

Health Sciences Associate of Applied Sciences Annual Assessment February 2025

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1.0 Program Overview

The University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) Health Science Department provides students with the knowledge, skills, and learning opportunities to achieve or continue education and training toward careers in health care. Health Sciences programs provide a supportive learning environment through small class sizes, individualized advice based on career pathways, and instructors trained and credentialed in health sciences fields.

Health Sciences Associate of Applied Science Description

The Associate of Applied Science in Health Sciences provides the foundational healthcare knowledge, skills and behaviors for graduates to obtain employment in a healthcare-related position, continue education in a professional health program, or enhance development of those who are employed in healthcare settings. Students need to consult with a Health Sciences advisor before registering for courses.

2.0 Program Learning Outcomes (Current PLOs)

1. Demonstrate effective listening, verbal, and written communication skills that result in the effective exchange of information in healthcare environments.
2. Incorporate knowledge of biological, psychological, sociological, cultural, spiritual, economic, and ethical factors into a healthcare foundation.
3. Integrate critical thinking and problem solving appropriate for student's allied health discipline.
4. Exhibit proficiency in the emphasis areas leading to licensure/certification to help meet Alaska's health workforce needs.

Description of the Degree Options 60 credits

General Education Requirements (18-19 credits):

- WRTG 111 Writing Across Contexts
- WTRG 211 Writing and the Humanities OR WRTG 212 Writing in the Professions
- COMM S111 Fundamentals of Oral Communication **OR** COMM S235 Small Group Communication & Team Building **OR** COMM S237 Interpersonal Communication **OR** COMM S241 Public Speaking
- MATH 105 Intermediate Algebra **OR** HS 116 Math in Healthcare
- PSY111 Intro to Psychology **OR** PSY S250 Lifespan Development
- HS135 Medical Terminology

The Health Sciences AAS emphasis areas (41-42 credits) include the following:

- *General Health Emphasis:* The flexible curriculum provides a foundation for entering a career in healthcare, offers courses that incorporate multiple healthcare pathways, and increases transferability to other professional programs using health sciences courses. Elective courses provide students the ability to choose courses that are appropriate to their individual career and educational goals.
- *Medical Assisting Emphasis:* Medical Assistants are multiskilled health professionals specifically educated to work in a variety of healthcare settings performing clinical and administrative duties. The practice of medical assisting necessitates mastery of a complex body of knowledge and specialized skills requiring both formal education and practical experience that serve as standards for entry into the profession. The Medical Assisting Certificate feeding into the Health Science AAS assesses the accreditation-specific required program learning outcomes and are submitted separately by the Medical Assisting Program Director.

- **Medical Coding Emphasis:** An area of Health Information Management specifically focused on coding/classifications systems at both the inpatient and outpatient level. The emphasis provides entry-level skills in healthcare coding, and a pathway to an Associate of Applied Science degree. National credentialing exams are available at both entry and advanced levels. The Health Information Management Coding Specialist Certificate learning outcomes are assessed under the Health Information Management program and are submitted separately by the Health Information Management Program Director.
- **Behavioral Health Emphasis:** The Health Science AAS with Behavioral Health emphasis provides students with additional career opportunities as entry-level behavioral health workers in human and social service organizations, the private healthcare sector, or as a foundation for further education in behavioral health.

The UAS occupational endorsements feeding into the Health Science AAS have program learning outcomes and are tracked internally by each Program Coordinator. These include:

- Behavioral Health Occupational Endorsement (utilizing UAS Institutional Effectiveness)
- Certificate Certified Nurse Aide Occupational Endorsement (The Alaska Board of Nursing reviews CNA certification exam pass rates, with an 80% annual pass rate threshold evaluated quarterly and annually.)

Electives (remaining credits):

In addition to the emphasis areas, students fulfill their degree requirements in any of the following advisor-approved electives: Business, Behavioral Health Sciences, Biology, Chemistry, Health Science, Health Information Management, Psychology, Sociology, or Statistics.

3.0 How the data is collected on the PLOs

The Health Sciences AAS has undergone a significant expansion in the last several years including adding two additional emphasis areas and two more planned for a total of six. Student motivations for completing the Health Sciences AAS degree are diverse and varied making the layers of assessment challenging. Regular assessments are conducted in the program pathways leading to the AAS degree, however, the General Health emphasis area is not associated with a specific pathway. Collaboration with the Career Ed Dean and Directors to structure data gathering and reporting on the Health Sciences AAS, or determine if assessment in the pathways is sufficient, has been difficult due to leadership changes. We will continue to develop an acceptable plan.

4.0 The data collected on the PLOs during the previous academic year

Overall AAS data from UAS Institutional Effectiveness (Dept of Labor and National Student Clearinghouse statistics, student headcount and degree completions) alongside regular program-level assessments is most appropriate for tracking long-term trends in this multi-faceted degree.

