

**STATE BOARD FOR TECHNICAL AND COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION**

**PROCEDURE**

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**TITLE:** STRUCTURE OF ASSOCIATE DEGREE, DIPLOMA,  
AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

**POLICY  
REFERENCE NUMBER:** 3-1-101

**DIVISION OF  
RESPONSIBILITY:** ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

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**DATE OF LAST REVISION:** September 10, 2009

All associate degree, diploma, and credit certificate programs offered in technical/community colleges shall conform to the following structure.

**Program Clusters**

Associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs shall be grouped in the following discipline and technology clusters:

Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources  
Architecture and Construction  
Arts, AV, Technology and Communication  
Business, Management and Administration  
Education and Training  
Finance  
General  
Government and Public Administration  
Health Science

Hospitality and Tourism  
Human Services  
Information Technology  
Law, Public Safety, Corrections, & Security  
Manufacturing  
Marketing, Sales, and Service  
Science, Technology, Engineering &  
Mathematics  
Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics

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### Range of Semester Credit Hours

The range of semester credit hours shall be standardized as follows:

Associate degree programs: 60-84 semester credit hours

Diploma programs: 40-52 semester credit hours

Certificates: 8-40 semester credit hours

With approval of the State Board, certain associate degree or diploma program credit hour ranges may be extended to meet requirements of (1) formal cooperative arrangements (combining course work and on-the-job training), (2) certification, (3) licensure, (4) accreditation, or (5) other unique situations. State Board staff may approve extensions not to exceed 5.0 credit hours.

Approved credit hour ranges for each associate degree and diploma major shall appear on the statewide model for that major. Extended credit hour ranges approved for any major shall likewise be displayed on the model for that major and shall supersede the standard range for that award.

### Associate Degrees

1. The authorized titles and abbreviations for associate degrees are:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Abbr.</b>
Associate in Arts	A.A.
Associate in Science	A.S.
Associate in Applied Science	A.A.S.

2. Associate degree programs must be approved by the college area commission, the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, and the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.

3. Associate degree programs shall be organized to conform to system-wide models developed jointly by System Office and institutional staff and approved by the State Board. Compliance with the models shall ensure minimum standardization of associate degree programs within the Technical College System.

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4. Associate degree programs shall be composed of courses listed in the system-wide Catalog of Approved Courses (CAC). Only courses numbered 101 or above shall be credited toward degree requirements.
5. The Associate degree programs are subject to the Annual Program Evaluation conducted by the System Office staff.

### Diplomas

1. The authorized titles for diplomas are:

**Title**

Diploma in Applied Science

2. Diploma programs must be approved by the college area commission and the State Board.
3. Diploma programs shall conform to system-wide models developed jointly by System Office and institutional staff and approved by the State Board.
4. The diploma program may be organized as the first year requirements of an associate degree program and therefore function as a "stop out" award, or it may be organized as a separate program to develop occupational knowledge and skills for which associate degree level education is not appropriate. Only courses numbered 100 or above in the system-wide catalog of approved courses shall be credited toward diploma requirements.
5. Diploma programs are subject to the Annual Program Evaluation conducted by the System Office staff.

### Certificates

1. The certificate is an organized program of credit courses requiring a minimum of 8 semester credits and a maximum of 40 semester credits. No Technical College System curriculum models will be developed for certificates. Each certificate shall be designed to meet specific needs as identified by the college. The certificate may or may not include courses in general education. A certificate may be designed as an independent award or as a component of either a diploma or an associate degree that is currently approved for that college.

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2. Certificate programs must be approved by the college area commission and are reported to the State Board.
3. Only courses numbered 100 or above in the system-wide catalog of approved courses shall be credited toward certificate requirements.
4. Certificate programs are subject to the Annual Program Evaluation conducted by the System Office staff.