

# Graduation Requirements

## PROGRAMS OF INSTRUCTION

The Lone Star College System offers courses and programs to suit the needs of individual students. In keeping with the mission of a community college, the system offers university-parallel or transfer courses, workforce or career programs, and continuing education courses for lifelong learning opportunities.

While individual courses are available in a variety of subjects and fields of study, many students have as their educational goal a prescribed program of study. Students are responsible for taking courses in the proper sequence and at the proper level as well as determining the applicability of a particular course to their educational objectives.

Students who fulfill the requirements of such programs of study may attain one or more of the following degrees or certificates:

**Associate of Arts Degree (AA)** - A collegiate degree related to the baccalaureate degree. This is not a degree with a declared major; rather it is a program of first and second year courses that will generally transfer to a four-year college or university. Requirements are on page 95.

**Associate of Science Degree (AS)** - A collegiate degree related to the baccalaureate degree. This is not a degree with a declared major; rather it is a program of first and second year courses that will generally transfer to a four-year college or university. Requirements are on page 96.

**Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT)** - A collegiate degree that will satisfy the lower division requirements for a bachelor's degree leading to initial teacher certification. Requirements are on pages 97.

**Associate of Applied Science Degree (AAS)** - A degree in a workforce field for students who wish to begin a career after completing this program of study. Requirements are on page 111.

**Core Curriculum** - The curriculum in liberal arts, sciences and political, social, and cultural history that all undergraduate students of an institution

are required to complete before receiving a degree. Students may receive a designation for being "core complete" on their transcripts; however, to receive an associate degree a student must also complete the remaining AA or AS requirements on page 94.

**Field of Study** - A curriculum that will satisfy the lower division requirements for a bachelor's degree in a specific academic area at a general academic teaching institution. The student shall receive full academic credit toward the degree program for the block of courses transferred which will meet that institution's lower division requirements for the degree program in the field of study into which the student transfers. Requirements are on pages 98-100.

**Certificate** - A program of study that varies in length and is designed to prepare the student for occupational employment. The certificate is awarded upon completion of specific courses that have been industry validated and sequenced for the purpose of developing and upgrading skills in an occupation. Requirements are on page 92.

**Area of Concentration** - A program that combines either the associate of arts or associate of science degree with an emphasis in a specific academic discipline. Course transferability for area of concentration courses should be checked with the transfer university. Requirements are on page 101.

Questions regarding course sequence and degree objectives should be referred to the appropriate faculty, advisor or counseling office.

## LSCS Core Perspectives and Intellectual Competencies

The Lone Star College System has defined student outcomes and skill development as completion of the AA and AS degrees and core curriculum. When appropriate and applicable to the course content, the faculty will integrate course activities and assignments that reflect these values, behaviors, and skills.

## Basic Intellectual Competencies in the Core Curriculum

**READING:** Analyze and interpret a variety of printed materials - books, articles, and documents - including both general methods of analyzing printed materials and specific methods for analyzing the subject matter of individual disciplines.

**COMPUTER LITERACY:** Use computer-based technology in communicating, solving problems, and acquiring information. Includes an understanding of the limits, problems, and possibilities associated with the use of technology, and development of the tools necessary to evaluate and learn new technologies as they become available.

**SPEAKING:** Communicate orally in clear, coherent, and persuasive language appropriate to purpose, occasion and audience. Exhibit poise and control of the language through experience in making presentations appropriate to the audience and discipline.

**LISTENING:** Analyze and interpret various forms of spoken communication.

**MATHEMATICS:** Apply mathematical techniques to solve problems as required in both discipline-specific and real-life applications, including employment situations.

**WRITING:** Produce prose that is clear, grammatically correct and coherent. Adapt prose to the purpose, occasion and audience, and employ steps in the writing process including topic discovery and development, organization, and audience analysis and adaptation.

**CRITICAL THINKING:** Apply both qualitative and quantitative skills analytically and creatively to subject matter in order to evaluate arguments and to construct alternative strategies. Problem solving is one of the applications of critical thinking, used to address an identified task.

**MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCIES:** Demonstrate knowledge of elements and processes that create and define culture. Develop knowledge of the values, practices, beliefs, and responsibilities of living in a multicultural world. Develop cross-cultural understanding, empathy, and communication. Demonstrate understanding of

diverse cultural expressions and their influences on cross-cultural interactions.

## Perspectives in the Core Curriculum

1. Establish broad and multiple perspectives of the individual in relationship to the larger society and world in which he or she lives, and to understand the responsibilities of living in a culturally and ethnically diversified world;
2. Stimulate a capacity to discuss and reflect upon individual, political, economic, and social aspects of life in order to understand ways in which to be a responsible member of society;
3. Recognize the importance of maintaining health and wellness;
4. Develop a capacity to use knowledge of how technology and science affect their lives;
5. Develop personal values for ethical behavior;
6. Develop the ability to make aesthetic judgments;
7. Use logical reasoning in problem solving; and
8. Integrate knowledge and understand the interrelationships of the scholarly disciplines.

