

ACADEMICS, NEBRASKA STATE COLLEGE SYSTEM

POLICY: 4140 Academic Program and Degree Requirements

Page 1 of 3

BOARD POLICY

All academic undergraduate degrees and programs in the Nebraska State College System shall conform to the following descriptions and definitions when prescribing degree, program and graduation requirements for completion of the Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Science (BS) degrees. The Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degree is designed to accommodate transfer students who have completed a technical associate degree from an accredited community or technical college or the equivalent in prior course work and life experience. Degrees and programs are based upon a unit of educational measurement referred to as a credit hour. A credit hour is defined in Board Policy 4141.

- Degree --** The academic award bestowed on an undergraduate student who completes 120 unduplicated credit hours and meets other academic requirements, including, but not limited to, sufficient credits in the major, general studies, upper division level courses, and a minimum grade point average overall and in the major. Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees shall include a minimum of thirty-six (36) ~~forty (40)~~ credit hours of upper division coursework, and the Bachelor of Applied Science degree shall include a minimum of twenty (20) credit hours of upper division coursework. Supportable and articulated requests for exceptions to the one hundred twenty (120) unduplicated credit hour requirement must be submitted to the Board for approval. Due to licensure requirements, teacher education field endorsement programs and the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) program are hereby granted exception to the 120 credit hour requirement and may require more than one hundred twenty (120) credit hours.
- Subject Major --** An academic program that concentrates on an academic discipline and ranges from thirty (30) to thirty-six (36) credit hours. A subject major shall be combined with a minor or second major to lead to a degree.
- Comprehensive Major --** An academic program that represents an expanded study of a discipline and leads to a degree. It may consist of a core and an option and ranges from at least forty-eight (48) credit hours to no more than fifty-seven (57) credit hours.
- BAS Major --** An academic program that ranges from thirty (30) to forty (40) credit hours of coursework that will prepare individuals for management and/or leadership opportunities.
- Core --** A cluster of courses in a comprehensive major that comprises the foundation for all options and shall include a minimum of twelve (12) credit hours. A core leads to a degree when combined with an option/concentration.
- Option/
Concentration --** A series of courses within a comprehensive major that, when combined with a core of courses, if required, leads to a degree. An option or concentration is a sub-specialty of a major and shall include at least eighteen (18) credit hours.
- Minor --** An academic program that concentrates on a subject but does not in itself lead to a degree. A minor shall range from eighteen (18) to twenty-one (21) credit hours.
- Endorsement --** A series of courses which leads to teacher certification in accordance with standards established by the Nebraska State Department of Education (NDE). The number of credit hours required to complete a field endorsement shall not exceed the minimum credit hours required by NDE by more than ten percent (10%) for endorsements with fifty (50) or more minimum credit hours established. The number of credit hours required to complete a field endorsement with fewer than fifty (50) minimum credit hours established, or a subject endorsement, shall not exceed the minimum credit hours required by NDE by more than twenty percent (20%).

ACADEMICS, NEBRASKA STATE COLLEGE SYSTEM

POLICY: 4140 Academic Program and Degree Requirements

Page 2 of 3

Certificate -- A cluster of courses that develops specific knowledge and/or skills and supports an occupational outcome or industry certification. This credential does not in itself lead to a degree. An undergraduate certificate shall range from nine (9) to fifteen (15) credits of predominantly upper division courses.

General Studies Program -- A series of courses designed to assist the student in acquiring the intellectual foundation that will last for a lifetime of learning and that will result in the graduation of students who are intellectually curious, proficient in their own field of study, knowledgeable and informed in the affairs of the world, and able to participate in society in a manner that will emphasize the role of individual contributions in the development of a better world.

The general studies program shall be clearly aligned to established student learning outcomes and range from thirty (30) to thirty-seven (37) credit hours. The number of general studies program credit hours may be extended up to forty (40) if an upper division (300 or above) capstone course is included in the requirements and provides students with a culminating general studies experience. Upper division coursework may be included as options for students to select to meet general studies requirements, but only the general studies capstone course shall be mandated as an upper level course requirement.

All academic graduate degrees and programs in the Nebraska State College System shall conform to the following descriptions and definitions when prescribing degree, program and graduation requirements for completion of a graduate degree. Programs may include a culminating experience, such as a thesis, internship, comprehensive examination, a scholarly/creative/action research project, nationally normed instruments, simulations, practicums or other valid experiences appropriate to a student's degree program as determined by the discipline and/or a student's graduate committee.

Degree -- The academic award bestowed on a student who completes a minimum of thirty (30) credit hours in an academic discipline and meets other academic requirements, including, but not limited to, completion of a baccalaureate degree, sufficient credits in the graduate core, and a minimum overall grade point average.

Graduate Major -- A set of core courses that comprise the foundation for a graduate degree and addresses the established accreditation and/or professional graduate standards for the program.

Focus Area -- A cluster of courses that concentrate on a specific area of specialization within a larger academic discipline. A focus area shall include a minimum of twelve (12) credit hours.

Certificate of Advanced Studies -- A cluster of courses that concentrate on specific knowledge and/or skills aligned to an area of specialization or industry certification. These courses are available to non-degree seeking students; however, they may also be used toward the completion of a graduate degree. A certificate of advanced studies shall include a minimum of nine (9) credit hours.

Thesis -- A document that presents the student's formal research and findings on a topic related to the student's field of interest. The format should conform to the most current professional standard of the discipline.

Internship -- A meaningful work experience that allows the student to apply classroom theoretical knowledge and skills in a practical work setting and develop related job skills under the guidance of trained and established professionals.

ACADEMICS, NEBRASKA STATE COLLEGE SYSTEM

POLICY: 4140

Academic Program and Degree Requirements

Page 3 of 3

**Comprehensive
Examination --**

A summative assessment over a program of study, administered in oral or written form, that includes questions regarding course work and other materials relevant to the student's field of study.

**Scholarly/Creative/
Action Research
Project --**

A scholarly or creative work that does not necessarily conform to the format of a thesis. The project should relate to the student's area of interest and professional practice.

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