

Program CIP Code ¹	Award CIP Code ²	Program / Award Name
52.06		Business/Managerial Economics
52.07		Entrepreneurial and Small Business Operations
52.08		Finance and Financial Management Services
52.09		Hospitality Administration/Management
52.10		Human Resources Management and Services
52.11		International Business
52.12		Management Information Systems and Services
52.13		Management Sciences and Quantitative Methods
52.14		Marketing
52.15		Real Estate
52.16		Taxation
52.17		Insurance
52.18		General Sales, Merchandising, and Related Marketing Operations
52.19		Specialized Sales, Merchandising, and Marketing Operations
52.20		Construction Management

2. Types and Characteristics of Awards

Each program may have several awards. Generally, it is recommended that the number and type of awards not exceed the following:

- One AAS or AAA and several certificates, including –
- Two level one certificates, each between 15-42 semester credit hours (SCH);
- One level two certificate between 43-59 SCH;
- One enhanced skills certificate (if applicable) between 6-15 SCH.; and
- Several continuing education certificates

In some disciplines, a broader array of awards may be warranted. Under exceptional circumstances a program may also have an advanced technical certificate of 16-50 SCH.

This configuration of awards provides building blocks for students leading from basic to more advanced workplace competencies. Ideally, each award will enable students to build toward the associate degree. In cases where career clusters exist at the six-digit CIP code level, the program may contain separate certificates of similar length for the four-digit awards. For example, a program with an AAS in Automotive Technology may have parallel certificates of similar length in each of the three six-digit CIP codes that make up the cluster, i.e. Auto Body Repair, Auto Mechanics, and Diesel Mechanics.

In August 1998, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) published a policy statement concerning the associate degree. The text of the statement may be accessed on the Internet on the AACC website at www.aacc.nche.edu. The existence of several different degree titles for the same or highly similar programs inevitably results in confusion when potential employers consider the qualifications of workforce education program graduates. The AACC policy statement therefore urges institutions to avoid degree title

proliferation:

In recent years there has been a problem of titles for associate degrees. In certain states and in certain institutions, different degree titles are used due to tradition or local circumstances. But institutions should avoid degree title proliferation and the confusion which results, especially since students move from institution to institution and, upon graduation, to different areas of the nation. The use of multiple degree titles has been especially prevalent in occupational areas where some institutions offer many different degrees in specific technologies. In an attempt to reduce the number of these degrees and to avoid confusion about the level of academic achievement, it is highly recommended . . . (that the applied associate degree) have a limited number of designations to denote special fields of study such as nursing, computer technology, or law enforcement. . . Institutions are encouraged to use nationally standardized nomenclature to ensure transferability and a common understanding of the associate degree.

The report further recommends that in contrast to narrowly specialized programs, programs should be designed to educate students broadly within an occupational cluster, preparing them for career advancement and lifelong learning opportunities. Where applicable, certificates should follow the same guidelines using standard nomenclature and types of awards.

The limitation on multiple awards within defined subject areas is intended to guard against undue award proliferation and to promote the successful movement of students toward program completion. The limitation is intended to trigger further staff review of new program applications and does not prevent exceptions from being requested by an institution or from being granted by the Commissioner.

Approved applied associate degree and certificate programs shall appear on the workforce education program inventory as maintained by the Coordinating Board staff and will be subject to established statewide institutional effectiveness program evaluation procedures. Awards must be listed in an institution's catalog, appear on a student's transcript, and be subject to an institution's Graduate Guarantee policy.

a. Associate of Applied Science/Associate of Applied Arts Degrees

The degree options for a workforce education program are the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree and the Associate of Applied Arts (AAA) degree. Degrees must be limited to a total of 60-72 semester credit hours. Each workforce education program should have at least half of its coursework drawn from a common technical specialty identified by the four- or six-digit CIP code designated for the program. This ensures that each degree or certificate program has a clearly defined subject focus and will provide students with valid opportunities for employment and career advancement.

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.

An applied associate degree results in a formal award that indicates mastery of a prescribed series of competencies with defined employment outcomes. AAS and AAA degrees are technical or professional in nature and are usually identified with a broad designation (e.g., AAS in Electronics and AAA in Music Performance).

The technical specialty component of an AAS or AAA degree should constitute 50 percent to 75 percent of the course credits. These may include both WECM courses and academic courses that are directly related to the discipline. Except in the case of emerging disciplines, the use of WECM Special Topics and Local Need courses in the curriculum is limited to three courses (see Chapter Four for details). In certain cases, there are parallel courses listed in the *Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM)* and the *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM)*. In these instances, the ACGM courses with WECM equivalents may count as part of the technical specialty component. The remaining 25 percent to 50 percent of an AAS or AAA degree should consist of related or support courses and general education courses. In recent years, new career fields such as Biotechnology have emerged that may require extensive academic preparation for a student to enter the workforce. Such cases may warrant an exception to the general policy that 50 percent of the course credit be in technical course work, especially if some of the required course work has no WECM equivalent courses. In cases where the program would require a preponderance of academic courses, the college must document that the additional academic course work 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.

