

Degree Credit Caps:

Report to the Legislature

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

October 2014



Minnesota
STATE COLLEGES
& UNIVERSITIES

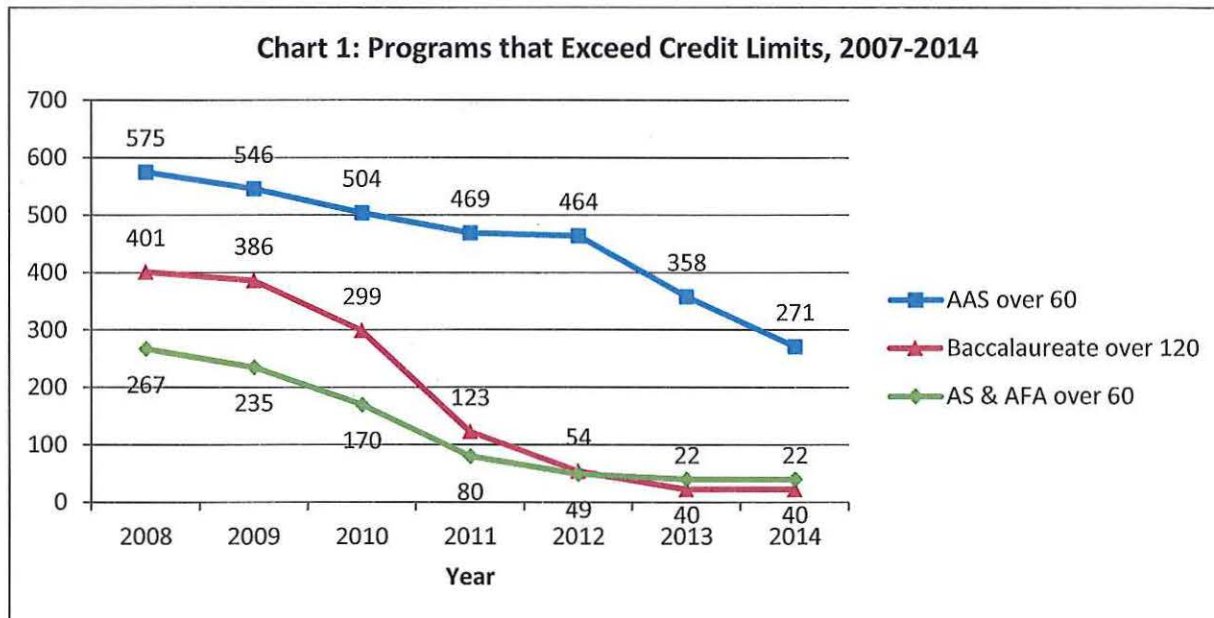
Report Summary

Legislation from 2008 requires the Board of Trustees to report annually to the House and Senate higher education committees the number of waivers that have been requested and granted. Legislative requirements have been met.

- All system associate in arts, associate in science, associate in fine arts, and baccalaureate degree programs are in compliance with Minnesota Statutes and Board of Trustees' policy and system procedures regarding program credit lengths.
- During the 2013-2014 academic year, 252 credit length waivers were requested; seven waivers were approved for Minnesota Alliance for Nursing Education (MANE) associate in science nursing programs (see Table 1) and 168 waivers were approved for associate in applied science degree programs (see Table 2).
- There are approximately 95 AAS programs that exceed the 60 credit limit that have not received a waiver. These remaining programs will be closed, reduced to 60 credits or less, or will be granted a waiver based on industry and professional standards. Review of the programs is ongoing with completion expected by early 2015.

Progress in Academic Program Credit Reduction

Chart 1^a illustrates the progress in reducing the number of associate and baccalaureate programs that exceed credit limits from August 2007 (when 60/120 legislation became effective) through September 30, 2014. Of the 566 bachelor degree programs currently offered at system universities, 544 programs (96%) are below the degree cap limit of 120 credits. The 22 programs requiring in excess of 120 credits were granted a waiver based on industry and professional standards. Of the 346 associate degree programs (AA, AS, and AFA) offered at system colleges and universities, 306 programs (88%) require 60 credits or less, while the remaining 40 programs were granted waivers based on industry and professional standards.



