Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Bachelor of Applied Science-Reduced Credit degree?

- A Bachelor of Applied Science - Reduced Credit degree is a program that requires fewer than the standard minimum of 120 credit hours for graduation.
- The Commission on Colleges & Universities considers a Bachelor of Applied Science-Reduced Credit degree a program that typically requires 90-119 semester credit hours, or the equivalent.

Who is the target audience for reduced credit degrees?

- The primary target audience for these degrees is learners interested in a specific workforce area. Students should have a strong passion for the area and/or related work experience (such as adult learners, military, etc.) that prepares them for an intensive, reduced-credit program. For learners who are not 100% sure and want a program that allows exploration, a reduced-credit degree would not be appropriate.
- Students interested in graduate education or in degrees that require licensure are not the primary target audience and should be advised to pursue a traditional degree program.

How can we maintain academic rigor with 30 fewer credits?

- Rigor is determined by the level of competency achieved. The 90-credit degree uses Backward Design, starting with high-level industry requirements to develop the curriculum. Exploratory electives outside the major's core are eliminated. The upper-division requirements (30 credits) provide the same depth as a traditional degree.

How should we develop student learning outcomes assessment plans for these degrees?

- Because these are not traditional baccalaureate degrees, student learning outcomes assessment plans should focus on the competency outcomes that informed the program curriculum.
- As with the learning outcomes assessment process, each competency outcome should:
    - Be mapped to courses,
    - Have prescribed evidentiary sources used to measure student attainment of the competency, and
    - Have defined levels of achievement that indicate successful attainment of the competencies.

What disciplinary areas would qualify for consideration as a reduced-credit degree?

- Reduced-credit degrees focus on high-demand workforce areas. These include disciplines that allow prospective students to apply prior learning (work or military) for course credit.

How does the curriculum of a Bachelor of Applied Science - Reduced Credit degree differ from that of a traditional bachelor's degree?

- A Bachelor of Applied Science - Reduced Credit degree uses a backward design process, with the curriculum tailored to job-related competencies. Typically, the traditional bachelor's degree uses an additive design, with major requirements and program outcomes layered over a fixed general education core.

Will the reduced credit bachelor's degree replace the Nexus degree?

- The Nexus degree will remain a specialized, industry-focused 60-credit-hour credential designed to quickly prepare students for high-demand careers.

How is the reduced credit bachelor's degree different from an accelerated or dual-degree program?

- A traditional accelerated or "fast-track" degree, for example, does not reduce the total number of credits. Instead, it shortens the standard 120-credit program by requiring a heavier course load each semester, often including summer and winter sessions.
- A dual-degree program lets students earn both a bachelor's and a graduate degree faster, for example, through a 3+3 model. The program accelerates the timeline by beginning graduate coursework during undergraduate studies, which can reduce both the overall cost and the time required to earn both degrees.

Will the Bachelor of Applied Science-Reduced Credit degree require an institution to develop entirely new courses, or can existing courses be used in the program?

- The Bachelor of Applied Science-Reduced Credit degree should be based on specific career competencies. Whether new or redesigned courses are necessary depends on how well existing courses align with those competencies.

What are the advantages of offering a reduced credit bachelor's degree?

- A reduced-credit degree helps students save money on tuition, fees, and living expenses by enabling them to graduate a year early.
- By potentially entering the workforce a year earlier, graduates not only save a year's worth of college expenses but also earn a full year's income and gain valuable work experience. This approach shifts the value proposition from broad knowledge and skills to a clear, discipline-specific pathway with a measurable return on investment.