



Hagerstown Community College

Curriculum Development Manual

2025-2026

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How to use the Manual

The Office of Academic Affairs has compiled this collection of resources to support faculty in their ongoing work to develop and revise courses and programs. This document, as well as important dates and deadlines for curriculum, can be found on the [Curriculum Development and Review webpage](#).

This manual provides:

- Course and program development materials and other reference materials for developing and revising courses and programs. New resources will continue to be created as research on teaching and learning evolves.
- Information on the College's Curriculum software with a direct link to the software webpage and forms.

Curriculum at Hagerstown Community College (HCC)

Curriculum

Curriculum is generally defined as a coherent plan for learning and instruction. Course-level curricula is reflected in the content of the lessons that address specific learning outcomes or objectives. Program-level curricula is composed of the courses that lead to program goals or outcomes. Collectively, all the programs at HCC constitute the College's curriculum and reflect the College's mission.

Curricular Mission

Hagerstown Community College offers a diverse array of courses and programs designed to address the curricular functions of university transfer, career entry and advancement, adult basic skills enhancement, general and continuing education, and student and community service. HCC is committed to maintaining a responsive, dynamic curriculum through continuous quality improvement and assessment.

Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)

HCC is accredited by the [Middle States Commission on Higher Education \(MSCHE\)](#). HCC adheres to MSCHE's Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation for all curriculum and [assessment processes](#).

Included in the MSCHE standards is the expectation that an accredited institution possesses or demonstrates certain attributes or activities in regards to its curriculum. In particular, MSCHE expects student learning experiences to be:

- designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time, part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals
- reviewed regularly and equitably, based on written, disseminated, clear, and fair criteria, expectations, policies, and procedures

Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)

As a higher education institution operating in the state of Maryland, HCC is regulated by the [Maryland Higher Education Commission](#) (MHEC). MHEC is the State of Maryland's higher education coordinating board responsible for establishing statewide policies for Maryland public and private colleges and universities, as well as for-profit career schools.

Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR)

All state agency regulations (including MHEC's) are compiled in the [Code of Maryland Regulations](#) (COMAR). COMAR contains 36 titles, with each title corresponding to a department or agency. Title 13B is the corresponding title for MHEC. (See p. 22 for additional information provided by COMAR).

Overview of Awards and Degrees at Hagerstown Community College

Letters of Recognition (L.O.R.) - awarded for successful completion of a designated *group* of courses (specified by each program awarding the L.O.R.) totaling *fewer than 12 credits*.

Lower Division Certificate (L.D.C.) – awarded for successful completion of a *minimum* of 12 semester credit hours at the freshman or sophomore levels, or both. Certificates must be at least 16 credits for students to be eligible for aid.

Lower Division Certificates at HCC come in two forms:

- “Stand-Alone Certificate” – not associated or “laddered” with an associate degree
- “Certificate within an Associate Degree” – associated and laddered with an associate degree

The [Programs and Courses Webpage](#) displays the current Lower Division Certificates at HCC and whether or not they are “laddered” with an associate degree.

Associate of Arts (A.A.) – awarded for successful completion of not less than 60 and not more than 70 credit hours [for approval to exceed 60 credits, refer to p. 11] in the liberal arts (social sciences, humanities, and similar subjects) and in the fine arts (music, art, etc.).

- The degree is intended for transfer to an equivalent Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree program at four-year institutions.

The following requirement and credit distributions are required for the [A.A. Degree at HCC \(Board Policy #4005\)](#):

General Education: COMAR requires 28-36 credits of General Education for the Associate of Arts. HCC requires a maximum of 32 credits as follows:

Arts/Humanities: 6 credits
Behavioral/ Social Sciences: 6 credits
Biological/Physical Science: 7-8 credits (at least one course must have a lab)
Diversity: 3 credits
English: 6 credits
Mathematics: 3 credits

Program Specific Credits: At least 12 credits in the major, which are essential to the programmatic outcomes and transfer requirements.

Program Support Credits: Optional credits that may be outside of the program specific courses, but support programmatic outcomes and/or transfer requirements. These may be listed as *restricted electives*.

Free Electives: Optional courses which may be in any discipline, except developmental courses.

Associate of Science (A.S.) – awarded for successful completion of not less than 60 and no more than 70 credit hours [for approval to exceed 60 credits, refer to p. 11] in science or technology (engineering, agriculture, the natural sciences) with a heavy emphasis on undergraduate mathematics or science.

- The degree is intended for transfer to a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree program at four-year institutions.

