

Course Articulation and Review Schedule Recommendation

How:

Work Group requested by:

- *CSCU Transfer Council*

Group Members:

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Scope of work:

- *Determine a process for initial review of CT State courses with CSUs/COSC, mandate that course equivalencies are shared in course descriptions at each institution, propose an SOP for course articulations, and create a schedule to review CSCU courses by Academic Disciplines*

Estimated start and finish:

- *November 2022 plan for initial review of CT State courses April 2023, Articulation SOP and review schedule May 2023*

What:

The Course Articulation and Review Schedule Work Group recommends to the CSCU Provost that as a system all CSCU institutions adhere to a standard practice of course articulation. Using the American Association Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) Best Practices Guide for Awarding Transfer and Prior Learning Credit and Maryland's recent legislation on the transfer of credits, this body recommends the following:

- 1. CSCU Endorsement of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Academic Officers (AACRAO), Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), and American Council on Education (ACE) Joint Statement on the Transfer and Award of Credit (Appendix A)***

A. In an effort to provide solidarity to prioritize transfer as a System, all CSCU institution Presidents and Chief Academic Officers should endorse the Joint Statement on the Transfer and Award of Credit.

- 2. CSCU Best Practice for Evaluation of Individual Course Comparability***

A. Comparability evaluation practice at each institution shall be determined by Faculty.

B. Comparability Standard.

(I) As a guideline, a receiving institution shall accept a course or combination of courses completed at a sending institution for transfer when the receiving institution determines that at least 70 percent of the course learning objectives of the course or combination of courses completed at the sending institution are comparable to the course learning

outcomes, course content, or course description of a course or combination of courses at a receiving institution.

Exceptions to the 70% guideline:

- 1. Certain learning outcomes have been designated as essential by the faculty. These essential learning outcomes must be included in the framework of the sending institution's course. Otherwise, it is not considered comparable and is not guaranteed to apply.*
- 2. Accreditation, regulatory and/or licensing bodies mandate that all outcomes be taught. Additional outcomes may be included, but none listed can be deleted in order to ensure that all students are consistently prepared according to accreditation and/or licensing standards.*
- 3. Appeal of exceptions must be documented by faculty and reviewed by the Transfer Council or Faculty designated by the Transfer Council.*

a. An institution should not solely consider the course numbers or levels assigned to the sending or receiving institution's course or combination of courses when making a determination under §B(l) of this recommendation.

b. An institution shall not use any other standard or method of determining the comparability of an individual course or combination of courses at a sending institution to a course or combination of courses at a receiving institution, other than the standard set forth in §B(l) of this recommendation.

c. A comparable course will transfer if the final grade at the sending institution for the completed course is the same or higher than the grade required for a non-transfer student for the comparable course at the receiving institution.

d. The number of credits awarded to the student by the receiving institution for a course or combination of courses deemed comparable under this regulation may not be less than the number of credits earned for that course or combination of courses at the sending institution.

e. A comparable course will be received and accepted as the articulated course at the receiving institutions. This is to include satisfying all; but not limited to; general education, liberal arts, Major, elective requirements as the articulated course at the receiving institution.

f. An institution shall include in the policies and procedures established under the CSCU Evaluation of Individual Course Comparability recommendation the process the institution will use for the evaluation of learning outcomes, course content, or course description for course comparability.

g. Establish a Course Articulation Review Cycle to evaluate CT State course comparability. Course comparability will not change between review cycles unless approved by the designated governing body charged by the CSCU Provost.

h. The CSCU Provost will charge the CSCU Transfer Council to, but not limited to, establish criteria and oversight of the Evaluation of Individual Course Comparability practices,

determine a course review schedule, and facilitate the convening of academic areas to review course comparability.

Why:

Upon completion of the CT State course alignment, all CSCU four-year institutions were asked to add CT State Community College along with the course equivalencies to their current transfer course equivalency data banks. This work involved a review of over 1750 courses in all academic disciplines. In an effort to maintain accurate course articulation information and avoid an overwhelming workload, it is suggested that a schedule be developed to breakdown this evaluation review into a more manageable process.

