ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND REQUIREMENTS

Degrees and Certificates

Northern Virginia Community College offers two-year associate degrees, one-year certificates, and short career studies certificates. The requirements for completion of these awards are determined by the College faculty and are intended to meet the requirements specified by the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, and certain specialized accrediting agencies.

Terminology

Unless otherwise noted, the term *program* refers to an associate degree with its own curriculum code and all related major, specializations, certificates, and career studies certificates. The Virginia Community College System defines a *major* as a grouping of 100- and 200-level courses that define a discipline or interdisciplinary specialty. Associate of Science (AS) and Associate of Arts (AA) degrees have majors. A *degree program* is a broadly structured curriculum leading to the award of an associate degree and is listed on a student's diploma. A *specialization* is an area of concentration that varies from the parent degree by 9-15 credits. Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree has specializations. A *certificate* is awarded for the completion of an approved non-degree curriculum consisting of 30-59 semester credit hours, usually in a career area; a minimum of 15 percent of a certificate's credit hour requirement will be in general education including one three-credit-hour English course. A *career studies certificate* is awarded for the completion of an approved non-degree curriculum of 9-29 semester credit hours in length.

Associate of Arts Degree (A.A.)

Awarded for the completion of two-year curricula in liberal arts. The A.A. degree is designed for those who plan to transfer to a four-year, degree-granting institution to complete a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.). A complete list of NOVA's A.A. degree programs can be found at the end of this *Catalog*.

Associate of Science Degree (A.S.)

Awarded for the completion of two-year curricula in a variety of preprofessional programs. The A.S. degree is designed for those who plan to transfer to a four-year, degree-granting institution to complete a Bachelor of Science (B.S.). A complete list of NOVA's A.S. degree programs can be found at the end of this *Catalog*.

Associate of Fine Arts Degree (A.F.A.)

Awarded for the completion of two-year curricula in the fine and performing arts. The A.F.A. degree is designed for those who plan to transfer to a four-year degree-granting institution to complete a Bachelor of Fine Arts or similar degree in fine arts and/or visual or performing arts. A significant portion of the A.F.A is in general education that is typical of the first two years at a four-year institution. A complete list of NOVA's A.F.A. degree programs can be found at the end of this *Catalog*.

Associate of Applied Arts Degree (A.A.A.)

Awarded for completion of two-year curricula primarily designed to prepare a student for employment in jobs in fine arts, music, and photography. These curricula are not designed for transfer to a four-year college or university. However, in some limited cases, the A.A.A. degree or selected career courses may transfer, and there may be articulation arrangements with senior institutions to facilitate such transfer. A complete list of NOVA's A.A.A. degree programs can be found at the end of this *Catalog*.

Associate of Applied Science Degree (A.A.S.)

Awarded for completion of two-year curricula designed to prepare students for employment in a technical field immediately following graduation. In some A.A.S. degree programs, one or more Summer Sessions may be required. These curricula are not designed for transfer to a four-year college or university. However, in some limited cases, the A.A.S. degree or selected career courses may transfer, and there may be articulation arrangements with senior institutions to facilitate such transfer. A complete list of NOVA's A.A.S. degree programs can be found at the end of this *Catalog*.

Certificate (C.)

Awarded for the completion of various curricula of study less than two years in length, totaling between 30 and 59 credits, at least 15 percent of the credits must be in general education, including at least 3 semester credits of English (ENG). Certificates must also include at least 1 semester credit in a Student Development (SDV) course.

Most certificates prepare students for a specific job or aspect of a job. Some certificates are part of an associate degree program, in which case the credit earned in the certificate may be used toward the degree. These curricula typically are not designed for transfer to a four-year college or university. The Uniform Certificate of General Studies (UCGS) is an exception; it does not prepare students for employment, but is designed to transfer. A complete list of NOVA's certificate programs can be found at the end of this *Catalog*.

Career Studies Certificate (C.S.C.)

Awarded for a specific group of career-related courses totaling between 9 and 29 credits. Career studies programs are designed for enhancement of job/life skills, retraining for career changes, and/or investigating new career possibilities. Credit earned in most career studies certificates may be used to meet the requirements in related certificate and degree programs, although a few are not closely related to a degree or certificate. A complete list of NOVA's career studies certificate programs can be found at the end of this *Catalog*.

Degree Requirements

The following grid shows the number of credit hours required for each component of a degree.

Components	A.A.	A.S.	A.A.A.	A.A.S.	A.F.A.
Written and Oral Communication [1]	6-9	6-9	6	3	6
Humanities/ Fine Arts/ Literature [2]	6	6	3	3	3-9
World Language (Intermediate) [3]	6	-	-	-	-
Social/ Behavioral Sciences [4]	6	6	3	3	3-9

Mathematics[5]	3	3-6	3	3	3
Physical and Life Science[6]	4	4-8	3	3	4
Minimum Total General Education Requirements	31-34	25-35	15	15	22-28
SDV Elective[7]	1	1	1	1	1
Elective and Major Area Requirements[8]	25-31	24-37	44-53	44-53	31-37
Total Credits[9] *	**60-63**	**60-63**	**60-69**	**60-69**	**60-63**

* Minimum credits required for each degree program as specified by the Virginia Community College System.

