

Degree Differences

What are the differences between Technical Certificates, A.A.S. degrees, and A.S./A.A./A.S.T. and A.F.A. transfer degrees?

Answer:

A **Technical Certificate** usually includes **specific courses in a professional/technical field** and does not include most general education classes. Students complete around 30 credit hours or less to receive a Technical Certificate. If a student is attending full-time (15 credit hours a semester) the student can complete a Technical Certificate in one year. **If a student wishes to continue their education after obtaining a technical certificate**, MOST Technical Certificates at NSCC contain courses that can be applied directly towards an A.A.S. degree. One example of this is our **Accounting Technical Certificate** which includes classes that transfer directly into the **Accounting A.A.S.** degree.

An **Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.)** degree requires additional general education courses and other classes such as math and science. Students generally complete around 60 credit hours to receive an A.A.S. degree. A.A.S. degrees are normally in a career/technical field and are meant to prepare students for a specific job/career, although some of the classes may transfer to a Bachelor's program depending on the school to which the student is applying. **Some majors are offered in both an A.A.S. degree and in an A.A./A.S. degree.** If students want to transfer, they need to contact the school to which they intend to transfer in order to determine which, if any, credits from their A.A.S. degree transfer because this degree is not specifically designed for transferring.

The **Associate of Science/Associate of Arts (A.S./A.A)** degree, **Associate of Science in Teaching (A.S.T.)**, and **Associate of Fine Arts (A.F.A.)** degrees are associate's degrees that are designed for students who are planning on transferring to a four-year college to complete a Bachelor's degree. These degrees are comprised of both major courses and additional general education courses. Classes on the A.S./A.A./A.S.T./A.F.A. advising sheets are chosen specifically to align with programs at surrounding four-year institutions and allow students who complete the A.S./A.A./A.S.T./A.F.A. degree to transfer **ALL** classes taken at NSCC to that institution if that degree is designated as a Tennessee Transfer Pathway (TTP). Some of our A.S./A.A. degrees are **University Parallel degrees**. Although most classes in University Parallel degrees are chosen to align with programs at four-year institutions, there is no guarantee of complete transfer of all credits, and students must check with the institution to which they intend to transfer to determine which credits will transfer. The advantage of these degrees is that **University Parallel degrees can be flexible with electives, so that students can choose the courses they will need to transfer to a specific program or university.**