## Core Curriculum Exemplary Objectives by Component Area

### Communication:

- To understand and demonstrate writing and speaking processes through invention, organization, drafting, revision, editing, and presentation.
- To understand the importance of specifying audience and purpose and to select appropriate communication choices.
- To understand and appropriately apply modes of expression, i.e., description expository, narrative, scientific, and self-expressive, in written, visual, and oral communication.
- To participate effectively in groups with emphasis on listening, critical and reflective thinking, and responding.
- To understand and apply basic principles of critical thinking, problem solving and technical proficiency in the development of exposition and argument.

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- To develop the ability to research and write a documented paper and/or to give an oral presentation.

### Mathematics:

- To apply arithmetic, algebraic, geometric, higher order thinking, and statistical methods to modeling and solving real-world situations.
- To represent and evaluate basic mathematical information verbally, numerically, graphically, and symbolically.
- To expand mathematical reasoning skills and formal logic to develop convincing mathematical arguments.
- To use appropriate technology to enhance mathematical thinking and understanding and to solve mathematical problems and judge the reasonableness of the results.
- To interpret mathematical models such as formulas, graphs, tables and schematics, and draw inferences from them.
- To recognize the limitations of mathematical and statistical models.
- To develop the view that mathematics is an evolving discipline, interrelated with human culture, and understand its connections to other disciplines.

### Natural Sciences:

- To understand and apply methods and appropriate technology to the study of natural sciences.
- To recognize scientific and quantitative methods and the differences between these approaches and other methods of inquiry and to communicate findings, analyses, and interpretation both orally and in writing.
- To identify and recognize the differences among competing scientific theories.
- To demonstrate knowledge of the major issues and problems facing modern science, including issues that touch upon ethics, values, and public policies.
- To demonstrate knowledge of the interdependence of science and technology and their influence on, and contribution to, modern culture.

### Humanities, Visual & Performing Arts:

- To demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities.
- To understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context.
- To respond critically to works in the arts and humanities.
- To engage in the creative process or interpretive performance and comprehend the physical and intellectual demands required of the author or visual or performing artist.
- To articulate an informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities.
- To develop an appreciation for the aesthetic principles that guide or govern the humanities and arts.
- To demonstrate knowledge of the influence of literature, philosophy, and/or the arts on intercultural experiences.

### Social/Behavioral Sciences:

- To employ the appropriate methods, technologies, and data that social and behavioral scientists use to investigate the human condition.
- To examine social institutions and processes across a range of historical periods, social structures, and cultures.
- To use and critique alternative explanatory systems or theories.
- To develop and communicate alternative explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues.
- To analyze the effects of historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and global forces on the area under study.
- To comprehend the origins and evolution of U.S. and Texas political systems, with a focus on the growth of political institutions, the constitutions of the U.S. and Texas, federalism, civil liberties, civil and human rights.
- To understand the evolution and current role of the U.S. in the world.

- To differentiate and analyze historical evidence (documentary and statistical) and differing points of view.
- To recognize and apply reasonable criteria for the acceptability of historical evidence and social research.
- To analyze, critically assess, and develop creative solutions to public policy problems.
- To recognize and assume one's responsibility as a citizen in a democratic society by learning to think for oneself, by engaging in public discourse, and by obtaining information through the news media and other appropriate information sources about politics and public policy.
- To identify and understand differences and commonalities within diverse cultures.

### **Multicultural Competencies:**

- Demonstrates knowledge of those elements and processes that create and define culture.
- Develops an understanding of the values, practices, beliefs, and responsibilities of living in a multicultural world.
- Develops cross-cultural understanding, empathy, and communication.
- Demonstrates an understanding of the underlying unity of diverse cultural expressions and their influences on cross-cultural interactions.

### **Demonstration of Mastery**

Each professor will select strategies and activities throughout the course that foster the development and mastery of the above educational skills and competencies. Some strategies are book reviews, article reviews, chapter reviews, writing assignments, role playing, question groups, role reversal, free association discussion, group presentation, Socratic method, group projects, individual projects, case studies, open-ended essay exams, interviews, panel discussions, team problem solving, group tests, organizing data, group investigations, self assignments, discussion leaders, team evaluations, and critical panels.

## **General Associate Degree Requirements**

Within five years of initial enrollment in credit courses at LSCS, a student may graduate according to the catalog degree requirements in effect at the time of first enrollment or any subsequent catalog degree requirements provided the degree, the program, and requisite courses are still being offered. Course prerequisite changes need to be followed. If a student fails to complete within five years all degree requirements of the catalog in effect at the time of initial enrollment, the student will be required to graduate under a catalog not older than five years. The five year initial enrollment period for specialized admissions programs begins upon acceptance into the program. Exception to this requirement may be approved in extenuating circumstances by the instructional vice president.

Students whose first year of enrollment in credit courses is prior to fall 1993 may graduate according to requirements in effect at that time provided the degree, the program, and requisite courses are still being offered.

