

CHANCELLOR'S PROCEDURE FOR POLICY 712.01: DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES

An instructional program is defined as a combination of courses and experiences that is designed to accomplish a predetermined objective or set of allied objectives such as preparation for advanced study, qualification for an occupation or range of occupations, or simply the increase of knowledge and understanding. Accordingly, colleges are authorized to certify the successful completion of prescribed courses of study in each instructional program through the awarding of the following degrees and certificates:

Associate in Arts (AA) Degree: An undergraduate award signifying successful completion of a prescribed course of study (60 to 64 semester credit hours) designed for students planning to transfer to a senior institution to pursue a baccalaureate degree in the liberal arts. Only colleges accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) are authorized to award this degree.

Associate in Science (AS) Degree: An undergraduate award signifying successful completion of a prescribed course of study (60 to 64 semester credit hours) designed for students planning to transfer to a senior institution to pursue a baccalaureate degree in the sciences or a specialized professional field. Only colleges accredited by SACSCOC are authorized to award this degree.

Associate in Applied Science (AAS) Degree: An undergraduate award signifying successful completion of a prescribed course of study (60 to 76 semester credit hours) that offers specialization in a technical, business, or semi-professional field qualifying the student for employment upon graduation while providing the possibility for transfer of some credit to a senior institution. Only colleges accredited by SACSCOC are authorized to award this degree.

Associate in Applied Technology (AAT) Degree: An undergraduate award signifying successful completion of a prescribed course of study (60 to 76 semester credit hours) that provides specialization in a technical, business, or semi-professional field qualifying the student for employment upon graduation. This degree is offered only by technical colleges accredited by the Council on Occupational Education (COE) and is not designed for students seeking to transfer credit to a senior institution.

Associate in Occupational Technology (AOT) Degree: An undergraduate award signifying successful completion of a prescribed course of study (60 to 76 semester credit hours) designed for students seeking to become multi-skilled technicians. Students must complete at least 28 semester hours in a primary technical specialty (the major) and at least 12 semester hours in a closely related secondary technical specialty (the minor). The AOT is not designed for transfer to a senior institution. All colleges are authorized to award this degree.

Certificate (CER): An undergraduate award (less than a degree) signifying the successful completion of a prescribed course of study (30 to 60 semester hours) that provides the student with a specialized set of skills for employment or professional advancement. Certificates are not designed for transfer to a senior institution. All colleges are authorized to award certificates.

CTE Short-Term Certificate (STC): An undergraduate award signifying the successful completion of a prescribed course of study (9 to 29 semester credit hours) equipping the student with a focused

set of skills for an entry-level position in business and industry. CTE Short-term certificates are not designed for transfer to a senior institution. All colleges are authorized to award short-term certificates.

General Education Short-Term Certificate: An undergraduate award signifying completion of a prescribed course of study of 29 semester hours. This award is designed to assist students in developing an academic foundation to earn credit toward the associate of arts or associate of science degree. All colleges are authorized to award short-term certificates.

The following table summarizes award authorizations:

Institution Type	Authorized Awards						
	AA	AS	AAS	AAT	AOT	CER	STC
Community Colleges Accredited by SACSCOC	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Technical Colleges Accredited by COE				✓	✓	✓	✓

Requirements for Degrees and Certificates

Colleges must offer degree programs that reflect coherent courses of study that are compatible with their own missions, that are based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education, and that include general education components ensuring a breadth of knowledge that promotes intellectual inquiry and critical thinking. Thus, each degree must consist of coursework from each of the following five areas as defined by the Alabama Articulation and General Studies Committee (AGSC):

- **Area I: Written Composition.** Study in this area ensures effective written communication skills, which are essential in a literate society.
- **Area II: Humanities and Fine Arts.** Study in the humanities addresses the ability to deal with questions of values, ethics, or aesthetics as they are represented in literature, philosophy, religion, and the arts, and is fundamental to general education. In addition to literature, disciplines in the humanities and fine arts include, but are not limited to, area/ethnic studies, philosophy, religious studies, speech, foreign languages, art and art history, music and music history, theatre, and dance.
- **Area III: Natural Sciences and Mathematics.** Study in the natural sciences and mathematics emphasizes the scientific method and quantitative reasoning. Disciplines in the natural sciences, include, but are not limited to, astronomy, biology, chemistry, earth science, geology, physical geography, physics, and physical science.
- **Area IV: History, Social, and Behavioral Sciences.** Study in history and the social and behavioral sciences deals primarily with the study of human behavior, social and political structures, and economics. Disciplines other than history in this area include, but are not limited to, anthropology, economics, geography, political science, psychology, and sociology.
- **Area V: Pre-Professional, Major, and Elective Courses.** Area V is designated for courses appropriate to the degree/major requirements of the individual student.

