and procedures, and other topics related to and of interest to the committee. Action Items appear as a Discussion Item in a prior meeting.

Consent Agenda (vote required)

Proposals will be recommended for the Consent Agenda if there are no substantive changes identified. Consent Agenda items are approved without discussion and authoring faculty presence is not required. If a proposal requires discussion, the item may be addressed as a regular agenda item or tabled.

Course Revisions (one hearing; vote required)

One hearing is for presentation of course revisions with substantive changes and to address the Curriculum Committee's approval criteria. Authoring faculty are expected to participate in the discussion and be present for the vote.

Substantive Changes (items requiring committee review) include but are not limited to the following:
- Major change in the Catalog Description, Course Content Outline, Course Objectives
- Course Format or Modality (Lecture, Laboratory, Activity, Distance Learning)
- Units with subsequent change in hours
- Grading option (Not Graded, Pass/No Pass or Standard Letter)
- Maximum Class Cap (Requires Course Cap Form)
- Transferability (CSU, UC or Not Transferable)
- General Education Information (Cal-GETC or local GE)
- Course Preparation (prerequisites, corequisites, and advisories)

Course Revision Workflow
Division Dean → Curriculum Chair → Articulation Officer → Curriculum Specialist → Curriculum Committee

New Courses (two hearings; one vote required for each hearing)

The first hearing is a presentation of the course concept which addresses the Curriculum Committee's approval criteria. Authoring faculty are expected to participate in the discussion and be present for the pre-approval vote.

The second hearing determines if the course proposal adequately addressed the issues identified in the first hearing. In most cases, the proposal will be placed on the Consent Agenda if there are no substantive issues or corrections to be made. Faculty presence is not required for the vote.

New courses requesting UC Transfer must complete their second hearing by the last meeting of the academic year (April) to meet the August UC submission deadline. If a course is offered prior to UC Transfer approval, students will not receive transfer credit.

New Course Workflow
Division Dean → Curriculum Chair → Articulation Officer → Curriculum Specialist → Curriculum Committee (1ˢᵗ Hearing) → Faculty → Division Dean → Curriculum Chair → Articulation Officer → Curriculum Specialist → Curriculum Committee (2ⁿᵈ Hearing)

Families – Active Participatory Courses (vote required)

One hearing is required for presentation of Families revisions and to address the Curriculum Committee's approval criteria. Authoring faculty are expected to participate in the discussion and be present for the vote.

Educational Requirements (vote required)

One hearing is required for the presentation of program award revisions, new program awards, student petitions and general education updates and to address the Curriculum Committee's approval criteria. Authoring faculty, subject matter experts, or counseling representatives are expected to participate in the discussion and be present for the vote.