

# APPLIED BACCALAUREATE DEGREES

## Opening doors for professional-technical graduates

Washington's community and technical colleges believe every degree should lead to bigger and better things for students, whether it's a well-paying career or step toward a higher degree-level. This commitment, along with increased degree requirements in certain professions, is at the heart of our applied baccalaureate degrees.



## Building upon a 2-year degree

Applied baccalaureate degrees fill skill gaps in practical, market-driven fields where job requirements have advanced beyond the associate degree level. They add junior and senior levels to two-year professional-technical (vocational) degrees — such as a radiation technology degree — that would otherwise not transfer and count toward bachelor's degrees at universities. The degrees vary from a two-year management track on top of a two-year technical education, or a continuation of a professional-technical degree.

Students build upon their already valuable two-year degrees to land higher-paying jobs and promotions, while employers get the additional skill sets they seek in bachelor's degrees.

## Increased opportunities, learning

Applied baccalaureate degrees arguably offer the best of both worlds: hands-on training in a career embedded within a four-year degree. Employers seek graduates because they have technical expertise combined with communication, computation, critical thinking and people-management skills.

- In 2015-2016, 1,859 students were enrolled in applied baccalaureate degree programs.<sup>1</sup>
- The mean annual income of a graduate with an applied baccalaureate degree is, on average, 29 percent higher than a graduate in the same field who has an associate degree.<sup>2</sup>

Twenty-five of our 34 community and technical colleges currently offer applied baccalaureate degrees in fields such as radiation and imaging sciences, cybersecurity, data analytics and manufacturing operations. For the most recent list, visit [www.sbctc.edu](http://www.sbctc.edu) and search for “applied bachelor’s degrees.”

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## Rigor matching demand

For colleges, getting approval to offer applied baccalaureate degrees is a rigorous process. It requires an extensive review of employer demand, approval from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and new accreditation as a baccalaureate-granting institution from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. The proposed degree must align with the college's mission and fill a need unmet by other colleges in the region.

## More bachelor's degrees for WA

Applied baccalaureate degrees are just one example of the important role community and technical colleges play in helping Washington residents pursue four-year degrees.

- Forty percent of public baccalaureate graduates in Washington start at a community or technical college.<sup>3</sup>
- Students who transfer from two-year colleges to four-year universities do just as well as those who started as freshmen, with similar GPAs and credits earned.<sup>4</sup>
- Transfer students make up 47 percent of business majors, 46 percent of health field majors, and 35 percent of majors in science, technology, engineering and math fields.<sup>5</sup>

Along with applied baccalaureate degrees, traditional bachelor's degree programs also are available on nearly every community and technical college campus, through University Centers or other campus-based partnerships with four-year colleges and universities. Students with work and family responsibilities can pursue four-year degrees where they live, work and raise their families.

## Doing what we do best

Applied baccalaureate degrees build on the strengths of the two-year college system and fill local skills gaps. As the workforce changes with lightning speed and job demands outpace employees' credentials, applied baccalaureate degrees at community and technical colleges serve Washington well.

### Sources:

1. State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. (June 2016). Online report manager.
2. State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. (August 2015). Post Program Earnings Differences Between the Associate in Applied Science and Applied Baccalaureate Degrees. Olympia. Data pulled from graduates between the years 2008-2009 and 2013-2014.
3. Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. (2013). *The Role of Transfer in the Attainment of Baccalaureate Degrees at Washington's Public Bachelor's Degree Institutions, Class of 2011*. Olympia.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

