

## Policy on Degrees and Awards

Gadsden State Community College awards associate degrees, certificates, and short-term 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, Gadsden State is authorized to certify the successful completion of prescribed courses of study in each instructional program through the awarding of the following degrees and certificates:

The **Associate in Science Degree (AS)** is an undergraduate award designed for a student who plans to transfer to a senior institution for the successful completion of a prescribed program of study in a general field or in a specialized pre-professional field. The maximum number of semester credit hours required for the AS degree is 64.

The **Associate in Arts Degree (AA)** is an undergraduate award designed for a student who plans to transfer to a senior institution for the successful completion of a prescribed program of study in a liberal arts area. The maximum number of semester credit hours required for the AA degree is 64.

The **Associate in Applied Science Degree (AAS)** is an undergraduate award designed for students planning to specialize in technical, business, semi-professional, and supervisory fields. Students specializing in certain career-oriented fields may be eligible to transfer to a senior institution. The AAS degree may require a maximum of 76 semester hours.

The **Certificate Award (CERT)** is a formal award certifying the satisfactory completion of a prescribed program of study. The certificate is less than a degree, and its curriculum is related to the student's employment or professional advancement. A certificate requires a minimum of 30 semester hours and a maximum of 60 semester hours.

The **Short-Term Certificate Award (STC)** is a formal award that prepares technicians and assistants for entry-level positions in business and industry. Short-term certificate programs must be a minimum of nine (9) semester credit hours in length and a maximum of 29 semester credit hours.

## 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, 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.

*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.*

### Program Length

The following tables illustrate the program length for each degree and award, as well as the hours required in each of the five areas. Specific course requirements and notes on the general education courses required are included in the degree requirements of the Student Catalog & Handbook.

#### Associate in Arts and Associate in Science Degree Programs

The Associate in Arts and Associate in Science Degree Programs require a minimum of 60 semester hours and a maximum of 64 semester hours.

#### **Program Length: Associate in Arts and Associate in Science Degrees**

Area	Required Semester Hours
I – Written Composition	6
II – Humanities and Fine Arts	12
III – Natural Sciences and Mathematics	11
IV – History, Social, and Behavioral Sciences	12
V – Pre-professional, Pre-major, and Elective Courses	19-23
<b>Total Semester Hours</b>	<b>60-64</b>

#### AAS Degree Programs

An Associate in Applied Science Degree (AAS) requires a minimum of 60 semester hours and a maximum of 76 semester hours.

#### **Program Length: Associate in Applied Science Degree**

Area	Required Semester Hours
I – Written Composition	3 – 6
II – Humanities and Fine Arts	3 – 6
III – Natural Sciences and Mathematics	6 – 11
IV – History, Social, and Behavioral Sciences	3 – 6
V – Pre-professional, Pre-major, and Elective Courses	31 - 61
<b>Total Semester Hours</b>	<b>60 - 76</b>

#### Certificate Programs

A certificate requires a minimum of 30 semester hours and a maximum of 60 semester hours.

#### **Program Length: Certificate**

Area	Required Semester Hours
I – Written Composition	3 – 6
II – Humanities and Fine Arts	0 - 6
III – Natural Sciences and Mathematics	3 - 7
IV – History, Social, and Behavioral Sciences	0
V – Pre-professional, Pre-major, and Elective Courses	11-54
<b>Total Semester Hours</b>	<b>30 - 60</b>

Short-Term Certificate Programs

Short-term certificate programs must be a minimum of nine (9) semester credit hours in length and a maximum of 29 semester credit hours.

**Program Length: Short-Term Certificate**

Area	Required Semester Hours
I – Written Composition	0 – 3
II – Humanities and Fine Arts	0
III – Natural Sciences and Mathematics	0 – 3
IV – History, Social, and Behavioral Sciences	0
V – Pre-professional, Pre-major, and Elective Courses	9 – 29
<b>Total Semester Hours</b>	<b>9 - 29</b>