

CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES FOR ESTABLISHING NEW CERTIFICATE AND DEGREE PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS

Arkansas Code Annotated §6-61-208 charges the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) with the responsibility to evaluate proposals for all new units of instruction, research, and public service, consistent with established role and scope designations, and to approve programs and organizational units based on established policies. The program approval policy was updated and clarified in 2004.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
PART 1 – ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS	5
Section 1. New Programs and Organizational Units Requiring Coordinating Board Approval	
Section 2. New Programs and Organizational Units Requiring ADHE Director Approval Unless Approval Requested by Coordinating Board	
PART 2 – GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS FOR NEW PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS	9
Section 1. Guidelines for New Program Proposals	
Section 2. Guidelines for New Organizational Units	
Section 3. Guidelines for the Preparation of New Program/Unit Budgets	
Section 4. Deadlines for Submission of Letter of Intent, Proposals and Letter of Notification	
PART 3 – PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS	12
Section 1. Program Request and Proposal Submission	
Section 2. Proposal Review by Chief Academic Officers	
Section 3. Proposal Review by ADHE Staff	
Section 4. Consultant Review of Proposals	
Section 5. Proposal Review by Executive Council	
Section 6. Proposals Recommended to the Coordinating Board	
Section 7. Limitations on Coordinating Board Approval	
Section 8. Follow-up Reviews of Approved Programs	

Section 9. Letter of Notification – Coordinating Board Approval Not Required

Appendix A – Program Resources and Assessment	15
Faculty Resources and Credentials	
Library Resources	
Instructional Support and Technology	
Assessment and Evaluation	
Programs Requiring Accreditation, Licensure or Certification	
Traditional Instruction (In-Class)	
Non-traditional Instruction (Self-Paced, Distance Technology)	
Experiential Learning Credits	
Certificate and Degree Granting Authority	
Appendix B – Definitions	19
Certificates	
Certificate of Proficiency	
Technical Certificate	
Advanced Certificate	
Graduate Certificate	
Degrees	
Undergraduate	
Graduate	
First-Professional	
Organizational/Administrative Units	
Appendix C – Minimum General Education Core, Technical Core and Statewide Programs	27

CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES FOR PREPARING PROPOSALS FOR NEW CERTIFICATE AND DEGREE PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS

INTRODUCTION

Arkansas Code Annotated §6-61-208 charges the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (Coordinating Board) with the responsibility to evaluate proposals for all new units of instruction, research, and public service, consistent with established role and scope designations, and to approve programs and organizational units based on established policies. A new unit of instruction, research or public service includes:

- New curricula
- Majors leading to a new certificate or degree program
- Establishment of a department, division, college, school, center, and institute
- New extension service
- Organizational unit not presently established at the institution.

The Coordinating Board is not required to consider reasonable and moderate extensions of existing curricular, research, and public service programs at the public institutions of higher education. Thus, the Coordinating Board has granted oversight authority to the Director of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) to monitor these activities and notify the Board at its regular meetings. State general revenues cannot be expended for new programs or units that are not approved by the Coordinating Board.

This document sets forth the relevant criteria and compliance procedures for the staff of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) and administrators and faculty members of the public colleges and universities.

PART 1. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS

A Letter of Intent must be submitted to ADHE for a new program or organizational unit that requires Coordinating Board approval. The proposal for a new program/unit must be approved by the institutional Board of Trustees before consideration by the Coordinating Board. Programmatic and organizational changes that require ADHE Director (Director) approval must be submitted to ADHE in a Letter of Notification. *For any new program or unit to be considered, an institution first must notify (via e-mail) all Arkansas public colleges and universities of the proposed program or unit and submit to ADHE any institutional responses that oppose the initiation of the proposed program/unit.*

The ADHE Executive Staff will present a recommendation on new programs/units that require Coordinating Board approval at a regularly scheduled Coordinating Board meeting. *Coordinating Board approval of the new program/unit is required prior to initiation. The Board will be notified of new programs or units approved by the ADHE Director upon program/unit approval. New programs and units that the Director approves for immediate implementation will be listed in the Letters of Notification agenda item at the next scheduled Coordinating Board meeting.* The deadlines for submission of the Letter of Intent, Letter of Notification, and Proposal are listed in Part 2, Section 4.

Section 1. New Programs and Organizational Units Requiring Coordinating Board Approval (Submit Letter of Intent and Proposal)

1. A new program of instruction, regardless of mode of delivery, that results in a certificate or degree. The program should complement and build upon existing programs and follow accepted higher education structure for the discipline and program level. If the certificate or degree program is designed for professional certification or licensure, documentation of appropriate agency/board *initial review/* approval must be submitted. ADHE staff will conduct an on-campus visit if the institution is offering its first certificate or degree program by distance technology. Definitions of certificate and degree programs are described in Appendix B.

(Coordinating Board approval is not required for new options, certificates, and degrees developed *primarily* from existing courses and degrees. See Sections 2.8 – 2.11.)

2. Any change in academic organization to establish new administrative units, if such units are to serve as a base for faculty appointments or are to offer degree programs. Definitions of academic administrative units are described in Appendix B.
3. New off-campus instruction centers where students can receive a minimum of 50 percent of the credits in a major field of study that are required for an existing certificate or degree from the institution. Instruction may be delivered on-site, through distance technology or correspondence. The Letter of Intent must be submitted prior to the signing of any agreement to establish off-campus instructional facilities.

4. Reactivation of any certificate, degree program *or unit* formally on inactive status for five years.

Section 2. Program and Unit Changes Requiring ADHE Director Approval Unless Prior Review Requested by Coordinating Board (Submit Letter of Notification)

1. Changes in name only of an existing degree, certificate, major, option or organizational unit where the curriculum or emphasis will not be modified.
2. Establishment of a center, division, institute or similar major administrative unit not offering primary faculty appointments or degree programs. The mission and role of the administrative unit must be submitted with the Letter of Notification.
3. The addition of a specialized course of study (option, concentration, emphasis, focus) as a component of an approved degree program if the number of new theory courses added to the curriculum does not exceed 21 semester credit hours (excluding a maximum of 6 semester credit hours of new clinical, practicum or internship courses). The new option must consist of a minimum of 9 semester credit hours. A list of the required courses in the option, the new course descriptions, the goals, objectives and student learning outcomes, *projected annual enrollment*, and justification/*need* for offering the new option must be submitted with the Letter of Notification.