Coordinating Board rules and guidelines are aligned with the Principles of Accreditation of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). To meet SACS guidelines, each degree must have a minimum of 15 semester hours in general education. The 15 hours of general education must include at least one course in each of the following three areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and mathematics/natural sciences. Each college should work with its SACS representative concerning specific courses that will be acceptable to SACS. General education courses must be transferable courses found in the *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM)* or on the college's approved academic unique need course inventory. Examples of acceptable general education disciplines are listed in Table 3-2, below.

Table 3-2. Examples of General Education Courses by Area

Humanities/ Fine Arts*	Social/ Behavioral Science	Natural Science and Math
Humanities Literature Journalism Drama/Art/Music Philosophy Cultural studies Classical languages Ethics	Government History Psychology Sociology Anthropology Economics	Biology Chemistry Physics College-level Math (must be academic, not applied) Geology

***Note:** Use of Speech or English Composition courses to satisfy the Humanities/Fine Arts requirement is not recommended. SACS teams have disapproved this practice at a number of colleges.

Each degree program must also contain math, computer, and communication competencies. These should be built into every course and program to the extent that they are applicable and relevant. If a college elects math, computer science, or communication courses as general education requirements, the courses must be academic transfer courses of collegiate level and of a general nature, not geared to a specific occupation—e.g., welders, electricians, or secretaries.

In contrast, applied competencies should be built into the program. In other words, math for electricians might be an acceptable program course, but it is not a general education course.

Further, if a college chooses math as a general education requirement, it need not be college algebra. Another acceptable course is College Mathematics, a course which may include algebra and geometry, with topics in sets, logic, number systems, number theory, functions, equivalence, congruence, measurement, other geometric concepts, and the introduction to probability and statistics.

b. AAS/AAA Program Options and Specialties

A program **option** is a different AAS or AAA degree within the same four- or six-digit CIP code listed on the program inventory. A degree and one or more options (additional degrees) will only be approved in exceptional circumstances and must be justified by the requesting institution. Each option is listed on the CB inventory of awards.

A program **specialty** is a variation within one AAS or AAA degree allowing students to take different courses. A specialty does not result in a different AAS or AAA degree and is not listed on the CB inventory, but may result in a different certificate award. The specialty should match the program CIP code of the approved award and should share a significant number of its technical

courses. As a rule of thumb, specialties in the same program should have 50 percent of the technical courses in common. Program specialties may be approved as revisions to the original degree. Colleges interested in program specialties should work closely with Coordinating Board staff advisors.

Examples of specialties include: AAS in hospitality administration/management with specialties in 1) hotel management and 2) tourism, or AAS in Computer Information Technology with specialties in 1) information systems security and 2) webmaster.

If a college has both an AAS or AAA and a shortened track to the degree, only the final award is listed on the CB inventory. For example, if a college has both an AAS in nursing and a licensed vocational nursing to associate degree nursing (LVN-ADN) transition track, the final award - the AAS - would appear on the inventory. When there are two tracks to the same award, they need not be of the same length; however, any credit given for previous learning must be tied to specific courses. For example, the college's associate degree in nursing program may require 72 SCH for students who have not completed the LVN program and only a total of 60 SCH for LVN transition students (e.g., 45 SCH of course work and 15 SCH transferred from the LVN program).

c. Credit Certificate Programs

A credit certificate should constitute a building block toward the AAS or AAA degree. At least 50 percent of the course credits should be drawn from a focused 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** can be completed by a student in one calendar year or less. It must consist of at least 15 and no more than 42 semester credit hours. Students in level one certificate programs are not required to take a test for purposes of the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) as long as they take no more than 6 SCH outside the curriculum for the certificate program; nevertheless, all certificate programs should provide for local assessment and remediation of students.

Programs in professions requiring external program accreditation and licensure or certification examinations for practitioners (e.g., Licensed Vocational Nursing, LVN); and which exceed the credit hour limit may be approved by the Coordinating Board staff as TSI-waived if the program can be completed in one year or less, have a maximum of 48 SCH for the program including all admissions and course prerequisites, and have a maximum of 18 SCH per semester. These awards shall be identified on the CBM-009 (graduate/completer report) as CERT1. Approval for TSI waiver may **only** be obtained by written request to the Director of Instructional Programs, Community and Technical Colleges Division.

The request must identify the award and include the total number of SCH in the award, the range of SCH per semester, the name of the applicable accrediting and licensing or certifying agency/agencies, and a statement of assurance that the award with all of its prerequisites can reasonably be completed in 12 calendar months. As a rule, the curriculum for a level one certificate is limited to one Special Topics or Local Need course.

