



### Operating Instruction 3.36.1.4 Stackable Credentials for Career and Technical Education Degrees, Diplomas, and Certificates

#### Part 1. Purpose

To establish consistent practices for applying all earned vocational and technical certificate and diploma credits toward approved associate degree requirements offered by the college in the same field of study.

#### Part 2. Authority

Minn. Stat. § 136F.32 Degrees; Diplomas; Certificates - Requires the Board of Trustees of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to:

- ensure colleges offer students the option of pursuing diplomas or certificates in each technical education program, unless the board determines that a degree is the only acceptable credential for career entry; and
- apply all vocational and technical credits earned for a diploma or certificate to any available degree program offered at the college in the same field of study.

#### Part 3. Definitions

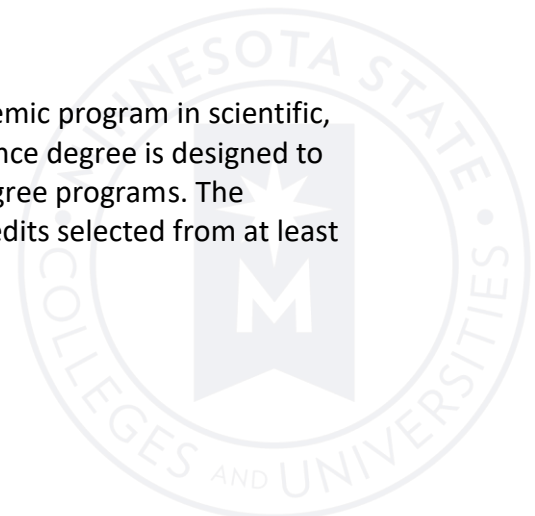
##### Associate of applied science (AAS) degrees

The AAS degree is awarded upon completion of a 60-credit academic program (or above 60 if a program waiver has been granted) in a named field of study in scientific, technological, or other professional fields. An associate of applied science degree prepares students for employment in an occupation or range of occupations. An associate of applied science degree requires a minimum of 15 credits selected from at least three of the ten goal areas of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum. At least 30 credits must be in the academic program's occupational or technical field of preparation.

##### Associate of science (AS) degrees

The AS degree is awarded upon completion of a 60-credit academic program in scientific, technological, or other professional fields. The associate of science degree is designed to transfer in its entirety to one or more related baccalaureate degree programs. The associate of science degree requires a minimum of 30 MnTC credits selected from at least six of the 10 goal areas.

##### Career and technical education program



Programs that offer a sequence of courses with rigorous academic content and relevant technical knowledge and skills needed for current or emerging occupations/professions.

**Field of study**

A discipline or area of learning reflected by Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP), Standard Occupational Codes (SOC), award titles, and program learning outcomes that lead to aligned occupations.

**Program advisory committee**

A formally organized committee that provides expert advice and assistance to colleges and universities on technical and career programs.

**Stackable Career and Technical Education (CTE) credentials**

Certificates and diplomas that apply toward the requirements of an associate degree program in the same field of study offered at the college.

**Technical credits**

Credits in a field of study in applied scientific, technological, or occupational/professional fields in an approved CTE program, excluding MnTC credits.

**Part 4. Requirements for the design and review of CTE degrees, diplomas, and certificates**

The intent of Minn. Stat. § 136F.32 Degrees; Diplomas; Certificates (a.k.a. the “Ness Legislation”) is to ensure:

- students can complete CTE certificates and diplomas in each technical education program, unless the board determines that a degree is the only acceptable credential for career entry into a specific field (e.g. nursing; education; peace officer/public safety, etc.); and,
- all CTE certificate and diploma technical credits count and apply to associate degree programs in the same field of study.

**Subpart A. Associate degree programs**

If an associate degree is the only acceptable credential for career entry, colleges that offer the associate degree are not required to offer certificate and diploma programs in that field of study. CTE associate degree programs must include all vocational and technical certificate or diploma credits the college offers in the same field of study.

**Subpart B. Certificates and diplomas**

Career and technical education certificates and diplomas may include a general education component only as part of a transfer agreement or to meet occupational requirements as established by the trade, profession, or program advisory committee.

Certificates that stack into associate of applied science or associate of science degree programs must not include more than 30 credits unless the associate degree program has a waiver to exceed 60 credits.

Diplomas must include a minimum of 24 occupational/professional or technical credits. See System Procedure 3.36.1, Part 3, Subpart B, 2.

Diplomas that stack into an associate of applied science or associate of science degree program must not include more than 45 occupational or technical credits, unless the associate degree program has a waiver to exceed 60 credits.

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### Related Documents

- Board Policy 3.36 Academic Programs
- System Procedure 3.36.1 Academic Programs

To view any of the following related statutes, go to the **Revisor's Office website**. You can conduct a search from this site by typing in the statute number.

- Minn. Stat. 136F.32 Degrees; Diplomas; Certificates (a.k.a. NESS Legislation)

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### Operating Instruction History

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*Date and Subject of Amendment:*

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