

Policy on Intercollege Transfer and Articulation among Washington Public Colleges and Universities (Umbrella Policy)¹

Higher Education Coordinating Board, 917 Lakeridge Way, Olympia, WA 98504-3430

The “Policy on Intercollege Transfer and Articulation among Washington Public Colleges and Universities” was prepared in response to substitute House Bill 790, passed in 1983. The document was developed by representatives of Washington’s public and private baccalaureate institutions, the State Board for Community College Education (SBCCE), and the Council for Postsecondary Education (CPE).

The policy was adopted by the CPE on December 4, 1984, and was endorsed by the four-year Interinstitutional Committee of Academic Officers and adopted by the SBCCE. The policy was adopted on February 18, 1986, by the Higher Education Coordination Board (HECB), successor to the CPE.

It is the policy of the HECB that the procedures involving the transfer of students and the credits they have earned will be governed by the statewide transfer policy and agreement titled “Policy on Intercollege Transfer and Articulation Among Washington Public Colleges and Universities.” The policy will be implemented and maintained through the cooperative efforts of the state institutions of higher education, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), and the HECB.

I. Introduction and Purpose

A. Intercollege Transfer

The colleges and universities of Washington have long recognized the importance of facilitating travel for students moving from one institution to another in pursuit of their educational goals. Working both directly, college-to-college, and through voluntary associations such as the Intercollege Relations Commission (ICRC), the state’s publicly supported institutions have established mutually acceptable guidelines and procedures to assist students in transition from college to college. The colleges work constantly, moreover, to obtain appropriate articulation between educational programs, to monitor transfer practices, and to improve the agreements, guidelines, and procedures that govern transfer.

The public colleges and universities in Washington wish now to record a formal agreement among themselves to establish and maintain the following policy on intercollege transfer and articulation. The statements which follow establish the policies and procedures for improving articulation between institutions and facilitating the transfer of students from one college or university to another. This agreement is an expression of the mutual respect and cooperation which prevail among the institutions of postsecondary education in Washington.

¹ Included in The Intercollege Relations Commission (ICRC) handbook revised July 2008, p. 14-20. Available at <http://www.washingtoncouncil.org/ICRC.html>.

It is important to acknowledge that the State of Washington has a dual system of higher education composed of public and independent colleges and universities. A significant number of community college students complete their studies for the Bachelor's degree in the independent sector. Although the provisions of this statement apply only to transfer from a community college to a public four-year institution, it should be noted that independent institutions work closely and in similar ways to facilitate transfer from community colleges to these institutions. The independent institutions are commended for their sensitivity and efforts in this regard and are encouraged to continue in this pattern in the future.

B. Intercollege Relations Commission

A permanent interinstitutional committee on articulation and transfer has been established in the State of Washington, titled the Intercollege Relations Commission (ICRC), a commission of the Washington Council on High School-College Relations. This Commission is composed of representatives appointed by the presidents of community colleges and baccalaureate institutions throughout the state and representatives from the HECB and SBCTC. It exists to develop sound recommendations for intercollege practices that directly affect students transferring between institutions of higher education in the State of Washington.

The Intercollege Relations Commission has the following responsibilities:

1. Facilitating the transfer of students and credits between and among community colleges and baccalaureate institutions.
2. Providing continuous evaluation and review of transfer degrees, programs, policies, procedures, and interinstitutional relationships that affect transfer of students.
3. Providing ways to resolve disputes regarding degrees, course equivalencies, and other transfer-related problems between or among member institutions.
4. Promoting articulation among the programs and curricula of member institutions

The Commission fulfills its responsibilities in the following ways:

1. By establishing and maintaining Associate Degree Guidelines for interinstitutional agreements under which community college transfer degrees may be used to satisfy general education requirements of baccalaureate institutions in the State of Washington.
2. By reviewing policies and procedures affecting intercollege transfer and recommending changes when appropriate.
3. By sponsoring conferences, seminars and other activities that promote Intercollege cooperation and articulation.

The Intercollege Relations Commission is convened at least two times during the academic year. Minutes of Commission meetings are distributed to postsecondary education institutions and appropriate state agencies.

C. Definition of Terms

1. Home credit: credit granted by a college or university for completion of its own courses or other academic work.
2. Transfer credit: credit granted by a college or university for courses or other academic work completed at another institution.
3. Native student: a student who entered a given college or university from high school, without matriculation first at another college.
4. Transfer student: a student who enters one college or university after completing one or more terms of study at another college or university.
5. Sending institution: college or university attended by a transfer student before transfer.
6. Receiving institution: college or university attended by a transfer student after transfer to another college.
7. Extra-institutional learning: study or learning conducted outside of programs or courses formally sponsored for credit by colleges and universities, such as non-sponsored experiential learning or prior life or work experience.