[1] Written and Oral Communication

A.A., A.S. and A.F.A. degrees require ENG 111 College Composition I and ENG 112 College Composition II. A 3-credit oral communication course is also required. For the A.S. degree, a 3-credit oral communication course is required except when it conflicts with the VCCS common curriculum.

A.A.A. degrees require 3 credits in English composition (ENG 111 College Composition I, or ENG 115 Technical Writing) and an oral communication course.

A.A.S. degrees require 3 credits in English composition (ENG 111 College Composition I, or ENG 115 Technical Writing).

See the "General Education Electives (https://catalog.nvcc.edu/general-education-electives/)" section for a list of approved general education courses.

[2] Humanities/Fine Arts

Humanities requirements may be met by selecting courses in art (ART), 200-level literature (ENG), humanities (HUM), music (MUS), philosophy (PHI), religion (REL), American Sign Language (ASL), and 200-level foreign language courses. See the "General Education Electives (https://catalog.nvcc.edu/general-education-electives/)" section for a list of approved general education humanities/fine arts courses. **Must be from two different categories.**

AFA programs cannot require both 9 credits of humanities/fine arts courses and 9 credits of social/behavioral science courses. AFA programs must include a 200-level literature course as one of the humanities/ fine arts requirements.

[3] World Language

Students who are in an A.A. program must demonstrate proficiency in a world language through the intermediate (201-202) level, which is consistent with the lower division requirements for most B.A. degrees. Waivers or credit by exam (for example CLEP, AP, or NYU exam) for previous experience may be available for some languages. When this requirement is waived due to a placement test, the credits must be replaced using General Education Electives (https://catalog.nvcc.edu/general-education-electives/) courses.

[4] Social/Behavioral Sciences

One Social/Behavioral Science course must be a General Education History course.

AFA programs cannot require both 9 credits of social/behavioral science and 9 credits of humanities/fine arts electives.

See the "General Education Electives (https://catalog.nvcc.edu/general-education-electives/)" section for a list of approved general education social/behavioral science courses.

[5] Mathematics

A.A. and A.S. degrees require a minimum of 3 credits in mathematics at or above MTH 154 Quantitative Reasoning. The A.S. in General Studies requires only 3 credits of mathematics.

A.A.A., A.F.A., and A.A.S. degrees require a minimum of 3 credits in mathematics or 4 credits of physical/life sciences.

Note that the mathematics courses offered by NOVA changed in Fall 2018. Please see an advisor if you have questions about how old math courses can be applied to new degree programs and how the new math courses can be applied to programs begun prior to Fall 2018.

See the "General Education Electives (https://catalog.nvcc.edu/general-education-electives/)" section for a list of approved general education math courses.

[6] Physical and Life Sciences

A.A. and A.S. degrees require 4-8 credits in courses in physical and life sciences that include laboratories. Courses may be chosen from biology (BIO), chemistry (CHM), environmental science (ENV), geology (GOL), natural science (NAS) (non-science majors only), or physics (PHY).

A.A.A. and A.A.S. degrees may or may not require a physical/life science, depending on the curriculum, but they must require a math or science course.

A.F.A. degrees require a minimum of 4 credits of physical/life sciences.

See the "General Education Electives (https://catalog.nvcc.edu/general-education-electives/)" section for a list of approved general education science courses.

[7] SDV Elective

All degrees require a one-credit Student Development course, SDV 100 College Success Skills, SDV 101 Orientation to: (a Specific Discipline). All Student Development courses cover topics related to academic success, responsible decision-making, and College information. Some sections address additional topics. First-time degree-seeking NOVA students are required to take an SDV course within their first semester at the College.

NOVA students seeking a degree must take an SDV course within their first semester at the College, unless the requirement has been waived. SDV waivers may be granted for students who have graduated with an associate, baccalaureate or higher degree from a regionally accredited United States institution of higher education. Students still must complete the required total number of credits for their degree.

[8] Open Elective and Major Area Requirements

Not all courses will transfer to all senior institutions or meet the requirements of a given four-year degree. Students who plan to transfer should refer to transfer pathways posted to the NOVA website or the Transfer VA Portal. If no pathway is available for the desired senior institution, students should see a counselor or academic advisor prior to registering for general electives. Students who plan to transfer to a four-year degree program should become familiar with the requirements of the intended transfer institution and select electives that meet that institution's requirements.

[9] Total Credits

A.S. degrees typically require between 60 and 63 credits. However, VCCS policy allows Engineering programs to require as many as 72 credits.

A.A.S. degrees require between 60 and 69 credits, with the exception of Health Science programs, which may require as many as 72 credits.