Graduates

AAS Health Science Graduates						
Program	Notes	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
AAS Health Science		6	5	5	9	13
General	Re-established as emphasis as of 24-25	6	4			
Medical Assisting			1	4	5	8
Pre-Nursing	Removed as of 24-25			1	4	5
Medical Coding	New as of 24-25					
Behavioral Health	New as of 24-25					

Employment Outcomes

Employment Outcomes: AAS Health Science	1 Year Prior to Graduation	1 Year Post Graduation	5 Year Post Graduation
Cohort Year	FY17 – FY21	FY17 – FY21	FY13 – FY17
Cohort Count	30	30	32
% Graduates who are AK Residents	97%	93%	84%
% Employed in AK	87%	83%	63%
Average Salary, All	\$24,711	\$30,445	\$69,007
Average Salary, in related field	n/a	\$30,700	\$75,079

Continuing Education Post Graduation

AAS Health Science Graduates													
The data below displays the numbers of graduates who continued their education after completing the AAS. Data displays students who enrolled outside UA and who enrolled within UA. Note, some students may be in both categories. The All Transfer row shows the distinct count of students who continued enrollment post-graduation.													
	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23	'24	
Grads	4	4	8	8	8	6	5	6	5	5	9	13	
Transfer External	0	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	5	2	2	2	
% Transfer Out	0%	50%	25%	38%	25%	33%	60%	33%	100%	40%	22%	15%	
Transfer Internal	3	0	3	1	1	3	2	2	1	1	1	0	
% Transfer Internal	75%	0%	38%	13%	13%	50%	40%	33%	20%	20%	11%	0%	
Transfer All	3	2	5	4	3	4	4	3	5	3	3	2	
Total Transfer	75%	50%	63%	50%	38%	67%	80%	50%	100%	60%	33%	15%	

*Students may not transfer immediately, so it is likely the '23 and '24 data will change.

Prior UA Grad before Completing the AAS

AAS Health Science Graduates													
The data below displays the numbers of graduates who completed a degree within UA prior to completing the AAS, and then separates out the count who completed a degree at UAS prior. The data also provides the level of degree completed at UAS prior to the AAS.													
	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23	'24	
Grads	4	4	8	8	8	6	5	6	5	5	9	13	
Prior UA Grad	0	2	2	2	6	3	2	4	2	4	5	6	
% Prior UA Grad	0%	50%	25%	25%	75%	50%	40%	67%	40%	80%	56%	46%	
Prior UAS Grad	0	1	2	2	6	3	2	3	2	4	5	6	
% Prior UAS Grad	0%	25%	25%	25%	75%	50%	40%	50%	40%	80%	56%	46%	
Prior UAS Degree													
OEC	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	1	1	0	1	1	
Certificate	0	1	2	2	3	2	0	1	1	3	4	4	
Associates	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
Bachelors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	

5.0 Evaluation of Data

Faculty updated PLOs and submitted curriculum changes in 2019-20, 2022-23 and 2023-24. After adding the Medical Assisting emphasis in 2021 an increasing number of students graduating with the Medical Assisting Certificate now also complete the Health Science AAS (45% in the 2022 cohort and 75% in the 2023 cohort). This serves as a good indicator that we are responding to the need for broad healthcare pathways. We plan additional changes in 2025-26 so it will likely take several years of data under the new program design to identify trends, however, we will continue to update our assessment plans and evaluate future results as students matriculate.

6.0 Future Program Plans

In response to the loss of federal funding for the Pre-Nursing and Pre-Rad Tech certificates, a task force was formed by the Interim Provost this academic year. The recommendation was to create an AAS emphasis area that students can complete at the same time they are working on the UAA nursing or radiology technology associate degrees, thus, graduating with two degrees at the same time. It was not clarified if the certificate programs should be discontinued or how they will be supported. Based on the recommendation, the faculty are developing an emphasis area to submit to the Curriculum Committee for 2025-26 in order to support these student educational goals. Additionally, we hope to create a Healthcare Management emphasis area in collaboration with and supported by the UAS Department of Business & Public Administration.

In AY23, the 5-year Institutional Review Committee recommended changes to the Health Sciences AAS curriculum which have successfully been incorporated. The committee also recommended direct program oversight by one person. This was subsequently addressed in the 2024 Annual Assessment, 2024-25 Assessment Plan, and monthly Health Sciences Department meetings. The HS AAS Program Coordinator handles responsibilities of program management, promotion, planning, and other required tasks to run and promote Health Sciences programs efficiently. The Health Science faculty unanimously agree that the Program Coordinator position is crucial for the department's leadership and success. Currently, this role lacks appropriate recognition and participation in shared decision-making and communication processes. With the loss of another Health Sciences faculty position due to budget concerns in Career Education and the revitalization and continuing expansion of the Health Sciences AAS and emphasis areas, faculty request increased connection to the designated Program Coordinator to facilitate the ongoing needs, program advocacy and representation of Health Sciences.