

# GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES

Southwestern Community College District provides lower-division educational programs of study that lead to associate degrees that prepare students for transfer to senior institutions and associate degree or certificate programs in career and technical disciplines that lead to employment or career advancement as well as upper-division coursework to support baccalaureate degrees upon approval by the Chancellor's Office. Students identify a program of study in a Student Education Plan and upon completion of program requirements may petition to graduate with the certificate and/or degree. The College District believes that a comprehensive education provides students with a broad range of learning experiences that develop capabilities and insights to support their academic and career goals. Such capabilities and insights are competencies that are relevant to all aspects of higher education.

This "general education" curriculum includes such competencies as the ability to think critically and communicate clearly and effectively both orally and in writing, to use quantitative reasoning, to understand the modes of inquiry of the major disciplines, to be aware of other cultures and times, to achieve insights gained through experience in thinking about ethical problems, and to develop the capacity of self understanding. These competencies provides a common base of learning for all students and seek to meet the needs of a student body diverse in social, cultural, and educational backgrounds. The general education curriculum also serves to develop creativity and critical thinking skills essential to the attainment of personal goals and to the ability of the individual to make a positive contribution to society.

## General Education Patterns

There are two General Education patterns available at Southwestern College. Each is based upon legal requirements and the educational philosophy of the college faculty at their respective institutions. A student may meet the general education requirements for an associate degree by completing one of the following general education patterns:

- Southwestern College Associate Degree General Education Requirements (<http://catalog.swccd.edu/certificates-certifications-degrees-csuuc-requirements/associate-degree-as-aa-general-education-requirements/>)
- The California General Education Transfer Curriculum (Cal-GETC) (<http://catalog.swccd.edu/certificates-certifications-degrees-csuuc-requirements/intersegmental-general-education-transfer-curriculum-igetc/>)

## Additional Graduation Requirements for the Associate Degree

### Lifelong Learning and Wellness Graduation Requirement

Effective Fall 2025, the Southwestern College Lifelong Learning and Wellness Graduation requirement is met by satisfactory completion (grade of "C" (2.0) or better or "Pass") of a transferable course (minimum of 3 semester units) or a combination of transferable courses that are less than 3 units provided that the student earns a total of at least three units. Students who have been awarded an associates or bachelor's degree from an institutionally accredited institution recognized by

the Department of Education shall be deemed to have fulfilled the Lifelong Learning and Wellness Graduation Requirement. In addition, students who petition for a "high unit major" as defined by the Extended Opportunity Programs & Services office may request to waive the requirement. Students in Allied Health programs may also petition to waive the requirement. Similar to the residency requirement, Students who have experienced injustice or undue hardship that impacts their ability to fulfill this graduation requirement may petition to waive the requirement in the responsible office.

To see a list of approved Lifelong Learning and Wellness courses, visit the Associate Degree General Education Requirements (<http://catalog.swccd.edu/certificates-certifications-degrees-csuuc-requirements/associate-degree-as-aa-general-education-requirements/>) page.

## Multiple Degrees

Students who qualify may receive additional associate degrees provided the designated degree to be earned will represent a significant change in program from the degree or degrees previously earned. A student who has already earned a bachelor's or higher degree from an institutionally accredited institution may qualify for an associate degree providing that the designated program and complete coursework are different from the bachelor's or higher degree. For each additional degree, the student must earn a minimum of six units in the new program. In addition, the student must meet all graduation requirements enforced at the time of declaration of a new program. Students who have previously been awarded an Associate Degree and wish to receive an ADT will be exempt from the additional unit requirement of six new units in the program. Students who wish to pursue a second ADT in a new program will also be exempt from the additional unit requirement. Students must complete all required courses for the ADT and submit a graduation petition for the new degree. Upon approval, the additional ADT will be posted to the student's academic record. A student who has earned an ADT and petitions to earn an additional AA/AS (non-ADT degree) must have earned a six unit difference in the program.

## Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADT)

Students who have previously been awarded an Associate Degree and wish to receive an ADT will be exempt from the additional unit requirement of six new units in the program. Students who wish to pursue a second ADT in a new program will also be exempt from the additional unit requirement. Students must complete all required courses for the ADT and submit a graduation petition for the new degree. Upon approval, the additional ADT will be posted to the student's academic record. A student who has earned an ADT and petitions to earn an additional AA/AS (non-ADT degree) must have earned a six unit difference in the program.

## Posted Degrees

The posting of an associate degree or certificate to a student's record is considered a permanent part of the student's academic record and cannot be rescinded, removed or modified.

## Official Transcripts

In order to apply units completed at another institution toward a degree, official transcripts may be mailed or submitted electronically to Southwestern College by the issuing institution. Transcripts from colleges accredited by one of the regional associations of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges will be evaluated upon

receipt for enrolled students at Southwestern College or upon request by the counselor. Transcripts from non-accredited colleges may be evaluated for prerequisite and course placement only. Military service credits based on DD-214 are posted after a veteran's first semester of attendance. The student's academic transcript shall be clearly annotated to reflect that credit was earned by assessment of prior learning according to standards established in Administrative Procedure 4235. Official college transcripts from all colleges attended must be on file before submitting a petition for any Associates Degree, Certificate of Achievement, or GE certification. Transcripts containing only upper division coursework are not required. Hand-carried copies of transcripts will not be accepted.

## Upper Division Coursework

Southwestern College may accept upper-division coursework if a student files a Substitution of Major Requirement petition with the appropriate school requesting that an upper-division course be substituted to satisfy a graduation requirement and/or a course in the required courses that constitute the major or area of emphasis. This request must be approved by faculty in the discipline or the appropriate designee.

## Continuous Enrollment

Continuous enrollment is defined as completion of a course during at least one semester or two quarters in a calendar year, including summer session, in either the CSU, UC, or California Community College System after time of entrance to Southwestern College (effective enrollment fall 2023). Completing a course is defined as receiving a grade of A, B, C, D, F, I, Pass (P), or No Pass (NP). Receiving a grade of "W", "EW" or "MW" will not satisfy the requirements for completing a course. The grade of "EW" or "MW" does not disqualify a student from continuous enrollment.

## Catalog Rights

A student's catalog rights are established at the time of entrance and completion of a course at Southwestern College. When continuous enrollment is maintained, students may choose their catalog rights for general education and graduation requirements in effect at the time of entrance to Southwestern College, or any catalog year thereafter. A student who petitions for an Associates Degree for Transfer who lacks catalog rights will be placed under the catalog in effect at the time the graduation petition is submitted.