

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK
Assessment Plan Form Version 3

March 2005

Department: Academic Advising, University College
Department Chair: Dr. Thea Z. Hoeft, 569-8686, tmhoeft@ualr.edu
Other Contact Person: Margaret McClain, 569-8683, msmcclain@ualr.edu
Complete Degree Program Name: Associate of Arts in General Studies
AA

Submitted to Provost's Office on: March 24, 2005
Approved by Provost on:

1. Program Mission. What is your program's central educational mission, and how does it relate to the UALR mission?

The mission of the Associate of Arts in General Studies program is to provide students with the same competencies through the core curriculum required of all UALR undergraduate students. By completing the UALR Core Curriculum, students are prepared to move on to complete a bachelor's degree. This mission supports UALR's mission to "develop the intellect of students" and "to instill in students a lifelong desire to learn."

2. The Associate of Arts in General Studies overall goals are:

- a. To provide students with the UALR Core Curriculum as a base for continuing in school for a bachelor's degree.
- b. To encourage students to consider this degree as progress toward a higher degree.
- c. To enable students to feel a sense of personal accomplishment upon receipt of the AAGS degree.
- d. To provide students with a means of professional advancement.

3. Program Objectives: All students graduating with the AAGS, from the Fall 2003 catalog on, are to demonstrate competency by completing the UALR Core Curriculum. The purpose of the core curriculum is to establish a foundation for the undergraduate academic experience and to ensure that students develop fundamental skills and a lifelong commitment and ability to learn (*Undergraduate Catalog 2004-2005, pg. 242*). Therefore, all graduates are to:

1. Complete the UALR Core Curriculum, and
2. Be prepared to continue studies for a bachelor's degree.

4. Site of Objectives. Where in the program (i.e., what courses or activities) are the objectives identified in question #3 met?

Students begin taking core courses in the first semester in school and continue to complete them while working on the required 64 credit hours.

During or upon completion of the core curriculum, students are being prepared to continue in school for a bachelor's degree. Upon signing the AAGS degree plan, students are invited, on the survey, to declare a bachelor's degree major. Over half, 53%, of this year's sample have already declared a bachelor's degree major.

5. Student Population to be Assessed

Students may request an AAGS degree plan upon completion of 30 credit hours. They are required to complete a survey when they come in to sign the degree plan. The students used for each year's assessment report are the ones who just completed a degree plan and a survey. Most students are at the level of sophomore or higher.

Seventy-six (76) students filed degree plans in 2004-2005, with 75 usable surveys for this year's report. Thirty-eight (38) were transfer students (51%), and thirty-seven (37) were native UALR students (49%). Ten (10) native UALR students also presented transfer credits for the degree. Native UALR students are defined as those who began in college at UALR, even if they transferred credits, such as for summer school, back to UALR. Students submitted 75 transcripts from 41 different colleges, and the top two transfer institutions continue to be Pulaski Technical College and the University of Central Arkansas. The number of hours transferred ranged from 11 to 79, and the average number of hours transferred was 43.

Year	UALR #	UALR %	Transfer #	Transfer %
2004-2005	37	49%	38	51%
2003-2004	44	54%	37	46%
2002-2003	36	48%	39	52%
2001-2002	30	43%	40	57%
2000-2001	23	33%	36	67%
1999-2000	30	50%	30	50%

Two graphs follow the body of this report. One outlines the number of core courses transferred toward meeting AAGS requirements, and one outlines the number of elective courses, by category, transferred to the degree.

AAGS Enrollment Trend. The number of students filing an AAGS degree plan declined last year. One goal for this 2005-2006 year is to get information out to students regarding the degree.

Year	Total # Students	% Change
2004-2005	76	-6%
2003-2004	81	8%
2002-2003	75	7%
2001-2002	70	1%
2002-2001	69	15%

Demographics. The characteristics of students filing for the AAGS appear to be similar to prior years. The average age of the AAGS degree seeking student is still 31, which is slightly higher than the average age of all UALR students. Eighty percent (80%) are female, and twenty percent (20%) are male. This has been consistent over several years, and one conclusion is that many female students have been in school part time or school has been interrupted at times. These students feel a sense of accomplishment by obtaining the Associate of Arts degree. A little more than half the students continue in school, but others obtain the associate degree and step out of school again, whether permanently or temporarily.

6. Assessment Methods.

Assessment of the core courses occurs in the academic departments.

Objective 1: All graduates are to complete the UALR Core Curriculum. Verification that students have successfully completed core courses is accomplished at graduation check-out time. The Director of Academic Advising completes a check that all core and degree requirements have been satisfied.

Objective 2: All graduates are to be prepared to continue studies for a bachelor's degree. The records of all AAGS seeking students in the 2004 report (n = 81) were reviewed one year later (March 2005) to determine: 1) if the student is still enrolled at UALR in spring 2005, and 2) if the student has completed a bachelor's degree at UALR. The status of each was checked in BANNER. Of the 81 students, 35 are enrolled in Spring 2005, and 13 have completed a bachelor's degree. Of the 35 still enrolled, 5 are in the status of "pending" completion of a bachelor's degree in May, 2005. This total of 48 students represents 59% of the 81 who are either still enrolled in school at UALR or have already completed a bachelor's degree.

