

Office of the Chancellor
Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education
Procedures and Standards for University Operations

Procedure/Standard Number 2022-54
Student Transfer

Approved by:  _____
Chancellor

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Revised: N/A

Related Policies, Procedures and Standards: Policy 1999-01-A The Student Transfer Policy; Policy 1990-06-A Academic Degrees; Policy 1993-01-A General Education at State System of Higher Education Universities; System Procedure and Standard 2012-13 Academic Degrees; System Procedure and Standard 2016-24 Graduation Residency Requirements

I. **Introduction**

The System Procedure and Standard on Student Transfer serves to interpret and clarify the policies on Student Transfer and on General Education as it relates to transfer of general education. It is designed to further define, explain, or apply the policies, not to impose new requirements not otherwise set forth in the policy. The goal of the policy and the procedure and standard is to streamline and clarify transfer pathways into and among State System universities and to support timely completion of the bachelor's degree without excess credits resulting from dependence on course equivalencies.

II. **Background**

This Procedure and Standard emphasizes definitions and standards with a view to compliance with 2009 legislation, which amended the Public School Code of 1949 by adding Article XX-C "Transfer of the Credits between Institutions of Higher Education" and established the Statewide Transfer and Articulation System so that students could transfer the full Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) degrees in Program-to-Program (P2P) and other parallel programs from Pennsylvania Community Colleges into parallel bachelor degree programs at State System universities, with junior standing. Specifically, Statewide P2P Agreements establish single agreements for more than 20 academic program areas. The agreements are comprised of student learning outcomes that PA Community Colleges assure are met by students who earn the associate degree and that State System universities recognize as preparing students for upper-level study in the major, regardless of the specific courses completed to earn the associate degree. P2P agreements for accredited programs have been designed to provide students with foundation-level knowledge in the field of study while also respecting the accreditation standards of the bachelor degree programs offered at State System universities into which students in P2P programs transfer.

The State System Student Transfer Policy, in keeping with the Pennsylvania Statewide Transfer and Articulation System, also operates on the principle that competencies and learning outcomes developed and documented through prior learning are the primary basis of recognition of transfer credit, not course equivalencies. Thus, although transfer courses are posted to the transcript, course equivalences are not the basis for determining full junior standing or whether general education requirements have been met when a student transfers an associate degree in a P2P or other parallel program or has completed a program of general education. Course equivalences may be used to determine whether transfer students, with or without the associate degree, have fulfilled prerequisites and satisfied *directed* general education requirements and what requirements they have fulfilled toward the major if they transfer without the AA or AS.

III. **Definitions**

A. College-level Credits

College-level credits do not include developmental or remedial courses or some career, technical, or applied courses. Universities have discretion to identify and reject non-college-level courses on transcripts submitted for transfer, within the provisions of the policy on student transfer as interpreted by this Procedure and Standard.

B. P2P and Other Parallel Program

Approved Statewide Program-to-Program (P2P) Articulation Agreements, for students transferring from PA Community Colleges into State System universities, are listed and the current agreements linked at the Pennsylvania Transfer and Articulation Center, [P2P Articulation Agreement Process](#). Specific university majors linked to specific associate degrees may be identified using the search function on the PA TRAC site ([Find Statewide Program-to-Program Agreements in Pennsylvania \(patrac.org\)](#)). Universities may, at their discretion, identify other programs as precursor or parallel programs and develop discrete agreements for those programs, based on similarity in disciplinary content or student outcomes as indicated by 4-digit CIP code.

C. Directed General Education

See Procedure & Standard 2012-13 Academic Degrees II.B.1 for clarification on Directed General Education.

IV. **Procedures and Standards - Undergraduate**

A. Transfer of college-level credits

The Student Transfer Policy requires that *all* college-level credits from postsecondary institutions with CHEA-recognized accreditation be accepted in transfer. Thus, college-level credits from postsecondary institutions with CHEA-recognized accreditation may not be rejected for earned grade requirements, for lack of equivalent course at the receiving institution, for modality of instruction, or for any other reason.

1. Transfer students from PA Community Colleges who have completed an Associate of Science or Associate of Arts in a P2P or other identified parallel program have earned at least 60 credits recognized by the community college as college-level and not including remedial or developmental courses. State System universities shall accept the full degree and not disallow discrete courses recognized as college-level by the community college but not the university.

2. Credits earned for a course for which a State System university has an earned grade requirement will transfer. The university may require the course to be retaken for a satisfactory grade, as would be required of a student who started their education at the State System university.
3. Laboratory science courses may not be rejected based on modality, even where P2P agreements stipulate in-person labs.
4. Prior learning transcribed for college-level credit by sending institutions with CHEA-recognized accreditation will be accepted by State System universities.
5. Minimum scores for credit by exam (including AP, IB, etc.) have been established through a consultative process led by PDE and may be found [here](#).
6. All transfer students must meet State System Graduation Residency Requirements.