As a system, we do not provide training, guidance, or resources on how to evaluate courses. Faculty have been left to decipher this by using their best judgement, set individual criteria, and use various methods to evaluate course comparability. Even with the best intentions for the success of our students, without guidelines to promote consistency, current practice allows for variations and overall discrepancies in how courses have been received and applied at our CSCU institutions.

Course comparability is currently allowed to change at any time. If a new Faculty member or Chair reevaluates a previously accepted course, they have the ability to change how that course is received at their institution. Again, this will be based on how that individual determines how to evaluate the course. The change, regardless of the impact on the degree, has led to confusion and a reluctance to confidently advise students for a successful transfer. If a student is advised to take a course one semester and the acceptance/application of that course changes the next, how can anyone adequately advise a student?

Value Proposition:

1. **CSCU Endorsement of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Academic Officers (AACRAO), Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), and American Council on Education (ACE) Joint Statement on the Transfer and Award of Credit**
 - a. *The Joint Statement on the Transfer and Award of Credit provides a framework on how to promote transfer student success and address the intent of the proposed recommendation. To quote directly from the "Use of Statement" section:*

Institutions are encouraged to use this statement as a basis for discussions in developing and reviewing institutional policies with regards to the transfer and award of credit for learning that has taken place in a variety of settings. Institutions may use the guidelines included in this statement to inform faculty, staff, students and other constituencies. It is also recommended that accrediting bodies reflect the essential precepts of this statement in their criteria.

2. **CSCU Best Practice for Evaluation of Individual Course Comparability**

- a. *Curriculum is the sole responsibility of the Faculty at our CSCU institutions. By providing clear standards for evaluating course comparability, Faculty will be provided clear guidelines on best practices for reviewing transfer courses.*
- b. *Consistent standards throughout the system will bring transparency on how transfer courses are evaluated.*
- c. *Current practice of receiving grades is not consistent between vertical and lateral transfer. The language proposed would provide an equitable solution for students transferring from CT State to any of our CSUs or Charter Oak.*
- d. *This is a standard practice by institutions.*
- e. *By clearly documenting the best practices for course comparability, institutions will codify the process and provide a resource for all stakeholders to access.*
- f. *Transfer advising will be supported by “locking-in” the comparability of courses within the confines of a review schedule. Upon implementation of this recommendation, institutions will be encouraged to include comparable course information with the course description within their catalogs. This would not be possible without assurances that course comparability will not simply change based on random reevaluations.*
- g. *By charging a governing body it will provide accountability for the review schedule, oversight of the best practices, process for updates based on new courses or programs, and a point of contact for communication related to course articulation.*

How:

In October of 2022, the CSCU Transfer Council charged the Course Articulation and Review Schedule Work Group to determine a process for initial review of CT State courses with CSUs/COSC, mandate that course equivalencies are shared in course descriptions at each institution, propose a standard operating procedure for course articulations, and create a schedule to review CSCU courses by Academic Disciplines. Membership of the work group was solely faculty from two-year and four-year institutions. After meeting nine times to discuss the feasibility of adopting the practices listed above, the Work Group recommends the following suggestion for next step:

- *Convene the CSCU Presidents and Provosts to endorse the AACRAO, CHEA, and ACE Joint Statement on the Transfer and Award of Credit*
- *Upon approval of the CSCU Transfer Council, submit the Course Review and Articulation recommendation to the CSCU Provost*
- *Upon approval of the CSCU Provost, distribute the Course Review and Articulation recommendation to institutional Provosts to solicit feedback from subject matter experts at each institution*
- *Create a draft policy based on feedback from subject matter experts*
- *Distribute draft policy to institutions for socialization through appropriate governance process*

When:

The following is a target timeline to submit to the CSCU Provost:

- *Work Group Vote: February 2024*

TCF22.0002

- Transfer Council Vote: March 2024
- Submit to CSCU Provost: March 2024
- Distribute for Subject Matter Experts: April 2024
- Governance/Socialization: September 2024

Transfer Council Vote

***Send the Course Articulation and Review Schedule Recommendation to the CSCU Provost:
April 5, 2024***

Approve: Unanimous

Appendix A:

Course Articulation and Review Schedule Recommendation



Joint Statement on the Transfer and Award of Credit

Introduction

These guidelines were developed by the two national associations whose member institutions are directly involved in the transfer^[1] and award of postsecondary academic credit, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, along with the American Council on Education (ACE), which makes credit recommendations for learning gained outside of traditional college classrooms.

