The Associate Degree

Hillsborough Community College offers associate in arts (AA), associate in science (AS), and associate in applied science (AAS) degrees.

The AA degree is awarded to students who complete university transfer curricula designed to prepare them to enter as juniors at a four-year college or university.

The AS degree is awarded to students who complete technical programs. The AS degree is designed to prepare students for the workforce. A number of these degrees are designed so that students who earn them may transfer their credits into specialized programs at four-year institutions. In addition, students who earn one AS degree may qualify for another. Students wishing to earn a second AS degree must complete at least 15 hours at HCC beyond the first degree. Moreover, they must meet all requirements for the second degree.

The AAS degree is also awarded to students who complete a technical program. However, the AAS degree is designed to be an entry-level, job-preparation degree. It is not designed for transfer to a four-year institution.

To ensure a well-rounded education, degree curricula include general education courses within communications, humanities, natural sciences, mathematics and social and behavioral sciences. Where options are available, they are noted.

Excess Hours Advisory Statement

Section 1009.086, Florida Statutes, establishes an “excess hour” surcharge for a student seeking a baccalaureate degree at a state university. It is critical that students, including those entering Florida colleges, are aware of the potential for additional course fees.

“Excess hours” are defined as hours that go beyond 120% of the hours required for a baccalaureate degree program. For example, if the length of the program is 120 credit hours, the student may be subject to an excess hour surcharge for any credits attempted beyond 144 credit hours (120 x 120%).

All students whose educational plan may include earning a bachelor’s degree should make every effort to enroll in and successfully complete those courses that are required for their intended major on their first attempt. Florida college students intending to transfer to a state university should identify a major or “transfer program” early and be advised of admission requirements for that program, including the approved common prerequisites. Course withdrawals and/or repeats, as well as enrollment in courses, non-essential to the intended major, may contribute to a potential excess hours surcharge.

Time to Degree and Common Prerequisites

Florida statutes require that associate in arts degrees require no more than 60 credit hours. Those statutes also mandate that the general education courses required for the associates in arts degrees be distributed within designated categories. Courses that comprise the 24 hours of electives may be designated for university program entry.

Graduation Requirements

To earn an AA, an AS degree, or an AAS students must:

• Complete the approved curriculum of not less than 60 credits including general education requirements, program requirements, and electives.
• Fulfill the degree requirements under the catalog in effect during the semester that begins the period of continuous enrollment immediately prior to the semester in which the student applies for graduation.

NOTE: Continuous enrollment is maintained by registering for at least one term each academic year. If a student’s enrollment is interrupted for more than an academic year, the student will be considered a former student returning. A former student returning must meet the graduation requirements of the catalog in effect during the semester they return.

• Earn at least 25 percent of the credit hours applicable to the degree in residence at HCC.

In addition:

• No more than four credit hours of physical education activity/skills courses may be applied toward a degree.
• Apply only 12 hours of EAP college-level credits.
• Have a 2.0 HCC cumulative GPA along with overall

NOTE: Credits from other colleges will be used in computing the GPA.
• Complete the capstone course for the AA degree. Prior to taking the course, students must have completed at least 45 hours of coursework towards the degree, including at least 24 hours of general education coursework with a minimum grade of “C.”
• Complete an application
• Fulfill all financial obligations before a release of transcripts or diploma.

Programs are subject to change.

Students are responsible for obtaining current and accurate information prior to registering for classes.