^a Program counting has changed over time. In 2013, counts were as of June 1 rather than July 1, due to changes in the program inventory database. After 2013, suspended programs are no longer included and programs are counted by institution rather than by location. In 2014, counts were as of September 30 due to turnover in staff personnel.

Finally, there are 659 associate in applied science programs (AAS) offered at system colleges and universities, and of that number, 388 programs (59%) require 60 credits or less. The number of associate in applied science degree programs over the credit limit has been reduced to 271 programs, of which 176 programs have been granted a waiver.

Waiver Requests and Approvals

As shown in Table 1, waiver requests were submitted for seven Minnesota Alliance for Nursing Education (MANE) Associate in Science Nursing programs. MANE is a collaboration between community colleges and Metropolitan State University. Students accepted for admission to a MANE program at a partner community college are dually admitted to the BSN nursing program at Metropolitan State University. Current partners include Anoka-Ramsey Community College, Century College, Inver Hills Community College, Normandale Community College, North Hennepin Community College, Ridgewater College, and Riverland Community College. The participating colleges received a waiver for 75 credits. The remaining 45 credits of the MANE BSN program will be provided on the community college campus in hybrid and online formats by Metropolitan State University.

Table 1. 2013-2014 Academic Year Associate in Science (AS) Waiver Requests and Approvals.

College	Program	Disposition
Anoka-Ramsey Community College	MANE Nursing AS	Granted waiver – 75 credits
Century College	MANE Nursing AS	Granted waiver – 75 credits
Inver Hills Community College	MANE Nursing AS	Granted waiver – 75 credits
Normandale Community College	MANE Nursing AS	Granted waiver – 75 credits
North Hennepin Community College	MANE Nursing AS	Granted waiver – 75 credits
Ridgewater College	MANE Nursing AS	Granted waiver – 75 credits
Riverland Community College	MANE Nursing AS	Granted waiver – 75 credits

As shown in Table 2, for the 2013-2014 academic year, 245 requests for waivers were submitted for associate in applied science (AAS) programs. Of those, 168 programs have been granted a waiver

based on industry and professional standards, and 17 waiver requests were withdrawn during the course of the review (13 programs reduced to 60 credits; 4 programs were closed or suspended). The remaining AAS waiver request reviews will be completed over the 2014-2015 academic year.

Table 2. Associate in Applied Science (AAS) Waiver Requests and Approvals for 2013-2014

College	Program	Disposition
Alexandria Technical and Community College	Accounting	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Administrative Office Management	Granted waiver – 63 credits
	Business Management	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Child Development	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Communication Art and Design	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Computer and Voice Networking	Granted waiver - 66 credits
	Diesel Mechanics	Granted waiver – 75 credits
	Fashion Management	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Health and Fitness Specialist	Granted waiver – 69 credits
	Human Services Practitioner	Granted waiver – 64 credits
	Interior Design	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Law Enforcement	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Marketing and Sales Management	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Mechatronics	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Medical Laboratory Technician	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Paralegal	Granted waiver – 63 credits
Anoka-Ramsey Community College	Physical Therapist Assistant	Granted waiver – 69 credits
Anoka Technical College	Automotive Technician	Granted waiver – 72 credits

College	Program	Disposition
	Biomedical Equipment Technician	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	CNC Manufacturing Technology	Granted waiver – 69 credits
	Electronic Engineering Technology	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Golf Course Grounds Management	Under review ^b
	Information Technology Management	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Judicial Reporting	Granted waiver – 68 credits
	Landscape Technology	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Mechanical Drafting and Design	Under review
	Occupational Therapy Assistant	Granted waiver – 71 credits
	Welding	Granted waiver – 66 credits
Central Lakes College	Criminal Justice	Under review
	Horticulture	Reduced to 60 credits ^c
	Marine and Small Engine Technology	Under review
	Natural Resources	Under review
	Natural Resources/Law Enforcement	Under review
	Robotics/Automated Systems Tech	Under review
Century College	Cosmetology	Granted waiver – 68 credits
	Dental Assistant	Granted waiver – 64 credits
	Dental Hygiene	Granted waiver – 79 credits
	Engineering CAD Technology	Reduced to 60 credits
	Interior Design	Reduced to 60 credits

