

BOARD OF REGENTS  
BRIEFING PAPER  
*Handbook Revision, AAS Degree Requirements*

**BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:**

Current Board policy outlines the general degree requirements for an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree, including 21 general education credits (*Title 4, Chapter 16, Section 25*). Those requirements can be challenging for faculty in establishing the technical AAS degrees demanded by the workforce because it can be difficult to meet the general education requirements and the technical degree requirements within the overall 60 credit limitation. AAS degree programs have industry advisory boards which help set the skills and knowledge needed for graduates to be ready to enter the workforce. Often, these advisory boards outline extensive sets of needed requirements. Therefore, the Articulation Board reviewed the general education requirements for similar two-year institutions in the western region of the United States and found, in general, that English and Communications requirements are often combined for flexibility, and human relations is not generally required. Additionally, in technical programs, human relations, mathematics and science are frequently now taught embedded within technical courses rather than as separate courses, which is permissible under NWCCU accreditation standards. (See NWCCU Standard Two, Undergraduate Programs: 2.C.9 -2.C.11).

Based on this review, the Articulation Board recommends revising the AAS degree requirements by combining the English and Communications requirements and eliminating the human relations requirement, but requiring that it be embedded within technical courses, for an overall reduction in general education credits from 21 to 18 credits consistent with western regional community colleges. The option of teaching mathematics and science within technical courses is also recommended.

**Transfer Policy – AAS to BAS**

In addition, Board policy includes a provision under which students with an AAS seeking a Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS), which includes the Bachelor of Technology, may transfer to the state college and universities with guaranteed junior status (*Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 14*). The Articulation Board recommends revising Board policy to require that transfer agreements include a year-by-year outline of course requirements, including transfer general education and degree requirements, in which the course of study leading to the Bachelor of Applied Science degree includes the first two years coursework that will result in completion of the requirements for an associate of applied science degree.

In its discussion, the Articulation Board strongly emphasized the importance of academic advising to ensure that, when students initially choose to pursue non-transferable associate's degrees, such as the AAS or Associate of General Studies, they are aware of the potential impact on their time to degree should they elect to either change majors and/or pursue a 4-year degree. This advising information needs to be provided to students early and often, including in advising sheets and transfer agreements, so they are aware of the potential impact before they transfer to a 4-year degree program. Institutions should continue to strive to explain the transfer process to students to inform transfer students of their rights and responsibilities which are available through the NSHE and institution websites, as required under *Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 16.7* of the *Handbook*.

**SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:**

Amend *Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 14* (effective Fall 2013) to require that transfer agreements include a year-by-year outline of course requirements in which the course of study leading to the Bachelor of Applied Science degree includes the first two years coursework that will result in completion of the requirements for an associate of applied science degree. (See the attached Policy Proposal.)

In addition, amend *Title 4, Chapter 16, Section 25* (effective Fall 2013) by (1) combining the English and Communications requirements and eliminating the human relations requirement, but requiring that human relations be embedded in the curriculum, for an overall reduction in the general education requirements from 21 to 18 credits, and (2) allowing mathematics and science to be taught within technical courses. (See the attached Policy Proposal.)

**IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):**

This proposal is brought forward at the request of the Articulation Board which recently reviewed the AAS degree requirements at similar two-year institutions in the west (see attached comparison table), along with the transfer policy for the AAS degree.

**BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:**

- If approved, the proposal to revise the AAS degree requirements will:
- Provide additional flexibility in developing AAS degrees;
  - Enable institutions to teach human relations, mathematics, and science within the context of the workplace skills needed, as permitted by accreditation standards;
  - Enable the institutions to address all the technical skills demanded by the workforce within the curriculum without generally exceeding 60 credits.
  - Align NSHE degree requirements with what is increasingly accepted by western regional two-year institutions.
  - Clarify the requirements for transfer agreements for the AAS and BAS degrees.

**POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:**

None have been brought forward.

**ALTERNATIVE(S) TO WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED/RECOMMENDED:**

Maintain the current policy requiring 21 general education credits for the AAS and retain the current language within Board policy regarding the ability to transfer with any AAS degree.

**COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:**

- Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title #\_\_\_\_\_ Chapter #\_\_\_\_\_ Section #\_\_\_\_\_
- Amends Current Board Policy: *Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 14* (effective Fall 2013) and *Chapter 16, Section 25* (effective Fall 2013)
- Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter #\_\_\_\_\_ Section #\_\_\_\_\_
- Other:\_\_\_\_\_
- Fiscal Impact: Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_**X**\_\_\_\_\_
- Explain:\_\_\_\_\_

**POLICY PROPOSAL - HANDBOOK**  
**TITLE 4, CHAPTER 14, SECTION 14**  
**NSHE Transfer and Admissions**

Additions appear in *boldface italics*; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

**Section 14. NSHE Transfer and Admissions** (*Effective Fall 2013*)

Transfer students to the state college and universities may be admitted under the following alternatives:

1. Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Associate of Business Degree Graduates

The primary basis for admission to upper-division study with full junior status of transfer students from an NSHE community college to any other NSHE institution shall be the associate of arts, associate of science, and the associate of business degrees.

....

- g. Transfer agreements shall be developed by both the baccalaureate degree-granting institutions and the associate degree-granting institution. Transfer agreements must include a year-by-year outline of course requirements, including general education and degree requirements, in which the course of study leading to the baccalaureate degree includes [~~in~~] the first two years coursework that will result in completion of the requirements for an associate degree.

....

3. Associate of Applied Science and Bachelor of Applied Science Degrees

- a. The Bachelor of Applied Science degree is a four-year occupationally specific degree that is intended to respond to the needs of the workforce. A student with an associate of applied science in a program approved by the Board of Regents seeking a Bachelor of Applied Science degree is guaranteed junior status upon transfer to another applicable NSHE institution.
- b. *Transfer agreements must include a year-by-year outline of course requirements, including transfer general education and degree requirements, in which the course of study leading to the Bachelor of Applied Science degree includes the first two years coursework that will result in completion of the requirements for an associate of applied science degree.*

....

(*Effective Fall 2013*)

**POLICY PROPOSAL - HANDBOOK**  
**TITLE 4, CHAPTER 16, SECTION 25**  
**Community College Degree Requirements**

Additions appear in *boldface italics*; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

**Section 25. Community College Certificate and Degree Requirements (Effective Fall 2013)**

Except as otherwise provided, the standard number of semester hours for an associate of arts, associate of business, and associate of science is 60. Specific requirements for all other certificates and degrees are as follows:

CERTIFICATE

Communications	3
Emphasis	24
Additional Program Requirements	<u>3</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>

NOTE: [~~Computation~~] *Mathematics* & Human Relations must be included as courses or be clearly identified as content included in other required courses *for a Certificate*.

ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE

Communications/ <i>English</i>	<del>3</del> <b>6</b>
[ <del>English</del>	<del>3</del>
Constitution	3
[ <del>Human Relations</del>	<del>3</del>
Social Science[*]/Humanities/ <i>Fine Arts</i>	3
Mathematics*	3
Science*	3
Emphasis/ <i>Additional Program Requirements</i>	<del>30</del> <b>42</b>
[ <del>Additional Program Requirements</del>	<del>9</del>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>

*\*Mathematics and science may be included as courses or clearly identified as content in other required courses.*

*NOTE: Human Relations must be included as a course or be clearly identified as content included in other required courses for an Associate of Applied Science.*

[\*When a Social Science course is used for Human Relations, the student must take a humanities class.]

ASSOCIATE OF GENERAL STUDIES

Communications	6
Constitution	3
Science	3
Mathematics	3
Social Science	3
Humanities	3
Additional Program Requirements	<u>39</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>

(Effective Fall 2013)

AAS General Education Requirements	NSHE	SLCC*	Mesa CC**	Southern Idaho***	American River CC	Lane CC****	El Paso CC	Tarrant CC	No. VA CC	Houston CC	Miami Dade
English/Communications	6	6	9	6	6	5.25		3 and 3	6		6
Human Relations	3	3									
Quantitative Reasoning	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Science	3		4				3		3		
Social Science/Humanities	3		6	3			3	3 and 3FA	3*/3 ss	3, 3, 3 FA	3 and 3
Constitutions	3										
Distribution/Elective		3		3		3	3				
Critical Reading			3								
PE/Health						2.25			1		
Information Systems											
<b>Total General Education</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Emphasis/Degree Reqs</b>	<b>39+</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>59.25</b>					
<b>Degree total</b>	<b>60+</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>72.75</b>		<b>60-75</b>	<b>65-69</b>	<b>60-72</b>	<b>60-65</b>

\* SLCC Distribution: Choose 3 credits from one of following: Biological Science Fine Arts Humanities Interdisciplinary Physical Science Social Science

\*\* Mesa CC: Mathematics and Sciences may be embedded in curriculum

\*\*\* Southern Idaho: 3 credits required from any additional general elective course

\*\*\*\* Lane CC: Converted Quarters to semesters Elective choice of Science or Computer Science

\*NVCC- Humanities/ Fine arts English is req'd but not part of General Education component