

MAINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS Section 302

SUBJECT: CRITERIA FOR ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS

PURPOSE: To establish criteria for awarding academic credentials

A. Introduction

The successful completion of a catalog program of study offered by a MCCS college entitles the student to a certificate, associate degree, or advanced certificate credential as appropriate to the curriculum. The basic criteria for the award of these credentials are described below. In all instances, care must be taken to ensure compliance with accreditation standards.

B. Certificate

A certificate is awarded upon the successful completion of a prescribed program of vocational and/or technical courses that leads to an occupational skill and includes the following:

1. 16 to 36 credit hours of coursework, including appropriate related and/or general education courses as specified by the program;
2. Demonstrated competence in mathematics and communication skills at a level consistent with the requirements of the program. This competency may be demonstrated either by satisfactory performance on prescribed academic assessment tests or by completing required communications and mathematics courses; and
3. Achievement of a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0.
4. Includes in the core curriculum a minimum of 25% of the credits that differentiate the program and build knowledge depth in an area of focus of the program.

Certificates may also be considered as the first year of an associate degree program and, if so, must meet the appropriate academic requirements.

C. Associate in Applied Science

An Associate in Applied Science credential is awarded upon the successful completion of a program designed for employment in a specific occupation or to upgrade skills to improve the opportunity for advancement within an existing position. The maximum allowable credits are currently 68. Five years from the effective date of this policy [September 2014 amendment] all existing programs will reduce the maximum hours from 68 to 64. The maximum allowable credits for all new programs effective the date of this policy [September 2014 amendment] will be no more than 64. The curriculum for such programs may offer some opportunities for transfer into baccalaureate programs and shall include all of the following as minimum requirements:

1. Minimum Semester Credit Hour Distribution by Subject:

- a. General Education
 - 1) Writing 6 credits
 - 2) Quantitative Literacy/Natural Science 6-7 credits
 - 3) Creative Arts/Humanities/Social Science 6 credits
 - 4) Any General Education Elective 3 credits

21-22 credits
 - b. Program Core up to 34 credits
2. Total Credits between 60 and 64
(unless an exception to exceed 64 semester credit hours is granted by the Board)
3. Minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average 2.0.
4. Includes in the core curriculum a minimum of 25% of the credits that differentiate the program and build knowledge depth in an area of focus of the program.
5. Completion of 60+ semester credit hours.

D. Associate in Science

An Associate in Science credential is awarded upon the successful completion of a program designed primarily to prepare students to transfer to an upper division baccalaureate program with an emphasis in math and/or science. Five years from the effective date of this policy all existing programs will reduce the maximum hours from 68 to 64 [September 2014 amendment]. The maximum allowable 6 credit for all new programs effective the date of this policy [September 2014 amendment] will be no more than 64. The curriculum for such programs shall also provide employment skills and include all of the following as minimum requirements:

- a. Minimum Semester Credit Hour Distribution by Subject
 - a. General Education
 - 1) Writing/ Communication 6 credits
 - 2) Quantitative Literacy/Natural Science 12*-15 credits
 - 3) Creative Arts/Humanities 3 credits
 - 4) Social Science 3 credits
 - 5) Diversity/Ethical Reasoning 3 credits
 - 6) Any General Education Elective 3** credits

30- credits

*Students must complete at least one lab science.

**Programs that require 12 credits math/science must also require an additional 3 credits in any general education domain.

- b. Program Core up to 34 credits

2. Total Credits between 60 and 64
(unless an exception to exceed 64 semester credit hours is granted by the Board)
3. Minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average 2.0
4. Includes in the core curriculum a minimum of 25% of the credits that differentiate the program and build knowledge depth in an area of focus of the program.
5. Completion of 60+ semester credit hours.

E. Associate in Arts

An Associate in Arts credential is awarded upon the completion of a program designed primarily to prepare students to transfer to an upper division baccalaureate program. The Associate in Arts curriculum is built on a robust general education framework of 34-35 credit hours, distributed across eight learning domains, with an emphasis in the social sciences and humanities. The Associate in Arts offers students considerable flexibility in selecting strands of electives to develop depth in the prerequisite knowledge required for further study at the baccalaureate level. Such curricula shall include all of the following as minimum requirements:

1. Minimum Semester Credit Hour Distribution by Subject:

- a. General Education
 1. Writing 6 credits
 2. Quantitative Literacy 3-4 credits
 3. Natural Science 4 credits
 4. Creative Arts 3 credits
 5. Social Science 6 credits
 6. Humanities 6 credits
 7. Diversity 3 credits
 8. Ethical Reasoning 3 credits
- b. Program Core 34-35 credits
2. Total Credits up to 29 credits
3. Minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average 2.0 60-64 credits
4. Completion of 60+ semester credit hours.

This credential is limited to 64 credit hours.

F. Advanced Certificate

An Advanced Certificate for occupational programs of study is awarded upon the successful completion of a prescribed program of vocational and/or technical courses designed to enhance the occupational skills of students seeking employment in highly specialized occupations.

Advanced Certificates require:

1. 16 to 36 credit hours of coursework as specified by the program exclusive of practicum hours;
2. Achievement of a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0;
3. Includes in the core curriculum a minimum of 25% of the credits that differentiate the program and build knowledge depth in an area of focus of the program; and
4. An earned associate degree, higher degree or equivalent professional credentials as approved by the academic dean as a standard criterion for admission into the program.

REFERENCES: 20-A M.R.S.A. §12706(1) and (15) DATE ADOPTED: June 24, 2009
DATE(S) AMENDED: June 22, 2011; September 24, 2014; April 29, 2015, June 21, 2017,
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