(A proposal must be submitted for an option requiring more than 21 semester credit hours of new theory courses.)

4. Establishment of a new instruction, research or service institute/center fully supported by sources other than state funds that will definitely terminate when non-state funding ceases. A synopsis of the mission and role of the institute or center, the projected annual budget, and the sources of funding must be submitted with the Letter of Notification.
5. Deletion of options, certificates, degree programs and organizational units. Program/unit deletions will be reported annually to the Coordinating Board.
6. Placement of a certificate or degree program on inactive status.
7. A change in structure to reorganize existing organizational units. The existing and proposed organizational structure and the justification for the change in structure must be submitted with the Letter of Notification.
8. An undergraduate certificate program consisting of 6-21 semester credit hours. The curriculum, list of required courses, new course descriptions, the goals, objectives and student learning outcomes, *projected annual enrollment*, and justification/*need* for offering the new program must be submitted with the Letter of

Notification. If the certificate program is designed for professional certification or licensure, documentation of appropriate agency/board *initial review*/approval also must be submitted.

9. An undergraduate certificate/*endorsement* program (21-45 semester) developed from an approved associate or bachelor's degree program provided that 75 percent of the coursework in the new certificate is included in the existing degree program. The curriculum, list of required courses, new course descriptions, the goals, objectives and student learning outcomes, *projected annual enrollment*, and justification/*need* for offering the new program must be submitted with the Letter of Notification. If the certificate program is designed for professional certification or licensure, documentation of appropriate agency/board *initial review*/approval also must be submitted.
10. A graduate certificate/*endorsement* program consisting of 12-21 semester credit hours of existing graduate courses that reflects a coherent academic accomplishment or meets requirements for professional licensure or certification. The curriculum, new course descriptions, the goals, objectives and student learning outcomes, *projected annual enrollment*, and justification/*need* for offering the new program, and professional licensure or certification criteria must be submitted with the Letter of Notification. If the certificate program is designed for professional certification or licensure, documentation of appropriate agency/board *initial review*/approval also must be submitted. Arkansas Department of Education approval must be submitted for certificate programs for teacher licensure or endorsement.
11. Reconfiguration of existing undergraduate or graduate degree programs to create a new degree. The existing and proposed curricula, list of required core courses, new course descriptions, the goals, objectives and student learning outcomes, *projected annual enrollment*, and justification/*need* for the new program must be submitted with the Letter of Notification.

Consolidation of Existing Degrees - The new combined degree program must require 12 semester credit hours of core courses with a minimum of two courses taken from each of the existing degree majors. Modification of Existing Degree to Create New Degrees - An existing degree major must include required courses in at least two disciplines for the degree to be separated into two or more new degree programs.

12. An existing certificate or degree program in which at least 50 percent of the total credits will be offered at an off-campus location. The institution proposing the program must submit the Letter of Notification and indicate why the institution plans to offer the program off-campus. If the program will be offered at an off-campus location in Arkansas, documentation of the discussions with the President/Chancellor and Academic Affairs Officer at the institutions in the surrounding area of the proposed off-campus location also must be submitted with the Letter of Notification. Should there be a dispute between the institutions, the Off-Campus Instruction Policy (AHECB 5.17) *on conflict resolution* must be followed.

Note: *An institution must inform ADHE (via e-mail) of any courses under consideration for offering at an off-campus location prior to initiation.*

13. An existing certificate or degree program in which at least 50 percent of the total credits will be offered through distance technology. The Letter of Notification must indicate why the institution plans to offer the program through distance technology. If the institution is planning to offer its first degree by distance technology, a new program proposal must be submitted to ADHE by the established deadline. The institution also must submit a copy of its responses to the Higher Learning Commission--NCA document that outlines institutional best practices for electronically offered programs. ADHE staff will conduct an on-campus visit prior to Coordinating Board consideration of the new distance technology program. Assessment of distance programs must be consistent with institutional assessment practices on the campus and program outcomes must be the same for both traditional and distance delivery methods. ADHE staff review of programs offered through distance technology will be conducted on a 5-year cycle.

PART 2. GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS FOR NEW PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS

Section 1. Guidelines for Proposals – New Programs

New programs that require Coordinating Board approval are listed in Part 1, Section 1. Proposals for new programs must be submitted to ADHE on appropriate forms and include the following information:

- Proposed program title
- Program initiation date
- General description of the program
- Documentation of need for the program and student demand/interest
- Program goals, objectives and student learning outcomes
- Program curriculum and new course descriptions
- List of program faculty (names and credentials)
- Description of program resources (library, instructional equipment and facilities, technology support)
- Program budget (new funds required and funding sources)
- Program duplication (similar programs in Arkansas)
- Institutional program *viability*
- Institutional and Board of Trustees approval of proposed program.

Section 2. Guidelines for Proposals – New Organizational Units

New organizational units that require Coordinating Board approval are listed in Part 1, Section 1. Proposals for new units must be submitted to ADHE on appropriate forms and include the following information:

- Description of proposed organizational unit
- Unit initiation date
- Justification for establishment of new unit
- Current and proposed organizational chart
- Unit budget (new administrative costs and funding sources)
- Institutional and Board of Trustees approval of proposed unit.

Section 3. Guidelines for Preparation of New Program/Unit Budgets

In order for ADHE staff to assess the adequacy of resources to support the proposed program/unit, a detailed list of resource requirements and planned funding sources must be presented. Institutions must provide evidence of the source of adequate funding.

Funding for new programs/units will either be supplied from new or existing sources. If funds are to be redistributed to the proposed program/unit, the source of funding must be identified and an analysis of the impact that the redistribution of funds will have on existing programs or organizational units must be stated. If the redistribution is from the

deletion of an existing program/unit, documentation of sufficient savings to the state to offset new program/unit costs must be provided.

New funding from student tuition, fees, and state general revenue generated by new student semester credit hours (SSCH), grants/contracts or other sources must be identified. Calculations and/or formulas that were used to project new revenue should be included in the budget section (e.g., number of new students projected in proposed program multiplied by tuition and fees; state general revenue dollars per FTE multiplied by projected number of FTEs to enroll in the new program).