^b Waiver requests were submitted; waiting for additional information and/or documentation

^c Waiver requests were submitted for the program, but were withdrawn when the program was reduced to 60 credits

College	Program	Disposition
	Paramedic	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Radiologic Technology	Granted waiver – 78 credits
Dakota County Technical College	Applied Visual Arts	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Auto Body Collision Technology	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Automotive Service (ASEP)	Granted waiver – 82 credits
	Automotive Technician	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Biomedical Equipment Technology	Granted waiver – 70 credits
	Civil Engineering Technology	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Electrical Construction and Maintenance Technology	Under review
	Energy Technical Specialist – Nuclear	Granted waiver – 75 credits
	Graphic Design Technology	Granted waiver – 70 credits
	Heavy Construction Equipment Technology	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Heavy Duty Truck Technology	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Information Systems Management	Granted waiver – 69 credits
	Interior Design	Granted waiver – 85 credits
	Landscape Horticulture	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Multi-Media and Web Page Design	Under review
	Nanoscience Technology	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Networking Administration	Granted waiver – 69 credits
	Software Development	Granted waiver – 69 credits
Hennepin Technical College	Apprenticeship Technology	Reduced to 60 credits
	Architectural Technology	Granted waiver – 72 credits

College	Program	Disposition
	Audio Production Specialist	Granted waiver – 65 credits
	Auto Body Technician	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Automotive Technician	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Automotive Technology (Ford Asset)	Granted waiver – 96 credits
	Cabinetmaking	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Computer Numerical Control Technician	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Culinary Arts	Under review
	Electronics Technology	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Emergency Management/Homeland Security	Closing program
	Engineering CAD Technology	Under review
	Fluid Power Engineering Technician	Under review
	Graphic Design – Creative	Under review
	Graphic Design – Web Design	Under review
	Heating, Ventilation, AC, and Refrigeration	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Hydraulic Engineering Technology	Reduced to 60 credits
	Interactive Designer	Under review
	Landscape Design and Construction	Under review
	Landscape/Horticulture	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Manufacturing Engineering Technology	Reduced to 60 credits
	Marine, Motorsport and Outdoor Power Equipment Technology	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Medium Heavy Truck Technology	Granted waiver – 94 credits
	Pneumatic Engineering Technology	Reduced to 60 credits
	Practical Nursing	Reduced to 60 credits

College	Program	Disposition
	Tool and Die Mold Making	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Video Production Specialist	Under review
Hibbing Community College	Culinary Arts/Food Service Management	Granted waiver – 65 credits
	Law Enforcement	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Medical Laboratory Technician	Granted waiver – 62 credits
Itasca Community College	Natural Resources	Granted waiver – 64 credits
Lake Superior College	Architectural Technology	Reduced to 60 credits
	Auto Service Technology	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Aviation Maintenance Technology	Granted waiver – 103 credits
	Building Construction Technology	Under review
	Commercial and Residential Wiring	Under review
	Computer and Web Programming	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Dental Hygiene	Granted waiver – 81 credits
	Diagnostic Medical Sonography	Suspended program
	Electronic Technology: Industrial Controls	Under review
	Integrated Manufacturing – Engineering CAD Technology	Under review
	Integrating Manufacturing Technology - CNC	Under review
	IT Specialist: Network Administration	Under review
	Medical Laboratory Technician	Granted waiver – 65 credits
	Nursing	Closed; converted to AS
	Physical Therapy Assistant	Granted waiver – 74 credits
	Radiologic Technology	Granted waiver – 78 credits