The following table gives the required distribution of semester credit hours among Areas I through V for each award.

Areas of Study		Credit Hours Required By Award							
		AA	AS	AAS	AAT	AOT	CER	CTE STC	GE STC
Area I	Written Composition	6	6	3 – 6	3 – 6	3 – 6	3 - 6	0 – 3	6
Area II	Humanities and Fine Arts	12	12	3 – 6	3 – 6	3 – 6	0 - 6	0	3-9
Area III	Natural Science and Mathematics	11	11	6 – 11	6	6	3-7	0 – 3	6-8
Area IV	History, Social, and Behavioral Sciences	12	12	3 – 6	3	3	0	0	6-9
Areas I – IV	General Education Requirements	41	41	15 – 29	15 – 21	15 – 21	6 - 19	0 - 6	21+
Area V	Technical Core, Technical Concentration, and Electives	19 – 23	19 – 23	31– 61	39 - 61	39 - 61	11 – 54	9 – 29	1-3
Areas I – V	Total Hours Required	60 – 64	60 – 64	60 – 76	60 – 76	60 – 76	30 – 60	9 – 29	22-29

Note: All degrees/certificates have other specific requirements and/or recommendations for distribution of credit-hours among disciplines in each area and some have restrictions on the particular courses which may serve to meet those requirements. Refer to the individual expanded charts to view the precise requirements for each award.

Associate in Arts (AA) Degree			
Award Description	Degree Requirements by Area		Credit Hours
Designed for students planning to transfer to a senior institution to complete a program of study in a liberal arts area.	Area I	Written Composition	6
	Area II	Humanities and Fine Arts	12
	Area III	Natural Science and Mathematics	11
	Area IV	History, Social, and Behavioral Sciences	12
	Areas I – IV	General Education Requirements	41
	Area V	Pre-professional, Pre-major, and Elective Courses	19 – 23
	Areas I – V	Total Hours Required**	60 – 64
<p>NOTES:</p> <p>Area I Must complete ENG 101 and ENG 102.</p> <p>Area II Must complete at least 3 semester hours in Literature* and at least 3 semester hours in the Arts. The remaining semester hours are to be selected from Humanities and/or Fine Arts. <i>Humanities and Arts disciplines include but are not limited to: Area/Ethnic Studies, Art and Art History, Foreign Languages, Music and Music History, Philosophy, Ethics, Religious Studies, Theater and Dance.</i></p> <p>Area III Must complete at least 3 semester hours in Mathematics at the Pre-Calculus Algebra or Finite Math level or higher. Must complete at least 8 semester hours in the Natural Sciences which must include laboratory experiences. <i>In addition to Mathematics, disciplines in the Natural Sciences include: Astronomy, Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Geology, Physical Geography, Earth Science, Physics, and Physical Science.</i></p> <p>Area IV Must complete at least 3 semester hours in History* and at least 6 semester hours in other disciplines in the Social and Behavioral Sciences. <i>Social and Behavioral Sciences include, but are not limited to: Anthropology, Economics, Geography, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology.</i></p> <p>Area V Courses appropriate to the degree requirements and major of the individual student and electives. <i>Students completing courses that have been approved for transfer by the AGSC and are appropriate to their major and/or degree program may transfer these courses with credit applicable to their degree program among two-year and four-year colleges and universities.</i></p>			

* Must complete a 6-semester-hour sequence either in Literature or in History. The sequences in Area II and IV in Literature and History need to follow the sequence requirements according to the student's major and transfer plans.

**Respective programs of study for baccalaureate degrees at Alabama public and private universities range from 120 to 128 semester credit hours in length. Colleges are only authorized to provide 50 percent of that total (60-64, depending on the total hours allocated for the bachelor's degree).