- (2) **A level two certificate** must consist of at least 43 and no more than 59 semester credit hours. Students in all level two certificates shall be subject to the requirements of the TSI. This award shall be identified on the CBM-009 as CERT2. As a rule, the curriculum for a level two certificate is limited to no more than two Special Topics or Local Need courses.
- (3) **An enhanced skills certificate** is a certificate associated with an AAS or AAA degree program. The associated AAS or AAA must be a prerequisite for the enhanced skills certificate. The certificate must be well focused, clearly related to the program, and justifiable. It must consist of at least six and no more than 15 SCH and may extend an AAS or AAA award to an overall total that shall not exceed 87 semester hours. This award shall be identified on the CBM-009 as CERT3. The award must not be used to circumvent the 72 SCH cap for degrees. It is intended to provide skills beyond career entry or where external mandates make it impossible for specified programs to meet the 72 SCH limit.
- (4) **An advanced technical certificate** is a certificate that has a defined associate or baccalaureate degree (or, in some circumstances, junior-level standing in a baccalaureate degree program) as a prerequisite for admission into the certificate program. It must consist of at least 16 and no more than 50 SCH. It must be focused, clearly related to the prerequisite degree, and justifiable to meet industry or external agency requirements. As a rule, the curriculum for an advanced technical certificate is limited to no more than three Special Topics or Local Need courses.
- (5) An AAS or AAA degree program that provides a **shortened track** of 16-50 SCH for students who hold a related degree may offer an advanced technical certificate for the shortened track. For example, an AAS degree in Sonography may provide an advanced technical certificate in sonography for students who already hold an AAS in Echocardiography. In this case the program inventory would list both an AAS in Sonography and an advanced technical certificate in Sonography.

d. Institutional Awards

In addition to Coordinating Board-recognized awards, colleges may offer institutional awards of fewer than 15 SCH or 360 continuing education contact hours reflecting a course or series of courses which:

- (1) represent achievement of an identifiable skill proficiency, or

(2) meet a student's self-defined educational objective.

Institutional awards shall be based on existing *WECM* courses or courses that are part of the institution's approved Local Need inventory. Institutional awards shall not be part of the Coordinating Board-maintained Program Inventory.

e. Continuing Education Certificate Programs

A coherent sequence of continuing education courses which total 360 or more contact hours must be approved as a workforce education certificate program. Courses may be considered part of a coherent sequence if they:

- (1) include required and/or recommended prerequisites or co-requisites or
- (2) lead to an external credential (license, certification, or registration) or
- (3) are taken by a majority of students in sequence to meet occupational qualifications

These certificate programs may award continuing education units (CEU) according to the *Guidelines* in this chapter and *WECM (Workforce Education Course Manual—see Chapter Four)*. All Continuing Education certificate programs must be listed on the college's approved inventory of programs and must be transcribed. Workforce education programs of 780 contact hours or more must be offered for SCH only. An exception is made for Emergency Medical Technology/Paramedic continuing education programs, CIP 51.0904, which may have a maximum of 800 contact hours.

A college wishing to convert CEU previously awarded to students to SCH must follow SACS guidelines. If the college converts CEU to SCH, it must maintain documentation that the continuing education courses have met the same objectives, rigor, evaluation process, and faculty qualifications as the analogous credit courses. The documentation must show that individual continuing education students have met the same competencies as the successful credit students prior to granting SCH retroactively for courses taken as continuing education.

f. Marketable Skills Achievement Awards

A **marketable skills achievement award** may be a sequence of credit courses totaling 9-14 SCH or workforce continuing education courses of 144-359 contact hours. These awards meet the minimum standard for program length specified in the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) but are too short to qualify as certificate programs on the Coordinating Board program inventory.

Marketable skills achievement awards are TSI-waived if they meet the following criteria:

- (1) The content of the award must have been recommended by an external

workforce advisory committee or appear on the Local Workforce Development Board's Demand Occupations list;

- (2) In most cases, the award should be composed of *WECM* courses only. However, academic courses may be used occasionally if recommended by the external committee and if appropriate for a TSI-waived program;
- (3) If the award does not have at least 50 percent of its course work in a CIP code area in which the college has an approved program on the program inventory, the college must comply with the Single Course Delivery guidelines for *WECM* courses listed in Chapter Four of this manual; and
- (4) The college should document that the marketable skills achievement award prepares students for employment in accordance with guidelines for the Workforce Investment Act.

Marketable skills achievement awards do not require prior approval from the Coordinating Board staff and will not appear on the college's program inventory. However, students who complete the awards may be reported as completers on the CBM-00M report (refer to the Coordinating Board Reporting and Procedures Manual for more details).

3. Groupings of Awards

Additional guidelines for logical and flexible groupings of awards within programs are as follows:

- a. All awards in a program should begin with the same four-digit CIP code (or six-digit code for those specified at the six-digit level). Institutional Effectiveness (IE) standards apply to an entire program, not to individual awards within a program. Colleges will have the opportunity to provide feedback to the Coordinating Board staff on any necessary reclassification or division of existing programs.

Example of a correct grouping of awards:

Plumbing and Water Supply Services

Awards:

- AAS degree - Plumbing Technology/Plumber 46.0503
- Certificate - Pipefitter and Sprinkler Fitter 46.0502
- Certificate - Well Drilling 46.0504