

STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Curriculum Program Applications
Fast Track for Action [FTFA*]

Request: The State Board of Community Colleges is asked to approve the curriculum program at the listed college on the condition that equipment funds are available to the college and operating funds generated by the budget formula will permit the offering of the program without any special allocation of funds.

Rowan-Cabarrus Community College

Health Sciences (A45230)

Effective Date: **Fall 2025**

Melissa Smith

Tri-County Community College

Cardiovascular Sonography (A45160)

Effective Term: **Fall 2025**

Melissa Smith

Wake Technical Community College

Cardiovascular Sonography (A45160)

Effective Term: **Fall 2026**

Melissa Smith

Background: Program applications must meet the following criteria in order to be placed on the Fast Track for Action (FTFA) program approval request presented to the State Board of Community Colleges as part of the consent agenda:

- The curriculum program title currently exists within the System and does not require the creation of a new program title and new curriculum standard;
- The application is complete, requires no further analysis or documentation, and has the endorsement of Academic Programs;
- There are no negative impact assessments from other colleges; and
- The college does not go outside of its service area for planning purposes.

Contact(s):

Dr. Hilmi Lahoud

Senior State Director of Business and IT
and Academic Programs Operations

STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Program Application Summary Evaluation Report
Rowan-Cabarrus Community College
Associate in Applied Science in Health Sciences (A45230)

Program Planning: Rowan-Cabarrus Community College is seeking approval for the new to the system Associate in Applied Science in Health Sciences (A45230) program to begin Fall 2025. The planning area is defined as the college's service area of Rowan and Cabarrus counties. All colleges were notified of the planning process for this program.

The proposed program was approved by the Board of Trustees at Rowan-Cabarrus Community College on September 25, 2024. Minutes from this Board meeting were attached to the program application. The President and the Board of Trustees of Rowan-Cabarrus Community College have certified the following:

- The proposed program will enhance the workforce of North Carolina, will provide educational and training opportunities consistent with the mission of the college, and will not duplicate the opportunities currently offered.
- They have assessed the need for the proposed program and the resources required to maintain a viable program and certify that the college can operate the proposed program efficiently and effectively within the resources available to the college.
- The college will complete a program accountability report including student success measures, enrollment trends, completion rates, and employment data three years after implementation of the program.

Program Rationale: Rowan-Cabarrus Community College (R-CCC) indicates the following:

- The program directly responds to the urgent workforce needs outlined in *the Investing in North Carolina's Caregiving Workforce* report, tackling the low 56% nursing graduation rate and 19% acceptance rate by expanding educational pathways for students pursuing healthcare careers. With over 1,000 healthcare job openings within a 50-mile radius of R-CCC, this program is essential for filling vacancies and strengthening the regional workforce.
- With 1,098 pre-health applicants competing for only 160 available nursing and allied health seats at R-CCC, this program provides an alternative pathway for students seeking healthcare careers. By broadening educational access, the program will improve student retention and completion rates while addressing unmet demand for training in high-demand healthcare occupations.

- The program equips students with industry-recognized credentials and skills in high-demand roles such as patient care technician, nurse aide, and phlebotomy while also providing a structured pathway for career growth, including opportunities to study in advanced healthcare programs and management positions.
- By aligning coursework with employer needs, focusing on essential skills such as communication, pharmacology, conflict resolution, and cultural competency, the program ensures that graduates are job-ready, reducing the training burden on healthcare employers. Recognizing existing certifications also accelerates educational progress, helping employers retain and upskill their workforce efficiently.
- This new to the system degree pathway, created in collaboration with statewide healthcare industry stakeholders, four-year institutions, the NCCC System Office, and NCCC Health Science deans and faculty, provides a workforce degree that expands access to healthcare education, strengthens the workforce pipeline, and provides clear career pathways for individuals seeking stable and well-paying jobs in healthcare.
- Surveys indicate strong student interest in the proposed program, with 75% of R-CCC Nurse Aide course students expressing enthusiasm and their intent to explore this pathway.
- Appalachian State University was consulted in the development of this degree and state they will support graduates from this program who wish to further their education by providing a pathway to the Bachelor of Science in Health Science degree upon completion of their AAS.
- Letters of support from Rowan-Salisbury School System, Kannapolis City Schools, Cabarrus Health Alliance, Centralina Workforce Development Board, Atrium Health, Novant Health, and Appalachian State University are included in the program application.
- Of the 58 community college Chief Academic Officers surveyed, 29 expressed support for the proposed curriculum standard for this new-to-system program. Building on this momentum, subsequent focus groups provided critical insights that shaped meaningful revisions, resulting in a more robust, industry-aligned pathway designed to meet evolving workforce demands.
- R-CCC requests special application status for this degree as stated in the Curriculum Procedure Manual:
 - 1) Local Certification (accompanied by a copy of the minutes from the Board of Trustees meeting(s) where the proposed program was discussed and approved must be attached to the application.)

