

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE NEBRASKA STATE COLLEGES
ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION\ACADEMIC AND PERSONNEL

ACTION: **First and Final Round Approval of Revisions to Board Policy 4140; Academic Degrees and Programs and Board 4430; Transfer of Credits and Degrees**

The revisions to Policy 4140 include the addition of clarity on the level of programming of a number of definitions (undergraduate vs graduate) and establishes a lower requirement of 30 credits of general studies requirements for a Bachelor of Applied Science degree. The revisions to Policy 4430 update the number of credit hours that will be accepted from accredited two year institutions for students who will complete a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Applied Science degree at one of the Colleges.

The System Office recommends approval of the Revisions to Board Policies 4140 and 4430.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Revisions to Board Policy 4140 (PDF)
- Revisions to Board Policy 4430 (PDF)

Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State Colleges

Academics

POLICY NAME: Academic Degrees and Programs

POLICY NUMBER: 4140

A. PURPOSE

To establish consistent definitions and descriptions for the academic degrees and programs offered by the Nebraska State College System.

B. DEFINITIONS

1. **Baccalaureate Degree:** The academic award bestowed on an undergraduate student who completes one hundred twenty (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.
2. **Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) Major:** An [undergraduate](#) academic program that ranges from thirty (30) to forty (40) credit hours of coursework that will prepare individuals for management and/or leadership opportunities [and leads to a Bachelor of Applied Science \(BAS\) degree](#).
3. **Certificate:** A cluster of undergraduate courses that develops specific knowledge and/or skills and supports an occupational outcome or industry certification. This credential does not itself lead to a degree. An undergraduate certificate shall range from nine (9) to fifteen (15) credits of predominantly upper division courses.
4. **Certificate of Advanced Studies:** A cluster of graduate 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 graduate 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.
5. **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 a graduate student's field of study.
6. **Comprehensive Major:** An [undergraduate](#) academic program that represents an expanded study of a discipline and leads to ~~an undergraduate~~ [a Bachelor of Art or](#)

Bachelor of Science degree. It ~~shall~~ may consist of a core and an option/concentration and ranges from at least forty-eight (48) credit hours to no more than fifty-seven (57) credit hours.

7. **Core:** A cluster of undergraduate courses in a comprehensive major that comprises the foundation for all options/concentrations and shall include a minimum of twelve (12) credit hours. A core leads to an undergraduate degree when combined with an option/concentration.
8. **Endorsement:** A series of undergraduate or graduate courses which leads to teacher certification in accordance with standards established by the Nebraska State Department of Education (NDE).
9. **Focus Area:** A cluster of graduate courses within a graduate program that concentrates on a specific area of specialization within a larger academic discipline. A focus area shall include a minimum of twelve (12) credit hours.
10. **General Studies:** A series of undergraduate courses designed to assist the student in acquiring the intellectual foundation that will last for a lifetime of learning. General studies coursework 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.
11. **Graduate 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.
12. **Graduate Major:** A graduate academic program ~~set of core courses~~ that comprises the foundation for a graduate degree and addresses the established accreditation and/or professional graduate standards for the program.
13. **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.
14. **Minor:** An undergraduate academic program that concentrates on a subject but does not itself lead to an undergraduate degree. A minor shall range from eighteen (18) to twenty-one (21) credit hours.
15. **Option/Concentration:** A series of undergraduate courses within a comprehensive major that, when combined with a core of courses, if required, leads to an undergraduate degree. An option or concentration is a sub-specialty of a major and shall include at least eighteen (18) credit hours.
16. **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 a graduate student's area of interest and professional practice.

17. Subject Major: An [undergraduate](#) 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 an [undergraduate Bachelor of Art or Bachelor of Science](#) degree.

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

C. POLICY

1. General Degree Requirements

- All academic degrees and programs in the Nebraska State College System shall conform to the following descriptions and definitions when prescribing degree, program and graduation requirements.
- Degrees and programs are based upon a unit of educational measurement referred to as a credit hour, which is defined in Board Policy 4141.
- Supportable and articulated requests for exemptions to the established definitions and descriptions for academic degree and programs must be submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval and will be documented in Section 4 below.

2. Baccalaureate Degree Requirements

2.1. Upper Division Coursework

- The Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Science (BS) degrees shall include a minimum of thirty-six (36) credit hours of upper division coursework.
- 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 and shall include a minimum of twenty (20) credit hours of upper division coursework.

