

**BACHELOR OF APPLIED SCIENCE (BAS)  
(Design for a Baccalaureate Completion Degree)**

**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission**

*“The credibility and effectiveness of the American higher education system – long the strength of our democracy and a model for the world – are on the line. Unique to the nature of that system is the implicit promise that educational opportunity and the better quality of life it brings are open to all. Universal access, then, becomes both our standard and our pledge. We must work together to keep our promise to today’s and future students.”*

*Improving Access to the Baccalaureate, AASCU*

**Rationale:**

A major stumbling block for students attempting to complete degree programs in American colleges and universities is the too frequent problem of transfer of academic credits. The area of greatest concern is for students who move from two-year to four-year institutions. Nationwide, roughly forty-three percent of students who begin their higher education at two-year institutions transfer at least once and many of these students transfer to a baccalaureate institution. An issue in all states, including West Virginia, is the effectiveness of state higher education policy in supporting the success of students wishing to transfer.

West Virginia higher education policy on transfer of academic credits is being revised to implement a statutory mandate which calls for the state’s public higher education institutions to ensure that community and technical college students have transfer opportunities to four-year colleges and universities as is consistent with sound academic policy. Problems in transfer to baccalaureate institutions are particularly acute for those students which have completed a significant number of academic credits in occupational/career fields and who possess an Associate of Applied Science degree. Since the credits accumulated may not readily transfer to traditional baccalaureate programs, some other type of bachelor’s degree–completion opportunity which will provide for additional skill enhancement and professional advancement is desirable.

A major element in providing enhanced opportunities for transfer is the establishment of a Bachelor of Applied Science which can be implemented at any of the state institutions that offer baccalaureate degree programs. The degree is open to all students who have completed occupational/career technical programs with an Associate of Applied Science degree.

**Proposal:**

The Bachelors of Applied Science (BAS) degree is designed to provide an opportunity for students who possess an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree to obtain a bachelor’s degree.

Graduates of community and technical colleges need opportunities to continue their education in areas that best meet their education goals. Meeting the educational goal of AAS students greatly meets the needs of the regional workforce in West Virginia.

This proposed degree addresses the needs of individuals whose educational goals are not being met through traditional degree programs.

This degree, once approved by the Higher Education Policy Commission, may be offered by baccalaureate degree granting public colleges and universities in West Virginia. Institutional degree programs must conform to the statewide guidelines and must be filed with the Higher Education Policy Commission office.

**Admissions:**

- The student must possess an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree from a regionally accredited institution.
- The student must meet all general institutional admission requirements.

**Policies:**

- The degree program and student must meet all institutional academic policies.
- The residency requirement will be 24 hours from the degree granting institution.

**Curriculum:**

- Degree - 120-128 hours
  - AAS Degree - Minimum of 60 hours
  - General Education - 42-48 hours (Includes AAS General Education hours. Courses must be distributed among all the following categories.)
    - Communication(s)
    - Natural Science
    - Mathematics
    - Computer/Information Technology
    - Social Science/Humanities/Fine Arts
  - Upper division requirement - 40 hours
  - Area of emphasis requirement - A minimum of 24 hours beyond the AAS degree. Areas of emphasis may be any area that meets regional workforce needs and is reflective of institutional strength. Some suggested areas of emphasis are the following:
    - Management/Supervision
    - Technology
    - Occupational Safety