The following requirement and credit distributions are required for the [A.S. Degree at HCC \(Board Policy #4005\)](#):

General Education: COMAR requires 28-36 credits of General Education for the Associate of Arts. HCC requires a maximum of 29 credits as follows:

Arts/Humanities: 6 credits
Behavioral/ Social Sciences: 6 credits
Biological/Physical Science: 7-8 credits (at least one course must have a lab)
Diversity: 3 credits
English: 3 credits
Mathematics: 3 credits

Program Specific: At least 12 credits in the major, which are essential to the programmatic outcomes and transfer requirements.

Program Support: Optional credits that may be outside of the program specific discipline, but support programmatic outcomes and/or transfer requirements. May be listed as *restricted electives*.

Free Electives: Optional courses which may be in any discipline, except developmental courses.

Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) – awarded for successful completion of not less than 60 and not more than 70 credit hours [for approval to exceed 60 credits, refer to p. 11] in vocational-technical occupational skills, including law enforcement, computer technology, and engineering technology.

- The degree is intended for a student seeking immediate employment opportunities. However, the program does not preclude a student from transferring to a technical bachelor's degree program such as a bachelor's degree in technology or a bachelor's degree in technical or professional studies, or from transferring non-technical courses to a four-year institution.

The following requirement and credit distributions are required for the [A.A.S. Degree at HCC \(Board Policy #4005\)](#):

General Education: At least 18 credits as follows:

Arts/Humanities: 3 credits
Behavioral/Social Sciences: 3 credits
Biological/Physical Science: 3 credits
Diversity: 3 credits
English: 3 credits
Mathematics: 3 credits

Program Specific: At least 12 credits in the major, which are essential to the programmatic outcomes and transfer requirements.

Program Support: Optional credits that may be outside of the program specific discipline, but support programmatic outcomes and/or transfer requirements. May be listed as *restricted electives*.

Free Electives: Optional courses which may be in any discipline, except developmental courses.

Associate of Arts in Teaching (A.A.T.) – awarded upon completion of lower-level degree academic content, outcomes, and requirements for teacher education, similar to the first two years of a bachelor's program in teacher education.

- Requires evidence of qualifying scores as established by the State Superintendent of Schools on the teacher certification tests approved by the State Board of Education;
- Requires a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.75 on a 4.00 scale; and
- If achieved, transfers up to 64 credit hours [for approval to exceed 60 credits, refer to p. 11], satisfying all lower-division teacher education program outcomes without further review by in-state four-year public and independent institutions.

The following requirement and credit distributions are required for the [A.A.T. Degree at HCC \(Board Policy #4005\)](#):

General Education: COMAR requires 28-36 credits of General Education for the Associate of Arts. HCC requires a maximum of 35 credits as follows:

Arts/ Humanities: 3-6 credits (depending on program)
Behavioral/Social Sciences: 6 credits
Biological/Physical Science: 7-8 credits
Diversity: 3 credits
English: 3-6 credits (depending on program)
Mathematics: 3-6 credits (depending on program)

Program Specific: At least 12 credits in the major, which are essential to the programmatic outcomes and transfer requirements.

Program Support: Optional credits that may be outside of the program specific discipline, but support programmatic outcomes and/or transfer requirements. May be listed as *restricted electives*.

Free Electives: Optional courses which may be in any discipline, except developmental courses.



It is important to keep in mind that when students graduate from HCC, awards or degrees will appear on their diploma (as well as on their transcript). Students often say, for example, “I’m receiving a degree in Theater.” In reality, they are receiving an “Associate of Arts degree in Arts and Sciences (program) with a *Concentration in Theater*.” Programs are akin to “majors” at four-year institutions.

Curriculum Development at Hagerstown Community College

Responsibility for the Curriculum

Faculty have a professional responsibility to ensure that the curriculum is relevant and meets the specific needs of students. The faculty must involve themselves as necessary to maintain a curriculum that meets the occupational, university transfer, continuing education, and workforce training needs of HCC students. The faculty must also ensure that the curriculum is closely aligned with requirements of industry, businesses, high-schools and four-year institutions. Before signing off on documentation for submission, division directors and faculty

must communicate the proposed change with affected divisions.

The Curriculum Development and Review Committee

The Curriculum Development and Review Committee reviews *new programs and courses*, as well as modifications to existing programs and courses, to ensure that they meet college and state standards. Additionally, the committee develops and reviews policies related to [General Education Criteria](#), course contact-to-credit-hour ratios, official course syllabi format, and course discipline codes. It is important to note that the Curriculum Development and Review Committee does not oversee matters relating to the rigor of courses or programs, this responsibility resides with appropriate faculty and academic officers.