- 2) Proposed Program of Study
 - 3) Impact Assessment Form(s) from colleges approved to offer the same or similar health science program which has a clinical component and
 - 4) Three Year Accountability Report (must be submitted three years after program implementation)
- Course impacts were presented for review and approved by the Curriculum Course Review Committee in May 2025.

Impact of the Proposed Program on Other Programs: Impact assessment forms were sent to the six contiguous community colleges around the RCCC service area approved to offer similar programs. ***No negative impacts were received.***

Implementation of Collaborative Plan: Not Applicable.

Curriculum Design: The proposed program of study is in compliance with the State Board approved curriculum standard.

Curriculum Description as Proposed on Curriculum Standard: *This curriculum is designed to prepare students for success in healthcare by providing a strong foundation in courses essential for health practice while offering opportunities to earn stackable credentials in relevant healthcare roles. Coursework includes the use of current healthcare technologies, specialized health science competencies, and training within interdisciplinary teams while offering opportunities to earn stackable credentials that support career advancement in a healthcare setting. Graduates will demonstrate professional standards, apply both discipline-specific and general education skills, and possess the academic preparation needed for career growth or further study in advanced health science programs.*

Contact(s):

Ms. Melissa Smith
Senior State Director of Health Science Programs

PROPOSED CURRICULUM STANDARD

Effective Term
Fall 2025
[2025*03]

Curriculum Program Title	Health Sciences	Program Code	A45230
Concentration	(not applicable)	CIP Code	51.0000

Curriculum Description

This curriculum is designed to prepare students for success in healthcare by providing a strong foundation in courses essential for health practice while offering opportunities to earn stackable credentials in relevant healthcare roles.

Coursework includes the use of current healthcare technologies, specialized health science competencies, and training within interdisciplinary teams while offering opportunities to earn stackable credentials that support career advancement in a healthcare setting.

Graduates will demonstrate professional standards, apply both discipline-specific and general education skills, and possess the academic preparation needed for career growth or further study in advanced health science programs.

Curriculum Requirements*

[for associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs in accordance with 1D SBCC 400.10]

- I. **General Education.** Degree programs must contain a minimum of 15 semester hours with a minimum of 6 semester hours of communications (3 SHC of which must be ENG-110 or ENG-111) and the remaining hours from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural sciences/mathematics. Diploma programs must contain a minimum of 6 semester hours of general education, including at least 3 semester hours in communications and the remaining hours from one of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural sciences/mathematics. General education is optional in certificate programs.
- II. **Major Hours.** AAS, diploma, and certificate programs must include courses which offer specific job knowledge and skills. Work-based learning may be included in associate in applied science degrees up to a maximum of 8 semester hours of credit; in diploma programs up to a maximum of 4 semester hours of credit; and in certificate programs up to a maximum of 2 semester hours of credit. *(See second page for additional information.)*
- III. **Other Required Hours.** A college may include courses to meet graduation or local employer requirements in a certificate, diploma, or associate in applied science program. These curriculum courses shall be selected from the *Combined Course Library* and must be approved by the System Office prior to implementation. Restricted, unique, or free elective courses may not be included as other required hours.

	AAS	Diploma	Certificate
Minimum General Education Hours	15	6	0
Minimum Major Hours	49	30	12
Other Required Hours	0-7	0-4	0-1
Total Semester Hours Credit (SHC)	64-76	36-48	12-18

Major Hours

- A. Core.** The subject/course core is comprised of subject areas and/or specific courses which are required for each curriculum program. A diploma program offered under an approved AAS program standard or a certificate which is the highest credential level awarded under an approved AAS program standard must include a minimum of 12 semester hours credit derived from the subject/course core of the AAS program.
- B. Concentration** (*if applicable*). A concentration of study must include a minimum of 12 semester hours credit from required subjects and/or courses. The majority of the course credit hours are unique to the concentration. The required subjects and/or courses that make up the concentration of study are in addition to the required subject/course core.
- C. Other Major Hours.** Other major hours must be selected from prefixes listed on the curriculum standard. A maximum of 9 semester hours of credit may be selected from any prefix listed, with the exception of prefixes listed in the core or concentration. Work-based learning may be included in associate in applied science degrees up to a maximum of 8 semester hours of credit; in diploma programs up to a maximum of 4 semester hours of credit; and in certificate programs up to a maximum of 2 semester hours of credit.