College	Program	Disposition
	Respiratory Therapy	Granted waiver – 76 credits
	Supervisory Management	Suspended program
Mesabi Range College	Graphic Media Design	Granted waiver – 73 credits
	Paramedic	Under review
	Process Automation Systems	Under review
Minneapolis Community and Technical College	Airframe Technician	Under review
	Electroneurodiagnostic Technology	Under review
	Graphic Design: Print Media	Under review
	HVAC and Refrigeration	Under review
	Power Plant Technician	Under review
	Web and Interactive Media	Under review
Minnesota State Community and Technical College	Accounting	Granted waiver – 69 credits
	Architectural Technology	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Auto Body Collision Technology	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Automotive Service Technology	Granted waiver – 69 credits
	Business: Management, Marketing and Sales	Granted waiver – 66 credits
	Civil Engineering Technology	Granted waiver – 68 credits
	Construction Management	Granted waiver – 66 credits
	Dental Assisting	Granted waiver – 63 credits
	Diesel Equipment Technology	Granted waiver – 79 credits
	Health Information Technology/Coding	Granted waiver – 64 credits
	Marine Engine Technology	Granted waiver – 69 credits
	Mechanical Drafting and Design	Granted waiver – 66 credits

College	Program	Disposition
	Network Administration and Security	Granted waiver – 66 credits
	Radiologic Technology	Granted waiver – 79 credits
	Sign Language Interpreter Preparation	Granted waiver – 64 credits
	Web Development	Granted waiver – 72 credits
Minnesota State College-Southeast Technical	Medical Laboratory Technician	Under review
Minnesota West Community and Technical College	Agriculture Business Management	Under review
	Agriculture Business Marketing	Under review
	Agriculture Production	Under review
	Automotive Technology	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Diesel Technology	Under review
	Electrician	Granted waiver – 81 credits
	Fluid Power	Under review
	Law Enforcement	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Medical Laboratory Technician	Under review
	Radiologic Technology	Granted waiver – 84 credits
Northland Community and Technical College	Architectural Technology and Design	Granted waiver – 69 credits
	Auto Body Collision Technology	Granted waiver – 71 credits
	Automotive Service Technology	Granted waiver – 73 credits
	Aviation Maintenance Technology	Granted waiver – 100 credits
	Cardiovascular Technology – Invasive	Granted waiver – 67 credits
	Firefighter/Paramedic	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning/Construction	Granted waiver – 70 credits

College	Program	Disposition
	Occupational Therapy Assistant	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Physical Therapy Assistant	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Radiologic Technology	Granted waiver – 83 credits
	Respiratory Therapist	Granted waiver – 78 credits
Northwest Technical College	Automotive Service Technician	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	High Performance Engine Machinist	Granted waiver – 72 credits
Pine Technical and Community College	Automotive Technology	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Robotics/Automation Technology	Granted waiver – 68 credits
Ridgewater College	Advanced Carpentry	Granted waiver – 66 credits
	Agri Business	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Audio Video Systems Technology	Granted waiver – 65 credits
	Auto Body Collision Technology	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Automation and Robotic Systems Technology	Granted waiver – 67 credits
	Automotive Service Technology	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	CNC Precision Manufacturing Technician	Granted waiver – 67 credits
	Computer Aided Drafting and Design	Granted waiver – 67 credits
	Cosmetology	Under review
	Dairy Management	Under review
	Die Making Technician	Granted waiver – 67 credits
	Electrician	Granted waiver – 84 credits
	Farm and Operation Management	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	GPS/GIS Technology for Agriculture	Under review

College	Program	Disposition
	Health Information Technician	Granted waiver – 64 credits
	Industrial Welding	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Law Enforcement	Under review
	Mold Making Technician	Granted waiver – 67 credits
	Nondestructive Testing Technology	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Paramedic	Granted waiver – 64 credits
	Veterinary Technology	Granted waiver – 75 credits
Riverland Community College	Administrative Assistant	Reduced to 60 credits
	Applied Technology	Reduced to 60 credits
	Automotive Service Technology	Under review
	Computer Technology	Reduced to 60 credits
	Diesel Technology	Under review
	Manufacturing Technical Specialist	Under review
	Medical Administrative Assistant	Reduced to 60 credits
	Network Security	Granted waiver – 63 credits
	Radiography	Granted waiver – 83 credits
Rochester Community and Technical College	Building Utilities Mechanic	Under review
	CAD Technology	Under review
	Cardiovascular Invasive Specialist	Granted waiver – 63 credits
	Clinical Neurophysiology Technology	Granted waiver – 81 credits
	Clinical Research Coordination	Under review
	Dental Assisting	Granted waiver – 64 credits
	Dental Hygiene	Granted waiver – 83 credits
	Health Information Technology	Granted waiver – 64 credits

