



Revision Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs
Responsible Executive Officer: President

Source/Reference: [TBR Policy 2:01:00:00](#)
[TBR Policy 2:00:01:06](#)
[TBR Policy 2:01:00:02](#)

PURPOSE

To establish the minimum requirements for associate degrees and certificates awarded by Columbia State Community College.

POLICY

- I. All associate degrees awarded by Columbia State Community College shall require 60 semester credit hours with an overall grade point average of 2.0, unless approved as an exception by the Tennessee Board of Regents. At least 25% of these must be earned in residence at Columbia State. Credit hours earned in Learning Support (remedial or developmental courses) are for institutional credit only and are not applicable to credit hours required for the degree.
- II. The minimum associate of science, the associate of arts, and the associate of science in teaching degree requirements shall be distributed as indicated below:
 - A. General Education Requirements
 1. Communications¹
 - (a) English Composition – 6 semester credit hours
 - (b) Speech – 3 semester credit hours
 2. Humanities and/or Fine Arts¹
 - (a) Literature – 3 semester credit hours
 - (b) Courses selected from fine arts/humanities – 6 semester credit hours
 3. Social/Behavioral Sciences¹ – 6 semester credit hours
 4. History – 6 semester credit hours
 - (a) History sequence selected in accordance with requirements of the college or university to which the student plans to transfer².
 5. Natural Sciences¹ – 8 semester credit hours
 6. Mathematics¹ – 3 semester credit hours
 7. A total of 41 semester hours of General Education is required. Courses meeting each general education category are published in the college catalog.

¹ Specific courses meeting this requirement are identified in the catalog.

² Students who lack the required one unit (one year) of American History from high school as an admissions requirement must complete six (6) semester hours of American History or three (3) semester hours of American History and three (3) semester hours of Tennessee History to fulfill the history requirement in general education. Otherwise, student may choose from among the history courses approved at a particular institution to fulfill the six-semester hour requirement in history.

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- B. A college success course is required for all degree-seeking students enrolled at Columbia State Fall 2016 or later. Exemptions are granted to students who have completed a similar course or transferred 12 or more credit hours to Columbia State from another institution.
- C. Additional required courses to meet the minimum semester hours required for the degree are specific to the program in which the student plans to major upon transfer.
- D. For students earning an Associate of Arts degree, demonstration of proficiency equivalent to one year of college-level work in the same foreign language is required.
- E. Courses taken as electives to address course deficiencies in high school preparation and to meet minimum university admissions requirements effective Fall 1989 may be used concurrently to satisfy general education requirements specified above with the exception of foreign language. Relative to removing course deficiencies in foreign language, the following provisions apply:
1. Students who pursue programs leading to the Associate of Science degrees may apply foreign language courses taken to remove the deficiencies as electives, if appropriate, or otherwise as add-on hours.
 2. Students who pursue programs leading to the Associate of Arts degree may apply foreign language courses taken to remove deficiencies toward fulfillment of degree requirements.
- III. The minimum requirements for the Associate of Fine Arts degree includes all of the required General Education in Section II. A. above except for three hours of the Humanities/Fine Arts requirement and the one course in literature. The total number of hours of General Education for the Associate of Fine Arts degree is 35 semester hours. The College Success course and 26 semester credit hours of Music courses are required for this program.
- IV. The Associate of Applied Science degree requirements include the following coursework and other requirements as indicated below:
- A. General Education courses – 15-17 semester credit hours¹
(Minimum of 25% up to a maximum of 50%), including the following minimum course distribution:
- English Composition – 3 semester credit hours
 - *Humanities and/or Fine Arts course – 3 semester credit hours
 - *Social/Behavioral Sciences – 3 semester credit hours
 - *Natural Science/Mathematics – 3-4 semester credit hours
 - *One additional course from the categories of communication, humanities and/or fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, or natural sciences/mathematics – 3-4 semester credit hours

¹ Specific courses meeting this requirement are identified in the catalog.

* Specific courses satisfying these requirements must be the same courses that satisfy the general education requirement for the Associate (A.A./A.S.) and baccalaureate degrees.