II. Transfer

A. Institutional Requirements

Each college and university has the responsibility and the authority to determine the requirements and course offerings of its programs in accordance with its institutional mission. These requirements and course offerings shall be published and communicated to students and the public. Colleges and universities shall treat transfer students and native students on an equitable basis. In particular, all students shall be expected to meet equivalent standards for regular admission to programs and to satisfy comparable program requirements.

Baccalaureate institutions shall notify community colleges of changes in lower division course requirements for baccalaureate degrees two years prior to their implementation for transfer students, and shall consult with community college academic officers when significant changes are under consideration.

Once changes in lower division baccalaureate degree course requirements have been adopted and published, baccalaureate institutions shall allow a grace period of two years before the changes

become effective for transfer students. This policy applies to lower division course requirements of all subdivisions of an institution (schools, colleges, departments, etc.).

B. Transfer Admission

Admission policies and specific program requirements shall be clearly stated in official documents. Transfer student admission will be determined following an assessment of academic performance and potential on the same basis as native students.

C. Transfer of Courses

College-level courses offered by regionally accredited colleges and universities in the State of Washington shall normally be accepted in transfer by the receiving institution. In addition, some courses not normally transferable will be accepted as part of a DTA Associate degree. Information about the transferability of college courses shall be provided by all institutions through regular advising of prospective students and through college publications.

D. Transfer of Credits

The numerical value of credits shall be maintained in transfer. When a course is acceptable in transfer, the receiving institution shall grant to the student the same number of credits as originally assigned to the course. When translation is required between semester and quarter credits, the conversion to be used is 1.5-quarter credits for each semester credit, or $\frac{2}{3}$ of one semester credit for each quarter credit.

Credit earned in transferable courses shall be granted without regard to the date at which the course was completed. In some degree programs, especially in scientific and professional subjects, students may be required to acquire current knowledge or to refresh their knowledge by repeating courses taken at a prior date. Credit will not be granted a second time for such repeated courses. This policy applies equally to home credit and to transfer credit.

E. Transfer of Degrees

The public community colleges and baccalaureate colleges and universities in Washington have adopted an interinstitutional transfer agreement based on the DTA Associate Degree Guidelines developed by the Intercollege Relations Commission. Under this agreement, DTA Associate degrees that fulfill the terms of the ICRC Guidelines shall be accepted as satisfying general education requirements for the baccalaureate degree at the receiving institution. Students who complete a transfer Associate degree meeting the ICRC Guidelines shall normally be granted junior standing upon admission to a baccalaureate institution.

This agreement is designed to facilitate transfer between community colleges and baccalaureate colleges and universities. Students who enter community colleges with clear intentions regarding transfer to a particular baccalaureate college, with or without a DTA Associate degree, are urged to plan their course study by reference to the specific degree requirements of the college or

academic program in which they intend to earn the Bachelor's degree. Program planning information shall be supplied to intended transfer students by all colleges.

F. Transfer of Grades

The grades assigned in transferable courses by the sending institution shall not be altered by the receiving institution. Courses completed with a grade of 'D' or above shall normally be accepted in transfer (except at The Evergreen State College, where a minimum of 2.0 or 'C' is required for transfer). Non-traditional grading practices require special handling, depending on the nature and circumstances of the program from which and to which a student is transferring, but receiving institutions shall take steps to assure all students equitable treatment.

G. Transfer of Vocational/Technical Courses and Programs

Vocational/technical courses offered by community colleges that are comparable to courses in baccalaureate programs or applicable to baccalaureate degrees as determined by the receiving institution shall be granted transfer credit. Up to 15 credits of coursework at the 100 level or above, that are otherwise non-transferable vocational/technical courses, may transfer as part of a DTA Associate degree meeting the ICRC Guidelines. In addition, inter-institutional agreements have been developed which permit students in some two-year technical programs to apply their technical studies toward baccalaureate degrees. Information about such agreements and about the transfer of vocational/technical courses shall be provided by the institution in their catalogs or transfer guides. Vocational/technical program agreements among colleges and universities shall be encouraged.

H. Credit for Extra-Institutional Learning and Credit by Examination

Some institutions grant credit for extra-institutional learning and credit by standardized examination when the knowledge demonstrated is applicable to a course, program, or degree. Determination of the credit value of extra-institutional learning is typically achieved through: (1) generally accepted faculty assessment procedures, (2) nationally or regionally standardized examinations (e.g., CLEP, ACT), or (3) credit formula systems (e.g., 20 hours lab = 1 credit, or 30 clinical hours = 1 credit).

Credit for extra-institutional learning granted through standardized examinations or credit formula systems should be identified as such on the permanent record. An institution using such measurement techniques shall list the tests or formula systems in its college catalog along with the minimum score levels or credit formulas. Receiving institutions shall grant credit for extra-institutional learning on the same basis for transfer students as for native students. The policies of receiving institutions on awarding such credit shall be stated in their official catalogs.

