

**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 of study that provides students career-specific skills leading directly to employment upon graduation or to upgrade skills to improve the opportunity for advancement within an existing position. 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/Communication                 | 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

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21-22 credits

b. Program Core up to 42 credits

c. Total credits between 60 and 64

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 60-64 semester credit hours. This credential is limited to 64 semester credit hours unless an exception to exceed 64 semester credit hours is granted by the Board.

**D. Associate in Science**

An associate in science credential is awarded upon the successful completion of a program of study that prepares students to transfer to an upper division baccalaureate program with a focus in disciplines such as the sciences, business, education, or a technical field. The associate in science curriculum includes a general education block of 21 credit hours, distributed across eight learning domains, and a program core that builds knowledge depth in the area of focus of the program. The curriculum shall also provide employment skills and include all of the following as minimum requirements:

1. Minimum Semester Credit Hour Distribution by Subject

a. General Education

- 1) Writing/ Communication 6 credits
- 2) Quantitative Literacy/Natural Science 6-7 credits
- 3) Creative Arts/Humanities 3 credits
- 4) Social Science 3 credits
- 5) Diversity/Ethical Reasoning 3 credits

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21-22 credits

b. Program Core up to 42 credits

c. Total credits between 60 and 64

2. Minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average 2.0

3. A core curriculum wherein a minimum of 25% of the credits differentiate the program and build knowledge depth in an area of focus of the program.
4. Completion of 60-64 semester credit hours. This credential is limited to 64 credits unless an exception to exceed semester credit hours is granted by the Board.

**E. Associate in Arts**

An associate in arts credential is awarded upon the completion of a program of study that prepares students to transfer to an upper division baccalaureate program with a focus in the liberal arts. 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. The curriculum 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
	34-35 credits

b. Program Core up to 29 credits

c. Total credits 60-64 credits

2. Minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average 2.0
3. Completion of 60-64 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.

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REFERENCES: 20-A M.R.S.A. §12706(1) and (15)

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March 21, 2018; September 27, 2023