

determination to approve or deny a request to exceed the 60-hour limit. Institutions of higher education must be in compliance with this subsection on or before the start of the 2015 fall semester.

Institutions may choose their own award titles provided the title clearly defines the nature of the award. Institutions are encouraged to use common award titles as specified in the CIP code manual to promote consistency with program offerings and awards granted by other institutions, as programs should be designed to educate students broadly within an occupation or industry. Where applicable, certificates should follow the same guidelines, using standard terminology and types of awards.

Approved applied associate degree and certificate programs will appear in the Coordinating Board's Workforce Education Inventory. All programs will be subject to established statewide program evaluation procedures. Awards must be listed in an institution's catalog, appear on the student's transcript, and be subject to the institution's Graduate Guarantee policy. The guarantee must assure a graduate's employer that the graduate has met program competencies and must offer up to nine tuition-free semester hours of education for a program graduate judged by the employer as unable to perform on the job the competencies specified in the college program.

An AAS or AAA degree should have a technical component composed of 50 percent to 75 percent of the course credits drawn from a common technical specialty identified by the program CIP code. This ensures that each degree or certificate program has a clearly defined subject matter focus and provides students with opportunities for employment and career advancement. The curriculum may include both *Workforce Education Course Manual* (WECM) courses and *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual* (ACGM) courses that are directly related to the discipline. The use of WECM Special Topics and Local Need courses in the curriculum is limited to three courses. In certain cases, parallel courses are listed in the WECM and the ACGM. In these instances, the ACGM courses with WECM equivalents may count as part of the technical specialty component. See Chapter 4 for more information.

The remaining percentage of an AAS or AAA degree should consist of support courses and general education courses. These guidelines are not intended to establish an arbitrary number or percentage of specific courses that must be contained in a program; logical exceptions to the guidelines will be permitted.

In cases where a program may require a preponderance of academic courses, the institution must document that the additional academic coursework was recommended by the program advisory committee and that it is directly related to the occupational field and/or to a Coordinating Board-approved Field of Study Curriculum.

To meet SACSCOC guidelines, each degree must have a minimum of 15 semester hours of general education courses. Courses must be selected from the following areas and must include at least 3 SCH in each area: Humanities/Fine Arts, Social/Behavioral Sciences, and Natural Sciences/Mathematics. Table 3.3 maps the Texas Core Curriculum component areas to these SACSSOC categories. Generally, courses should be selected from the institution's core curriculum, though each institution should work with its SACSCOC representative concerning courses that meet the requirements. General education courses must be

transferable courses found in the ACGM or on the college’s approved academic unique need course inventory, although unique need courses cannot be part of a core curriculum. See SACSCOC [Principles of Accreditation](#) and the [Texas Core Curriculum](#) for further information.

Table 3.3: SACSCOC-Required General Education Courses
By Texas Core Curriculum Component Area

Humanities/ Fine Arts*	Social/ Behavioral Science	Natural Science and Math
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Language, Philosophy, and Culture • Creative Arts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American History • Government/Political Science • Social and Behavioral Sciences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics • Life and Physical Sciences

A program specialty is a variation within one AAS or AAA degree that allows students to take a particular sequence of courses. A specialty does not result in a different AAS or AAA degree and is not listed in the Coordinating Board program inventory, but may result in a separate certificate award. The specialty must match the program CIP code of the approved award and must have at least 50 percent of the technical specialty component (including WECM and ACGM courses) in common. Program specialties may be approved as additions to the original degree. For example, an institution could offer a single degree program, AAS in Hospitality Management, with two specializations, one in Hotel Management and another in Tourism.

An AAS or AAA degree program that provides a shortened track of 16-45 SCH for students who hold a related degree may offer an Advanced Technical Certificate (ATC) for the shortened track. For example, an AAS degree program in Sonography may provide an ATC in Sonography for students who already hold an AAS in Echocardiography. In this case, the program inventory would list both an AAS and an ATC in Sonography. The ATC is discussed further below, in Characteristics of Workforce Certificates.

All students enrolled in an associate degree program or a Level Two certificate program must meet the requirements of the Texas Success Initiative (TSI). More information about TSI requirements is available in [Coordinating Board Rules Chapter 4, Subchapter C](#).

F. Characteristics of Workforce Certificates

A credit certificate should provide progression toward an AAS or an AAA degree. At least 50 percent of the course credits should be drawn from a single technical specialty. The remaining courses may be technical or academic courses.

Credit certificates will be approved in four different categories or levels:

1. A level one certificate (CERT1) can be completed by a student in one calendar year or less. It must consist of at least 15 SCH and no more than 42 SCH. Level one certificate programs are exempt from TSI requirements, but certificate programs may perform local assessment and remediation of students, provided that these activities do not exclude the student from enrollment in the certificate program.