Degree Pathways & Concurrent Advising

Helping Students Make the Most of A-State's Early College Program

Through Early College Programs (ECP) at Arkansas State University, high school students can earn college credits that contribute toward an associate's degree, bachelor's degree, or other academic pathway.

As students earn college credits while in high school, it is important to ensure their coursework aligns with their long-term academic and career goals.

We encourage high school counselors to help students identify an appropriate degree pathway early and make intentional course selections that support progress toward that degree.

Our goal is not simply for students to accumulate college credits or earn a credential before high school graduation, but to ensure the courses they complete provide meaningful progress toward their future educational goals.

Important Scholarship Information: A2A & Arkansas Academic Challenge

High school counselors should be aware of how the **ACCESS to Acceleration (A2A) Scholarship** may affect students' future eligibility for the **Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship**.

Beginning with the high school graduating class of 2028, credit hours paid for through the A2A Scholarship will be deducted from a student's total Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship eligibility in **30-credit-hour increments**.

What Does This Mean for Students?

- **0–29 A2A-Funded Credit Hours:** Students may use A2A funding for up to 29 credit hours without reducing their Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship eligibility.
- **30 or More A2A-Funded Credit Hours:** Once a student reaches 30 A2A-funded credit hours, their future Academic Challenge Scholarship eligibility will be reduced accordingly.

Important: This policy applies to credit hours funded by A2A, not necessarily all college credit hours earned while in high school.

Advising Students Beyond Their First 29 Credit Hours

We encourage students to continue pursuing college credits beyond their first 29 hours when those courses align with their academic goals and degree plans.

Rather than viewing 29 credit hours as a stopping point, counselors should help students determine which degree pathway best supports their future plans.

- **Students With an Intended Major:** Students who know which bachelor's degree or other eligible degree program they would like to pursue should consider declaring that major and completing coursework that applies directly toward its requirements.
- **Students Who Are Undecided:** Students who have not selected a major may explore the Associate of General Studies or other eligible pathways while completing foundational coursework that supports their future educational goals.

Our Recommendation: Students should prioritize courses that contribute toward their intended degree rather than accumulating credits without a clear academic purpose.

For additional information, visit the ADHE A2A Scholarship FAQs.

Associate of General Studies (AGS)

A Popular Degree Pathway for Early College Students

The **Associate of General Studies (AGS)** is the most frequently requested degree among high school students participating in Early College Programs at Arkansas State University.

The AGS is a flexible degree program that allows students to complete general education and elective coursework while exploring their academic interests.

While many concurrent and dual enrollment courses may apply toward this degree, **we encourage students to select a degree pathway based on their long-term academic and career goals rather than pursuing an associate's degree simply to earn a credential before high school graduation.**

Degree Overview

- **Degree:** Associate of General Studies (AGS)
- **College:** University College
- **Total Credit Hours Required:** 60
- **Degree Level:** Undergraduate – Associate's Degree
- **Program Focus:** General education and elective coursework

Is the Associate of General Studies the Right Pathway?

The AGS may be an appropriate option for students who are undecided about their future major or interested in completing a broad foundation of college coursework.

However, students who already know their intended bachelor's degree major may benefit more from declaring that major and completing coursework that applies directly toward its requirements.

Important Considerations for Counselors:

- **Degree Alignment:** Students should prioritize courses that contribute toward their intended academic and career goals.
- **Transferability:** Not all courses completed toward an associate's degree will necessarily apply to a student's future bachelor's degree requirements.
- **Degree Completion:** Earning 60 college credit hours does not automatically guarantee completion of the AGS. Students must satisfy all applicable degree requirements.
- **Individualized Planning:** The AGS is one of several available pathways and may not be the best option for every student.

For detailed information about degree requirements and program expectations, visit the official A-State program page.

View the Associate of General Studies Program

Explore Other Degree Pathways

Helping Students Identify Their Academic Goals

While the Associate of General Studies is the most frequently requested degree among high school students, it is not the only degree pathway available.

Early College Programs students may declare other eligible undergraduate majors and begin working toward degree-specific requirements.