<u>Resource Requirements</u>	<u>1st Year</u> (in dollars)	<u>2nd Year</u> (in dollars)	<u>3rd Year</u> (in dollars)

Staffing (Number)			
Administrative/Professional			
Full-time Faculty			
Part-time Faculty			
Graduate Assistants			
Clerical			
Equipment & Instructional Materials			
Library			
Other Support Services			
Supplies/Printing			
Travel			
Distance Technology			
Other Services (specify)			

TOTAL			

<u>Planned Funding Sources</u>	<u>1st Year</u> (in dollars)	<u>2nd Year</u> (in dollars)	<u>3rd Year</u> (in dollars)

New Student Tuition and Fees			
New State General Revenue			
Redistribution of State General Revenue			
External Grants/Contracts			
Other Funding Sources (specify)			

TOTAL			

Section 4. Deadlines For Submission Of Letter Of Intent, Proposals, And Letter Of Notification

Letter of Intent

A Letter of Intent informs the Coordinating Board that an institution seeks to offer a new program or organizational unit that requires a proposal and Coordinating Board approval.

<u>Letter of Intent</u>	<u>Proposals Due</u>	<u>*Institutional Comment Period Ends</u>	<u>Coordinating Board Meeting</u>
January 1	February 1	March 1	April
April 1	May 1	June 1	July
July 1	August 1	September 1	October
October 1	November 1	December 1	January

Note: *The deadline for submission of notification and proposal documents for Educator Preparation programs is February 1 for Fall program implementation, and July 1 for Spring program implementation. For any new educator preparation program to be considered, an institution first must notify (via e-mail) all Arkansas public universities offering bachelor’s degrees or above of the proposed program and submit to ADHE any institutional responses that oppose the initiation of the proposed program.*

*Presidents/Chancellors and Academic Affairs Officers may comment on the proposed programs and organizational units before ADHE staff review of the proposals.

Letter of Notification

A Letter of Notification informs the Coordinating Board that an institution seeks to offer a program/unit or make a change in the program/organizational structure that requires ADHE Director approval unless prior review is requested by the Coordinating Board.

<u>Letter of Notification</u>	<u>Coordinating Board Meeting</u>
November 1	January
February 1	April
May 1	July
August 1	October

PART 3. PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

Section 1. Program Request and Proposal Submission

A Letter of Intent must be submitted to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education by the established deadline for the proposal to be considered by the Coordinating Board at its regularly scheduled meeting in January, April, July or October. All proposals for new programs and organizational units must be prepared according to published criteria and submitted electronically to ADHE on the appropriate forms by the established deadlines. The deadlines for submission of the Letter of Intent and the proposal are listed in Part 2, Section 4. The Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board will not consider proposals for new programs or organizational units that have not been formally approved by the President and Board of Trustees of the proposing institution.

Prior to submission of a proposal to ADHE, it is recommended that the Academic Affairs Officer discuss the proposed program with the Academic Officers that offer similar programs in the state and with Academic Officers at institutions in the surrounding area. Institutions that plan to offer programs off-campus or plan to establish off-campus instruction centers, but cannot reach agreement either informally or with a written Memorandum of Understanding with other Arkansas institutions may appeal to the ADHE Director as outlined in the Off-Campus Instruction Policy (AHECB Policy 5.17).

Section 2. Proposal Review by Academic Affairs Officers

A synopsis of the proposals for new programs or organizational units will be posted on the ADHE webpage within 10 days of the deadline for submission. An electronic notice will be sent to all Academic Affairs Officers when the proposal summaries have been posted, and a synopsis of the proposals will be sent to members of the Coordinating Board. The Academic Affairs Officers will have 10 working days after the web posting to comment, question or request additional information on the proposals. All such comments, questions or requests must be in writing and directed to the contact person listed on the ADHE webpage by the established deadline.

Institutions proposing programs/units must provide a written response to ADHE within 10 days of receipt of the requests for clarification or additional information. The Academic Affairs Officers of the institutions proposing the programs/units also may decide to withdraw the proposals at this time in lieu of a response. All comments and responses will be kept in the program proposal file at ADHE.

Section 3. Proposal Review by ADHE Staff

The ADHE Academic Affairs staff will review new program proposals before contacting the Academic Affairs Officer and program faculty for additional information. All institutional comments and responses received during the comment period will be considered. ADHE staff also may conduct a conference with the Academic Affairs Officer and program faculty before recommendations are made and reported to the Presidents' Council. If a proposal must be deferred based on the review by the ADHE

staff, the ADHE Associate Director of Academic Affairs will notify the Academic Affairs Officer no later than 20 days before the Coordinating Board meeting.

Section 4. Consultant Review of Proposals

ADHE staff may engage a maximum of three in-state or out-of-state experts in selected fields of study to assist with the review of proposals for undergraduate and graduate programs. The review team will submit a written report to ADHE that evaluates the proposed programs in terms of the need for graduates, student demand and interest, appropriateness of the curricula, and adequacy of institutional resources. Typically, a campus visit is required. The review team will not make a recommendation on program initiation. While institutions submitting proposals for review will be responsible for all expenses associated with the external reviews, ADHE staff will select the team in consultation with the institutions. In all instances, members of the review team will not have a relationship beyond professional acquaintance with the institutions and programs under review.

Section 5. Proposal Review by Presidents' Council

ADHE staff will present a synopsis of all new proposals to the Presidents' Council for their review before the proposals are included on the agenda for the Coordinating Board meeting. The ADHE Associate Director of Academic Affairs will notify the Academic Affairs Officers of the disposition of the proposed programs, including any concerns raised during the review process. If a proposal must be deferred based on the review by the Presidents' Council, the ADHE Associate Director of Academic Affairs will notify the Academic Affairs Officers immediately following the Presidents' Council meeting.

Section 6. Proposals Recommended to the Coordinating Board

Proposals that are not challenged during the review process will be placed on the consent agenda for the Coordinating Board meeting unless the ADHE Associate Director of Academic Affairs determines that the proposal should be presented to the Academic Committee of the Coordinating Board for information and discussion purposes. Also, any Board member may request that the proposal be presented to the Coordinating Board for the purpose of discussion and a separate vote. Institutional program representatives must attend the Coordinating Board meeting to respond to questions about the proposals. The Coordinating Board will vote on consent agenda items as a group with limited or no discussion. State general revenues cannot be expended for new programs/units that are not *approved* by the Coordinating Board.

Section 7. Limitations on Coordinating Board Approval

Following a favorable action on the proposals by the Coordinating Board, institutions are expected to initiate programs/units on the dates specified in the Board agenda items. Coordinating Board approval will terminate for programs/units not initiated within two years of Board approval, and a new proposal must be submitted for Coordinating Board consideration if the institutional administration still wishes to initiate the proposed program/unit.