Membership of the Curriculum Development and Review Committee

The Committee is a standing College committee and one of the sub-committees of the College [Governance Council](#). Membership of the Committee is as follows:

- Vice President, Academic Affairs and Student Services (**VPAASS**), co-chair
- Seven faculty, one from each division, including a faculty co-chair
- One Division Director
- One Academic Advisor
- Dean of Instruction (**DoI**)
- Coordinator of Curriculum and Academic Systems (**CCAS**)

Reporting Relationship of the Curriculum Development and Review Committee

The Curriculum Development and Review Committee reports on curricular changes to new and existing programs and courses, as well as makes curricular policy recommendations.

Meetings of the Curriculum Development and Review Committee

The Curriculum Development and Review Committee meets on the second Thursday in September, October, November, December, February, and April, as well as two “as determined” meetings in March due to an excess in submissions, Spring Break week, and Faculty Assembly. There is no meeting in January due to Faculty in-service week.

Meeting Time Limit

If meeting conversations extend past our 2:30PM-4:30PM meeting timeframe an additional meeting can be scheduled within the same month, preferably the following day.



When can program changes be made to curriculum? Any **programmatic changes** (this includes *general education changes, restricted elective option changes, credit distribution changes, free elective changes, and program requirement changes*) need to be submitted to the Curriculum Development and Review Committee no later than March each year. This allows enough time for changes to be made so that students receive accurate and up-to-date advising before registration opens.

Programs

An **academic program** is defined as a curriculum pathway or sequence of study (i.e. “major”) that results in a student’s achievement of specific learning outcomes. The successful completion of programs can lead to the awarding of degrees, certificates, and letters of recognition.

An **area of concentration** is a sequential arrangement of courses that is linked to an “umbrella” academic program. However, it can vary, credit-wise, from its program by 12 to 30 hours. An example is the Marketing Concentration within the Management Program. Both areas equal 60 total credit hours, but vary in requirements/electives by about 18 credit hours.



In compliance with COMAR and Senate Bill 740, Hagerstown Community College requires **60 credit hours to graduate with an associate degree**. Only the following programs at HCC are currently approved by MHEC to *exceed 60 credit hours* due to requirements for accreditation, certification, licensure, and/or articulation: Dental Hygiene, Engineering Science, Health Information Management, Nursing, Medical Laboratory Technician, and Radiography. There is a substantial review/approval and set criteria for programs to exceed 60 credits. It is important to understand that increasing credit limits also impacts other state programs. For inquiries into increasing credit limits, please contact the VPAASS.

Program Pathways

The full list of active programs under the current catalog can be found on the [Programs and Courses Webpage](#). Program information like division, degree type, educational goal (career or transfer), ladder programs, and online status is noted per program on the link above. The information on the webpage is updated annually in accordance with our catalog changes by the Public Relations & Marketing department.



Program pathway course load should not exceed 18 credits in a semester. In compliance with Senate Bill 740, all associate degrees must have a program pathway that clearly outlines the suggested order in which a student should complete the required courses in their program. The pathway is a guide to help students complete the degree in the appropriate amount of time, which is typically four semesters (first- and second-year fall and spring), although some programs may have additional semesters. When designing program pathways, it is important to make sure that courses are aligned such that pre-requisites occur in the pathway prior to their requisite courses.



In compliance with COMAR, program pathways must list an English and Mathematics requirement as part of the *first 24 credits to be completed* (within the first two semesters).

Program Curricular Actions - General

There are three types of program curricular actions that faculty and administrators may take at HCC:

1. Create a new program (New Program Notification)
2. Modify an existing program (Program Modification Proposal)
3. Inactivate program (Program Inactivation Notification)

Reasons for Developing a New Program

Some of the most common reasons for new program development:

- Adding a new program of content not currently offered
- Addressing specific needs of a specialized group of students
- Filling gaps in student skill development and/or career preparation
- Applying recommendations from an advisory committee
- Incorporating requests from employers
- Incorporating results of program reviews

New Program Process

Step One

A new program need is identified by faculty, division directors, or the President. Background data on whether the proposing program supports the College's strategic goals and local demand should be collected.

Step Two

The division director presents the proposed program with supporting data to the VPAASS.

Step Three

The VPAASS presents the proposed program with supporting data to the President, and subsequently approved by the HCC Board of Trustees.

