Chapter 4

The Course Outline of Record

Basic Criteria for Approval

All courses and programs must meet these five basic criteria for approval stated in Title 5, as summarized below by the Chancellor's Office:

Appropriateness to Mission

Course must be directed at the appropriate level for community colleges; must address a valid transfer, career and technical education, basic skills, civic education, or lifelong learning purpose; and should also be congruent with the mission statement and master plan of the college and district.

Need

The outline justification must provide evidence of need for the course in college service area.

Curriculum Standard

Must fulfill the requirements of the local curriculum approval process, which includes careful scrutiny by faculty and administrators at the originating college; approval on a regional level (career and technical education); the course should also be consistent with requirements of accrediting agencies.

Adequate Resources

The college has the resources needed to offer the course at the level of quality described in the Outline of Record.

Compliance

Design of the course or program is not in conflict with any law, including both state or federal laws, and both statutes and regulations.

Standards for Associate and Lower Division Baccalaureate Degree Credit Courses

Every course is required to have an official Course Outline of Record (COR). The COR, for either credit or noncredit courses, must fully describe the course. C ORs are public records and considered legal documents between the faculty, student, and college.

All credit courses must meet the following standards, as outlined in Title 5, §55002:

Grading Policy

The grade is based on demonstrated proficiency in subject matter and the ability to demonstrate that proficiency, at least in part, by means of essays, or in courses where the Curriculum Committee deems them to be appropriate, by problem solving exercises or skill demonstrations by students.

Units

The course grants units of credit based upon a relationship specified by the governing board between the number of units assigned to the course and the number of lecture and/or laboratory hours or performance criteria specified in the course outline.

Intensity

The course treats subject matter with a scope and intensity that require students to study independently outside of class time.

Prerequisites and Co-requisites

When a student is highly unlikely to receive a satisfactory grade unless the student has the knowledge or skills not taught in the course, then the course shall require prerequisites or co-requisites.

Difficulty

The course work calls for critical thinking and the understanding and application of concepts at college level.

Level

The course requires learning skills and vocabulary appropriate for a college course.

Non-credit courses are intended to prepare students to achieve academic, career and lifelong learning goals, including preparing to succeed in college level work. These courses are expected to emphasize critical thinking skills.

Non-credit courses must fall under one of ten apportionment areas defined by the state. Course placement is driven by the course objectives and target population to be served

The 10 instructional areas are:

1. English as a Second Language (ESL)
2. Immigrant Education
3. Elementary and Secondary Basic Skills
4. Health and Safety
5. Substantial Disabilities
6. Parenting
7. Home Economics
8. Courses for Older Adults
9. Short-term Vocational Programs
10. Workforce Preparation

Note: All non-credit courses are required to have Chancellor's Office approval.
See Program and Course Approval Handbook for detailed description of each category.

Standards for Stand-alone Courses

Most courses at Cerritos College are part of an approved program: a certificate of achievement (16 or more units or 8 to 15.5 units), an associate degree major, an associate degree for transfer, or a General Education requirement. A *stand-alone course,* on the other hand, is a credit course that is *not* part of a Chancellor's Office approved program.

Cerritos College does have some stand-alone courses that have been approved because they meet the standards defined and fulfill purposes within the college's mission. Do we have any stand-alone courses?

The Chancellor's Office grants community college districts the authority to approve stand-alone courses as long as Curriculum Committee members and any staff and administrators directly involved in the approval process receive annual training on the guidelines for approval. Cerritos College complies with training requirements.

Stand-alone courses must follow the same standards of rigor and approval processes as other credit courses.

The Course Outline of Record as a Legal Document

Title 5 requires that every course be represented by a Course Outline of Record (COR), an official public document approved by a Curriculum Committee, local Board of Trustees, and the Chancellor's Office (which must approve all courses associated with programs and all noncredit courses). It must be evident in the COR that all Title 5 standards are met.