I. Limitations on Transfer of Courses or Credits

Transfer credit is not normally awarded for the following types of study or coursework: (1) courses taken at colleges or universities that are not regionally accredited, (2) non-credit courses and workshops, (3) remedial or college preparatory courses, and (4) sectarian religious studies.

III. Applicability of Transfer Credit

Acceptance of courses and credits in transfer means that they are normally applicable to degree requirements of the receiving institution. When students transfer with DTA, an Associate degree that meets the ICRC Guidelines, general education courses taken in completion of that degree shall normally fulfill general education requirements for the baccalaureate degree. When students transfer without an Associate degree, transferable courses will apply toward baccalaureate requirements in the same way as comparable home courses. All transfer students must satisfy the residence credit requirement of the degree-granting institution.

A. Course Comparability or Equivalency

1. Institutions shall identify, to the extent possible, transfer courses that are equivalent or parallel to home courses on a discipline-by-discipline basis. Information about course comparability shall be communicated to other institutions.
2. Transfer courses identified as comparable or equivalent to home courses shall be applicable toward baccalaureate prerequisites and requirements in the same way as the home courses.

B. Courses and Program Prerequisites and Degree Requirements

1. The determination of prerequisites and degree requirements, including minimum qualifying grades, is the responsibility of the institution awarding the degree. Each institution shall make public such prerequisites and requirements.
2. Provided students obtain minimum qualifying grades, transfer courses which have been identified as satisfying prerequisites or degree requirements shall be applicable toward those requirements upon transfer.

IV. Academic Records and Transcripts

Institutions shall keep a complete permanent record for each enrolled student. This record shall identify the student and include all courses in which the student was enrolled, the status in each course at the end of each term, grades earned, cumulative grade point averages, numbers of credits earned (where applicable), the source of all credits granted, transfer credits, and any diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded by the home institution. (Since The Evergreen State College uses a non-traditional evaluation and record system, its practices will vary somewhat from this description.) A description of the grading system of the institution shall normally be included with each transcript.

V. Student Rights and Responsibilities

A. Non-Discrimination Policy

All the colleges and universities of Washington maintain a policy of not discriminating against students because of their age, color, sex, disability, national origin, race, or religion, as published in official institutional bulletins.

B. Information Dissemination and Acquisition

Students have the right to expect fair and equitable treatment from the public colleges and universities of Washington, both sending and receiving institutions. They have the right to expect reasonable efforts on the part of colleges to make accurate and current information available. They have, in turn, the responsibility of seeking out current information pertaining to their educational objectives and for acquiring appropriate information when they change their academic plan. When a student changes a major or degree program, the student shall assume full responsibility for meeting the new requirements. Colleges shall make every effort to help students make transitions as smooth as is feasible.

VI. Review and Appeal

A. Student Appeals

Students who encounter transfer difficulties shall first seek resolution through the receiving institution's transfer officer. If not resolved at this level, the student may appeal in writing to the transfer officer of the sending institution. The transfer officers shall confer and attempt to resolve the problem. In the event the transfer officers cannot resolve the issue within two weeks, the matter will be referred to the two chief academic/instructional officers for resolution. Within two weeks, after the academic officers have conferred, a decision will be rendered by the chief academic officer of the receiving institution.

B. Interinstitutional Disputes

In the event of interinstitutional transfer disagreements, it is the responsibility of the two transfer officers to resolve the dispute wherever possible. If not resolved at this level within two weeks, the two transfer officers will refer the matter to the two chief academic/instructional officers for resolution. Unresolved inter-institutional transfer disputes shall be referred for review and recommendation to a committee composed of three representatives appointed by the Washington Association of Community College Presidents and three representatives of the Interinstitutional Committee of Academic Officers of the state's public four-year institutions. A report to the two institutions will be rendered when this committee has completed its deliberations. The chief academic officers of the affected institutions shall respond in a formal report to the committee within four weeks indicating actions to be taken in response to committee recommendations.

VII. Implementation and Revision of Policy

Specifications in this document are intended to be minimum standards for transferability in order to maintain institutional flexibility. This policy shall be implemented and maintained through the cooperative efforts of the state institutions of higher education, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and the Higher Education Coordinating Board. It shall be implemented no later than Fall Term, 1985.

VIII. Publication of Policy

This policy shall be published and disseminated by the Intercollege Relations Commission, the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and the public colleges and universities of the State of Washington.

IX. Evaluation of Policy

The Higher Education Coordinating Board will monitor transfer issues referred to the committee appointed to review and recommend the resolution of transfer disagreements. The Board will present a biennial report summarizing the operation of the policy to the Governor and the Legislature.