Upon signing the AAGS Degree plan, students fill out a survey. One question asks, "Which of the following most closely describes the reasons for your decision to seek this degree?" "Personal satisfaction" is checked most frequently as a response to this question. They may check as many responses as they choose.

Personal satisfaction - 36
 Half way to a bachelor's - 30
 Job opportunity and advancement - 20

Met the requirements – 8
Intend to transfer – 5
Other – 1

Students are given an option to make comments, and their comments about the AAGS are favorable.

- It is not a bachelor's, however, I can use this associate degree to seek employment.
- It will help me at work.
- I could use this degree as a stepping stone to encourage myself to stay in school.
- Thank you all for your help in completing the paperwork involved. It is not easy to communicate when you live over 1,000 miles away. You've gone the extra mile, and I really appreciate it.
- Thank you.
- I believe this is a wonderful idea to offer this opportunity to the students of central Arkansas, and I, for one, appreciate it.
- Thanks.
- More people need to know about the AAGS.
- I feel this degree will help me to find a better paying job and enable me to continue my education to the bachelor's degree.
- I would personally be pleased to achieve my Associate of Arts in General Studies because I've been attending UALR since 1993 Fall. I've been fighting through health problems and I will not give up. I love going to school, especially UALR, and I am going to continue as long as it takes. Through sickness and health!!

7. Follow-up Assessment

Each year the Office of Counseling and Career Planning conducts the annual ACT Alumni Survey for all UALR graduates. The results of the survey are reported annually in a booklet. Seven (7) AAGS graduates participated in the survey. They reported earning a salary ranging from "\$14,999 or less" to "30,000 – 39,999."

This office plans to develop an email survey to be sent out in September each year to the prior year's AAGS graduates. This information will help University College in understanding the value of the AAGS to its graduates. This will be useful in marketing the degree to potential graduates. For instance, as a result of last year's survey, a flyer was developed and shared with faculty advisors from other departments.

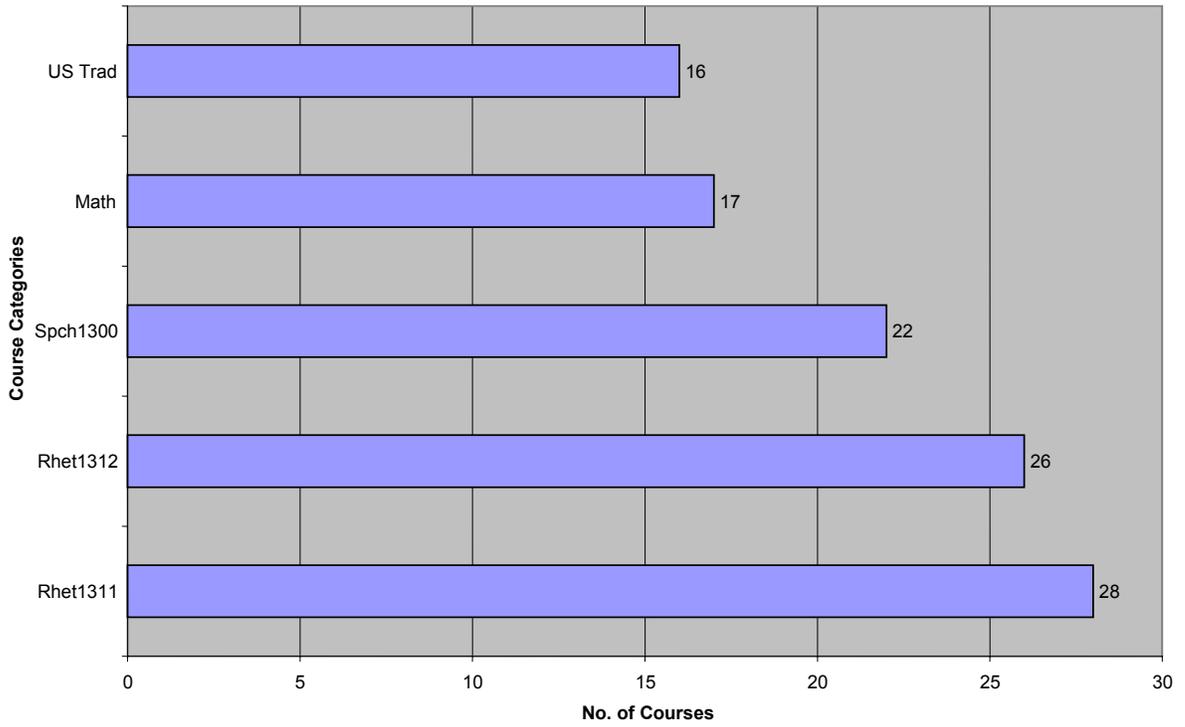
8. Use for Program Improvement.

Assessment information was used for program improvement when the new program requirements were implemented in the fall of 2003. This made the UALR AAGS program similar to other associate of arts programs in the state, which meet the state minimum core requirements.

Because of feedback from students on the survey about how they learn about the AAGS program, a flyer advertising the program has been developed. Students report the various ways in which they learn about the program, and one way was that they hear about it from professors and advisors. To get the information out to those who may be able to share this information, the flyer was handed out at a University College, Academic Advising training session in February 2005.

A summary of student comments and program assessment will be posted on the Academic Advising website section for the Associate of Arts program. Recent program assessments are archived at this site: www.ualr.edu/aadept/aarts.html.

Core Courses Transferred



Elective Courses Transferred