Section 8. Follow-up Reviews of Approved Programs

ADHE staff may conduct follow-up reviews of approved programs to determine if the enrollment, general program strength, and number of graduates are sufficient to justify continuation of the program. Because the use of distance technology is a *different* mode of program delivery and the Coordinating Board has expressed concerns about the quality of these programs, an ADHE staff review of programs offered through distance technology will be conducted on a 5-year cycle and status reports will be presented to the Coordinating Board.

Section 9. Letter of Notification – ADHE Director Approval

A Letter of Notification is required for programmatic and organizational changes that do not require prior review by the Coordinating Board unless requested. The Letter of Notification with supporting documentation must be submitted to ADHE by the established deadlines listed in Part 2, Section 4. All changes in existing programs/units or requests for new programs/units *may be approved by the ADHE Director for immediate implementation and* must be included on the agenda of the next scheduled Coordinating Board meeting.

APPENDIX A – PROGRAM RESOURCES AND ASSESSMENT

Section 1. Faculty Resources and Credentials

Institutions must employ a faculty of sufficient size and range for the number of programs offered and the students enrolled. There must be a sufficient number of full-time faculty members who hold the appropriate terminal degree in each program. A minimum of one full-time faculty member with appropriate credentials is required for each degree program.

Typically, at least 50 percent of the faculty members in each bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree program must hold the appropriate terminal degree. Faculty member credentials must be appropriate to their assigned duties and disciplines, including the levels at which they teach. Faculty degrees, professional accomplishments in research and creative activity, and experience should be commensurate to their duties. New program proposals should indicate ways in which the faculty are in keeping with best practices in higher education, accreditation standards of their professional organizations, and faculty members in comparable program areas at peer institutions.

- Faculty must hold degrees, certifications and licenses from institutions accredited by agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or Council on Higher Education Accreditation such as the Higher Learning Commission or from agencies with comparable status, certification or recognition in other countries.
- Faculty members teaching general education core courses are expected to hold at least a master's degree that includes 18 graduate hours in the teaching field. (A limited number of faculty may hold equivalent documented experience to meet educational qualifications.) Supervised graduate teaching assistants may serve as instructors for general education and core courses in the disciplines in which they are studying.
- Typically, faculty members teaching remedial/developmental education courses hold a master's degree, but must hold at least a bachelor's degree in the teaching field.
- Faculty members teaching in occupational skill areas must hold at least an associate degree or appropriate industry-related licensure/certification.
- A majority of the faculty members teaching in graduate-level degree programs must hold the appropriate terminal degree and have demonstrated competency in teaching or research at the appropriate graduate level. If doctoral programs are offered, a sufficient number of graduate faculty must have dissertation committee experience.

Section 2. Library Resources

Library resources (volumes, monographs, periodicals, indexed and full-text databases) specifically related to proposed certificate and degree programs must be available or planned to meet the needs of faculty and students.

Section 3. Instructional Support and Technology

Instructional support and technology (e.g., laboratories, technology applications and infrastructure, instructional equipment) should be determined by the program objectives and must be sufficient to meet program needs.

Section 4. Assessment and Evaluation

An assessment plan must be in place to evaluate faculty performance and student achievement.

Section 5. Programs Requiring Accreditation, Licensure or Certification

Certificate and degree programs designed to prepare students for professional licensure or certification must meet all standards and requirements of the accrediting or approval agencies.

Section 6. Traditional Instruction (In-Class)

College and university terms vary in length, with the most typical being semester, quarter or trimester. Some institutions use a pattern of two 8-week terms per semester instead of a 15-17 week semester. Whatever the term length, time spent in the appropriate mixture of lecture, laboratory, self-paced learning, team activities, and field work must bring enrolled students to the same required levels of competence, knowledge and performance. Typically, classes have met for 750 minutes or 12.5 clock hours in a term for each semester credit hour awarded in lecture classes with proportionately more time for laboratory classes.

The minimum semester length is 15 weeks of actual class time and examinations. A minimum of fifteen (15) fifty-minute class sessions, excluding laboratories, is required to award one semester hour of credit. Institutions may have terms of other than semester length, but the amounts of credit awarded must be adjusted in proportion to the length of term. There may be exceptions regarding length of terms and amount of credit awarded for specific circumstances such as workshops, seminars, and summer terms in instances where the instructional content and activities are selected appropriately.

The amount of credit awarded for a course is based on the amount of time in class, the amount of outside preparation required, and the intensity of the educational experience.

- A formal lecture course with extensive assigned reading or other out-of-class preparation is awarded one semester credit for a minimum of 750 minutes or 12.5 hours of classroom instruction;
- A laboratory class with moderate out-of-class preparation is awarded one semester credit for a minimum of 1500 minutes or 25 hours of laboratory instruction; and
- Clinical, practicum, internship, shop instruction or other self-paced learning activities involving work-related experience with little or no out-of-class preparation is awarded one semester credit for a minimum of 2250 minutes or 37.5 hours of work-related instruction.

Section 7. Non-Traditional Instruction (Self-Paced, Distance Technology)

An exception to the standard length of terms and student semester credit hour guidelines can occur if an institution offers instruction through self-paced methods that allow students to achieve predetermined goals and objectives while working independently or in a group without an instructor. When proposing new programs with self-directed components outside of traditional semester and credit hour designations, institutions must indicate the minimum and maximum length allowed for completion of the components as well as intended student learning outcomes. Time-in-class is not a factor in self-paced learning.

Instruction delivered through distance technology is an approach to learning in which the majority of instruction occurs with a separation of place or time between the instructor and the students and with interaction occurring through electronic media. At least 50 percent of the course content in a distance technology course must be delivered electronically. Internet courses are conducted via web-based instruction and collaboration. Courses may require proctored examinations, and may include opportunities for face-to-face orientations, but there are no class attendance requirements.

Mixed-Mode courses include both required classroom attendance and online or 2-way interactive instruction. These classes have substantial content delivered over the Internet which will substitute for some classroom meetings. A correspondence course does not have any significant site attendance, but less than 50 percent of the course is delivered electronically. Standards for academic quality, admission, retention and assessment must be same in all courses and degree programs regardless of the mode of delivery.