Students increasingly are pursuing their education in a variety of institutional and extra-institutional settings. Social equity and the intelligent use of resources require that validated learning be appropriately recognized wherever it takes place.

Individual institutions must have the autonomy to make the ultimate decision regarding transfer of credit according to their own academic mission and standards. Below are important considerations for institutions to take into account in developing credit transfer policies or accepting credit students seek to apply from another institution or an extra-institutional setting such as workplace courses or military occupations and training.

General Principles

This statement is directed to colleges and universities and others concerned with the transfer and award of academic credit between higher education institutions or recommended credit based on learning that occurs outside of the college classroom. An essential principle is that every institution is responsible for determining its own policies and practices with regard to the transfer of credit. Institutions are encouraged to review their policies and practices regularly to ensure that their credit transfer/award policies align with their academic missions and strategic priorities, and function in a manner that is fair and equitable to students and take into consideration new sources for learning and alternative assessment methods. General guidelines such as this or others should be used as tools to help develop specific institutional policies and practices, not in lieu of such institutional policies.

Transfer and award of credit is a concept that increasingly involves transfer between dissimilar institutions and curricula and recognition of extra-institutional learning, as well as transfer between institutions and curricula with similar characteristics. As their personal circumstances and educational objectives change, students seek to have their learning, wherever and however attained, recognized by institutions where they enroll for further study. It is important for reasons of social equity and educational

^[1] "Transfer" as used here refers to the movement of students from one college, university or other education provider to another and to the process by which credits representing educational experiences, courses, degrees or credentials that are awarded by an education provider are accepted or not accepted by a receiving institution.

effectiveness for all institutions to develop reasonable and well-articulated policies and procedures for the consideration of credit for such learning experiences, as well as for the potential transfer of credits earned at another institution. Such policies and procedures should provide maximum consideration for the individual student who has changed institutions or objectives. It is the receiving institution's responsibility to provide reasonable and well-articulated policies and procedures for determining a student's knowledge in required subject areas. All sending institutions have a responsibility to furnish transcripts, syllabi and other documents necessary for a receiving institution to judge the quality and quantity of the student's work. Institutions also have a responsibility to advise the student that the work reflected on the transcript may or may not be accepted by a receiving institution as bearing the same (or any) credits as those awarded by the provider institution, that the evaluation of credit is not always consistent among institutions, or that the credits awarded will be applicable to the specific academic degree or credential the student is pursuing.

Inter-Institutional Transfer of Credit

Transfer of credit from one institution to another involves at least three considerations:

- (1) the educational quality of the learning experience which the student seeks to transfer;
- (2) the comparability of the nature, content and level of the learning experience to that offered by the receiving institution; and
- (3) the appropriateness and applicability of the learning experience to the programs offered by the receiving institution, in light of the student's educational goals.

Accredited Institutions

Accreditation addresses primarily the first of these considerations, serving as the basic indicator that an institution meets certain minimum standards. The goal of accreditation is to give students and policymakers confidence in the effectiveness of an institution's or program's academic quality and that it has the resources necessary to accomplish its goals. Accreditation speaks to the probability that students have met acceptable standards of educational accomplishment.

Users of accreditation are urged to give careful attention to the accreditation conferred by accrediting bodies recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the U.S. Department of Education. Both have a formal process that requires that all recognized accrediting bodies meet the same standards. Although accrediting agencies vary in the ways they are organized and in their statements of scope and mission, all accrediting bodies that meet the CHEA and Department of Education standards for recognition must demonstrate that they require the institutions or programs to meet generally accepted standards.

Determining Comparability of Coursework

Accreditation does not address questions about the comparability of the nature, content, and level of potential transfer credit. These questions are as important in the evaluation process as the accreditation status of the institution where the student originally earned his or her credit. Since accreditation does not address these questions, this information must be obtained from catalogues, syllabi and other materials and from direct contact between knowledgeable and experienced faculty and staff at both the receiving and sending institutions. When such considerations as comparability and appropriateness of credit are satisfied, however, the receiving institution should have reasonable confidence that students from accredited institutions are qualified to undertake the receiving institution's educational program. In its articulation and transfer policies, the institution should judge courses, programs and other learning experiences on their learning outcomes and the existence of valid evaluation measures, including third-party expert review.