Furthermore, the Course Outline of Record:

- States the Student Learning Outcomes, Objectives, content, and level of rigor for which students and faculty—across all sections of the course—will be held accountable.
- Provides the basis for determining the degree of preparation (prerequisites, co-requisites, and/or advisories) that students need to advance successfully through a series of courses.
- Ensures consistent, quality instruction (from instructor to instructor, section to section, and year to year) in the classroom by clearly identifying standards and content of the course to be taught while still providing flexibility for individual instruction.
- Plays a critical role in the process of program review by which a college seeks to keep its curriculum relevant and to allocate its resources sufficiently to maintain its programs.
- Demonstrates that all of the required components are present in the course for the required degree of rigor as specified in Title 5.
- Serves as documentation of the college's high academic standards and quality for accreditation purposes.
- Also, the Course Outline of Record is an essential element in the transfer process. It is:
    - Submitted for approval as meeting the California General Education Transfer Curriculum (Cal-GETC) requirements, which represent the CSU and UC systems.
    - The basis for evaluation of the transferability of courses and evidence of their equivalence to those courses offered at the four-year schools.

Components of the Course Outline of Record

See Step by Step Guide for creating or revising the COR on Curriculum Committee Website

The Course Outline of Record is comprised of the following components:

General Information Includes:

- **Course Code** (view CB01 🔗) (discipline prefix and number)

  Cerritos College numbering protocol:

Number	Protocol
1-49	Non-AA-applicable
50-99	AA-applicable-only course
100-299	AA-applicable courses that also are transferable to the CSU and UC systems
200-299	Courses numbered 200-299 are considered sophomore level courses and suggest that there exists an introductory course in the 100s, but this is not a hard rule. Some course numbers are reserved for special courses: Occupational Work Study/Experience – 71, 72, 171, 172, 271, and 272 Directed Studies – 99, 198, 199, 298, and 299
Note: The addition of a single alphabetical letter (a-z) is allowed for related courses, though the letter "L" is reserved for lab-only courses.	

Starting Fall 2025, SDCCD Colleges will switch to a new course numbering system. This new system, called the Common Course Numbering (CCN) system, will use the following structure:

- Subject: Four letter abbreviation (e.g., ENGL for English)
- Course Type Identifier: C= Common Course Number; local courses would not have a C; and
- Course Number: Standardized 4-digit course identification.
- C1000-C1999 = 100 level course
- C2000-C2999 = 200 level course

Numbers that have previously been used for other courses, active or inactive, may not be reused unless they also include an alpha letter (a-z) that has not been used previously with that number. Contact the Curriculum Specialist if you are unsure if a number has been used before.

- **Course Title** (view CB02)

  Provides readers with a brief, general description of the subject matter covered in the course.

- **TOP Code** (view CB03) and CIP Code

  A "TOP Code" (view CB03) represents a unique code used by California Community Colleges to classify the subject matter of a course within the "Taxonomy of Programs" system. A "CIP Code" represents a broader classification system used nationwide by all educational institutions to categorize academic programs, with both codes serving as a way to identify and categorize course content for reporting purposes. That is, a TOP code is specific to California community colleges; whereas, a CIP code is used across the US for wider academic program classification.

  Taxonomy of Programs Manual (view manual)

  This manual thoroughly explains the Taxonomy of Program (TOP), which is a system of numerical codes used at the state level to collect and report information on programs and courses, in different colleges throughout the state, have similar outcomes.

- **Course description**

  The course description should give students a succinct, but descriptive summary of what the course covers. If the course replaces an existing course, include a phrase at the end of the description indicating the course is not open to students who have received credit for the original course.

- **SAM Code** (view CB09)

  This code is used to indicate the degree to which a course is occupational, and to assist in identifying course sequence in occupational programs. Use the following information to determine your choice:

  Apprenticeship (offered to apprentices only)

  The course is designed for an apprentice and must have the approval of the State of California, Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Apprenticeship Standards. Some examples of apprenticeship courses are Carpentry, Plumbing, and Electrician.

  Advanced Occupational (not limited to apprentices)

  Courses are those taken by students in the *advanced* stages of their occupational programs.

Clearly Occupational (but not advanced)

Courses will generally be taken by students in the middle stages of their programs and should be of difficulty level sufficient to detract "drop-ins." ness Management, Advanced Keyboarding, and Technical Engineering.

Possibly Occupational

"D" courses are those taken by students in the *beginning stages* of their occupational programs. The "D" priority can also be used for service (or survey) courses for other occupational Programs. Some examples of "D" level courses are Technical Mathematics, Graphic Communications, Elementary Mechanical Principles, Fundamentals of Electronics, Keyboarding (Beginning or Intermediate), and Accounting (Beginning).