When proposing new programs delivered through distance technology, the institution must demonstrate its commitment to distance technology instruction and the adequacy of technical support for faculty and students. Courses and degree programs offered through distance technology must be developed in accordance with the Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs endorsed by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Institutions proposing to offer 50 percent of an existing certificate or degree program through distance technology must submit a Letter of Notification with supporting documentation to ADHE by the established deadlines. All requests to offer existing programs through distance technology must be listed on the Coordinating Board meeting agenda *and listed on the AHECB Approved Program Inventory*. ADHE staff review of programs offered through distance technology will be conducted on a 5-year cycle.

A Letter of Intent must be submitted to ADHE before a proposal for a new program offered through distance technology can be submitted to ADHE. If the institution is offering its first certificate or degree program via distance technology, ADHE staff will conduct an on-campus visit before making a recommendation on program approval to the Coordinating Board.

Section 8. Experiential/Prior Learning Credits

Institutions may award a maximum of 30 semester credit hours in a certificate or degree program for documented learning or work experiences.

At a minimum, credits awarded for prior learning must be assessed and documented by faculty with appropriate subject-area knowledge to determine if the student's prior learning experiences relate to the content of a particular course listed in the college catalog and if college credit should be awarded for a specific course. Institutions must have written policies, procedures, and criteria for assessing prior learning that are aligned with recognized assessment service organizations such as the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL).

Section 9. Certificate and Degree Granting Authority

Institutions may not award a certificate or degree to any student unless demonstrated mastery of knowledge and skills has been documented. A degree also may not be granted to any student solely for prior/experiential learning or work experience. *Arkansas public colleges and universities must obtain and maintain institutional accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission or comparable accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or Council on Higher Education Accreditation. Arkansas colleges/universities also must obtain and maintain appropriate/required specialized program accreditation for professional practice programs from recognized accrediting agencies.*

APPENDIX B – DEFINITIONS (Certificates, Degrees, and Organizational Units)

CERTIFICATES

Certificate of Proficiency/Endorsement

The Certificate of Proficiency *or Endorsement* will be awarded to students who have demonstrated mastery of skills and knowledge against specified performance standards in a specific area or discipline. The award is granted for programs requiring 6-21 undergraduate semester credit hours. The program of study may be a stand-alone program or part of a technical certificate, associate degree or bachelor's curriculum. Remedial/developmental education courses must be used for placement purposes only and cannot be used to fulfill certificate requirements.

Technical Certificate

The Technical Certificate is a planned and coherent program of classroom and laboratory/shop work at the collegiate level that recognizes the completion of a specified level of competency in an occupational field. The program of study may be a stand-alone program or a part of an associate degree curriculum.

The curriculum must require a demonstration of competency in communications (oral and written) and mathematics, and a mastery of skills and knowledge against specified performance standards in a specific area or discipline. Remedial/developmental education courses must be used for placement purposes only and cannot be used to fulfill certificate requirements. The range of credit hours is 21-45 undergraduate semester hours.

Certificate of General Studies

The Certificate of General Studies is designed to recognize 31-38 credit hours of *specified* general education core courses successfully completed by students. The program will document the student's mastery of skills and competencies needed to be successful in the workforce and function in today's world. The skills and competencies addressed in the program are based on findings in the report, *What Work Requires of Schools*, published in 1991 by the U.S. Department of Labor Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS). Remedial/developmental education courses must be used for placement purposes only and cannot be used to fulfill certificate requirements. (See Appendix D for curriculum requirements.)

Advanced Certificate/Endorsement

The Advanced Certificate *or Endorsement* is a planned program of study in a specialty area. Admission to the program requires an associate degree or higher, national certification in a technical specialty or other specifically defined postsecondary education requirements. The curriculum must require demonstrated mastery of skills and knowledge against specified performance standards in a specific area or discipline. The range of hours is 21-45 undergraduate semester credit hours. Program completion could lead to certification/licensure and recognition will be noted on the student transcript. If the certificate program is designed for professional certification or licensure, documentation of appropriate agency/board approval must be submitted to ADHE. Teacher education certificates/*endorsements* must be designed to meet

certification/licensure requirements in designated specialty areas and *the program of study* must be approved by the Arkansas Department of Education prior to submission to ADHE for consideration.

Graduate Certificate/Endorsement

The Graduate Certificate *or Endorsement* is a 12-21 semester hour program that includes a focused collection of courses which when completed affords the student a record of coherent academic accomplishment in a given discipline or set of related disciplines. Program completion could lead to professional certification/licensure and recognition of the award will be noted on the student transcript.

The required courses must be part of the graduate curriculum of a university with graduate degree programs as part of its role and scope and must be taught by faculty with graduate faculty status. Admission and completion requirements must be based upon the policies of the Graduate School. If the certificate program is designed for professional certification or licensure, documentation of appropriate agency/board approval must be submitted. Teacher education certificates must be designed to meet certification/licensure requirements in designated specialty areas and *program of study* must be approved by the Arkansas Department of Education prior to submission to ADHE for consideration.

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES

Associate of Arts

The Associate of Arts degree will be awarded to students who successfully complete a program of collegiate level work that is *fully* transferable toward a baccalaureate degree. The degree must include the 35-hour state minimum general education core (Appendix C) that requires courses in English/writing, the humanities and fine arts, history and the social sciences, mathematics, and the natural sciences; *15-25 semester credit hours of directed electives selected from the six general education core categories; and up to 10 semester credit hours of institutional requirements or advisor-approved electives.* The curriculum must require a demonstration of competency in communications (oral and written) and mathematics, and a mastery of skills and knowledge against specified performance standards in specific areas or disciplines. Remedial/developmental education courses must be used for placement purposes only and cannot be used to fulfill degree requirements. *The Associate of Arts degree is designed for transfer purposes and the field of study is not specified in the degree title. The AA degree is 60 semester credit hours and must include the stated minimum number of credit hours and courses in the specified general education core categories. (See Appendix D for the AA degree template) The Associate of Arts degree meets the requirements of the 60-hour state minimum core curriculum required under Act 747 of 2011. All pre-requisite and required courses for the bachelor's degree program major must be completed by AA degree graduates. Thus, Associate of Arts degree graduates may be required to complete additional lower-division courses to meet these specified pre-requisite course requirements and program major course requirements for bachelor's degree programs upon transfer to any Arkansas public university which may require the AA graduate to complete credit hours beyond the stated minimum credits for bachelor's degrees.*

College advisors must document that AA students have been informed of the possible requirement for additional courses/credits for bachelor's degree completion.