- B. Technical courses – 43-59 semester credit hours

- C. A College Success course is required for all degree-seeking students enrolled at Columbia State Fall 2016 or later. Exemptions are granted to students who have completed a similar course or transferred 12 or more credit hours to Columbia State from another institution.
 - D. Total hours for the degree must be between 60 to 75 semester credit hours. Programs that exceed 60 semester credit hours must be approved as exceptions by the Tennessee Board of Regents.
 - E. Grade point average of at least 2.0 in program courses.
- V. Requirements for the Technical Certificate of credit varies in required semester hours and can include up to one full year of study in technical specialty courses. Requirements for the Technical Certificate include:
- A. Grade point average of at least 2.0 in courses required for the certificate.
 - B. At least 25% of the hours earned toward this certificate must be earned in residence at Columbia State.
- VI. Guidelines for Degrees and Certificates
- A. Students may not earn a degree or certificate before completing all Learning Support competencies as required by their program of study.
 - B. The College will not award the A.A. or A.S. degree to persons who already hold an A.A., A.S., A.S.T., or A.F.A. degree. Individuals holding a Baccalaureate degree or higher without an A.A., A.S., A.S.T or A.F.A. degree may be awarded an Associate degree designed for transfer if the degree sought has a different concentration from the major of the advanced degree(s).
 - C. Students may be awarded the A.S.T. if they have been awarded an A.A. or A.S. degree previously; however, students previously awarded the A.S.T. degree are not eligible for the A.A., A.S. or A.F.A. degree.
 - D. Students holding advanced degrees or a transfer Associate's degree may be awarded the A.A.S. degree or Technical Certificate provided they meet the stated requirements.
 - E. Students who have been awarded an A.A.S. degree who complete a different major which includes 16 semester hours over and above those required for the first A.A.S. degree will earn a second A.A.S. degree.

- F. Students completing a degree must take a general education exam as well as any other examination required by the College or the Tennessee Board of Regents. Students who fail to do so will not graduate. Students who have previously graduated from Columbia State or who have earned a Bachelor's degree are exempt from the general education exam.
- G. Students may earn multiple Technical Certificates as long as 25% of the required hours were not required for previously earned certificates.
- H. All financial and other obligations to Columbia State must be met for diplomas and/or transcripts to be released.

PROCEDURES

I. Degrees and Certificates

- A. Students must file an Intent to Graduate form or Request for Technical Certificate form to be considered for certificate or degree completion.
- B. The Records Office personnel will perform an academic audit to determine if students meet the program conditions:
 - 1. Completion of all certificate and/or degree program requirements
 - 2. Achievement of a passing grade for all courses required by the specific program
 - 3. Achievement of a minimum Grade Point Average and minimum Quality Points
 - 4. Completion of the Columbia State residency requirement
 - 5. Completion of the General Education Examination, as well as any other examination required by the College or the Tennessee Board of Regents.
- C. The Records Office will email students communications regarding their degree completion status.
- D. Upon validation of certificate and/or degree completion, the Records Office personnel will print and release diplomas and certificates.

II. Posthumous Degrees and Certificates

- A. Columbia State may grant degrees posthumously if it is determined that a deceased student has completed sufficient coursework to earn a degree.
 - 1. Student must have been enrolled at the time of death (summer excluded) or their continuous enrollment must have been interrupted by an extenuating circumstance (illness, injury, deployment, etc.).
 - 2. Student must have been in good academic and disciplinary standing.

- B. Upon learning of the death of a Columbia State student, the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Division Dean of the student's program will determine the academic and President for Academic Affairs.
- C. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will consider all information relative to each case and will submit a recommendation to the President, who will ultimately determine whether the deceased student is eligible as a candidate for a posthumous degree or certificate.
- D. Upon approval by the President, the family of the deceased will be notified of the approval. The degree or certificate will be conferred at the next regularly scheduled commencement exercise.
- E. The Posthumous Degree will be printed in commencement programs within the appropriate college section. If the family chooses not to participate, this award may still be read during the ceremony (unless explicitly requested otherwise by the family).
- F. The statement "awarded posthumously" will be printed on the student's academic record, but not on the diploma.

III. Replacement Diplomas and Certificates

- A. Alumni may order replacement certificates and/or diplomas if the original has been lost or damaged by submitting a Request for Replacement Diploma and \$10.00 to Business Services. After the payment has been validated on the form, the form should be submitted to the Records Office.
- B. All replacement certificates and diplomas may be printed with current Tennessee Board of Regents Chancellor and College President signatures.
- C. The replacement diploma will be mailed to the recipient.

December 1988; Revised; December 11, 2000 (policy updated and new policy format); March 8, 2004 (to bring policy up-to-date with revised requirements); February 27, 2012 (changed residency requirement from 18 credit hours to 25% to be consistent with SACS, to bring policy up-to-date with revised requirements, new policy format and updated titles) September 4, 2012 (Revised Section V. B. to read appropriately); March 2, 2015 (update verbiage to match current catalog/practices, revised IV. Guidelines for Degrees and Certificates); October 19, 2015 (correct conflict of residency requirement for certificates and delete section of requirements for academic certificates; Revised June 2018; reviewed/accepted by Cabinet