

professional degree, you should research those requirements so as to properly prepare yourself for that next step in your education.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Prior to picking a particular degree type it is important to talk with a variety of people who are working in the career area of interest and to those professors and administrators delivering those college level programs. Counselors and college advisors can also be a valuable source of information and will be able to direct you to places and people where all the information necessary to make an informed decision can be gathered.

The Bachelor's Degree, sometime called a four year degree, is made up of a minimum of 120 credit hours and comes in many forms, such as the Bachelor of Arts, B.A., Bachelor of Science, B.S., Bachelor of Business Administration, B.B.A., Bachelor of Science in Nursing, B.S.N. and the list goes on. The most common of these are the B.A. and B.S which are awarded in many diverse disciplines and are differentiated by the amount of arts versus math and science contained in each degree. Bachelor's Degrees can be stand alone, meaning they do not begin with either a certificate or associate degree. As such, they are often called zero-four degrees which indicates a student would start at the beginning (i.e., zero credits) and continue for four years or 120 credits until all of the Bachelor's Degree requirements have been met. Bachelor's Degrees that begin with an Associate Degree and ladder into a Bachelor's Degree program are called 2 + 2 degrees (i.e., 2 year Associate Degree plus 2 more years = the Bachelor's Degree).

Bachelor's degrees are made up of courses at several levels: designated 100 and 200 level courses are considered lower division and for Freshmen and Sophomores and 300 and 400 level courses are considered to be upper division and designed to be more advanced for college Juniors and Seniors. A Bachelor's Degree can be quite general as in and B.A. in General Studies or very specific like a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering. Depending on the institution, bachelor's degrees are available in virtually any subject one might be interested in from Agriculture to Zoology, from Architecture to Theater will be available and prepare you for employment or additional schooling upon graduation. For instance a bachelor's degree in secondary education,

computer programming or engineering will prepare you for immediate employment after graduation, whereas a bachelor's degree in pre-med or pre-law will prepare you for additional years of required professional school.

For information call Great Basin College Admission Advising and Career Center at 775.753.2168

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Great Basin College, 2013



**GBC
College
Knowledge**

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**Types of Post-
Secondary
Programs
and Degrees
[length and purpose of
each credential]**

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This brochure describes several types of postsecondary credentials and is the third in a series of eight that will provide readers information about many important aspects of college.

Postsecondary or college credentials are first thought of as being either at the undergraduate level or graduate level. At the undergraduate level there are three common credentials, the certificate, the associate degree and the bachelor's degree. A college education will always begin at the undergraduate level; as such, most of this column will focus on undergraduate credential types. Near the end of the column, graduate and professional degrees will be discussed briefly.

THE CERTIFICATE

A certificate program is designed to both educate and train an individual to do a specific job related occupation such as a computer technician, mechanic, medical transcriptionist or a welder. There are literally dozens of entry level occupations that require a year or more of postsecondary technical training. Because the typical certificate program is so career focused, much of the course work referred to as general studies (e.g., English, Humanities and Social Science) has been removed leaving only the job related technical essentials in the program of study.

A college program that results in the awarding of a certificate is typically one academic year (i.e., 2 semesters) in length and is comprised of approximately 30 semester hours or ten separate courses. A semester hour is defined as a course meeting one hour per week for 15 weeks and for each hour of meeting time there will be a minimum of two hours of outside work. It takes two to three hours of meeting time per week for 15 weeks when a science lab or activity course like welding is converted to credit hours.