Step Four

Once approved by the President and Board of Trustees a new program proposal, an articulation agreement with a four-year institution (an articulation agreement is only required for transfer programs which include A.A., A.A.T., and A.S. programs – excluding the Nursing A.S. program since it is a career program), along with payment from the College must be submitted to MHEC for state approval. Faculty and division directors work with the DoI to write the new program proposal. All MHEC correspondence must be initiated from the Academic Affairs office.

Step Five

MHEC electronically posts all new proposals and substantial program modifications to the MHEC website for a 30-day peer review and comment period. Once the review period has ended, MHEC then takes up to 30 days to decide and notifies HCC of the program's approval or denial. A total of 60 days before a decision is granted.

Step Six

If MHEC approves the new program, a New Program Notification Form must be sent to the Curriculum Development and Review Committee outlining the program's curriculum, catalog description, and program pathway. If MHEC denies the new program, there is an appeals process. For guidance on appeals, should this step be necessary, please contact the VPAASS.

Reasons for Modifying an Existing Program

Some of the most common reasons for a program modification:

- the distribution of credits
- the overall credit requirements for the program
- the required courses in the program
- the program's title
- the description of the program in the catalog
- Substantial changes have been made to the program outcomes

Program Modification Approval Process

Step One

Any modifications to a program must be submitted to the Curriculum Development and Review Committee for approval. A representative from the originating division must complete the Program Modification Proposal form by the document due date. Updated program pathways must be submitted with the program modifications form if any of the changes listed directly impact the program pathway. Additionally, if the change is to be considered a substantial change (more than 50% cumulative change) the division must also submit a completed articulation agreement with a four-year institution (an articulation agreement is only required for transfer programs which include A.A., A.A.T., and A.S. programs – excluding the Nursing A.S. program since it is a career program). The division can work with the DoI to complete the articulation agreement.

Step Two

After the modification is approved by the Curriculum Development and Review Committee, a "Letter of Notification", along with payment, is sent to MHEC by the CCAS if it is a non-substantial change. If the change is substantial a substantial modification proposal, articulation agreement with a four-year institution (an articulation agreement is only required for transfer programs which include A.A., A.A.T., and A.S. programs – excluding the Nursing A.S. program since it is a career program), a program change letter, along with payment from the College must be submitted to MHEC for state approval. The division can work with the DoI to complete the substantial modification proposal.



COMAR's new [13B.02.03.03 regulation](#) requires an MHEC notification to be sent for a *"change more than 50 percent of an existing program's course work, unless all of the proposed changes are required by an accreditor, licensing board, or other state or national*

entity that governs academic program elements required to enter into a particular field or industry”.

MHEC cumulates a program’s change percentage from the last substantial modification approval. Once a program reaches more than 50%, substantial documentation must be submitted and the program’s percentage of change resets to 0%. Program modifications totaling 50% or less of a program’s cumulative change percentage are considered non-substantial. The current listing can be found on the [Program Change Percentage Tracking](#) webpage.

A substantial change requires a [substantial modification proposal](#), an articulation agreement with a four-year institution (an articulation agreement is only required for transfer programs which include A.A., A.A.T., and A.S. programs – excluding the Nursing A.S. program since it is a career program), a program change letter, along with payment from the College must be submitted to MHEC for state approval. The CCAS can help divisions determine if cumulative change percentages are substantial or not. The division can work with the DoI to complete the substantial modification proposal and articulation agreement. The program change letter and payment will be initiated from the Academic Affairs Office.

A non-substantial change requires a program change letter and payment to be sent to MHEC from the Academic Affairs Office.

The calculation to determine the percent of current change is the following, which would need to then be added to the programs current cumulative percentage to determine the programs current percent of change:

**(added and removed program requirements [excluding general education requirements] +
added or removed free and restricted elective
[only if the total required free or restricted elective credits change])**

**(total program + restricted elective + free elective requirement credits
[excluding general education requirement credits])**

For example, if I remove HAP-101 (-3 credits) from the program requirements and added HAP-100 (+3 credits) in its place, these changes count as 6 credits of change to the program requirements (added plus removed). The total program + restricted elective + free elective requirement credits [excluding general education requirement credits] is 24 credits. So, $6 \text{ changed credits} / 24 = 0.25 = 25\%$ current change. We then want to add this percent of change to the current program change percentage, let’s say the program is currently at 26% cumulative change and we are adding the current 25% change – the program is now at 51% change and requires substantial modification.



Academic Affairs notifies MHEC of **associate degree** and **certificate** program modifications and title changes. *Changes to letter programs do not require MHEC notification.* Financial Aid also notifies the Department of Education of any new certificate programs, certificate programs that have increased above or dropped below 16 credits, and certificate programs that become inactive.

