

**STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND OCCUPATIONAL
EDUCATION**

ASSOCIATE DEGREE AND PROGRAM DESIGNATIONS AND STANDARDS

BP 9-40

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ISSUED BY:

Dr. Nancy McCallin, System President

Policy Statement

An associate degree program reflects the larger goals of educational attainment the institution holds for its students. The associate degree indicates that the holder has developed proficiencies sufficient to prepare for upper-division collegiate work, or to enter directly into a specific occupation or to meet individual career goals. An associate degree is awarded only for completion of a coherent program of study designed for a specific purpose. This policy defines the associate degrees, program designations, and minimum standards.

Scope

This policy applies to all programs that the Board approves pursuant to C.R.S. 23-60-202(1)(f).

Degree Designations and Standards

Associate of Arts Degree (AA)

Associate of Arts (A.A.). A two-year academic degree designed to transfer to a four-year degree program, limited to 60 credits.

- ➤ An Associate of Arts without designation is designed to transfer into liberal arts programs.
- ➤ An Associate of Arts degree with a program designation is designed to transfer into a specific four-year program aligned with a Statewide Articulation Agreement.

Associate of Science Degree (AS)

Associate of Science (A.S.). A two-year academic degree designed to transfer to a four-year degree program, limited to 60 credits.

- ➤ An Associate of Science without designation is designed to transfer into math and science degree programs.
- ➤ An Associate of Science degree with a program designation is designed to transfer into a specific four-year program aligned with a Statewide Articulation Agreement.

Associate of General Studies Degree (AGS)

There are two types of AGS degrees.

This first type of the AGS degree is designed to meet individual career goals with no intent of transferring to baccalaureate degree programs. It consists of a broad program of both career and traditional transfer courses without the constraints of specialization. Transferability of this customized degree program depends upon the courses taken and the receiving institution. The AGS Degree is limited to 60 credits, and requires at least 30 semester hours of general education. Fifteen of these semester hours must be in prescribed general education courses labeled as those accepted in the State Guaranteed General Education Transfer and designated as such in the college catalogue.

The second type of the AGS degree is used as a technical pre-professional transfer degree with a major field specified, is designed for students to transfer into a baccalaureate degree program with junior standing, based on a written articulation agreement with one or more designated institutions. The course of study for the various fields of specialization must be outlined in the college catalogue as well as the identification of the baccalaureate institution(s) that have agreed to accept the program in transfer. The AGS Degree is limited to 60 credits, and requires at least 30 semester hours of general education. The other hours will be subject to the terms of the agreement with the baccalaureate institution(s).

Associate of Applied Science (AAS)

This degree (with the occupational field specified) is intended to prepare individuals to enter skilled and/or paraprofessional occupations or to

upgrade/stabilize their employment. These programs are not intended for transfer to baccalaureate degree programs; however, certain courses may be accepted toward a bachelor's degree at some senior institutions. The range of semester credit hours is 60 (minimum) to 75 (maximum). Exceptions to the AAS degree maximum of 75 semester credit hours may be granted in those fields in which there is a demonstrated need that requires additional course work. The general education component of the AAS is 15 semester credit hours.

General Education Requirements

Definition of General Education - General education is 'general' in several clearly identifiable ways: it is not directly related to a student's formal technical, vocational or professional preparation; it is a part of every student's course of study, regardless of his or her area of emphasis; and it is intended to impart common knowledge, intellectual concepts, and attitudes which every educated person should possess.

Transcripts

For all associate degrees, the transcript of a student should reveal the exact nature of the program completed. A grade of "C" or better is required in each course applied to the AA/AS/AGS degree in order to be accepted for guaranteed transfer as described in CCHE Transfer Policy.

State Guaranteed Transfer Courses

The State Guaranteed General Education Transfer Courses (GT-Pathways) are designated by CCHE as those whose transfer to Colorado public higher education institutions is guaranteed. The Community College core includes at least the appropriate courses and their distribution to meet the State Guarantee program. The Community College core will fulfill lower-division general education requirements for the Associate of Arts and the Associate of Science degrees at all community/junior colleges in Colorado. When the required general education courses have been completed satisfactorily, they fulfill the lower-division general education requirements of most liberal arts and sciences baccalaureates in Colorado public higher education institutions as described in the Commission on Higher Education's Transfer Policy. Once a student has been certified by a community/junior college on the official transcript as having completed satisfactorily its general education core curriculum, regardless of whether the associate degree is conferred, no other state university or community/junior college to which he or she may transfer shall require any further such lower-division general education courses. When a student has not completed the guaranteed transfer courses prior to transfer, the receiving institutions will review and accept courses on a course-by-course basis in relation to college or university requirements. All renewal/change efforts in the degree

program will follow a process approved by the Vice President for Educational Services.

Transferability of General Education Credits

Any equivalent general education course from an accredited Colorado educational institution may be transferred to state system community/junior colleges to fulfill the general education requirements in a comparable degree program.

Credit for Prior College Level Learning

Individual colleges may award credit for prior learning in accordance with SBCCOE policy.

Other Standards for AAS Degrees

In the case of an Associate of Applied Science degree, the general education and occupational content must meet the appropriate guidelines established by the System staff.

The program must be consistent with the role and mission of the institution.

Approval of Degree Programs

A new associate degree program must be submitted and approved according to policies and procedures established by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education and Board policy.

Procedures

The system president shall promulgate procedures as necessary to implement this policy.