Admissions and Degree Purposes

At some institutions there may be differences between the acceptance of credit for admission purposes and the applicability of credit for degree requirements or about the appropriateness and applicability of the credit a student has earned at one institution to the programs offered by the institution where the student seeks to transfer that credit. Previous work, because of its nature and not necessarily its inherent quality, may have no applicability to a specific degree to be pursued by the student and may be considered for elective credit only. Institutions have a responsibility to make this distinction, and its implications, clear to students before they decide to enroll. This should be a matter of full disclosure, with the best interests of the student in mind. Institutions also should make every reasonable effort to reduce the gap between elective credits and credits applied toward specific requirements of an educational degree or credential.

Additional Criteria for Transfer Decisions

These additional criteria are intended to sustain academic quality in an environment of more varied transfer, assure consistency of transfer practice, and encourage appropriate transparency about transfer policy and practice.

- *Balance in the Use of Accreditation Status in Transfer Decisions:* Institutions and accreditors should ensure that decisions about awarding transfer credit are not made solely on the source of accreditation of the sending program or institution. While acknowledging that accreditation is an important factor, receiving institutions ought to make clear their institutional reasons for accepting or not accepting credits that students seek to transfer. Students should have reasonable explanations about how work for which students seek transfer credit is or is not of sufficient quality when compared with the receiving institution and how work is or is not comparable with curricula and standards to meet degree requirements of the receiving institution.
- *Consistency:* Institutions and accreditors should reaffirm that the considerations

that inform credit award decisions are applied consistently in the context of a higher education landscape where more students are trying to transfer more credit and there are a number of new higher education providers offering more potential sources of transfer credit. This increases the number and type of transfer credit issues that institutions will need to address—making consistency even more important in the future.

- *Effective and Transparent Public Communication:* Institutions and accreditors should ensure that students and the public are fully and accurately informed about their respective transfer credit policies and practices. The public has a significant interest in higher education's effective management of transfer credit, especially in an environment of expanding access and increased mobility. Colleges and universities are the stewards of significant taxpayer dollars, such as state investments in public institutions or federal student aid funding. This funding is accompanied by public expectations that the transfer credit process is built on a strong commitment to fairness and efficiency.
- *Commitment to Address Innovation:* Institutions and accreditors should be flexible and open in considering alternative transfer credit approaches that might benefit students, including credit earned through alternative means, such as competency-based, distance, and online learning and other applications of technology.

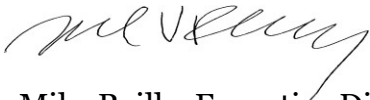
Evaluation of Extra-Institutional and Experiential Learning for Purposes of Transfer and Award of Credit

Transfer and award of credit policies should encompass educational accomplishments attained in extra-institutional settings, such as those gained in the workplace, military or community. Assessment and credit recommendations for extra-institutional learning, or prior learning, has been in place since World War I, when returning military veterans were provided opportunities to demonstrate their skills and knowledge in order to gain high school credentials and enter postsecondary education programs. Since then, nationally recognized methods of assessment and credit recommendations have been developed. Those methods include third-party validation of learning offered outside traditional classrooms by the military and civilian organizations, including private employers, government agencies, training providers, institutes, labor unions, national examination programs and online education vendors. Institutions also have created tools for individualized assessment to document college-level equivalencies through informal learning. Like any transfer credit, colleges and universities have the responsibility for determining transfer awards for credit for prior learning options.

Uses of This Statement

Institutions are encouraged to use this statement as a basis for discussions in developing and reviewing institutional policies with regards to the transfer and award of credit for learning that has taken place in a variety of settings. Institutions may use the guidelines included in this statement to inform faculty, staff, students and other constituencies. It is also recommended that accrediting bodies reflect the essential precepts of this statement in their criteria.

Signed



Mike Reilly, Executive Director
American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
October 2, 2017



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