Completion of associate degrees requires the following:

1. At least 61 semester hours of earned credit, 25% of which must be courses taken at LSCS and apply to the degree. Courses transferred from regionally-accredited institutions will be evaluated and applied to degree requirements if:
  - a. At least a grade of "D" was earned.
  - b. The cumulative GPA of the transfer courses applied to the degree or certificate must be at least a 2.00.
  - c. AAS graduates may be required to demonstrate skills/proficiencies in the discipline.
2. Satisfaction of core competency requirements.
3. At least a 2.0 cumulative GPA for LSCS courses applying toward their degree requirements.
4. A cumulative 2.0 GPA on all credit courses earned at LSCS (graduation GPA).

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

5. Completion of LSCS Student Success Initiative requirements (college level reading and writing, and at least completion of Math 0308) even if students are exempt from the Texas Success Initiative.
6. Completed formal application for graduation on or before the announced deadline.
7. All transcripts on file and all financial obligations to the college complete, including all records cleared in the library.

### Associate of Applied Science Degree

The associate of applied science degree is issued to students who complete a college-level workforce education curriculum. This degree is designed to prepare students for employment in a specific career. It is issued to students who successfully fulfill the general requirements, in addition to the specific technical or workforce curriculum for each program and the general education core requirements listed below.

#### Requirements

The general education block for each program must contain a minimum of 15 college credit hours.

1. The general education block for each program must include ENGL 1301.
2. The general education block for each program must contain at least one course from each of the following categories:
  - Math/Natural Sciences
  - Social/Behavioral Sciences
  - Humanities/Fine Arts
  - General Education Core Requirement
3. Furthermore, graduates must meet the computer literacy, math (minimum completion of MATH 0308 plus any math degree requirements), oral communication competencies, wellness, and multicultural requirements.

#### Earning Additional Associate Degrees

A student who has received an associate degree from LSCS or any other regionally-accredited institution of higher education may obtain an additional associate degree in another area. However, students

should seek appropriate academic advising before initiating the pursuit of another associate degree.

This provision is subject to the following stipulations:

1. For each additional associate degree, a minimum of 18 semester credit hours must be completed at LSCS. These credit hours may not repeat credit applied to a previous degree and must apply to the additional degree.
2. All courses required by any specific program must be completed.

### Certificate Programs and General Requirements

Certificates are awarded upon the completion of specific courses that have been industry-validated and sequenced for the purpose of developing and upgrading skills in an occupation. The programs vary in length and are designed to prepare the student for employment. Students will receive their certificate from the LSCS College authorized to offer the total certificate program at which he/she has completed the greatest number of technical program credit hours applicable to the degree or certificate. To be awarded a certificate from LSCS, a student must:

1. Fulfill all the course requirements for a certificate program, completing at least 50 percent of coursework at LSCS.
2. Earn a cumulative grade point average of 2.00 in all courses required for the certificate.
3. APPLY FOR GRADUATION before a certificate can be awarded.

If pursuing an Enhanced Skills Certificate, students must complete the related LSCS associate degree prior to enrollment.

Students desiring an Advanced Technical Certificate must complete a related associate or bachelor's degree prior to enrollment.

All associate degrees, certificates over 42 credit hours, and post AAS certificates require completion of TSI requirements.

No more than 50% of the credits on a certificate program or associate degree may be earned from Prior Learning Assessment methods. No more than fifteen (15) semester credit hours may be awarded from PLA by means other than recognized evaluative examinations. Students must complete 50% of the

credits of a credit certificate program or at least 25% of an associate degree with Lone Star College System credit courses to meet graduation requirements.

## Graduation

Students will be awarded a LSCS diploma when they graduate from one of the six LSCS colleges in accordance with the following criteria:

Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) Degrees—Students will graduate from the LSCS College where he/she has completed the greatest number of credit hours applicable to the degree.

Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Degree and Certificates – Students will graduate from the LSCS College authorized to offer the total degree program or certificate at which he/she has completed the greatest number of technical program credit hours applicable to the degree or certificate. Nursing students will graduate from the college where they successfully complete the capstone course for the program.

Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) – Students will graduate from the LSCS College authorized to offer the total degree program or certificate at which he/she has completed the greatest number of program credit hours applicable to the degree or certificate.

Annual commencement exercises are held at the close of the spring semester. Students who complete

all degree or certificate requirements or who are candidates for graduation are invited to participate in the college commencement exercise. An application for graduation should be submitted prior to the semester that all course work is completed.

## AA, AS, AAT Transferability

Requirements for a baccalaureate degree in any given major are set by the university granting that degree. Students who wish to receive an associate of arts degree or an associate of science degree from LSCS must incorporate the degree requirements previously listed with those of the college/university of their choice. To minimize problems with transferability of courses, students should make their choice of a college or university as soon as possible and obtain a catalog from that institution. A faculty advisor or counselor should be consulted and a degree plan developed to ensure progress toward the student's educational goal. A student who enrolls in 30 or more credit hours above the baccalaureate degree plan may have to pay out-of-state tuition rates for the excess hours.

## Graduation Though Reverse Transfer

Reverse transfer provides an avenue for obtaining an associate degree after transferring to a university. Reverse transfer establishes policies and procedures for credits earned at universities to be transferred to LSCS and applied toward associate degrees.

For additional information, go to our website at [LoneStar.edu/joint-admissions](http://LoneStar.edu/joint-admissions).

