

Arts and Sciences Degree Requirements

If you are in the Arts and Sciences area, we presume that you are going after one of two degrees, the Associate of Arts Degree (A.A.) or the Associate of Science Degree (A.S.). The basic difference between the two is this: if you want to go into one of the Sciences, or Math, or Engineering, or you want to be a doctor, or something that is very science or math heavy, what you are going to want to do is go for the Associate of Science Degree (A.S.). Almost every other major, whether you want to be a teacher, or an architect, or an artist, in all likelihood, it is the Associate of Arts Degree (A.A.) that you want. Now, these two are alike in many ways, but there are some significant differences, so I want to talk about each of the categories here, and I will compare them as we go along. You can use the chart as a reference.

Associate of Arts (A.A.) & Associate of Science (A.S.) Degree Requirements		
Total Credits Required: 64		
	Associate of Arts (A.A.)	Associate of Science (A.S.)
English/Speech	9 credits	9 credits
Humanities/Fine Arts	8 credits	8 credits
Mathematics/Science	8 credits	20 credits
Social Sciences	9 credits	9 credits
Distributed Electives	6 credits	-----
Introduction to Computers	3 credits	3 credits
How to Be Successful in College	3 credits	3 credits
General Electives	18 credits	12 credits

1. First category: **English and Speech**. Both the A.A. and the A.S. both require **9 credit hours**, and those 9 credit hours are in specific areas. For instance, you have to take ENG 105 which is Composition I, you have to take ENG 106 which is Composition II, and then you have to take either SPC 112: Public Speaking or SPC 111: Fundamentals of Oral Communication. So, whatever you are going into, you have to have those basic communication skills, and that's what these classes will give you.
2. The next category is **Humanities and Fine Arts**. Now, you will notice that for both the A.A. and the A.S., you have to get **8 credit hours** in those areas. There is one course here that you have to take, and that is a 3 credit Literature course. The rest can come from other Humanities or Fine Arts areas. Philosophy, for instance, would fall in that category. You could also take an art or drawing course. You can fill that category out after you take your Literature class with things I would say might interest you, things you want to explore, or things you have never really heard of before, like Medieval Philosophy.

3. The third category is **Math and Science**. Here is where the big difference is between the A.A. and the A.S. You will see for the A.A. degree you have to have **8 credit hours** in Math and Science. Of that, you have to have a 3-credit-hour Math course and at least one Lab Science course. Now, look over at the A.S. degree: you need to have **20 credits hours**. You will have Math and at least one Lab Science course, but you will also have more advanced Math and Science courses, and you will take those that fit your interests.
4. Next is **Social Sciences**. It's kind of a broad category, but you notice again the same requirement for both A.A. and A.S.: **9 credit hours**. In Social Sciences you do have to take either a Western Civilization course or a U.S. History course, but other than that, you can choose from all the other Social Science courses: things like Psychology, Sociology, or other History courses.
5. Now we have another major difference between the two degrees, **Distributive Electives**. If you are an A.A. student, you've got to choose **6 more credit hours** from one of the categories above. Maybe, if you really like Literature, you can choose all 6 from Literature. If you really are into Psychology, and want to go into the Psychology field, then you are going to take more from that. The Distributive Electives come from those categories that are listed above. Now, if you look over at the A.S. degree you will see there aren't any Distributive Electives. The reason for that is all of the electives are coming in the Math and Science areas, so you don't have to have those extra courses.
6. For both degrees, you have to have a **Computer course**. The course required is a **3-credit-hour** course called Introduction to Computers, and it covers Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and other aspects of the Office Suite that you may or may not have used before.
7. The next course is **SDV 101: How To Be Successful in College**, and we do require that all A.A. and A.S. degree-seeking students take this course. We do it because we really think that it will help you succeed. In fact, research has suggested that students who take a college introduction type course, usually are much more likely to finish than those who do not, and that is why most colleges and universities require a similar sort of course. There are a number of different topics in that course and we've found that not only is it very helpful, but students actually like it very much. We highly recommend that you take that either your first or second term, because it wouldn't make a whole lot of sense to take an introduction to college course right before you leave.
8. And finally... **General Electives**. What you want to do is choose electives according to your interests and according to what you want to do when you leave here. For instance, if you are wanting to be a Business major, then you will want to take a lot of Business courses. If you are in the Associate of Arts area, you can see that you need **18 credit hours**. If you are in the Associate of Science area, you need to have **12 credit hours** in terms of General Electives. Choose them on the basis of interests or the requirements of the institution that you want to transfer to.

Those are the things you are required to do to graduate. Now, let's talk about that first term. For a lot of students, that first term is a little scary. People are nervous about what to take. Here is a little bit of advice that we believe will help you be much more successful.

First Term

- You need to choose course times based upon your life and your work schedule. You don't want to set up a class at a time when you know you have to be at work before the class is over. Likewise, if you are not a morning person, perhaps signing up for an 8:00 a.m. course your first term might not be the best idea. Now, you might have to take an 8:00 a.m. course sometime, but that does not mean that it has to be the very first term.
- You also want to make sure that you allow yourself some time for study. Most of the work in college takes place outside of the classroom, so you have to make sure that you have time outside of class to study. You need to keep all of those things in mind.
- To be a full-time student, you will need to take **8 credit hours** and students can take up to 15 credit hours. But really, in that first term, we highly recommend that you take closer to the minimum, while you get your feet on the ground and get accustomed to college life. Don't overburden yourself from the beginning.
 1. We highly recommend that you take SDV 101: How to Be Successful in College in your first term. That is when you will get the most good out of it, and that will help you with your other courses.
 2. Likewise, we strongly suggest that you take the Introduction to Computers course during your first term. The reason for this is that you are going to be using those programs in a lot of your other courses. If you are in Comp I, you will need to be able to use Microsoft Word to write your papers, and this course will make sure you know how to do that.
 3. The third thing that we would suggest is to take something from a subject area that you really love. If you are really into History, for instance, take a History course your first term, because it's something you feel comfortable with, and it will get you off to a good start.
 4. Also, select something from one of the **required areas** that we just talked about. Take Comp I and mark off that particular requirement, or take a Math or Science course. What we really suggest is that you avoid taking something that very first term that is extremely difficult for you.

5. We also strongly urge you to work with our **Academic Advisors**, because they have been through this with a lot of people for a lot of years. And, they have a lot of knowledge about how students succeed and what kind of schedules are best. So, please try to work with the advisors to help you put together your schedule.

Finally, I want to advise you of this: Obviously you want to get a degree. You want to get a job. You want to get through, and get on. Those are all good things, but I also think that as you are getting through things you need to think about **getting an education**. I really think that “getting an education” is different from simply “getting a degree.” Getting an education really develops you as a person. It’s not just about getting you a job. It’s about being able to think, being able to consider, being able to interact with other people, and all of those sorts of things will stay with you your entire life. I mean, let’s face it: people can lose jobs, but they can’t lose education. So, I really want to encourage you to not just get through this, but to really enjoy it as you go along, and if you need any help, don’t hesitate to ask.

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