

Workforce Degrees and Certificates



Designed primarily for students seeking skills, knowledge, and training leading to employment in a specific field, the **Associate in Applied Science** degree is awarded in technical and occupational areas. Courses and programs are divided into ten clusters: Business, Marketing and Management; Commercial Arts; Engineering-Related Technologies; Health Sciences; Human Development; Information Technologies; Manufacturing and Construction Trades; Public Service Careers; Science Technologies; and Transportation. Degree requirements include general education courses and specific occupation-related courses.

Certificates are awarded upon completion of a sequence of courses in an occupational field. Credits earned in a certificate will typically apply to a related HCCS Associate in Applied Science degree.

A **Marketable Skills Achievement (MSA) Award** is granted to students who complete 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 approved Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board certificate programs. MSA Awards are in Fashion Design, Fashion Merchandising, Horticulture, and Interior Design. Credits earned in an MSA will typically apply to a related HCCS certificate or AAS degree.

Review the following pages to learn more about the wide array of workforce programs available at HCCS.

ASSOCIATE IN APPLIED SCIENCE (AAS)

The Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree is intended primarily for students whose first priority is to acquire skills and knowledge needed for employment in a specific field.

To be eligible for an AAS degree from HCCS, a student must:

1. Accumulate at least 60 semester hours of credit and successfully complete the prescribed curriculum for a two-year workforce program (see AAS degree plans).
2. Complete a minimum of 18 semester hours toward the degree at HCCS, 12 semester hours of which must be in the workforce program the student is pursuing. These hours may not be satisfied by Credit by Examination.
3. Have an overall 2.0 HCCS grade point average.
4. Receive a passing score on TASP examination.
5. Prior to graduation, resolve all financial obligations to HCCS and return all materials.

GENERAL EDUCATION ELECTIVE OPTIONS

In the various AAS workforce degree plans, some general education electives are required. The following are approved choices for each elective category:

Humanities/Fine Arts Electives: Must choose three hours from ARTS, DANC, DRAM, ENGL Literature; Foreign Language 2311, 2312; HUMA; MUAP; MUSI; or any PHIL (except 2303).

Math/Science Electives: Must choose three hours from BIOL, CHEM, GEOL, MATH, or PHYS.

Social/Behavioral Science Electives: Must choose three hours from ANTH, ECON, ENVR, GEOG, GOVT, HIST, PSYC (except 2317), or SOCI.

General Education Electives: Student must choose one course from each of the above areas and the total must include 15 semester credit hours (SCH).

ENHANCED SKILLS CERTIFICATES

Enhanced Skills Certificates are designed to enrich the specific curriculum of AAS/Tech Prep programs, consisting of six to 15 SCH, and help students meet higher technical skill levels in a constantly changing workplace.

ADVANCED SKILLS CERTIFICATES

An Advanced Skills Certificate is designed to provide a longer, more specialized, and advanced set of knowledge and skills in a particular area of expertise, e.g., Diagnostic Medical Sonography. Typically, Advanced Skills Certificates require students to have already completed a two-year associate degree prior to admission.

To be eligible for an Enhanced or Advanced Skills Certificate from HCCS, a student must:

1. Complete the related AAS degree.

2. Successfully complete prescribed curriculum.
3. Have an overall grade point average of at least 2.0 in all credits applying to the certificate.
4. Receive passing scores on TASP examination.
5. Resolve all financial obligations to HCCS and return all materials, including library books.

INSTITUTIONAL CERTIFICATES, CERTIFICATES OF COMPLETION

HCCS Institutional Certificates are awarded upon successful completion of small clusters of job-specific CEU or SCH courses (from six to 12 SCH). These courses are designed to give the student a certain level of skill and/or knowledge in an occupational area. Semester credit hours earned in completing a certificate may be applied to a related AAS degree program. A student may, for example, take a number of courses in a field such as real estate or drafting and earn a certificate which helps obtain a job or advance in a present job. While working, a student may continue college part-time and add related courses to qualify for an AAS degree.

Certificates of Completion are the same as Institutional Certificates above, but are of longer duration (from 15 to 42 or more SCH). To be eligible for a Certificate of Completion from HCCS, a student must:

1. Successfully complete the prescribed curriculum for the certificate.
2. Complete a minimum of nine hours in the specialization area toward the certificate at HCCS. Hours may not be satisfied by Credit by Exam.
3. Have an overall grade point average of at least 2.0 in all credits applying to the certificate.
4. If required for the particular certificate (typically those of 42 SCH or greater), receive passing scores on the TASP examination.
5. Resolve all financial obligations to HCCS and return all materials, including library books.

EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS

HCCS' commitment to quality education in workforce education was validated during the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) site visit in February, 2001. The THECB rigorously examined the HCCS workforce programs using statewide measures for program effectiveness. Based on enrollment, graduates, placement of completers, industry involvement and quality of instruction, the following twelve workforce programs were rated "exemplary," the highest rating possible: Accounting, Business Management, Business Technology, Child Development, Culinary Arts, Emergency Medical Technology, Fashion Design, Fashion Merchandising, Financial Management, Industrial Electricity, Machine Operations Technology, and Veterinary Paramedic.