Federal Requirement 4.2

9. The institution’s curriculum is directly related and appropriate to the purpose and goals of the institution and the diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded.  
   (Federal Requirement 4.2)
   ___X___ Compliance  ___ Non-Compliance

4.2 – Program Curriculum

Narrative:

Chipola College maintains a curriculum that is directly related and appropriate to the mission of the institution. The degrees and certificates awarded are made up of courses of study that follow standards and practices typical of US and Florida institutions of higher learning. The requirements established by the Florida Department of Education and Legislature, the oversight of the Chipola College Curriculum and Courses of Study Committee, and the careful administration of all aspects of the degrees ensure that the institution’s curriculum is directly related and appropriate to the purpose, goals, and certificates/degrees delivered.

Chipola’s degree programs are compatible with its mission, which states in part:  

Chipola is a comprehensive public college whose mission is to provide accessible, affordable, quality educational opportunities. . . .

Chipola provides the following:

• Educational programs which include general and pre-professional classes leading to the Associate in Arts degree for transfer into baccalaureate degree programs;

• Selected baccalaureate degree programs which produce educated and capable professionals;

• Workforce Development programs leading to Associate in Science degrees and Certificates of Training to prepare students for careers . . . .

As detailed in the Chipola College Catalog, only the educational programs referred to in the mission statement are offered at Chipola College.

Florida Degree Program Requirements

Florida educational statutes, rules, and Department of Education (DOE) policies and procedures mandate the following:
- Florida Statute, Section 1007.25 and Administrative Rules mandate that the minimum semester hour general education requirements are the same at all Florida College System institutions and universities in the state: at least 36 semester hours for AA and BS degrees and at least 15 for AS degrees (\cite{3}; \cite{4}).

- The Florida system of higher education ensures articulation from the Division of Florida Colleges (DFC) to the State University System (SUS) in statute and policy. The Articulation Coordinating Committee (ACC) is a K-20 advisory body appointed by the Commissioner of Education. The ACC exists to coordinate ways to help students move easily from institution to institution and from one level of education to the next. The ACC works with the DOE to ensure that programs offered in public institutions of higher education in Florida embody a coherent course of study and are appropriate to higher education (\cite{3}; \cite{5}; \cite{6}).

- The State Course Numbering System (SCNS), “created in the 1960s, is a key component of Florida's K-20 seamless system of articulation. The system provides a database of post-secondary courses at public vocational-technical centers, Florida college system institutions, universities, and participating nonpublic institutions. The assigned numbers describe course content to improve research, assist program planning, and facilitate the transfer of students” (SCNS webpage). This mandate for the SCNS is in statute and administrative rule. Therefore, all courses offered at Florida college system institutions and universities are appropriate to higher education. Information about the SCNS is available on the SCNS website and on pages 104-105 in the Chipola College Catalog (\cite{3}; \cite{7}; \cite{8}; \cite{9}).

- Florida Administrative Rule 6A-10.0242 establishes procedures for distinguishing lower division (freshman or sophomore) courses from upper division (junior or senior) courses and identifying the level appropriate to each course. Chipola and all other public institutions of higher education adhere to these classifications. Offering courses that increase in level and complexity as the student progresses helps ensure that degree and certificate programs embody a coherent course of study (\cite{8}; \cite{10}).

- The FDOE places a high priority on providing a seamless transfer for every student from a Florida college system institution into a Baccalaureate program at a public college or university. The Common Prerequisite Manual for Public Institutions is published by the DOE and details common lower-level prerequisites for all Baccalaureate degrees offered by public institutions of higher education in the State of Florida. Chipola follows the requirements detailed in the manual, thus ensuring that the courses of study for students are coherent and appropriate to higher education. The manual is included on the FACTS.org website and in hard-copy form. (FACTS.org is an acronym for Florida Academic Counseling and Tracking for Students) (\cite{3}; \cite{5}; \cite{6}; \cite{11}).
Chipola College Degree Programs

Chipola College offers Bachelor’s degrees, Associate degrees, and Certificates. Each of these degrees/certificates is made up of coherent courses of study beginning with freshman level work and progressing to higher level work that requires critical thinking and other higher-level skills and knowledge. The degree programs strike a coherent balance of general education studies and the study of a specific subject or skill area chosen by the student. The certificate courses of study adhere to state-approved frameworks and prepare students to enter the workforce, typically after one year of study. In all cases, the fields of study have been identified by the FDOE and Chipola’s Curriculum and Courses of Study Committee, faculty, and administrators as appropriate to higher education (4).

Chipola’s Student Affairs Department maintains and updates Academic Plans for all of Chipola’s programs. These guides clearly show the recommended coherent sequence of courses for each Chipola program, beginning with the first semester of the freshman year. In addition, for many of the Baccalaureate degrees offered at the five universities to which most Chipola students transfer, there are university-specific Academic Plans showing the sequence of courses to be taken the first two years at Chipola (12).

