

9.2 Program length

The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. The institution provides an explanation of equivalencies when using units other than semester credit hours. The institution provides an appropriate justification for all degree programs and combined degree programs that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit.

Compliance Judgment: In Compliance

Rationale

The University of South Carolina Aiken adheres to best practices for determining program length. A host of factors are considered as faculty develop programs of study that impact program length including but not limited to the type of degree, policy, learning expectations of the discipline, professional accrediting standards, and licensure requirements. As indicated in [narrative response to Standard 9.1 - Program Content](#) ^[1], the curricula for all USC Aiken degree programs, including program length, are reviewed and approved by department faculty, USC Aiken's Courses and Curricula Committee, and USC Aiken's Faculty Assembly, the Provost, the Board of Trustees, the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, and if required by SACSCOC.

Semester credits required for programs of study. USC Aiken adheres to USC system policy [ACAF-200](#) ^[2] that requires a minimum of 120 semester hours for baccalaureate degrees and a minimum of 30 semester hours for master's degrees. These minimums reflect national norms and are based upon a traditional full-time schedule of 15 hours per semester taken over 8 semesters for a baccalaureate degree and 9-12 hours per semester taken over 3 semesters for a master's degree.

Table 9.2. Programs of Study Length

Program of Study (links to the requirements for each program)	Hours
Bachelor of Arts (Art) ^[3]	120
Bachelor of Arts (Biology) ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Arts (Chemistry) ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Arts (Communication) ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Arts (Communication) <i>online completion</i> ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Arts (Communication and Digital Arts) ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Arts (English) ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Arts (Fine Arts) ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Arts (History) ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Arts (Music) ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Arts (Political Science) ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Arts (Sociology) ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Arts in Education (Early Childhood Education) ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Arts in Education (Early Childhood Education) <i>Salkehatchie completion</i> ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Arts in Education (Early Childhood Education) <i>Sumter completion</i> ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Arts in Education (Elementary Education) ^[4]	126-128
Bachelor of Arts in Education (Elementary Education) <i>Salkehatchie completion</i> ^[4]	126-128
Bachelor of Arts in Education (Elementary Education) <i>Sumter completion</i> ^[4]	126-128
Bachelor of Arts in Education (Middle Level Education) ^[4]	123-130
Bachelor of Arts in Education (Secondary Education) ^[4]	120-144
Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (Interdisciplinary Studies) ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Arts in Special Education (Special Education) ^[4]	128-132
Bachelor of Arts in Special Education (Special Education) <i>online completion</i> ^[4]	128-132
Bachelor of Fine Arts (Writing) ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Science (Applied Computer Science) ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Science (Applied Computer Science) <i>online completion</i> ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Science (Applied Mathematics) ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Science (Biology) ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Science (Chemistry) ^[4]	120-124
Bachelor of Science (Clinical Laboratory Science) ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Science (Earth Systems Science) ^[5]	120
Bachelor of Science (Exercise and Sports Science) ^[4]	121-129
Bachelor of Science (Industrial Process Engineering) ^[4]	129
Bachelor of Science (Psychology) ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Science (Psychology) <i>online completion</i> ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (Business Administration) ^[4]	121-124
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (Business Administration) <i>Sumter completion</i> ^[4]	121-124
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (Business Administration) <i>online completion</i> ^[4]	121-124
Bachelor of Science in Education (Secondary Education) ^[4]	130-143

Program of Study (links to the requirements for each program)	Hours
Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies (Interdisciplinary Studies) ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (Nursing) ^[4]	125
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) online completion ^[4]	120
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (Nursing) Sumter completion ^[4]	125
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (Nursing) Union completion ^[4]	125
Master of Science (Applied Clinical Psychology) ^[4]	60
Master of Business Administration (Business Administration) online ^[4]	30-36
Master of Education (Educational Technology) online ^[4]	36
Master of Education (Educator Leadership) online ^[4]	36

As shown in Table 9.2, some undergraduate programs require more than 120 credit hours; these additional credit hours are typically required to meet the demands of both USC Aiken’s general education program and those of specialized state or professional accreditation agencies. Master’s degrees typically exceed the minimum of 30 semester hours in order to meet professional accrediting standards or licensure requirements. A specific program of study may have varying length that is determined by the combination of concentration and course options that a student selects.

Second undergraduate degree and double majors. As stipulated in the [USC Aiken Academic Programs Bulletin](#) ^[6], a student may earn a second baccalaureate degree provided that the additional requirements for the second degree include a minimum of 24 semester hours beyond those required for the first degree and a minimum of 144 semester hours total. In all cases, the student must fulfill the complete degree requirements for both degrees, including all general education and major requirements. To graduate with a double major, a student must fulfill all requirements for one degree and all of the major course requirements of a second. A double major does not necessarily lead to a second degree. If one or both of the student’s two major programs normally requires a cognate or minor, that requirement is met with the second major. All requirements for the double major must be completed before graduation.

Dissemination of program length and assurance of program completion.
The requirements of all USC Aiken programs of study, including program length, are

annually published in the [USC Aiken Academic Programs Bulletin](#).^[4] Students are also informed of the length and requirements of programs by faculty advisors within their major and with online guidance forms in an enterprise software platform called Degree Works. Personnel in the Registrar's office use Degree Works to conduct degree audits to assure all requirements have been met when students apply for graduation.

Illustrative examples of Degree Works audits are provided for the [Bachelor of Science in Nursing](#) ^[7] and the [Master of Science in Applied Clinical Psychology](#) ^[8] programs of study.

Supporting Documentation

1. [Narrative response to Standard 9.1 - Program Content](#)
2. [USC system policy ACAF-2.00](#)
3. [Bachelor of Arts \(Art\) Program Description](#)
4. [Academic Programs Bulletin: Programs of study](#)
5. [Bachelor of Science \(Earth Systems Science\) Program Description](#)
6. [Academic Programs Bulletin: Second degree and double majors](#)
7. [Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree Works audit](#)
8. [Master of Science in Applied Clinical Psychology Degree Works audit](#)