Courses

Course Curricular Actions - General

There are five main types of course curricular actions:

1. The development of new courses (New Course Proposal)
2. The addition or removal of new general education courses (Course Modification Proposal)
3. The modification of existing courses (Course Modification Proposal)
4. The inactivation of current courses (Course Inactivation Proposal)
5. The reactivation of an inactive course (Course Modification Proposal)

Reasons for Developing a New Course

Some of the most common reasons for new course development include:

- Adding new content in the discipline area
- Addressing the specific needs of a specialized group of students
- Filling gaps in student skill development and/or career preparation
- Implementing recommendations from an advisory committee
- Implementing requests from employers
- Utilizing results of program reviews
- Utilizing results of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA)

Reasons for Modifying an Existing Course

Some of the most common reasons for course modification include:

- A course description needs to be revised or updated
- A course number needs to be changed
- A course title needs to be revised
- A course pre-requisite or co-requisite needs to be changed or updated
- The course contact hours have increased or decreased
- The course credit hours have increased or decreased
- Substantial changes have been made to the course outcomes
- Added or removed as a general education course

Course Inactivation

Each year the CCAS will distribute a report to the division directors which includes all courses that have not actively run in the past two years. It is the responsibility of the division directors to review this report and determine if the courses should be inactivated or modified to meet current standards and offerings.

A course may be inactivated due to the following reasons:

- Course has consistent low enrollment or has not run in two or more years
- Course is no longer needed for the curriculum
- Course is being replaced by another course

Course Reactivation

A previously inactivated course may be reactivated in certain circumstances. For instance, a course that was previously taken out of the curriculum may now be important due to changing industry needs. Course reactivations need to be approved by the Curriculum Development and Review Committee.

Preparing Course Proposals

The following general criteria should always be considered when creating course proposals:

- Courses should not be “stand-alone” courses. Every course created should be tied to a degree, certificate, or letter program as some type of requirement OR made to be a general education course.
- Courses should be connected to disciplines which are designated by a *course prefix* (for example: a prefix of “MAT” designates a mathematics course).
- The number of course credits should align with the number of contact hours (i.e. number of hours a student has direct instructional contact with the instructor(s) of the course (for example: based on the amount of contact hours for a **lecture**, 1 course credit = 15 contact hours, 2 credits = 30 contact hours, and 3 credits = 45 contact hours; refer to p. 22).
- The course title and description should accurately reflect course content.
- Pre-requisites and co-requisites must be adequately aligned to support student success (for example: an introductory English course may have a developmental course or placement score as the pre-requisite, but a 200-level mathematics course may have a 100-level mathematics course as the pre-requisite to prepare students for the content they are about to learn).
- The course number must be appropriate for the level of the course (for example: the word “introduction” should not be included in the title of a 200-level course).
- The course description should align with the required standards of cohort groups, industry, or transfer institutions.
- The course content should align with the Student Learning Outcomes.
- The course should not duplicate existing courses or course content in other disciplines already offered by the College.
- The development or modification of a course should not adversely impact existing courses or programs.

Course Prefix, Number, and Title

Courses are identified by a prefix, number, and title.

Course prefix:

The course prefix consists of three letters which represent the discipline area of the course. The following guidelines should be considered when selecting a prefix for a course:

- Identify the discipline area under which the course content is categorized
- If you are unsure of the appropriate course prefix or number, please contact the CCAS to determine the “best-fit” prefix



If existing prefixes do not sufficiently represent the course, and if additional courses will be created with similar subject matter, the creation of a new prefix may be necessary. The selection of a new prefix should be a coordinated decision between the division, the VPAASS, and the CCAS.

Course number:

The course number consists of three numerical characters (and in some instances, followed by a letter). The division will work with the CCAS to determine a number that has the following characteristics:

- The proposed number has not been used in the present or past by this course prefix
- The proposed number is appropriate for the course level content
- The proposed number should be one that corresponds to an equivalent course offered at an articulating/transfer university (if possible and applicable)

Course numbering system:

Hagerstown Community College courses are currently numbered as follows:

001-100	Developmental Courses
101-199	Freshman/College Level Courses
200-299	Sophomore/College Level Courses
240	Capstone Courses
269-270	Internship I and Internship II Courses
290-299	Independent Study Courses
###C	Clinical Courses
###L	Laboratory Courses
###P	Packaged Courses
###X	Experimental Courses

Course title:

The course title clearly identifies the course and should be no longer than 60 characters. It also differentiates the course from other similar courses and identifies the content unique to that course. Please follow these guidelines when developing a course title:

1. Indicate level of course where appropriate:
Example: FRN-101 Elementary French I
FRN-102 Elementary French II
FRN-201 Intermediate French I
FRN-202 Intermediate French II
2. Use Roman numerals to indicate a sequence of courses, especially where one course may be a pre-requisite for the next one (see example above).