Chipola College offers seven BS degrees in teacher education: (1) Elementary Education, (2) English Education, (3) Exceptional Student Education, (4) Middle School Mathematics Education, (5) Secondary Mathematics Education, (6) Middle School Science Education, and (7) Biology Education. The State of Florida has established very specific and rigorous guidelines and standards for all teacher education programs (TEPs). All public TEPs must go through a stringent application process to receive state approval. All of Chipola’s TEPs are state approved. The application requires demonstration of a coherent and appropriate course of study for each teacher education degree. Most of the upper level courses of study are prescribed by the State, thus ensuring consistency among TEPs across all public institutions of higher education (13).

In accordance with State requirements, Chipola’s BS in Education degrees require satisfactory completion of at least 36 general education courses in the areas of Communications, Humanities, Mathematics, Natural Science, and Social Science, nine hours of prerequisite teacher education courses, and appropriate subject area courses to equal 60 semester hours. In the BS junior and senior years students must complete 60 semesters hours of state-mandated professional education, methods, and subject area courses. The course of study ends with a semester-long student teaching experience in which students apply all they have learned in a real teaching situation. The length of each BS program is 120 semester hours. Academic Plans for the BS teacher education degrees are available on the Chipola website and on pages 70-80 in the Chipola College Catalog (3); (12); (13); (14).

Chipola College also offers the Bachelor of Science in Nursing. This degree is a “two-plus-two” degree--RN to BSN. Applicants for the BS in Nursing must have earned the AA degree and AS degree in Nursing, be licensed Registered Nurses, and have completed all required prerequisite courses. This program is approved by the
Department of Education and the State Board of Nursing. The Academic Plans for the degree are in the Chipola College Catalog, page 71 [15].

The college offers a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, with concentrations in Accounting and Management. An AA degree is required of applicants with all of the prerequisites for the business degree program. The academic plans for each concentration are approved by the Department of Education, and the courses are included in the State Course Numbering System. The academic plans for the degree are in the Chipola College Catalog on pages 69-70 [16].

In addition to the Bachelor in Science degrees, Chipola College also offers Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, and Certificates in several Workforce Development fields.

The Associate in Arts degree requires at least 36 semester hours of general education credit in the areas of Communications, Humanities, Mathematics, Natural Science, and Social Science. Students must take additional courses, to total at least 60 semester hours, required for their major when they transfer. For any given major or degree, these prerequisites are the same across all Florida state colleges and universities as detailed above. Information about the AA degree requirements is detailed on pages 80-85 of the Chipola College Catalog. Curriculum guides detailing these prerequisites are available on Chipola’s website [12]; [17].

The courses of study in all Associate in Science (AS) degrees and Certificates are based on state-approved curriculum frameworks that have been established for all Workforce Development program areas. Chipola and all other institutions in the Florida College System develop their AS degree and certificate program content based on these frameworks which have been carefully formulated to embody coherent courses of study that are appropriate to higher education as well as satisfy employment credentialing. The Academic Plans detailing the sequence of courses for each AS degree are in the Chipola College Catalog on pages 86-95 [12]; [18]; [19].

The AS degrees and certificate programs prepare students to enter specific occupations upon graduation. AS degrees require the successful completion of at least 15 semester hours of general education credit in the areas of Communications, Humanities/Fine Arts, Social/Behavioral Sciences, and Natural Science/Mathematics. Students must take additional courses, to total at least 60 semester hours, in courses required for the degree [3].

In accordance with state statutes and professional standards and requirements, Certificate programs in Florida college system institutions do not have a general education component. Certificate programs may be either credit or clock-hour and teach the skills that individuals will need to enter the workforce. The Academic Plans detailing the sequence of courses for the certificate programs are in the Chipola College Catalog on pages 96-101 [20].
Distance Learning: Ensuring Appropriate Program Curriculum
The Vice President of Instruction and department deans/directors are careful to select courses for online format that can be taught effectively online. Likewise, the Curriculum and Courses of Study Committee considers the appropriateness of delivery format for all courses proposed for approval. The same high standards govern the preparation and delivery of both online and on-campus instruction.

Documentation:

[1] Chipola College Mission Statement

[2] Chipola College Catalog, Programs of Study

[3] Florida Statutes, Section 1007.25. General Education Courses; Common Prerequisites; and Other Degree Requirements

[4] Chipola College Board Policy Number 2.050: General Education


[6] Articulation Coordinating Committee Website

[7] State Course Numbering System Website

[8] Florida Statutes, Section 1007.24. Statewide Course Numbering System

[9] Chipola College Catalog, Course Prefixes

[10] Rule 6A-10.0242 - Procedures for Determining the Level at which Courses Shall be Classified

[11] Common Prerequisite Website

[12] Chipola College Website – Academic Plans


[14] Chipola College Catalog, BS Degree Academic Plans

[15] Chipola College Catalog, BS in Nursing
[16] Chipola College Catalog, BS Degrees
[17] Chipola College Catalog, AA Degrees
[18] Curriculum Frameworks Website
[19] Chipola College Catalog, AS Degrees
[20] Chipola College Catalog, Certificate Programs