Non-Occupational

These courses are non-occupational.

- **Course Control Number** (view CB00🔗)
  This is assigned by the Chancellor's Office upon course approval.

- **Course Authors**
  The Course Outline of Record details faculty authorship.

- **Distance Education Approval Status**
  Once motioned and approved by the Curriculum Committee, the Board of Trustees also must approve, with final approval from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

- **Curriculum Committee, Board of Trustees, and Chancellor's Office Approval Dates**
  The Curriculum Committee and Board of Trustees publicly post all approval dates in accordance with the Brown Act.

Faculty Requirements: Includes Master Discipline and Alternate Discipline when appropriate. This designation is used to determine faculty minimum qualifications for teaching the course.

When building the course, this section also includes the proposal start date – this is the term the new course or revision will take effect. Typically, this is in Fall of the following academic year.

Course Development Options Includes:

- **Basic Skill Status** (view CB08)
  Course type used for basic skills courses and for Precollegiate Basic Skills (PBS) courses.

- **Course Special Status** (view CB13)
  Course designation reflecting an "approved special class" for students with disabilities.

- **Grade Option**
  A variety of grading options, including letter grades, pass/no pass, and satisfactory/no credit may be offered.

- **Credit by exam status**
  Students interested in credit by examination should refer to refer to Administrative Procedure 4235 for additional information.

- **Repeatability** (view CB12)
  Indicates whether the credit course has been designated by the district as one for which repetitions may be claimed for state apportionment according to the provisions of Title 5, Section 55041.

- **Course Prior to College Level** (view CB21)
  For basic skills courses. You should indicate the appropriate level below transfer.

- **Class Size**
  Course authors may make a recommendation. However, methods of instruction, methods of evaluation, and assignments on the COR are evaluated by class size work group for recommendation.

- **Course Audit status**
  Auditing courses is permitted at Cerritos College. An audit student is a student who attends a course or courses for no credit or notation on an official transcript.

- **Course Support Course Status** (view CB26)
  Indicates whether a specific course is considered a "support course," meaning it is designed to provide additional assistance to students in completing another, primary course, usually within the same subject area.

Associated Programs:

This section contains a list of all programs the course is associated with.

Transferability and General Education Options

- **General Education Status** (view CB25🔗) – For Local A.A./A.S. and Cal-GETC
  Please communicate with the campus Articulation Officer to determine appropriate GE Category.

  Proposals for General Education also require the submission of the General Education Questions and require a separate Curriculum Committee Approval. Approval is complete only when CSU and/or UC has accepted the course for General Education.

  C-ID approval is also noted in this section.

- **Transferability** (view CB05🔗) – to CSU and/or UC
  Approval is dependent on UC and/or CSU approval. This will be updated for you if approvals are different than expected.

  A = UC transferable
  B = CSU transferable (typically 100-299 numbered courses)
  C = if the course number is 99 or below

Units and Hours Section includes:

- **Minimum Credit Hours** (view CB07🔗)
  1 hour of lecture = 1 unit
  3 hours of lab = 1 unit

- **Maximum Credit Hours** (view CB06🔗)
  Cerritos College does not use variable hours so this number always equals the minimum hours.

- **Total Student Learning Hours**
  The combined time a student spends both in class (i.e., contact hours) and outside of class (e.g., studying, completing assignments) dedicated to learning in a particular course

- **Course Credit Status** (view CB04🔗)

Indicates whether a course is considered for credit towards a degree (i.e., Credit - Degree Applicable) or not (i.e., Credit - Not Degree Applicable or Noncredit).
Most Credit Courses at Cerritos College fall into the “D” category

- **Course non-credit category** (view CB22🔗)
  Indicates the noncredit category of a course. Noncredit courses are community college courses that do not award college credit or grade. If your course is a non-credit or Adult Education course, select the category. If your course is a credit course, select “Y”.

- **Course Classification Code** (view CB011🔗)
  Classifies a course in accordance with its primary objective meaning Credit Courses “Y” and Noncredit Courses “J.”