College	Program	Disposition
St. Cloud Technical and Community College	Veterinary Technology	Under review
	Accounting	Granted waiver – 70 credits
	Advertising Communication Design	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Architectural Construction Technology	Granted waiver – 61 credits
	Auto Body Collision Technician	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Automotive Service Technician	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Carpentry	Granted waiver – 65 credits
	Computer Programmer	Granted waiver – 71 credits
	Culinary Arts	Granted waiver – 66 credits
	Dental Assistant	Granted waiver – 64 credits
	Dental Hygiene	Granted waiver – 80 credits
	Diagnostic Medical Sonography – Generalist	Granted waiver – 67 credits
	Electrical Construction Technology	Granted waiver – 81 credits
	Energy Technical Specialist – Nuclear	Granted waiver – 74 credits
	Health Information Technology	Granted waiver – 64 credits
	Heating, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Land Surveying/Civil Engineering Technology	Granted waiver – 70 credits
	Mechanical Design Technology	Granted waiver – 68 credits
	Medium/Heavy Truck Technician	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Paramedicine	Granted waiver – 64 credits
	Robotics and Automation	Under review
	Water Environment Technologies	Granted waiver – 62 credits

College	Program	Disposition
Saint Paul College	Auto Body Repair	Granted waiver – 62 credits
	Automotive Service Technician	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Clinical Sports Massage	Granted waiver – 66 credits
	Cosmetology	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Culinary Arts	Granted waiver – 68 credits
	Esthetician (Spa)	Granted waiver – 66 credits
	Health Information Technology	Granted waiver – 64 credits
	Medical Laboratory Technician	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Respiratory Care Practitioner/Therapist	Granted waiver – 78 credits
	Sign Language Interpreter/Transliterator	Granted waiver – 67 credits
South Central College	Accounting	Under review
	Accounting Technician	Under review
	Agribusiness Office Specialist/Manager	Under review
	Agribusiness Production	Under review
	Agribusiness Service and Management	Under review
	Agribusiness Service Technician	Under review
	Auto Body and Collision Technology	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Automotive Service	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Computer Integrated Machining	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Culinary Arts	Granted waiver – 67 credits
	Dental Assisting	Granted waiver – 63 credits
	Graphic Communications	Granted waiver – 72 credits
	Intensive Care Paramedic Technician	Under review
	Medical Laboratory Technician	Under review

College	Program	Disposition
Vermilion Community College	Wilderness and Park Management	Under review
	Wildland/Wildlife Law Enforcement	Under review

APPENDIX A

Related Legislation

Session laws in 2007, 2008, and 2009 affect the credit length of selected degree programs. Session law in 2007^d directs the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees to set the maximum number of semester credits required for a baccalaureate degree at 120 credits, and for an associate degree at 60 credits. The law permits the Board of Trustees to grant waivers for specific degree programs in which industry or professional accreditation standards require a greater number of credits. In January 2009 the Board of Trustees amended Policy 3.36 Academic Programs and the chancellor approved the related procedure to guide the system's response to this legislation.

Legislation in 2008, below, requires the Board of Trustees to report annually to the House and Senate higher education committees regarding waivers that have been requested and granted.

MAXIMUM CREDIT FOR GRADUATION; WAIVER REPORTING.

The board must annually by October 1 report to the chairs of the house of representatives and senate committees with primary jurisdiction over higher education policy on the board's current policy setting the maximum number of semester credits required for a baccalaureate and an associate in arts degree at 120 and 60 semester credits or their equivalent, respectively, as required by Laws 2007, chapter 144, article 1, section 4, subdivision 3, paragraph (b). The report must specifically identify requests in the previous academic year for waivers from the policy and the requests granted. The specific identification must include, among other things, the program and the campus for which a request was made and for which a waiver was granted. **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective January 1, 2009.^e

Session law in 2009, below, modifies the 2007 legislation by (a) directing that, until July 2, 2012, associate in applied science degree programs be exempt from the 60 credit length limit set by Board of Trustees policy and (b) permitting additional waiver review criteria for emerging or innovative programs.

MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES DEGREE REQUIREMENTS.

Until July 2, 2012, an associate in applied science degree offered by a college in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system is exempt from the 60-semester credit length limit for an associate degree specified in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board Policy number 3.36, Part 3, Subpart C. The chancellor may consider criteria for waiving the credit length limits under this board policy for emerging or innovative programs. By January 2, 2012, the Minnesota State College Faculty and the Minnesota State College Student Association must present a joint report to the House of Representatives and senate committees with jurisdiction over higher education policy on

^d Minnesota Session Laws 2007 Chapter 144, article 1, section 4, subdivision 3, paragraph (b)

^e Minnesota Statutes § 136F.301

process for reviewing the credit requirements for an associate in applied science degree.
EFFECTIVE DATE. This section is effective the day following final enactment and applies to
associate in applied science degrees whether first offered before, on, or after that date.^f

^f Minnesota Session Laws 2009, Chapter 95, article 2, section 44

APPENDIX B

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System Procedure 3.36.1 Academic Programs

Part 3. Authorized Academic Awards

Subpart C. Program Credit Length Waivers for Associate and Baccalaureate Degrees

1. **Authority.** The system office determines the approval or disapproval of all requests for waivers to exceed program credit length limitations.
2. **Criteria for Granting Waivers.** Credit length waivers may be granted when determined necessary to ensure that the degree provided meets industry or professional standards. Waivers shall be granted only when a need for a longer program credit length is demonstrated by one or more of the following:
 - a. Industry Standards
 - National or international program certification,
 - National or international standards, including skill standards,
 - Standards recommended by a primary employer or multiple employers within a program service area.
 - b. Professional Standards
 - National specialized program accreditation,
 - State licensure requirements,
 - National practices or standards.
3. **Waiver Process for Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, Associate in Fine Arts and Baccalaureate Degrees.** The following process shall be followed to request a waiver:
 - a) Preparation of a waiver application for submission to the system office shall be consistent with accepted college or university curriculum approval processes. Waiver requests for similar academic programs may be pursued on a multi-college/university basis when recommended by faculty consistent with accepted processes at each participating college or university.
 - b) Academic program advisory committees may provide recommendations on learning requirements. Program advisory committee recommendations that support the standards may be submitted with the waiver request. Board policy requires student representation on college academic program advisory committees as specified in Policy 2.3 and Procedure 2.3.1.
 - c) Waiver applications will be distributed for review and comment to statewide student associations, faculty union leadership, and college and university administrators.

- d) The system office will act on the waiver application and notify the applicant.
 - e) Appeals related to waiver decisions will be processed through the senior vice chancellor for academic and student affairs.
 - f) Public information regarding the waiver process, review criteria, rationale for decisions, and decisions reached will be available on the system office website.
4. **Waiver Process for Associate in Applied Science Degrees.** The following process shall be followed to request a waiver:
- a) Preparation of a waiver application for submission to the system office shall be consistent with accepted college or university curriculum approval processes.
 - b) An associate in applied science waiver application shall compare and contrast credit lengths of comparable programs and provide a program analysis describing learning outcomes not found in shorter programs.
 - c) Academic program advisory committees shall provide recommendations on learning requirements. Board policy requires student representation on college academic program advisory committees as specified in Policy 2.3 and Procedure 2.3.1.
 - d) Waiver applications shall document the approval of the college curriculum committee, the program advisory committee, and the college student representative on the program advisory committee. If there was no college student representative on the program advisory committee, the college student association shall review and comment on the waiver application.
 - e) Waiver applications will be distributed for review and comment to state student associations, faculty union leadership, and college and university administrators.
 - f) The system office will act on the waiver application and notify the applicant.
 - g) Appeals related to waiver decisions will be processed through the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs.
 - h) Public information regarding the waiver process, review criteria, rationale for decisions, and decisions reached will be available on the system office website.
 - i) Associate in applied science programs approved to exceed 60 credits shall include an explanation of why the program is longer than similar programs in the catalog description.