THE ASSOCIATE DEGREE

Many times a certificate will ladder directly into an associate degree, meaning the certificate can in some cases be the first year of study in a two year associate degree. The Associate Degree is two years in length (i.e., four semesters) and contains a minimum of 60 semester hours or approximately 20 separate courses. Individual courses can be any number of semester hours in length, often ranging from one to twelve credit hours with three or four hour courses being the most common. The associate degree comes in three forms, the Associate of Arts, the Associate

of Science and the Associate of Applied Science. Generally, the Associate of Arts is a transfer degree (i.e., the first two years of a bachelor's degree) in the area of English, literature, arts, theater or music. The Associate of Science is also a transfer degree in area of accounting, biology, business, chemistry, computer science, education, engineering, geography, geology, mathematics, or any other discipline that has its foundation in math and science. The Associate of Applied Science, A.A.S. is a technical career focused degree that prepares an individual to enter the workforce with specific skills. Examples of the A.A.S. are Business Administration, Computer Aided Design, Computer Technology, Criminal Justice, Diesel Technology, Early Childhood Education, Electrical Systems Technology, and Welding Technology. The A.A.S. degree has its own terminal objectives which are job-ready focused. This means that the typical A.A.S. has more technical and less general studies content than the university transfer focused Associate of Arts or Science Degrees. So, should the individual earning the A.A.S. degree decide they wanted to continue their education working toward a Bachelor's Degree, they will often have some general studies courses to make up (e.g., 12-15 hours of humanities, social science, and science coursework). However, much of the A.A.S. degree will transfer to and count toward a Bachelor's Degree (e.g., approximately 50 semester hours) and many institutions have created bachelor's degrees that accept all 60 plus credits contained in an A.A.S Degree.

THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE

The Bachelor's Degree, sometime called a four year degree, is made up of a minimum of 120 credit hours and comes in many forms, such as the Bachelor of Arts, B.A., Bachelor of Science, B.S., Bachelor of Business Administration, B.B.A., Bachelor of Science in Nursing, B.S.N. and the list goes on. The most common of these are the B.A. and B.S which are awarded in many diverse disciplines and are differentiated by the amount of arts versus math and science contained in each degree. Bachelor's Degrees can be stand alone, meaning they do not begin with either a certificate or associate degree. As such, they are often called zero-four degrees which indicate a student would start at the beginning (i.e., zero credits) and continue for four years or 120 credits until all of the Bachelor's Degree requirements have been met. Bachelor's Degrees that begin with an Associate Degree and ladder into a Bachelor's Degree program are called 2 + 2 degrees (i.e., 2 year Associate Degree plus 2 more years = the Bachelor's Degree).

Bachelor's degrees are made up of courses at several levels: designated 100 and 200 level courses are considered lower division for Freshmen and Sophomores and 300 and 400 level courses are considered to be upper division and designed to be more advanced for college Juniors and Seniors. A Bachelor's Degree can be quite general as in a B.A. in General Studies or very specific like a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering. Additionally, some Bachelor's Degrees specify virtually every course in the program (e.g., Nursing and Engineering) while others might contain what is called a Major (i.e., 30-36 credit hours in a given subject area) and also a Minor consisting of 20-24 credit hours; the balance of such degrees is made up from general studies courses and electives. Depending on the institution, bachelor's degrees are available in virtually any subject one might be interested in from Agriculture to Zoology or from Architecture to Theater to prepare you for employment or additional schooling upon graduation. For instance, a bachelor's degree in secondary education, computer programming or engineering will prepare a student for immediate employment after graduation, whereas a bachelor's degree in pre-med or pre-law will prepare one for additional years of required professional school.

GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL DEGREES

Upon or near the completion of a Bachelor's Degree, an individual will be eligible to apply to graduate school. Graduate school offerings can be roughly divided into academic degrees (i.e., Masters and Ph.D.s) and professional degrees such as the Jurist Doctorate, Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Pharmacy and Doctor of Optometry. On the academic side, Master's Degrees (30-60 credit hours beyond the Bachelors Degree) and Ph.D.s (60 credit hours beyond the Masters Degree) are offered in virtually every known subject or discipline. The Ph.D. is an abbreviation for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree which is available in most subject areas and not just the humanities discipline of philosophy.

Professional degrees are entered into directly after the Bachelor's Degree and require three-four years of formal study which may include or be followed by a year-long internship. Getting admitted into graduate or professional school is competitive, requires very good undergraduate grades, and may also include entrance exams, writing samples, interviews, etc. So if you are just beginning your path toward a career that includes/requires a graduate or