Associate of Science

The Associate of Science degree will be awarded to students who successfully complete a program of collegiate level work with an occupational objective of which of *the* courses are transferable toward a *specified* baccalaureate degree *at a college/university*. The degree must include the 35-hour state minimum general education core (Appendix C) that requires courses in English/writing, the humanities and fine arts, history and the social sciences, mathematics, and the natural sciences. The curriculum must require a demonstration of competency in communications (oral and written) and mathematics, and a mastery of skills and knowledge against specified performance standards in specific areas or disciplines. Remedial/developmental education courses must be used for placement purposes only and cannot be used to fulfill degree requirements. The field of study *must be* specified in the degree title. The range of hours is 60-66 semester credit hours. Exceptions to this range *may be* allowed for *documented transfer and bachelor's degree completion purposes*. *College advisors must document that students have been informed of the universities accepting this associate degree for full transfer to specified bachelor's degrees.*

Associate of Science in Liberal Arts and Sciences

The Associate of Science degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences will be awarded to students who successfully complete a program of collegiate level work of which all of the courses are transferable toward a specified baccalaureate degree. The degree must include the 35-hour state minimum general education core (Appendix C) that requires courses in English/writing, the humanities and fine arts, history and the social sciences, mathematics, and the natural sciences. The curriculum must require a demonstration of competency in communications (oral and written) and mathematics, and a mastery of skills and knowledge against specified performance standards in specific areas or disciplines. Remedial/developmental education courses must be used for placement purposes only and cannot be used to fulfill degree requirements. Typically, the field of study is not specified in the degree title. The range of hours is 60-66 semester credit hours. Two-year college advisors must document that students have been informed of the universities accepting this associate degree for full transfer to specified bachelor's degrees.

Associate of Applied Science

The Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree will be awarded to students who successfully complete a program of collegiate level work which is primarily designed for direct employment. The program must include a minimum of 15 semester credit hours of general education courses in English/writing, mathematics, social sciences, and computer applications/fundamentals (Appendix C). A minimum of 30-36 semester hours must be in a technical area. An additional component of the program of study should be support courses from other related technical disciplines. The curriculum must require demonstrated mastery of skills and knowledge against specified performance standards in a specific area or discipline. Remedial/developmental education courses must be used for placement purposes only and cannot be used to fulfill degree

requirements. The occupational field may be specified in the title of the degree (e.g., Associate of Applied Science in Electronics Technology). The range of hours is 60-72 semester credit hours. Selected health-related programs may exceed 72 semester hours, but should not exceed 80 semester hours. *College advisors must document that students have been informed of the universities accepting this associate degree for full transfer to specified bachelor's degrees.*

Associate of General Studies/Professional Studies/Liberal Arts/Fine Arts

The Associate of General Studies, *Associate of Professional Studies*, Associate of Liberal Arts, or *Associate of Fine Arts* degree will be awarded to students who successfully complete a planned program of collegiate level work that includes a minimum of 15 semester hours of general education courses (Appendix C) and occupational, liberal arts, and/or *fine arts* courses. The curriculum must require demonstrated mastery of skills and knowledge against specified performance standards in at least one specific area or discipline. The program of study must be developed cooperatively by the student and the institution. The degree is intended to serve as a flexible program option for students whose needs cannot be met by other programs. Individual courses may fulfill requirements for transfer toward a baccalaureate degree, direct employment or educational enrichment. Remedial/ developmental education courses must be used for placement purposes only and cannot be used to fulfill degree requirements. The range of hours is 60-66 semester credit hours.

Associate of Occupational Studies

The Associate of Occupational Studies degree will be awarded to students who successfully complete a planned program of collegiate level work that includes a minimum of 15 semester hours of general education courses (Appendix C) and occupational courses. The curriculum must require demonstrated mastery of skills and knowledge against specified performance standards in at least one specific area or discipline. The program of study must be developed cooperatively by the student and the institution. The degree is intended to serve as a flexible program option for students whose needs cannot be met by other programs. Individual courses may fulfill requirements for transfer toward a baccalaureate degree, direct employment or educational enrichment. Remedial/ developmental education courses must be used for placement purposes only and cannot be used to fulfill degree requirements. Typically, the field of study is not specified in the degree title. The range of hours is 60-72 semester credit hours.

Associate of Applied Science in General Technology

The Associate of Applied Science in General Technology program will be awarded to students who successfully complete an individualized program of study to fulfill a unique career goal that cannot be met through the completion of a single program offered by the institution. The program must include 15 semester credit hours of general education courses: English/writing, mathematics, computer application/fundamentals, and social sciences (Appendix C). There must be 24-30 semester hours in a major technical area, and 15-21 semester hours of support courses from other related technical disciplines. A maximum of 30 semester hours may be awarded for experiential learning or work experience. The curriculum must require demonstrated mastery of skills and knowledge against specified performance standards in a specific area or discipline.

Remedial/developmental education courses must be used for placement purposes only and cannot be used to fulfill degree requirements. Typically, the field of study is not specified in the degree title. The range of hours is 60-72 semester credit hours.

Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT)

The Associate of Arts in Teaching degree will be awarded to students who successfully complete a planned program of collegiate level work that is transferable toward a *specified* baccalaureate degree in teacher education *at each participating Arkansas university*. This *statewide* transfer degree is designed to introduce students to the profession of teaching, to increase the number of teacher candidates, to ease transfer from two- to four-year institutions, and to maximize the credit hours taken at the two-year institution. The degree must include the state minimum general education core (35 semester credit hours) that requires courses in English/writing, the humanities and fine arts, history and the social sciences, mathematics, and the natural sciences (Appendix C). The Associate of Arts in Teaching is designed to align with Arkansas state licensure requirements and consists of 60-64 semester credit hours. Remedial/developmental education courses must be used for placement purposes only and cannot be used to fulfill degree requirements. In order to receive the AAT, students must have a *minimum* final grade point average of ~~2.65~~ and pass a state-approved assessment of reading, writing, and mathematical skills. *No course modifications or course substitutions are allowed for the AAT degree. When there are changes in Arkansas state licensure requirements, ADHE will suspend the AAT until the curriculum is revised to meet new state licensure requirements. (ADHE will remove the AAT from the AHECB Approved Program Inventory if the AAT curriculum is not updated within 5 years of the initial suspension; or remove the AAT from the AHECB Inventory for any institution that does not offer the state-approved AAT curriculum.)* Students currently enrolled in the AAT degree must be informed of the new state licensure requirements and notified of any changes in degree requirements. *The AAT degree only can be offered by Arkansas two-year colleges, and the junior- and senior-level courses required for the specified bachelor's degrees in teacher education must be submitted to ADHE by the each participating Arkansas university. All institutions participating in the AAT-Bachelor's Degree Completion Program must have a signed agreement on file at ADHE and must designate an institutional contact for the AAT program.*