Experimental Courses

A new course may be offered as an experimental course. Experimental courses may be offered for up to two semesters before they must be approved by the Curriculum Development and Review Committee. Experimental courses are created in with an “X” at the end of the course number (example: BTC-120X). Once experimental courses are approved by the Curriculum Development and Review Committee, the “X” is removed.



To offer an experimental course, faculty and division directors must provide the CCAS with the following information so the course can be created in Ellucian and the catalog:

- Course Title
- Course Number
- Course Prefix
- Description
- Credits and Contact hours
- Instructional Method
- Any pre-requisites or co-requisites
- Program ties

Pre-requisites and Co-requisites

If a course requires students to have specific content knowledge previously, previously or concurrently, or just concurrently then a pre-requisite or co-requisite should be assigned. For example, if a student needs to understand the basic principles of electricity in order to be successful in an advanced electricity course, a pre-requisite is needed. However, if the student does not need to understand the basic principles of electricity to be successful in a facilities safety course, then a pre-requisite is not needed.

Course pre-requisites must be taken prior to the requisite course. However, co-requisites can be taken either previously or concurrently, or strictly concurrently with the requisite course.



Pre-requisites and co-requisites should be assigned solely based upon the necessary content knowledge needed to be successful in a given course. Pre-requisites and co-requisites should never be “hidden.” In other words, they should be clearly stated in the course requirements and should be aligned throughout the entire program. When designing the program pathway, be sure to make room for pre-requisites so that all steps toward program completion are transparent to students.

Cross-listed Courses

Cross-listed courses include two or more courses with similar course content that often differ in course prefix, course number, and title. The number of credit hours and additional scheduling information (time/days/room information) should be the same for all cross-listed courses. Courses may be cross-listed if they are offered concurrently. For instance, Jazz Band I, II, III and IV, may be taught at the same time, by the same instructor.

General Education Courses

Across multiple institutions and throughout the history of higher education, general education has meant different things from a philosophical perspective. However, the constant variable is the word, “general.” At HCC, general education courses should be appropriate in content level for every student (i.e. a “general” audience). They are meant to convey a core set of knowledge approved by our accrediting body. In addition, at HCC, general education courses are intended for students to explore a range of disciplines and ideas without requiring prior knowledge in these areas.



In keeping with the HCC philosophy of General Education, these courses should not have pre-requisites (unless the pre-requisites are developmental course requirements).

Credit or Credit Hour

The HCC definition of a credit hour formalizes compliance with federal and accreditation expectations and helps to provide consistency throughout the College. One credit hour is defined as, “a unit of measurement representing the equivalent of 50 minutes (at a minimum).

In the state of Maryland, The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), through the Code of Maryland (COMAR), regulates the granting of academic credits in the state’s institutions of higher education (COMAR 13B.02.02.16.C). Credit hours determines the minimum number of student contact hours required for an institution to grant an academic credit. Instructional methods are mentioned in the code but are not defined. COMAR states that one academic credit may be granted for the following:

A minimum of 15 contact hours, of 50 minutes each, of actual *lecture class time*, exclusive of registration, study days, and holidays.

A minimum of 30 contact hours, of 50 minutes each, of supervised *laboratory or studio time*, exclusive of registration, study days, and holidays.

Internship credit hours are determined by negotiation between the supervising faculty and the work supervisor at the cooperating site, both of whom must judge and certify different aspects of the student’s work. The credit formula is similar to that for practice credit.

A minimum of 45 contact hours, of 50 minutes each, of instructional situations such as *practicums, internships, and cooperative education placements*, when supervision is ensured and learning is documented.

Instructional Methods

At Hagerstown Community College, contact hours are granted for various types of instructional methods as follows:

Classroom Lecture and Application (CLA) (20-30 Student Contact Hours per Credit)

A class utilizing the applied lecture method involves participation in or the performance of some activity. Knowledge associated with the proper performance of skill or activity is presented by the instructor utilizing the lecture method. Students demonstrate acquisition of the knowledge by performing the skill or activity. The instructor provides guidance, critical review and final evaluation.