Associate in Science (AS) Degree			
Award Description	Degree Requirements by Area		Credit Hours
Designed for students planning to transfer to a senior institution to complete a program of study in the sciences or in a specialized pre-professional field.	Area I	Written Composition	6
	Area II	Humanities and Fine Arts	12*
	Area III	Natural Science and Mathematics	11
	Area IV	History, Social, and Behavioral Sciences	12*
	Areas I – IV	General Education Requirements	41
	Area V	Pre-professional, Pre-major, and Elective Courses	19* – 23*
	Areas I – V	Total Hours Required***	60 – 64
<p>NOTES: Area I: Must complete ENG 101 and ENG 102.</p> <p>Area II Must complete at least 3 semester hours in Literature** and at least 3 semester hours in the Arts. The remaining semester hours are to be selected from Humanities and/or Fine Arts.</p> <p><i>Humanities and Arts disciplines include but are not limited to: Literature, Area/Ethnic Studies, Art and Art History, Foreign Languages, Music and Music History, Philosophy, Ethics, Religious Studies, Theater and Dance.</i></p> <p>Area III Must complete at least 3 semester hours in Mathematics at the Pre-Calculus Algebra or Finite Math level or higher. Must complete at least 8 semester hours in the Natural Sciences which must include laboratory experiences.</p> <p><i>In addition to Mathematics, disciplines in the Natural Sciences include: Astronomy, Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Geology, Physical Geography, Earth Science, Physics, and Physical Science.</i></p> <p>Area IV Must complete at least 3 semester hours in History** and at least 3 semester hours in other disciplines in the Social and Behavioral Sciences.</p> <p><i>Social and Behavioral Sciences include, but are not limited to: Anthropology, Economics, Geography, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology.</i></p> <p>Area V Area V courses are courses appropriate to the degree requirements and major of the individual student and electives.</p> <p><i>Students completing courses that have been approved for transfer by the AGSC and are appropriate to their major and/or degree program may transfer these courses with credit applicable to their degree program among two-year and four-year colleges and universities.</i></p>			

***ENGINEERING EXCEPTIONS:** For all engineering majors, the AGSC voted to allow the hour requirements in Area II to be reduced from 12 SH to 9 SH and in Area IV to be reduced from 12 SH to 9 SH. This reduction allowed for additional hours (6 semester hours) to be added to Area V for engineering majors so that required math and science courses could be taken prior to transfer that would meet [national engineering accreditation standards \(ABET\)](#). The ACCS has adopted this exception. Engineering students may take 9 hours in Area II, 9 hours in Area IV, and 25 to 29 hours in Area V.

** Must complete a 6-semester-hour sequence either in Literature or in History. The sequences in Area II and IV in Literature and History need to follow the sequence requirements according to the student's major and transfer plans.

***Respective programs of study for baccalaureate degrees at Alabama public and private universities range from 120 to 128 semester credit hours in length. Colleges are only authorized to provide 50 percent of that total (60-64, depending on the total hours allocated for the bachelor's degree).

Associate in Applied Science (AAS) Degree

Award Description	Degree Requirements by Area		Credit Hours
Designed for students planning to specialize in technical, business, semi-professional, and supervisory fields that are career-oriented. Portions of this degree may, in selected fields, transfer to a senior institution.	Area I	Written Composition I and II	3 – 6
	Area II	Humanities and Fine Arts	3 – 6
	Area III	Natural Science and Mathematics	6 – 11
	Area IV	History, Social, and Behavioral Sciences	3 – 6
	Areas I – IV	General Education Requirements	15 – 29
	Area V	Technical Core, Technical Concentration, and Electives	31 – 61
	Areas I – V	Total Hours Required	60 – 76

NOTES:

Area I

Prescribed: A course or course combination that promotes effective written and oral communication skills.

Area II: *In addition to Literature, disciplines include but are not limited to: Area/Ethnic Studies, Art and Art History, Foreign Languages, Music and Music History, Philosophy, Ethics, Religious Studies, Theater and Dance.*

Note: For purposes of SACSCOC accreditation, courses in basic composition that do not contain a literature component, courses in oral communication (Speech), and introductory foreign language courses are considered skills courses and may NOT be the one course designated to fulfill SACSCOC Core Requirement 2.7.3 for a humanities/fine arts course. See the [SACSCOC Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation](#) for complete information on this restriction.

Area III: *In addition to Mathematics, disciplines in the Natural Sciences include: Astronomy, Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Geology, Physical Geography, Earth Science, Physics, and Physical Science.*

Requirements Prescribe: A minimum of 3 hours in Mathematics required.

Area IV: *In addition to History, the Social and Behavioral Sciences include, but are not limited to: Anthropology, Economics, Geography, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology.*

Area V: Area V courses are courses appropriate to the degree requirements, occupational or technical specialty requirements, core courses, and electives.

Associate in Applied Technology (AAT) Degree

Award Description	Degree Requirements by Area		Credit Hours
Designed for students attending Council on Occupational Education (COE) accredited technical colleges, the AAT provides specialization in technical, business, or semi-professional fields leading to employment upon graduation.	Area I	Written Composition I and II	3 – 6
	Area II	Humanities and Fine Arts	3 – 6
	Area III	Natural Science and Mathematics	6
	Area IV	History, Social, and Behavioral Sciences	3
	Areas I – IV	General Education Requirements	15 – 21
	Area V	Technical Core, Technical Concentration, and Electives	39 – 61
	Areas I – V	Total Semester Hours for Award	60 – 76

NOTES:

Area II: *In addition to Literature, disciplines include but are not limited to: Area/Ethnic Studies, Art and Art History, Foreign Languages, Music and Music History, Philosophy, Ethics, Religious Studies, Theater and Dance.*

Note: Colleges planning to transition from COE to SACSCOC accreditation should design degree plans accordingly. See the requirements for the AAS degree for more information.