Associate of Science in Business

The Associate of Science in Business (ASB) degree will be awarded to students who successfully complete a planned program of collegiate level work that is transferable toward a *specified* baccalaureate degree in business. This *statewide* transfer degree is designed to to ease transfer from two- to four-year institutions, and to maximize the credit hours taken at the two-year institution. The degree must include the state minimum general education core (35 semester credit hours) that requires courses in English/writing, the humanities and fine arts, history and the social sciences, mathematics, and the natural sciences (Appendix C). The Associate of Science in Business consists of 62 semester credit hours. (See Appendix D for curriculum requirements.) Remedial/developmental education courses must be used for placement purposes only and cannot be used to fulfill degree requirements. In order to receive the ASB, students must have a *minimum* final grade point average. *No course substitutions are allowed for the ASB degree. (ADHE can remove the ASB from the AHECB*

Approved Program Inventory for any institution that does not offer the state-approved ASB curriculum.) The ASB degree only can be offered by Arkansas two-year colleges, and the junior- and senior-level courses required for the specified bachelor's degrees in business must be submitted to ADHE by the each participating Arkansas university. All institutions participating in the ASB-Bachelor's Degree Completion Program must have a signed agreement on file at ADHE and must designate an institutional contact for the ASB program.

Bachelor's Degree

The bachelor's degree will be awarded to students upon successful completion of a program that requires a minimum of 120 undergraduate semester credit hours, including the 35-semester hour state minimum general education core (Appendix C), a minimum of 40 semester hours of upper-level courses, and a minimum of 30 semester hours (including 20 semester hours of upper-level courses) in the major field of study. The curriculum must require a demonstration of competency in communications (oral and written) and mathematics, and a mastery of skills and knowledge against specified performance standards in a specific area or discipline. Remedial/developmental education courses must be used for placement purposes only and cannot be used to fulfill degree requirements. The range of the bachelor's degree is 120-130 semester hours. Selected programs (e.g., education, music, engineering) may exceed 130 semester hours, but cannot exceed 150 semester hours unless particular course content is required by accrediting or approval agencies.

Bachelor of Applied Science

The Bachelor of Applied Science is a degree completion program that allows students holding an Associate of Applied Science degree to apply the entire associate degree toward the requirements of a bachelor's degree. The bachelor's degree curriculum must include a minimum of 35 semester hours of general education courses (Appendix C) and a minimum of 40 semester hours of upper-level courses in selected fields of study. The curriculum must require demonstrated mastery of skills and knowledge against specified performance standards in at least one specific area or discipline. Remedial/developmental education courses must be used for placement purposes only and cannot be used to fulfill degree requirements. The range of hours is 120-130 semester credit hours.

Bachelor of Professional Studies

The Bachelor of Professional Studies is designed as a flexible program option for students with earned college credit (including technical and occupational courses). The bachelor's degree curriculum must include a minimum of 35 semester hours of general education courses (Appendix C) and 40 semester hours of upper-level courses in selected fields of study. The program of study can be developed cooperatively by the student and the institution to meet a variety of professional development and career enhancement needs. The curriculum must require demonstrated mastery of skills and knowledge against specified performance standards in at least one specific area or discipline. Remedial/developmental education courses must be used for placement purposes only and cannot be used to fulfill degree requirements. The range of hours is 120–130 semester credit hours.

GRADUATE DEGREES

Master's Degree

The master's degree will be awarded to students who complete a minimum of 30 semester credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree that includes 50 percent graduate-only semester hours in the field of study. The curriculum must require demonstrated mastery of skills and knowledge against specified performance standards in a specific area or discipline.

Specialist Degree

The specialist degree will be awarded to students who complete a minimum of 30 graduate-only semester credit hours beyond the master's degree. The curriculum must require demonstrated mastery of skills and knowledge against specified performance standards in a specific area or discipline. The degree does not meet the academic requirements of a doctoral degree.

Doctoral Degree

The doctoral degree will be awarded to students who complete a minimum of 72 graduate semester credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree. The program of study includes 42 graduate-only semester hours beyond the master's degree. The curriculum must require demonstrated mastery of skills and knowledge against specified performance standards in a specific area or discipline. Program requirements must balance credit hours for required coursework, research, and dissertation preparation.

FIRST-PROFESSIONAL DEGREES

The first-professional degree (law, pharmacy, medicine, health-related professions) will be awarded to students upon successful completion of a program that meets all of these criteria: at least 60 semester credit hours of undergraduate coursework before entering the program, a minimum of 72 semester credit hours beyond the 60-semester hour entrance requirement, and completion of academic requirements to begin practice in the profession. The curriculum must require demonstrated mastery of skills and knowledge against specified performance standards in a specific area or discipline.

ORGANIZATIONAL/ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

Department - A basic organizational unit consisting of all faculty members or teaching personnel in a given subject-matter field or academic discipline or in a group of related disciplines or fields. The academic department is the fundamental unit in the institution because it is the focus of the basic functions of the institution: teaching, research, and service.

Division - A grouping for administrative purposes of two or more departments within a college or university.

College - A major instructional division of a university that includes related departments.

School - (1) A major instructional division of a university; (2) a major subdivision of a university offering a curriculum which leads to a professional or graduate degree.

Center - An academic organizational unit that conducts research, teaching or public service activities, or a combination of these functions in specified fields. The term also applies to an off-campus instructional location that has at least one permanent staff/faculty member assigned for administrative purposes. *An institution can establish a Degree Center to offer courses for degree completion on another Arkansas college campus; and a two-year institution may establish a University Center with legislative or AHECB approval for the purpose of allowing one or more college/university to offer courses leading to a degree completion program on the two-year campus or by distance technology. At least one permanent staff/faculty member must be assigned to the University Center for administrative purposes.*

Institute - (1) A separate institution, within or independent of a university, designed for teaching, research, or both, in a particular field of study; (2) a short course or workshop consisting of lecture and discussion topics on a specific theme.