Health Sciences A45230

	AAS	Diploma	Certificate
Minimum Major Hours Required	49 SHC	30 SHC	12 SHC
A. Technical Core: Required Courses <i>Select a minimum of two courses from the following:</i> HSC 112 Health Sciences Pharmacology 3 SHC HSC 121 Healthcare Communication 4 SHC HSC 140 Transcultural Healthcare 3 SHC HSC 115 Intro to Health Sys & Ethics 3 SHC <i>Select one course from the following:</i> HSC 111 Intro to Healthcare Careers 3 SHC PTE 121 Pathway to Employ-Health 3 SHC Anatomy and Physiology (<i>Select one set</i>) BIO 163 Basic Anatomy & Physiology 5 SHC OR BIO 165 Anatomy and Physiology I 4 SHC BIO 166 Anatomy and Physiology II 4 SHC OR BIO 168 Anatomy and Physiology I 4 SHC BIO 169 Anatomy and Physiology II 4 SHC Career Pathway (<i>Select a minimum of one course</i>) HCT 111 Health Care Technology 9 SHC HCT 112 Basic Phlebotomy and EKG 3 SHC HCT 115 Basic Respiratory Skills 3 SHC NAS 111 Nurse Aide I 6 SHC NAS 112 Nurse Aide II 6 SHC PBT 110 Phlebotomy Technology 6 SHC PBT 111 Phlebotomy Practicum 3 SHC	17-27 SHC		
B. CONCENTRATION (<i>Not applicable</i>)			

C. OTHER MAJOR HOURS

To be selected from the following prefixes:

AAI, AMC, ATC, BIO, BUS, CHM, CIM, CIS, CIT, CSC, CTR, CYT, DDT, DEN, DIA, DOS, ENG, GRO, HBI, HCI, HCT, HEA, HFS, HIT, HMT, HSC, HSE, HTO, HUC, ICT, ICV, IMG, LBT, MAT, MED, MHA, MLT, MRI, MSK, NAS, NCT, NDE, NMT, NUR, NUT, OPH, OSA, OST, OTA, OTC, PBT, PED, PET, PHM, PSF, PSG, PSY, PTA, PTC, PTE, RAD, RCP, RTT, SAB, SFA, SLP, SOC, SON, STP, SUR, SWK, and WBL

Up to two semester hour credits may be selected from ACA.

Up to three semester hour credits may be selected from the following prefixes: ARA, ASL, CHI, FRE, GER, IRI, ITA, JPN, LAT, POR, RUS, and SPA.

STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Program Application Summary Evaluation Report
Tri-County Community College
Cardiovascular Sonography (A45160)

Program Planning: Tri-County Community College is seeking approval for the Cardiovascular Sonography (A45160) program to begin Fall 2025. The planning area is defined as the college's service area of Cherokee, Clay, and Graham counties. All colleges were notified of the planning process for this program.

The proposed program was approved by the Board of Trustees at Tri-County Community College on March 27, 2025. Minutes from this Board meeting were attached to the program application. The President and the Board of Trustees of Tri-County Community College have certified the following:

- The proposed program will enhance the workforce of North Carolina, will provide educational and training opportunities consistent with the mission of the college, and will not duplicate the opportunities currently offered.
- They have assessed the need for the proposed program and the resources required to maintain a viable program and certify that the college can operate the proposed program efficiently and effectively within the resources available to the college.
- The college will complete a program accountability report including student success measures, enrollment trends, completion rates, and employment data three years after implementation of the program.

Program Rationale: Tri-County Community College (T-CCC) indicates the following:

- As of June 2025, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a 15% nationwide growth in demand for cardiovascular sonographers over the next decade. In North Carolina alone, there are currently more than 198 job openings, including 13 within the college's service area (ZipRecruiter.com, June 2025). In 2024, the seven Cardiovascular Sonography programs across the North Carolina Community College System only graduated fifty-one (51) students, highlighting a significant gap between workforce demand and program output.
- The median annual salary for cardiovascular sonographers in the college service area is \$72,800, exceeding the average \$46,000 median livable wage for a single adult in Cherokee, Clay, and Graham counties. This competitive pay makes cardiovascular sonography an appealing career path for both high school graduates and adults, offering ample opportunities for advancement. (North Carolina Department of Commerce, 2025).