Area III: *In addition to Mathematics, disciplines in the Natural Sciences include: Astronomy, Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Geology, Physical Geography, Earth Science, Physics, and Physical Science.*

Requirements Prescribe: A minimum of 3 hours in Mathematics required.

Area IV: *In addition to History, the Social and Behavioral Sciences include, but are not limited to: Anthropology, Economics, Geography, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology.*

Area V: Area V courses are courses appropriate to the degree requirements, occupational or technical specialty requirements, core courses, and electives.

Associate in Occupational Technologies (AOT) Degree

Award Description	Degree Requirements by Area		Credit Hours
Designed for students seeking to become multi-skilled technicians, the AOT includes both a Primary Technical Specialty and a Secondary Technical Specialty.	Area I	Written Composition I and II	3 – 6
	Area II	Humanities and Fine Arts	3 – 6
	Area III	Natural Science and Mathematics	6
	Area IV	History, Social, and Behavioral Sciences	3
	Areas I – IV	General Education Requirements	15 – 21
	Area V	Primary* and Secondary** Technical Specialties	39 – 61
	Areas I – V	Total Hours Required	60 – 76

NOTES:

Area I

Area II: *In addition to Literature, disciplines include but are not limited to: Area/Ethnic Studies, Art and Art History, Foreign Languages, Music and Music History, Philosophy, Ethics, Religious Studies, Theater and Dance.*

Note: For purposes of SACSCOC accreditation, courses in basic composition that do not contain a literature component, courses in oral communication (Speech), and introductory foreign language courses are considered skills courses and may NOT be the one course designated to fulfill SACSCOC Core Requirement 2.7.3 for a humanities/fine arts course. Colleges planning to transition from COE to SACSCOC accreditation should design degree plans accordingly. See the [SACSCOC Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation](#) for complete information on this restriction.

Area III: *In addition to Mathematics, disciplines in the Natural Sciences include: Astronomy, Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Geology, Physical Geography, Earth Science, Physics, and Physical Science.*

A minimum of 3 hours in Mathematics is required. One Computer Science course or demonstrated computer literacy skills, or the integration of computer proficiencies within a required discipline-specific course(s) is highly recommended. Appropriate 100 level courses (or higher) as denoted in *The Alabama Community College System Course Directory* may be substituted.

Area IV: *In addition to History, the Social and Behavioral Sciences include, but are not limited to: Anthropology, Economics, Geography, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology.*

Area V: Area V courses are courses appropriate to the degree requirements, occupational or technical specialty requirements, core courses, and electives.

*Primary Technical Specialty (Major): A minimum of 27 credit hours in a single content area.

**Secondary Technical Specialty (Minor): A minimum of 12 credit hours in another related technical area.

Certificate			
Award Description	Degree Requirements by Area		Credit hours
Designed for students seeking a specialized set of skills for employment or professional advancement.	Area I	Written Composition	3 - 6
	Area II	Humanities and Fine Arts	0 - 6
	Area III	Natural Science and Mathematics	3 - 7
	Area IV	History, Social, and Behavioral Sciences	0
	Areas I – IV	General Education Requirements	6 – 19
	Area V	Technical Core, Technical Concentration and Electives	11 – 54
	Areas I – V	Total Hours Required	30 – 60
NOTES:			
<p>Area I: Requirements Prescribe: A minimum of one written composition course which may have a discipline specific prefix other than COM or ENG or the integration of written communication proficiencies within a required discipline-specific course(s).</p> <p>Area III: Requirements Prescribe: A minimum of one mathematics course which may have a discipline specific prefix other than MAH or MTH or the integration of mathematics proficiencies within a required discipline-specific course(s).</p>			

CTE Short-Term Certificate			
Award	Degree Requirements by Area		Credit hours
Designed to equip the student with a focused set of skills for an entry-level position in business or industry.	Area I	Written Composition	0 – 3
	Area II	Humanities and Fine Arts	0
	Area III	Natural Science and Mathematics	0 – 3
	Area IV	History, Social, and Behavioral Sciences	0
	Areas I – IV	General Education Requirements	0 – 6*
	Area V	Technical Core, Technical Concentration and Electives	9 – 29
	Areas I - V	Total Hours Required	9 – 29
NOTES:			
*for certificates with 6 hours of general education credits, the minimum total credit hours will be 15 credit hours.			