Clinical (CLN) (45-60 Student Contact Hours per Credit)

Clinical instruction occurs primarily in nursing related facilities and involves work with clients who receive professional services from students serving under direct or indirect supervision of a faculty member and/or an approved member of the agency staff. Students collaborate extensively with health professionals to provide critical and acute patient care in multiple settings.

Externship (EXT) (60 Student Contact Hours minimum per Credit)

Applied, monitored and supervised, field-based, hands-on learning experience. Students gain practical experience and follow a directed plan of study. Students are supervised by a preceptor who is a professional in the field of study and monitored by a faculty member.

Independent Study (IDS) (Ranges 1-3 credits, Contact Hours vary)

Students complete individualized plans of study in academic areas for which there is not currently a specific course in existence. The faculty member and students negotiate the details of the study plans. The student is given initial guidance by the instructor who follows up with critical review and final evaluation.

Internship/Practicum (INT) (60 Student Contact Hours minimum per Credit)

Applied, monitored and supervised, field-based, hands-on learning experience for which the student may or may not be paid. Students gain practical experience; they follow a negotiated and/or directed plan of study.

Laboratory (LAB) (30-45 Student Contact Hours per Credit)

Courses meeting in a defined physical setting (i.e., laboratory) for the purpose of the application of methods and principles of a discipline. (Includes instruction in a laboratory which provides a “virtual” or simulated experience that could occur in a “real-life” environment.) Section size varies according to accreditation standards, pedagogical limitations, level of offering, availability of laboratory stations, and equipment.

Lecture (LEC) (15 Student Contact Hours per Credit)

Faculty members orally present and interpret information, facts, concepts and principles in a face-to-face format. Instruction takes place in a traditional classroom setting. Section size varies by level and discipline. Instruction may involve student interaction in collaborative groups.

Simulation (SIM) (Contact Hours Vary) **content based*

Simulated teaching is the technique of learning and training in which the learner performs a specified role in an artificially created environment.

Tutorial (TUT) (Contact Hours vary)

Tutorials are provided for a student who has a critical need for an existing course that normally would be offered but is not available in a given semester, has been cancelled because of low enrollment or has too few students enrolled to run as a full-enrolled class. The Instructor schedules time independently with the student(s). The student is given initial guidance by the instructor who follows up with repeated, regularly scheduled individual student conferences and periodic review.

Modality (Delivery Methods)

Instruction can be delivered to students in different ways:

As Arranged (ASA) (Contact Hours are determined based on the course-level method and carry down to the section-level)

A course that does not have meeting days/times determined until a later date.

Hybrid (HYB) (Contact Hours are assumed to be the same as the Contact Hours required for the on-campus, face-to-face version of the course.)

Half the normal instructional time is provided as an on-campus in a face-to-face format. The remainder of the instruction is provided as it would be for a WEB (online) course. These classes are conducted as synchronous or asynchronous. Asynchronous meaning the section combines online, self-paced, instruction with face-to-face instruction. Students must be on campus at the meeting time designated on the schedule. Synchronous meaning the section combines live online instruction with face-to-face instruction. Students must be on campus (DAY/TIME); live online instruction will be delivered on (DAY/TIME).

Web-Delivered (WEB) (Contact Hours are assumed to be the same as the Contact Hours required for the on-campus, face-to-face LEC version of the course.)

These classes are conducted as synchronous or asynchronous via the internet. Asynchronous meaning the section is fully online, no required meeting times. Synchronous meaning the section is fully online with designated virtual meeting times. Students must sign in to Zoom/D2L at the scheduled meeting time.

Curriculum Submission/ Review/ Approval Process and Timelines

1. Curriculum Forms are to be submitted ***no later than CoB on the document deadline date for the intended monthly meeting***. Document due date information is located on the [Curriculum & Development Review webpage](#).
2. The CCAS reviews all submissions and distributes a preliminary agenda to the division directors and committee members one week prior to the division meetings, which are held on the first Thursday of each month.
3. Each division reviews the monthly curriculum submissions at their division meeting. If there are any concerns that arise at the division meeting in regards to a curriculum submission, the division representative or member must bring the concerns up at the official curriculum meeting for vote/feedback.
4. The CCAS will distribute a final agenda to the division directors and committee members the Monday prior to the Curriculum Meeting.
5. Each proposal is presented at the meeting by the original requestor or by a representative from the requesting division. It is strongly advised to have a representative present to explain each proposal. If there is no one present to explain the proposal, it may be tabled until the next meeting.
6. The committee will vote and declare the proposal as approved, denied, conditionally approved, partially approved, or tabled. If a proposal is tabled, it will need to be brought up again by the chair, co-chair, or the Curriculum & Development Review Committee to be added to a later agenda.
7. If the proposal is supported by the committee and the VPAASS declares it approved it will take effect according to the effective terms.