2.2. Teacher Education Endorsements

- The number of credit hours required to complete a teaching endorsement shall not exceed the minimum credit hours required by NDE by more than ten percent (10%) for field endorsements with fifty (50) or more minimum credit hours established.
- The number of credit hours required to complete a teaching endorsement shall not exceed the minimum credit hours required by NDE by more than twenty percent (20%) for field endorsements with fewer than fifty (50) minimum credit hours established and all subject endorsements.

2.3. General Studies

- The general studies program shall be clearly aligned to the College's established student learning outcomes and range from thirty (30) to thirty-seven (37) credit hours.
- [The general studies program requirements for the Bachelor of Applied Science degree shall not exceed thirty \(30\) 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.

3. Graduate Degree Requirements

- [Graduate 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.

4. Approved Academic Program Exemptions

- Teacher education field endorsement programs may require more than one hundred twenty (120) credit hours for degree completion.
- The Certified Public Accountant (CPA) program may require more than one hundred twenty (120) credit hours for degree completion.
- The WSC Industrial Technology comprehensive major may require more than the current limit of fifty-seven (57) credit hours; approved for sixty-three (63) credit hours – April 2022.
- The PSC Business Administration - Certified Management Accountant (CMA) option may require more than the current limit of fifty-seven (57) credit hours; approved for sixty-three (63) credit hours – June 2022

FORMS/APPENDICES:

None

SOURCE:

Policy Adopted: February 1995

Policy Revised: June 2011, March 2015, January 2016, September 2016, June 2017, January 2020, January 2021, January 2022, March 2022, April 2022, July 2022, [March 2023](#)

Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State Colleges

Academics

POLICY NAME: Transfer of Credits and Degrees

POLICY NUMBER: 4430

A. PURPOSE

To establish the policy and criteria for the transfer of credits and/or degrees to the Nebraska State Colleges.

B. DEFINITIONS

1. **Accredited Institution:** An institution holding accreditation from one of the following accrediting bodies, unless otherwise specified: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), Higher Learning Commission (HLC), Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), and Western Association of Schools and Colleges [WASC] Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC).

C. POLICY

1. General Criteria

- 1.1. All College level courses, carrying a letter grade of “C-” or better, from an accredited institution of higher education as defined above that are applicable toward a baccalaureate degree at any State College will be received and applied by all member institutions of the Nebraska State College System toward the requirements of the baccalaureate degree.
- 1.2. College level courses carrying a grade of P (Pass), CR (Credit), and S (Satisfactory) shall only be accepted on a course-by-course basis upon review and approval of the academic vice president; this process can be suspended by the Chancellor should these grades warrant automatic acceptance for a specific academic term due to extenuating circumstances. Such courses shall not include remedial or developmental courses.
- 1.3. Each college is authorized to determine the applicability of credits earned based on a specific degree, program and/or accreditation requirements.

- 1.4. Each College may give credit for education received from non-collegiate institutions. The Colleges are authorized to use the Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services and the National Guide to Educational Credit for Training Programs, both published by the American Council on Education, the College Credit Recommendations: The Directory of the National Program on Non-Collegiate Sponsored Instruction published by the State University of New York, and/or College procedures to determine applicability.

2. Transfer of Credit Principles

- 2.1. Courses completed more than seven (7) years prior require special approval by the receiving institution.
- 2.2. A student must earn a minimum of thirty (30) credit hours at the receiving State College to earn an undergraduate degree from that College.
- 2.3. A total of up to sixty six (66) hours of coursework will be accepted from accredited two year institutions [for students completing a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree](#), to be distributed among general education, major and minor programs, and general electives, unless otherwise accepted by agreement.
- 2.4. A total of up to eighty (80) hours of coursework will be accepted from accredited two year institutions for students who hold an Associate of Applied Science degree and are completing a Bachelor of Applied Science degree, to be distributed among general education, major and minor programs, and general electives, unless otherwise accepted by agreement.

3. Transfer of Degree Principles

- 3.1. An Associate of Arts (AA) or Associate of Science (AS) degree completed at an accredited post-secondary institution that includes a minimum of thirty (30) semester hours of general studies coursework or its equivalent will fulfill all requirements of a general studies program established at a Nebraska State College.
- 3.2. The general studies requirements will be fully met with completion of the Associates degree; however, only those courses carrying grades as established above will be applied to the credit hour requirements of the baccalaureate degree.

FORMS/APPENDICES

None

SOURCE:

Policy Adopted: June 1993

Policy Revised: September 2009, September 2011, March 2015, March 2017, June 2019,
June 2020, July 2020, January 2021, March 2022, [March 2023](#)