- T-CCC has received a total of \$1.2 million from the Golden LEAF Foundation and the Tennessee Valley Authority and \$500,000 in High Cost Start Up grant funding from the NC Community College System to support the creation of this program.
- Letters of support from Blue Ridge Medical Center, Union General Hospital, Piedmont Heart Institute-Murphy, and Erlanger Western Carolina Hospital are included in the application packet.

Impact of the Proposed Program on Other Programs: Seven community colleges are approved to offer the Cardiovascular Sonography (A45160) program. This program contains a clinical component; therefore, all colleges approved to offer this program were provided with a program impact assessment from CPCC. ***Seven community colleges responded with no negative impacts.***

Implementation of Collaborative Plan: Not Applicable

Curriculum Design: The proposed program of study is in compliance with the State Board approved curriculum standard.

Curriculum Description as Designated on Curriculum Standard:

The Cardiovascular Sonography curriculum provides the individual with the knowledge and skills necessary to acquire, process, and evaluate the human heart and vascular structures. A cardiovascular sonographer uses high frequency sound waves to produce images of the heart and vascular structures. Course work includes effective communication and patient care skills combined with a knowledge of physics, human anatomy, physiology, and pathology, all of which are essential to obtaining high quality sonographic images. Graduates may be eligible to apply to the American Registry of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers for examinations in physics, cardiovascular physics, vascular physics, and adult echocardiography. Graduates may find employment in hospitals, physicians' offices, mobile services, and educational institutions.

Contact(s):

Melissa Smith
Senior State Director, Health Science Programs

STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Program Application Summary Evaluation Report
Wake Technical Community College
Cardiovascular Sonography (A45160)

Program Planning: Wake Technical Community College is seeking approval for the Cardiovascular Sonography (A45160) program to begin Fall 2026. The planning area is defined as the college's service area of Wake County. All colleges were notified of the planning process for this program.

The proposed program was approved by the Board of Trustees at Wake Technical Community College on April 15, 2025. Minutes from this Board meeting were attached to the program application. The President and the Board of Trustees of Wake Technical Community College have certified the following:

- The proposed program will enhance the workforce of North Carolina, will provide educational and training opportunities consistent with the mission of the college, and will not duplicate the opportunities currently offered.
- They have assessed the need for the proposed program and the resources required to maintain a viable program and certify that the college can operate the proposed program efficiently and effectively within the resources available to the college.
- The college will complete a program accountability report including student success measures, enrollment trends, completion rates, and employment data three years after implementation of the program.

Program Rationale: Wake Technical Community College (WTCC) indicates the following:

- As of June 2025, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics states the need for cardiovascular sonographers is projected to grow by 15% nationwide over the next ten years. There are currently over 198 job openings for cardiovascular sonographers in North Carolina and 37 job openings in the college service area (ZipRecruiter.com, June, 2025). A total of only fifty-one (51) students graduated from the seven Cardiovascular Sonography programs in the NCCCS in 2024. These figures reveal a significant workforce gap and underscore the urgent need to expand training capacity to meet statewide and regional demand.
- The median annual salary for cardiovascular sonographers in the college's service area is \$84,600, compared to the average private-sector wage in Wake County of \$76,600. This wage differential underscores the strong return on investment for students pursuing careers in cardiovascular sonography and highlights the program's potential to support regional economic mobility.

- WTCC received \$500,000 in High Cost Start Up grant funding from the NC Community College System to support the creation of this program.
- Letters of support from Wake Med and Cardinal Point Imaging are included in the application.

Impact of the Proposed Program on Other Programs: Seven community colleges are approved to offer the Cardiovascular Sonography (A45160) program. This program contains a clinical component, therefore, all colleges approved to offer this program were provided with a program impact assessment from CPCC. ***Seven community colleges responded with no negative impacts.***

Implementation of Collaborative Plan: Not Applicable

Curriculum Design: The proposed program of study is in compliance with the State Board approved curriculum standard.

Curriculum Description as Designated on Curriculum Standard:

The Cardiovascular Sonography curriculum provides the individual with the knowledge and skills necessary to acquire, process, and evaluate the human heart and vascular structures. A cardiovascular sonographer uses high frequency sound waves to produce images of the heart and vascular structures. Course work includes effective communication and patient care skills combined with a knowledge of physics, human anatomy, physiology, and pathology, all of which are essential to obtaining high quality sonographic images. Graduates may be eligible to apply to the American Registry of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers for examinations in physics, cardiovascular physics, vascular physics, and adult echocardiography. Graduates may find employment in hospitals, physicians' offices, mobile services, and educational institutions.

Contact(s):

Melissa Smith

Senior State Director, Health Science Programs