GE Short-Term Certificate			
Award	Degree Requirements by Area		Credit hours
Designed to assist students in developing an academic foundation to earn credit toward the associate of arts or associate of science degree.	Area I	Written Composition	6
	Area II	Humanities and Fine Arts	3-9
	Area III	Natural Science and Mathematics	6-8
	Area IV	History, Social, and Behavioral Sciences	6-9
	Area V	Electives	1-3
		Total Hours Required	

Example Curriculum for GE STC:

Semester 1:

ENG 101	3 semester hours
Core Mathematics	3 semester hours
Core History, Social, or Behavioral Science Elective	3 semester hours
Core Humanities/Fine Arts Elective	3 semester hours
ORI 110	<u>1 semester hour</u>
Total Hours	13 semester hours

Semester 2:

ENG 102	3 semester hours
SPH 106 or SPH 107	3 semester hours
Core Biological or Physical Science w/lab	4 semester hours
Core History, Social, or Behavioral Elective	3 semester hours
Core Humanities/Fine Arts Elective	<u>3 semester hours</u>
Total Hours	16 semester hours

Total Hours 29 semester hours

Core History, Social, or Behavioral Science include Anthropology, Economics, Geography, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, and History.

Core Humanities and Fine Arts include Area/Ethnic Studies, Art Appreciation and Art History, Music Appreciation, Philosophy, Ethics, Religious Studies, and Theater Appreciation.

Core Disciplines in the Natural Sciences include Astronomy, Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Geology, Physical Geography, Earth Science, Physics, and Physical Science.

Note: The CIP Code for this award is 30.9999.

DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES AT A GLANCE

Areas of Study		Credit Hours Required By Award							
		AA	AS	AAS	AAT	AOT	CER	CTE STC	GE STC
Area I	Written Composition	6	6	3 – 6	3 – 6	3 – 6	3 - 6	0 – 3	6
Area II	Humanities and Fine Arts	12	12	3 – 6	3 – 6	3 – 6	0 - 6	0	3-9
Area III	Natural Science and Mathematics	11	11	6 – 11	6	6	3 - 7	0 – 3	6-8
Area IV	History, Social, and Behavioral Sciences	12	12	3 – 6	3	3	0	0	6-9
Areas I – IV	General Education Requirements	41	41	15 – 29	15 - 21	15 - 21	6 - 19	0 – 6*	21+
Area V	Technical Core, Technical Concentration, and Electives	19 – 23	19 – 23	31 - 61	39 - 61	39 - 61	11 - 54	9 – 29	1-3
Areas I – V	Total Hours Required	60 – 64	60 – 64	60 – 76	60 – 76	60 – 76	30 – 60	9 – 29	22-29

***Note:** Refer to individual expanded charts to view the more precise requirements for each award, which may include parameters for distribution of credit-hours among disciplines in each area or restrictions on particular courses which may serve to meet specific area credit-hour requirements.*

Award Descriptions

Associate in Arts (AA) Degree: Designed for students planning to transfer to a senior institution to pursue a baccalaureate degree in the liberal arts.

Associate in Science (AS) Degree: Designed for students planning to transfer to a senior institution to pursue a baccalaureate degree in the sciences or a specialized professional field

Associate in Applied Science (AAS) Degree: Offers specialization in a technical, business, or semi-professional field qualifying the student for employment upon graduation while providing (in certain cases) the opportunity for transfer of some credit to a senior institution

Associate in Applied Technology (AAT) Degree: Provides specialization in a technical, business, or semi-professional field qualifying the student for employment upon graduation. This degree is offered only by technical colleges accredited by the Council on Occupational Education (COE) and is not designed for students seeking to transfer credit to a senior institution.

Associate in Occupation Technology (AOT) Degree: Designed for students seeking to become multi-skilled technicians. Students must complete at least 28 semester hours in a primary technical specialty (the major) and at least 12 semester hours in a closely related secondary technical specialty (the minor).

Certificate (CER): Provides the student with a specialized set of skills for employment or professional advancement.

CTE Short-Term Certificate (STC): Equips the student with a focused set of skills for an entry-level position in business or industry. * For certificates with 6 hours of general education credits, the minimum total credit hours will be 15 credit hours.

GE Short-Term Certificate (STC): An undergraduate award signifying completion of a prescribed course of study of 29 semester hours. This award is designed to assist students in developing an academic foundation to earn credit toward the associate of arts or associate of science degree.