Depending on their academic interests and future career goals, students may pursue:

- **Associate's Degrees:** Programs designed to provide foundational knowledge and prepare students for further education or career opportunities.
- **Bachelor's Degrees:** Four-year degree programs that allow students to begin completing general education and applicable major-specific coursework while still in high school.
- **Exploratory Pathways:** Opportunities for students who are still deciding on a major to complete foundational college coursework while considering their options.

Important Information About Bachelor's Degrees

Students may declare an eligible bachelor's degree major and begin working toward that degree while enrolled in high school. However, students are NOT eligible to graduate with a bachelor's degree until AFTER they have earned their high school diploma.

This restriction does not prevent students from completing coursework that applies toward their degree while participating in Early College Programs.

For students who already know their intended major, we encourage counselors to help them identify courses that will contribute directly toward that degree.

Find Available Degree Programs

Counselors can use A-State's Program Finder to explore available majors, review degree requirements, and help students identify appropriate academic pathways.

Explore All A-State Degree Programs

Please Note: Not all degree programs or courses are available to high school students through Early College Programs. Some majors have additional admission requirements or restrictions. Declaring a major does not guarantee admission into a selective program.

Changing a Student's Major or Degree Pathway

Students may request to change their declared major or degree program as their academic interests and goals develop.

For example, a student pursuing a bachelor's degree may decide to pursue the Associate of General Studies, or a student enrolled in the AGS program may decide to declare a specific bachelor's degree major.

How Students Can Request a Change of Major

Students should complete the Change of Major process through their Pack Portal.

1. Log in to the **Pack Portal** using A-State credentials.
2. Navigate to the **Academics** section and select **Student Tools** quick links.
3. Find and complete the **Change of Major** form.
4. Select the intended major or degree program.
5. Submit the request for processing.

Important Information for Counselors

- **Program Restrictions:** Certain programs, including nursing and teacher education, have additional admission requirements and may not be available through the standard Change of Major process.
- **Effective Date:** Requests submitted after the 11th day of classes will take effect the following semester.
- **Academic and Financial Aid Considerations:** Changing a major may affect degree progress, future financial aid, scholarships, and anticipated graduation timelines.

If a student experiences difficulty completing the Change of Major process, please contact the Early College Programs Office for assistance.

ADHE Concurrent Advising Resources for Counselors

Quick Start Guide to Concurrent Advising in Arkansas

The Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE) has developed a **Quick Start Guide to Concurrent Advising in Arkansas** to support high school counselors and academic advisors in helping students make informed decisions about college coursework.

The guide provides a framework for:

- Aligning concurrent enrollment courses with students' academic and career goals.
- Incorporating college coursework into Student Success Plans.
- Understanding course transferability and degree applicability.
- Discussing scholarship eligibility and financial considerations.
- Preparing students for college-level academic expectations.

We encourage counselors to use this resource when planning concurrent enrollment opportunities and advising students on their degree pathways.

Download the ADHE Quick Start Guide to Concurrent Advising in Arkansas (PDF)

Academic Advising & Degree Planning

Connecting Students With Academic Advisors

Early College Programs students will be assigned an A-State academic advisor to assist with degree planning and academic progress.

Academic advisors can help students understand degree requirements, review completed credits, identify appropriate coursework, and plan for their transition from high school to college.

We encourage high school counselors to work collaboratively with students' assigned academic advisors to ensure their concurrent and dual enrollment courses align with their intended degree pathways.

Questions About Academic Advising?

For questions about academic advising or assistance identifying a student's assigned advisor, visit A-State's Academic Advising website.

Visit A-State Academic Advising

You may also contact the Early College Programs Office for assistance.

Questions? Contact Early College Programs!

The Early College Programs team is here to support our high school partners as they help students explore degree options and make progress toward their educational goals.

Whether you have students interested in completing the Associate of General Studies, pursuing a bachelor's degree, or determining how their concurrent and dual enrollment credits apply toward a degree, we are happy to help!

Early College Programs
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Together, we can help students make every college credit count toward their future!

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