

POLICY FOR ARTICULATION AND TRANSFER BETWEEN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN RHODE ISLAND

Board of Governors for Higher Education
State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

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Introduction

Articulation between the educational programs of the Rhode Island public institutions of higher education is a matter of considerable importance. The relationships among the academic disciplines and between levels of coursework require clear understandings about content and purpose so that students may make progress toward their educational objectives without unnecessary disruption. Institutions within the system, therefore, are obliged to observe these guidelines and procedures for course and program articulation, and the transfer of credit.

Purpose

Articulation and transfer guidelines facilitate cooperation between higher education institutions for the purpose of accommodating the needs and interests of students who earn credit at one institution and choose to transfer to another. Successful transfer minimizes loss of time and duplication for students and optimizes the use of institutional resources. The policy recognizes that each institution has a separate and distinct mission, and that each has the responsibility to establish and to maintain academic quality within that mission. Underlying the policy is an attitude of mutual respect and cooperation among the institutions and recognition that the primary objective of articulation agreements is to benefit students.

Guidelines and Procedures

Institutional Requirements

Each higher education institution has the responsibility of establishing, maintaining and communicating requirements to students seeking to complete courses and programs and to earn certificates and degrees at the institution.

Transfer Student Admission

Admission of transfer students will be determined by the receiving institution following an assessment of academic performance and standing as well as eligibility for entrance to a specific program. Students holding associate of arts degrees oriented toward the baccalaureate degree

with a grade point average of 2.4 from the Community College of Rhode Island shall be assured admission to Rhode Island College and the University of Rhode Island. If the number of transfer students seeking admission to a particular program exceeds the number that can be accommodated, program admission decisions will be based on criteria developed and promulgated by the institution; these criteria shall provide fair treatment for institutional students and for transfer students.

Direction of Transfer

The direction of student transfer (two-year to four-year college or university, four-year to two-year, and four-year to four-year) shall not affect the transferability of credit, unless so noted.

Academic Transcript

Institutions shall keep a complete student academic transcript. The transcript shall clearly identify each student and include all academic work for which the student was enrolled during each semester, the end-of-semester status in each course, grade and credit awarded. The transcript shall clearly indicate the source of credit (e.g., examination, course, assessment of experiences). A statement explaining the grading policy of the institution shall be part of each transcript.

Course Prerequisites

All requirements and prerequisites for entrance into courses and programs shall be stated in the official catalog in a consistent manner. The determination of such requirements and prerequisites is the responsibility of the institution awarding the degree. Transfer students who have completed equivalent prerequisite courses and achieved an acceptable grade should not be required to repeat such prerequisite courses.

Earned Credits

College-level credit earned with minimally acceptable grades at one public higher education institution shall be transferable to another as earned credit. Specified prerequisite-equivalent courses may require a "C" grade to serve as the equivalent prerequisite at the receiving institution; for non-equivalent prerequisite courses, a higher grade may be required.

Pass/Fail Credit

The application of pass/fail grading systems to transfer students shall be consistent with the application of those systems to students who entered the institution as freshmen. Transfer students should consult the catalog of the institution to which they are transferring regarding these policies.

Non-Traditional Learning and Evaluation for Credit

The determination of the credit value of non-traditional learning is typically achieved through an examination or other standardized or institutionally-accepted form of assessing prior learning. An institution which examines or otherwise assesses extra-institutional learning shall clearly state its criteria for measuring and awarding credit and publish information about its credit by examination/assessment policies in its official catalog.

For credit by examination, information must be available that includes names of tests for which credit by examination is given (Advanced Placement, general and subject matter CLEP, ACT,

institutional, etc.), and score levels which indicate that course work requirements comparable to classroom situations have been met. For the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), the receiving institution will accept the American Council on Education (ACE) recommended credit-granting score for the year in which the examination was taken.

Credit awarded through examination or other forms of assessment shall be identified as such on the transcript. These transcribed credits will be honored by the receiving institution.

Graduate and Advanced Professional Credit

Decisions regarding the transfer of credit toward advanced degrees (master's, CAGS, doctorate) or advanced professional degrees rests with the faculty of the degree-granting division.