B. Transfer of the full associate degree in P2P and other parallel academic programs

The policy requires that students transferring into a State System university with an Associate of Arts or an Associate of Science degree from a postsecondary institution with CHEA-recognized accreditation in a parallel academic program or as part of the P2P Statewide agreements be awarded full junior standing and not be required to satisfactorily complete more than 60 credits to earn a 120-credit baccalaureate degree in a P2P or other parallel program, regardless of the courses they took to earn the associate degree. Thus, AA and AS degrees in P2P or other identified parallel programs transfer as a whole, signifying achievement of competencies that prepare the student for upper-division coursework, not as a collection of discrete courses to be evaluated using course equivalencies. The courses are posted, but course equivalents are not used to determine full junior standing, completion of general education requirements, or to require lower-level major or cognate courses because the course equivalent was not taken to complete the associate degree in the P2P or other parallel program, within the provisions of the policy.

1. Transfer students in this category will be considered to have satisfied all general education requirements at the receiving State System university through prior learning and, with three exceptions stipulated in the policy, are not required to satisfy remaining general education requirements at a State System university.
2. Transfer students in this category must meet earned grade requirements and retention standards required of all students in the major. If a student fails to meet earned grade requirements and must, for that reason, repeat courses taken at either the community college or the university, it may add credits above the 60-credit maximum.
3. Some State System university professional and licensure programs have been approved by the Office of the Chancellor to exceed the 120-credit limit in Board of Governors' Policy 1990-06-A: Academic Degrees. The maximum number of satisfactorily completed credits the university can require transfer students with an AS or AA degree in the parallel program to complete for these programs is the difference of 60 credits and the maximum number of credits allowed for the degree.

4. Students transferring into a P2P or other parallel program with accreditation or licensing/certification standards may be required to take limited additional credits to meet those standards. This is considered an exception to the policy and requires a waiver from Academic and Student Affairs in the Office of the Chancellor.

C. Core-to-Core Transfer of ‘Completed’ General Education Programs

Transfer students with at least 30 credits in liberal arts and sciences disciplines, aligned with the 30-Credit Framework, will be considered to have completed a general education program through prior learning and, with three exceptions stipulated in the policy, are not required to satisfy remaining general education requirements at a State System university.

D. Transfer of General Education Coursework

Transfer students who have completed neither an AA or AS degree nor 30 credits in liberal arts and sciences disciplines aligned with the 30-Credit Framework shall be able to transfer comparable courses to meet general education requirements at a State System university. The Student Transfer Policy establishes the PA Statewide Transfer Framework (a.k.a. 30-Credit Framework) as the basis for ‘comparability’ of general education coursework, not course equivalencies. Thus, foundational coursework in liberal arts and sciences completed at an institution or institutions with CHEA-recognized accreditation that aligns with the distribution and disciplinary fields represented in the framework will be accepted as meeting a general education requirement, regardless of modality and regardless of whether a course equivalent exists at the State System university or whether the course equivalent meets general education requirements at the State System university. Foundational coursework not aligned with the 30-Credit Framework but comparable to a category of general education requirement at the State System university, such as wellness, technology literacy, or social and cultural diversity, is also considered ‘comparable’ general education coursework for purposes of transfer.

Example 1: A student transferring into a State System university from a PA Community College or other institution with CHEA-recognized accreditation presents a transcript with one course in English composition, one course in a social science, one course in wellness, and four courses in arts and humanities. The student would receive general education credit for English composition, one course in social sciences, two courses in arts and humanities, and for the course in wellness if the university general education requirement includes a ‘wellness’ category. Remaining courses in arts and humanities would apply to the major, other general education categories such as diversity, university or degree requirements, as appropriate, or as a last resort to elective credits.

Example 2: A student transferring into a State System university from a PA Community College or other institution with CHEA-recognized accreditation presents a transcript with A&P I lecture & lab. The student would receive general education credit for one lab science course based on the Framework, whether or not the course equivalent at the university meets a general education science requirement. If Biology I and II are prescribed general education courses for the

student's major, the student must still complete Biology I and II to complete the major.

E. Guaranteed Admission

Students with an Associate of Science or Associate of Arts in a parallel academic program or as part of the P2P Statewide agreements are guaranteed admission to the P2P or parallel academic program, subject to capacity, so long as they meet criteria for admission required of students who began their education at a State System university.

Universities shall designate clearly on their websites and all transfer materials those programs that have limited capacity. The process for competitive application to limited access programs shall be published and shall not disadvantage students transferring in a parallel academic program or as part of the P2P Statewide Agreements.

IV. Procedures and Standards - Graduate

Transfer of Graduate Courses: The total number of graduate-level credits required is inclusive of credits required for thesis, capstone project, or dissertation.