

Buckheit, James

From: CCDQ@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, January 04, 2006 8:49 AM
To: j buckheit@state.pa.us
Subject: Re: Chapter 31 Comments

Jim:
We thought we could resolve this with staff sooner, but we ran out of time.
Dick

From:
Pennsylvania Association of Private
School Administrators
Richard Dumaresq

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

CHAPTER 31 ISSUES

January 3, 2006

Background

The AST/B degree is an occupational, as opposed to an academic degree. Historically, it has been taught by craftspeople and artisans to prepare the next generation of technicians and technologists. As such, for 35 years, general education has been designed as applied general education in support of the specialized, technical program.

According to the Master Plan for Higher Education (2005) graduates of specialized associate degrees “possess such general and specific knowledge in a technical, professional or intellectual field as to be able to lead productive lives.” (p.4) In addition, the Master Plan clearly delineates the AST/B degrees from the more formal academic degrees when it states, “Technical and career education at the two and four year levels will be more widely available to students and aligned to the needs of business and industry.” (p.4)

As a result, all coursework, whether general or specialized, directly supports the outcome of preparation specifically for business and industry.

PAPSA also notes that the general education standard used by the national commissions that accredit the ASB/T schools is “applied” general education which supports the specialized education component.

In addition, we note that Chapter 31 of the Master plan is silent on a definition of general education. As a result, it is left to institutional faculty and administration to determine the appropriateness of the general education component offered at the institution.

Since general education is not defined in regulation and is not specifically delineated or delimited in any way, then institutional faculty and administration would propose the general education rationale. In fact, the design of general education has always been under the purview of institutional staff. This is not an approval area for Department of Education staff since a Chapter 31 definition is absent and, historically, the approval of general education in postsecondary education has always rested with the institution.

Purpose

The purpose of the following guidelines is to provide regulatory clarification for review teams, staff, faculty and school administrators so that there can be consistent interpretation for all colleges and schools with occupational associate degrees (ASB/AST).

I.a. General Education (Gen Ed) Definition

In occupational (ASB/T) associate's degree programs, general education is defined as education in applied mathematics, communications, natural sciences, social sciences, technology, humanities and the arts which enhance the ability of a graduate to apply specialized occupational skills in the workplace.

b. Related Instruction Definition

Related instruction is offered only in ASB/T degree programs and must place an emphasis on practical applications of principles and theory associated with a particular occupation. Related instruction is directly applicable to a specific occupation in related written and oral communication, quantitative principles, natural and physical sciences, social and behavioral sciences, technology, humanities and fine arts which enhance the ability of an individual to apply occupational skills in the workplace. Related instruction is included in the calculation of the 20-30 percent general education structure of an ASB/T program (see d.).

c. Specialized Technical and Occupational Education Definition

Specialized technical and occupational education is directly applicable to a specific occupation.

d. Percentage Delineation of the Program

Between 20-30 percent of the AST/B program must be either general education or related instruction. For a standard semester based AST/B degree, there should be a minimum of 300 hours or 12 credit hours of general and/or related education.

Between 70-80 percent of the AST/B program must be specialized technical and occupational education.

e. Responsibility for Determining General Education

It is the responsibility of faculty, working with school administration, to determine the appropriate general education and related instruction that support or enhance a particular program that would allow an individual to apply occupational skills in the workplace. Faculty and administration should be able to provide a clear rationale, consistent with generally accepted standards, for each general education and related instruction subject and how such education will support the learning outcomes of a particular program. In addition, faculty and administration must demonstrate that the general education provided meets the standards of the institution's accrediting commission.

f. Examples

Based on the above definitions of general education, the following are currently approved as AST/B general education. While this is not an all encompassing list, it does provide a guide to some acceptable general education subjects.

Statistics	Principles of Sociology
Business Management Principles and Practices	Business English
Introduction to Computers/Windows Operating Systems	Public Speaking
Technical Writing	Nutrition
Technical Math-Algebra	Human Anatomy/Physiology
Job Search/Professional Development	Art History
	Geometry and Measurement-Carpentry Math

II. Faculty Preparation

Faculty members teaching related instruction or specialized technical and occupational subjects in an AST/B program must demonstrate competency in the assigned teaching field, such as academic or vocational training and credentials, related work experience, licensure or certification. The institution must be able to demonstrate and justify the qualifications of the faculty to teach their assigned courses.

III. Library/Learning Resource Center (LRC)

- a. Staffing. An individual with the ability to maintain the resources and to assist students and faculty shall be designated to oversee the learning resources of the institution.
- b. Function. The library function is shaped by the educational programs of the institution and may be carried out in the LRC and/or the classrooms.
- c. Outputs. The ultimate test of a library/LRC's adequacy is determined by the extent to which its resources support all the courses offered by the institution. Is there a plan in place on how the resources of the LRC are used inside and outside the classroom; how will the institution document a student's ability to use the LRC effectively and how will the LRC and the program enhance the student's ability to perform research while providing for continued life long learning?