- **Funding Agency Category** (view CB23🔗)
  Indicates which external funding agency, if any, was involved in the development or support of a particular course or curriculum. If your course is eligible for Economic Development funding, select the appropriate funding level. Otherwise select “Y.”

- **Weekly Student Hours**
  The expectation is that a student will complete three hours of work per week for approximately 18 weeks, or the equivalent, for each unit of credit earned (a 3:1 ratio). This expectation must be clearly stated in the course outline of record and syllabus.

  Cerritos College recognizes two structures to meet this expectation for one unit:

  Lecture
  One hour of lecture and two hours of independent homework per week for 18 weeks

  Laboratory
  Three hours of laboratory where a student works under the supervision of a qualified instructor.

- **Course Student Hours**
  The total amount of time a student is expected to spend on a specific course, including both in-class time (e.g., lectures, discussions) and out-of-class time (e.g., homework, studying, assignments)

Prerequisites, Corequisites, Anti-requisites, Advisories

This section lists the courses and the catalog language for the requisites and the required Content Review for all requisites. Mapping of objectives and objectives is required.
Specifications section includes:

- **Methods of Instruction**
  Assignments should reflect the course content and be specific to the course being proposed. This section should be in outline format with the following headings. Course authors may use "for example" or "such as" to allow for academic freedom

  A. Reading
  B. Writing or Problem Solving or Skill Attainment
  C. Critical Thinking

- **Methods of Evaluation**
  Course authors should relate the complexity of the class to the methods of evaluation.

  Required Textbooks - Should be no older than 5 years or marked as classic
  Departments may include a list of possible texts approved by the department so that individual instructors have a choice of which text to use.

- **Required equipment, or other instructional materials.**

- **Lab Fee** – enter Yes or No
  To set a lab fee, departments must complete the appropriate form through the Academic Affairs Office.

Learning Outcomes and Objectives

- **Course Objectives**
  Objectives should exist for each major component of the course content and introduce only concepts introduced in the listed content. Use action verbs that describe observable behaviors.

- **Course Student Learning Outcomes**
  A recommended standard is 4-6 CSLOs for a standard 3-unit course. CSLOs should be action verbs and be measurable.

Course Content

- **Course Content**
  Content should be adequate to inform a new instructor to teach relevant materials and give the reader an accurate representation of what is taught in the course.

- **Lab Outline**
  If the course has lab hours, then the COR needs to include lab content. This section should show how the lecture material is being applied, practices, or include the skills and activities required to meet the objectives and outcomes of the course.

Differences Between the Course Outline and the Syllabus

While the COR and course syllabus may contain similar information, they have different functions in the institution.

The *course outline* gives the basic components and requirements of the course that *all* instructors must teach. The COR serves as the "the basis for a *contract among the student, instructor, and institution* identifying the expectations which will serve as the basis of the student's grade and giving the fundamental required components of the course which the student is guaranteed to receive from the instructor and institution."

A *syllabus* describes how the individual instructor will carry out the terms of that contract (the COR) through specific assignments. Syllabi give specific dates, grading standards, and other rules of the conduct of a course required by the individual instructor. A syllabus allows the individual instructors to draw upon their strengths by enhancing the course with additional information, theoretical approaches, themes, or emphases. The syllabus should include a course description, organization that complements the approved course outline, and student learning outcomes.

Stylistic Conventions for Writing the Course Outline of Record

For the sake of consistency and clarity, when inputting the material into the outline please remember to:

- Spell out acronyms (unless they are universally known) the first time they are used in the outline so that all readers will know what the letters are referring to.
- Avoid ampersands (&). Spell out the word “and”
- Avoid use of etc.
- Be consistent in capitalization and end punctuation for lists and outlines
- Use capitals and quotations as appropriate, but avoid ALL CAPS as a formatting device
- Spell-check and proofread your submission before submitting
- When wording requisites follow the following example:
- Completion of ART 100 or equivalent with a grade of “C” or higher or “Pass”
- Italicize book titles
- When listing student learning outcomes start each outcome with a measurable verb
- Follow hierarchal outline style of I., A., 1. , a. , and i.
- Include a comma before the “and” in a simple series (a.k.a. the Oxford comma)
- Maintain parallel verbs within a section of the outline. For instance, if you using “ing” verbs on some elements of the section then all verbs must use the “ing” construction