When Do Changes to Curricula go into Effect?

Curriculum changes are made for the upcoming catalog year. A “catalog year” is an academic year and begins with the fall semester and ends the following summer semester. Once the catalog is published in June, no further changes may be made to that catalog (any approved changes from that point on are added to the NEXT catalog during the upcoming curriculum committee cycle September through April).

As you make changes, please keep in mind:

- New courses and course modifications will become effective and displayed in the NEXT catalog following approval. Changes are not allowed in the current catalog once it is published.
- A course inactivation will become effective immediately in Ellucian-Colleague upon approval if there are no active sections. However, they will be reflected in the NEXT catalog.
- New Programs will become effective under the intended catalog when MHEC approval is received.
- Program Modifications will become effective the NEXT catalog year.

Retroactive Changes

Retroactive changes are very non-substantial changes *that have already been published in the current Catalog* but are just coming through the Curriculum Development and Review Committee for “notification purposes.” These changes must have received approval by the division director, faculty, VPAASS, and CCAS between the last curriculum meeting held in April and the time the catalog published in June/July.

Allowable retroactive changes include:

- minor course modifications that do not impact other divisions
- programs recently approved by MHEC
- courses for recent MHEC-approved programs
- a stand-alone course inactivation not affecting other course requisites or program requirements

Discontinued Programs

When a program of study is discontinued, students will be afforded time to complete the program requirements. Academic Directors are responsible for approving a student's plan to complete his/her coursework. This plan may include a combination of waivers and substitutions for program requirements, not to exceed 9 combined credits. Under no circumstances can an alternative completion plan result in students graduating with fewer than 60 credits. The length of time for services and benefits to be extended is determined by the number of credits the student needs to complete the program with a maximum of two years after the discontinuation of an associate or certificate program, and a maximum of one year for a letter of recognition. Requests for further extension must be submitted in writing to the VPAASS. Please note that *program reactivations* require a new program proposal and MHEC approval.

Watermark™ Curriculum Strategy Software

[Watermark™ Curriculum Strategy](#) is Hagerstown Community College's online Curriculum Management System that automates the process of course and program approvals through electronic workflows. The online system allows full-time faculty and directors to submit changes towards new and existing programs and courses for the upcoming college catalog.

For more information on how to sign in and use the software please refer to the [Watermark™ Curriculum Strategy End User Manual](#).

Additional Curricula-Related Terms Used at HCC

Although the following concepts are commonly used in discussing curriculum-related issues, they often have somewhat different meanings. These are the definitions that are used at HCC:

Accreditation:	The process used by the Middle State Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) to evaluate the College.
Active:	The status that designates that a course or program is eligible to be included in the College catalog.
Advisory Committee:	A committee composed of representatives from a specific industry that provides advice and direction to a program.
Alignment:	The deliberate connection between a course or program and a set of standards or outcomes.
Articulation Agreement:	A formal agreement between two educational institutions that facilitates the transfer of students from one institution to the other. These agreements may include how course and/or degree programs transfer to meet requirements at another school and the maximum number of credits and/or additional benefits to students (e.g. reduced tuition or admission fees).
Catalog:	The College's publication describing academic programs and courses, student services, general regulations, requirements, and procedures for a single academic year.
Cohort:	A cohort in education is commonly defined as a group of students who work through a curriculum concurrently to achieve the same academic degree. At HCC, cohort groups exist in the Health Sciences and Nursing areas.
COMAR:	Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) is the official compilation of all administrative regulations issued by agencies of the state of Maryland.

Contact Hour:	Amount of time students have direct instructional contact with the instructor(s) of a course.
Developmental Course:	Courses designed to improve academic skills for college students who do not yet meet post-secondary skill level.
General Education Course:	Courses to improve the basic skills in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies through instructor-directed lessons, computer-based programs, and independent work outside of the classroom.
Inactive:	Status designation for a course or program previously offered by the College, but currently not eligible for scheduling or inclusion in the catalog.
Restricted Electives:	A group of courses specifically identified for a program that the student must choose from.
Transfer Program:	A degree designated to meet the educational needs of students planning to continue their education at a four-year college or university.
Unit Planning:	An integrated process of planning, evaluation, and budgeting for the following fiscal year. Unit planning meetings are held from September through October, with academic units generally convening first.