

September 16, 1976
Office of the Provost

Minimum Credit Requirements for Undergraduate Degree Programs

The minimum credit requirements set for in these guidelines apply to existing and proposed undergraduate degree programs offered by the State University or under its academic supervision. The requirements are consistent with State Education Department requirements and regulations.

1. Types of Degree Programs

a. Associate Degree Programs: The State University of New York and institutions operating under its academic program supervision offer two types of associate degree programs: (1) degree programs designed primarily for students pursuing academic studies in fields which lead to the Bachelor of Arts or the Bachelor of Science and (2) degree programs which are designed primarily to prepare a student for immediate employability without further formal study. Associate in Arts and the Associate in Science degree programs are of the first type and articulate with the Bachelor of Arts or the Bachelor of Science degree for transferring students. Associate in Applied Science and the Associate in Occupational Studies degree programs are of the second type. When a graduate of such a program elects to pursue baccalaureate study, specialized baccalaureate degree program (e.g. Bachelor of Technology or Bachelor of Professional Studies) may be best suited for the continuation of studies. Additional study may be required of A.A.S. or A.O.S. degree holders if they transfer into a program leading to the B.A. or B.S.

b. Baccalaureate Degree Programs: The State University of New York offers programs leading to three categories of baccalaureate degrees: (1) Bachelor of Arts, (2) Bachelor of Science, and (3) specialized baccalaureate degrees.

2. General Degree Requirements

a. The minimum total requirements for an associate degree is 60 semester hours or the equivalent. Ordinarily, no associate degree program should require more than 64 semester hours. Certain programs, particularly some in technical areas involving external accreditation, may require study beyond 64 semester hours. With special justification the upper limit for an associate degree may be 72 semester hours. Students who change curricula may legitimately be obliged to meet formal requirements of the curriculum in which a degree is sought even though normal maxima in credit hours are exceeded.

b. The minimum total requirement for a bachelor's degree is 120 semester hours or the equivalent. Major exceptions, such as those for Time-Variable degrees, must be submitted for review to the Provost of the University. Except in fields where externally imposed standards are established, as in the case of architecture and some areas of engineering, no baccalaureate degree program should require more than 128 semester hours without strong educational justification.

3. Liberal Arts:

It is the responsibility of the faculty of each campus to designate courses as "liberal arts" courses. Each campus should define the nature of such courses, publish and periodically review a list of them.

4. Liberal Arts Requirements in Associate Degree Programs:

- a. Associate in Arts. All programs leading to this degree require at least 45 semester hours in liberal arts.
- b. Associate in Science. All programs leading to this degree require at least 30 semester hours in liberal arts.
- c. Associate in Applied Science. All programs leading to this degree require at least 20 semester hours in liberal arts.
- d. Associate in Occupational Studies. Programs leading to this degree need not observe a minimum requirement in liberal arts.

5. Liberal Arts Requirements in Baccalaureate Degree Programs:

- a. Programs leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree must include at least 90 semester hours in liberal arts. Such programs should require no more than 36 semester hours of specialization in a single discipline. Students should not offer toward graduation more than 50 credit hours in a single discipline.
- b. Programs leading to the Bachelor of Science must include at least 60 semester hours in liberal arts. Such programs should require no more than 44 semester hours of specialization in a single discipline. Students should not offer toward graduation more than 60 semester hours in a single discipline. The degrees, Bachelor of Science in Education, in Medical Technology, in Nursing and in Pharmacy should adhere to the same limitations as the Bachelor of Science degree.
- c. Specialized baccalaureate degrees. All specialized baccalaureate degrees that are recognized in New York State and not names in paragraph b. above, require at least 30 semester hours in liberal arts.

6. Upper Division Work in Baccalaureate Degree Programs: To be awarded a baccalaureate degree, a student must successfully complete at least 45 semester hours in upper division courses. At least 24 semester hours of the courses taken within the student's major field should be at the upper division level.

7. Balance and Breadth in Degree Programs: Although these guidelines do not specify exact distributive requirements or specific content, it is expected that the liberal arts components of the Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, Associate in Applied Science, and the elective elements of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degree programs will provide a balanced curriculum in general education.

8. Exceptions:

Some programs, because of innovative and nontraditional approaches, cannot appropriately be measured by these guidelines. Degree programs which vary from these minimum requirements may be submitted to the Provost of the University for separate approval.