Academy – A separate organizational entity within or independent of a college or university in which special subjects or skills are taught.

APPENDIX C – MINIMUM GENERAL EDUCATION AND TECHNICAL CORES

Section 1. State Minimum General Education Core (35 semester credit hours)

English/Communication (6-9 semester credit hours)

English Composition 6 credit hours
Speech Communication 0-3 credit hours

Mathematics (3 semester credit hours)

A comprehensive mathematics course such as College Algebra, Statistics, Quantitative Literacy/Mathematical Reasoning or any higher-level mathematics course.

Institutions may require students majoring in mathematics, engineering, science, and business to take a higher-level mathematics course as part of the state minimum core.

Science (8 semester credit hours)

Science courses must include laboratories.

Institutions may require students majoring in mathematics, engineering, science, education, and health professions to take higher-level or specific science courses.

Fine Arts/Humanities (6-9 semester credit hours)

Must be broad survey courses.

Institutions may require students majoring in engineering to take either 6 hours of humanities and social sciences at the junior/senior level or substitute an additional 6 hours of higher-level mathematics and/or additional science courses.

Social Sciences (9-12 semester credit hours)

U.S. History or Government 3 hours
Other Social Sciences 6-9 hours

Institutions may require students majoring in engineering to take either 6 hours or humanities and social sciences at the junior/senior level or substitute an additional 6 hours of higher-level mathematics and/or additional science courses.

Section 2. General Education Core for Associate-Level Occupational and General Studies Programs (15 semester credit hours)

English/Writing (6 semester credit hours)

English Composition and/or Technical/Professional Writing

Mathematics (3 semester credit hours)

Applied Technical Mathematics or higher-level math course

Social Sciences (3 semester credit hours)

An introductory course appropriate for the field of study, e.g., psychology, sociology, economics

Computer Applications/Technology (3 semester credit hours)

A general or program-related technology course or integrated technology course

Certificate of General Studies

Discipline/Courses	Semester Hours
English/Communication	9
English Composition	6
Oral Communication or Speech	3
Science, Math, & Technology	10-14
Physical, Biological, or Earth Science (with lab)	4-8
College Algebra (equivalent or higher)	3
Computer or Technology Elective	3
Social Sciences	9
U.S. History or American Government	3
General Psychology or Introduction to Sociology	3
Social Science Elective	3
Fine Arts/Humanities	3-6
Fine Arts or Humanities Elective	3-6
Total Semester Hours	31-38

CGS Approved: February 3, 2006, Agenda Item No. 3

Associate of Science in Business

Degree Requirements – 62 semester credit hours, DC 0308, Effective Fall 2010

English Composition I
 English Composition II
 Oral Communications
 College Algebra
 Biological Science & Lab
 Physical Science & Lab
 Fine Arts Visual or Theatre or Music
 Literature I or Literature II
 American History to 1876 or American History since 1876 or American Government
 Western Civilization to 1660 or Western Civilization since 1660
 Sociology
 Accounting Principles I
 Accounting Principles II
 Microeconomics
 Macroeconomics
 Microcomputer Business Application
 Business Statistics
 Business Calculus
 Legal Environment of Business
 Directed Elective (3 credit hours)

Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) – Note: Suspended/Inactive Status – Fall 2014
Degree Requirements – 60-64 semester credit hours

General Education Requirements

English/Communications

English Composition I	3 hours
English Composition II	3 hours
Speech (Oral Communications)	3 hours

Mathematics

College Algebra	3 hours
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Lab Science

Biology with Lab	4 hours
Introduction to Physical Science with Lab	4 hours

Fine Arts/Humanities

Visual Arts or Musical Arts or Theatre Arts	3 hours
World Literature I or II	3 hours

Social Sciences

U.S. Government	3 hours
World Civilization I or II	3 hours
American History I or II	3 hours

AAT - Education Core Requirements

Introduction to Education	3 hours
K-12 Educational Technology	3 hours
Math I	3 hours
Math II	3 hours

Required Electives

Arkansas History	3 hours
Introduction to Psychology	3 hours

Middle School Requirements

<u>Option 1 – Math/Science Specialty</u>	
College Trig or Pre-Calculus or Survey of Calculus or higher	3-4 hours
Physical Geography or Geology or Earth System with Lab	3-4 hours
Directed Elective	0-3 hours

or

<u>Option 2 – Language Arts/Social Studies Specialty</u>	
American Literature I or II	3 hours
Introductory Geography	3 hours
Directed Elective	1-3 hours

P-4 Requirements

Introductory Geography or Physical Geography	3 hours
Child Growth and Development	3 hours
PE (Activity)	1 hour
Directed Elective	0-3 hours

AAT Revised: July 25, 2008; Suspended: April 2014

**Associate of Arts Degree/60-Credit Hour State Transfer Core Curriculum
Degree Requirements – 60 semester credit hours, Effective Fall 2013
35-Hour State Minimum General Education Core**

(List institutional course number/course title, ACTS course number, and indicate semester credit hours)

English Composition (6 semester credit hours)

Communication (0-3 semester credit hours)

College Math (3 semester credit hours)

Lab Science (8 semester credit hours)

Fine Arts/Humanities (6-9 semester credit hours)

U.S. History/Government (3 semester credit hours)

*Social Sciences (6-9 semester credit hours)

*An introductory course in Criminal Justice and Micro/Macro Economics courses can be included in the Social Sciences category

****Directed Electives – 15-25 semester credit hours** (List discipline areas and/or list institutional course number/course title, ACTS course number, and indicate total semester credit hours) ****Courses can be selected only from General Education Core Categories listed above**

+Institutional Requirements/Advisor Approved Electives – 0-10 semester credit hours (List institutional course number/course title, ACTS course number, and indicate total semester credit hours)

+Up to 10 semester credit hours of courses can be selected from any discipline area, including career and technical areas, and applied toward the 60-semester credit hour core curriculum and/or Associate of Arts degree

-Remedial/Developmental Education Courses cannot be applied toward the 60-credit hour state transfer core curriculum and/or Associate of Arts degree.

Policy Revised: Agenda Item No. 13
April 16, 1993

Revised: Agenda Item No. 21
July 25, 1997

Revised: Agenda Item No. 21
October 23, 1998

Revised: Agenda Item No. 13
October 20, 2000

Revised: Agenda Item No. 16
October 22, 2004

Updated/Clarified: January 30, 2015