Resolution of Equivalency Disputes

From time to time there may be interinstitutional disagreements among the faculty of subject matter disciplines. These disagreements will normally be resolved at the chairperson level. Conflicts not resolved by the chairperson will be referred to the Articulation/Transfer Committee. The committee will resolve the dispute or forward a recommendation to the Postsecondary Education Executive Council (PEEC). PEEC may accept the recommendation or seek an alternate resolution.

Transfer Guide

Interinstitutional agreements on course and program equivalencies shall appear in appropriate institutional publications and be compiled regularly in a single document entitled: Transfer Guide for Students (hereafter, the guide). The guide is an integral part of the articulation/transfer policy and procedures and shall be made available for use by students, faculty and staff.

Course Equivalencies

The institutions shall identify specific courses that are equivalent. This identification shall be on a discipline-by-discipline basis and shall appear in the guide. Information about course additions, changes or deletions by an institution shall be communicated by the appropriate chairperson to the corresponding chairpersons at other institutions for equivalency evaluation before or during the annual meeting of departmental chairs.

Program Equivalencies

The institutions shall specify transfer agreements on a program-to-program basis; these agreements shall appear in the guide. Program transfer plans will consist of the sequence of courses to be completed to fulfill associate degree requirements at the community college and the equivalent sequences at the college and the university, where appropriate. Chairpersons shall agree on program-to-program equivalencies before or during the annual meeting of department chairs.

General Education Requirements

General education programs are determined by individual institutions, each of which has the continuing responsibility for determining the character of its own program, for its own degree purposes. General education program requirements shall be clearly stated in the institutional catalog and in the guide. Students who intend to transfer to another institution should review that institution's general education requirements and discuss their plans with admissions counselors or advisors in their intended majors.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Students who intend to transfer must inform themselves of the transfer admission requirements, and the program and degree requirements of the institution to which they expect to transfer.

Students who through no fault of their own encounter legitimate difficulties in transferring from one institution to another must seek resolution of these difficulties through institutional procedures, with the assistance of academic advisors. Students who have exhausted all administrative remedies available at the institution to which transfer credit is being sought and who has been unable to satisfactorily resolve the problem may appeal in writing to the articulation/transfer officer at the institution that awarded the credit. The articulation/transfer officer shall receive and consider all relevant materials and shall review the cases with appropriate representatives of the receiving institution so that a determination may be made as to the transferability of the courses or earned credits being contested. Cases which cannot be satisfactorily resolved may be reviewed by the Articulation/Transfer Committee.

When a student transfers under the course-to-course option, the articulation/transfer agreement in place when that student initiates the second half of the associate's degree program (31 credit hours or more) will be the agreement that governs course equivalencies for that student.

When a student transfers under a program-to-program agreement, the student is governed by the requirements in effect at the beginning of the academic year in which the student was officially accepted into the program. These requirements will remain in effect for that student for five years regardless of changes to individual course equivalencies.

Interinstitutional Articulation/Transfer Committee

Composition of the Committee

To assure compliance with and the continuing viability of the Articulation/Transfer Policy, a permanent interinstitutional committee on articulation/transfer was established. This Articulation/Transfer Committee is comprised of eleven members: three from each of the three public institutions of higher education plus a chairperson and a staff person from the Rhode Island Office of Higher Education (RIOHE). The institutional representatives are appointed by the president and are to include the institutional articulation/transfer officer. The chairperson is appointed by the Commissioner of Higher Education. Committee appointments shall be reviewed every three years.

Committee Responsibilities

The Committee is responsible to the Postsecondary Education Executive Council (PEEC) for the following tasks:

- Soliciting suggestions from administrators, faculty and students concerning matters of articulation/transfer;
- Providing continuous evaluation and review of institutional programs, policies and procedures, and interinstitutional relationships affecting transfer of students;
- Recommending such revisions as are needed in institutional programs, policies, and procedures to promote the success and general well-being of the transfer student.

The Committee shall fulfill these responsibilities in the following ways:

- Recommending policy or procedural changes that would improve articulation/transfer in higher education institutions;
- Recommending resolution of course equivalency disputes between cooperating institutions;
- Conducting reviews as needed of the Articulation/Transfer Policy;
- Planning and executing the annual meeting of department chairpersons and assisting in the production of the guide.

Committee Meetings

The Articulation/Transfer Committee shall be convened, as necessary, by its chairperson.