

8 Statewide Program Articulation

8	Statewide Program Articulation.....	1
8.1	Overview	2
8.2	Developing Statewide Articulation Agreements.....	2
8.2.1	Role of Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE).....	2
8.2.2	Role of TAOC	2
8.2.3	Role of TAOC Representatives and the Participating Institutions.....	3
8.2.4	Role of the PAC.....	3
8.3	Program Articulation Committees (PACs)	3
8.3.1	Charge.....	3
8.3.2	PAC Membership	4
8.4	Approving Statewide Articulation Agreements	6
8.5	Implementing Statewide Articulation Agreements	6
8.5.1	Identifying Articulated Associate Degree Programs.....	6
8.5.2	Identifying Parallel Bachelor Degree Programs	6
8.5.3	Statewide Articulation Database.....	7
8.5.4	Institution Verification	8
8.5.5	Student Verification	8
8.6	Amending Agreements.....	8
	Appendix A: General Statewide Program-to-Program Articulation Agreement in Pennsylvania (<i>Revised April 11, 2012</i>).....	9

Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee

Governance, Policies and Procedures

Revised: 1/14/13

8.1 Overview

Pennsylvania's Public School Code of 1949 Section 20-2002-C requires the colleges and universities that participate in the commonwealth's Statewide College Credit Transfer System to develop agreements that will allow students to transfer full Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) degrees into parallel bachelor degree programs at the participating institutions with junior standing.

Once implemented, students will be able to transfer the equivalent of the first two years of a bachelor's degree to a four-year university and complete the remainder of their degree program in just two more years of full-time study.

Development of the statewide program-to-program articulation agreements began April 30, 2010, with the launch of three pilot articulation projects in Mathematics, Psychology and PreK-4 Education. In February 2011, new committees consisting of faculty and personnel from the institutions were charged with developing similar agreements in ten additional fields of study. Representatives from the participating institutions will continue to develop agreements each semester until all of the programs of study identified by PDE parallel programs of study have an articulated pathway from an AA or AS degree into a bachelor degree.

The full transfer of associate degrees into bachelor degree programs into compatible fields of study will be realized by the fall semester of 2013. Agreements approved by TAOC prior to August 31, 2011 will be effective by the fall semester of 2012. Agreements approved by TAOC between September 1, 2011 and August 31, 2012 will be effective by the fall semester of 2013. TAOC will determine an appropriate effective date for all other approved agreements.

TAOC's policies regarding statewide program articulation are outlined in Appendix A: General Statewide Program-to-Program Articulation Agreement in Pennsylvania (**Revised April 11, 2012**).

8.2 Developing Statewide Articulation Agreements

TAOC develops the process and timeline for implementing statewide program-to-program articulation agreements. Specific information about the current articulation model is available in the [Pennsylvania's Statewide Articulation Toolkit](#)¹. Per legislation, all agreements are developed in consultation with faculty and personnel from the participating institutions.

8.2.1 Role of Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)

PDE serves as the facilitator and coordinator of the articulation projects. The coordinator of the Commonwealth's college credit transfer system, as the chair of TAOC, assists TAOC representatives with developing the articulation process, organizing the PACs and articulation projects and ensuring that the projects meet legislative requirements.

8.2.2 Role of TAOC

PDE works with TAOC to coordinate and maintain the Commonwealth's college credit transfer system. TAOC is a representative body that consists of the following members:

- 1 representative from each of the participating institutions.
- 1 representative from the Office of the Chancellor for the PA State System of Higher Education (PASSHE).
- 1 representative from the Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges.
- 2 representatives from PDE, including the transfer system coordinator and the Deputy Secretary for the Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education.

TAOC's role in the statewide program articulation process is as follows:

¹ http://www.patrac.org/portals/6/PAFiles/StatewideArticulation_Toolkit_Spring2011.pdf

Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee Governance, Policies and Procedures

Revised: 1/14/13

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- Develop a system by which statewide articulation agreements are created.
 - Review and approve articulation agreements submitted by the PACs.
 - Outline a process and timeline by which statewide articulation agreements will be implemented by the participating institutions.

8.2.3 Role of TAOC Representatives and the Participating Institutions

Each college and university participating in the college credit transfer system has a representative serving on TAOC. TAOC representatives have the following responsibilities in the articulation process:

- To work with their sector to appoint representatives to serve on the PACs.
- To communicate TAOC policies, procedures and processes to the appropriate individuals at their institutions.
- To review and approve articulation agreements submitted to TAOC by the PACs.
- To coordinate and oversee implementation of the statewide agreements by the deadline determined by TAOC.
- To guarantee that their institutions meet all legislative requirements as they pertain to the transfer system and statewide program-to-program articulation.

8.2.4 Role of the PAC

The Pennsylvania General Assembly and TAOC have decided that all statewide articulation agreements should be created collectively by institutional faculty and personnel. Therefore, Pennsylvania's statewide program articulation model uses Program Articulation Committees consisting of faculty, administrators and personnel from both two- and four-year participating institutions to develop the agreements.

As a group, the role of the PAC is to do the following:

- Develop a written statewide program-to-program articulation agreement that allows a student to transfer the full Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree in the PAC's respective field of study into a parallel bachelor degree program offered at a participating four-year institution.
- Identify the foundation-level content and competencies required for entry into the program of study at the junior-level.

8.3 Program Articulation Committees (PACs)

TAOC uses subcommittees called Program Articulation Committees (PACs) to develop statewide articulation agreements in fields of study identified by TAOC. Each PAC includes faculty and personnel from participating institutions with degree programs in the PAC's assigned field of study.

8.3.1 Charge

PAC members are charged with developing a statewide program-to-program articulation agreement that allows a student to transfer the full Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree in the PAC's respective program of study into a parallel bachelor degree program at a participating four-year institution.

PAC members will work together to identify the foundation-level competencies required for entry as a junior into advanced coursework in the program of study.

The ultimate goal of the PAC is to develop a written program-to-program articulation agreement in the PAC's respective program of study that meets the charge and receives TAOC approval.

Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee

Governance, Policies and Procedures

Revised: 1/14/13

Statewide articulation is not intended to create common associate or bachelor degree programs at the participating institutions. Rather, the resulting articulation agreements will be used to ensure foundation-level competency requirements are being met at the associate degree level, to minimize the loss of credit when the transfer does occur and to provide a seamless pathway for students planning to pursue advanced studies in PAC's respective discipline.

When developing a statewide program-to-program articulation agreement, the PAC is advised to consider requirements of external accreditation and certification organization(s). The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) recognizes accrediting organizations in many disciplines. For more information visit www.chea.org.²

8.3.2 PAC Membership

Recognizing the importance of having faculty, administrators and personnel from both two- and four-year participating institutions involved in the statewide program-to-program articulation process, the Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee (TAOC) determined each PAC shall include **13** members representing the three sectors (community colleges, state-owned universities, opt-in institutions) and TAOC:

- **5 community college representatives**, including **4** teaching faculty from the field of study and **1** non-teaching representative with an understanding of transfer and articulation (i.e., Transfer Counselor, Registrar, etc.)
- **5 representatives from universities in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE)** to include 4 teaching faculty from the field of study and 1 non-teaching representative with an understanding of transfer and articulation.
- **2 representatives from the independent or state-related institutions that have formally joined TAOC** (a.k.a., "Opt-Ins") to include at least **1** teaching faculty member from the field of study and **1** additional representative (either a faculty member *or* a representative with an understanding of transfer and articulation.)
- **1 TAOC member** appointed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE).

8.3.2.1 PAC Member Criteria

Effective articulation agreements are a combination of academic requirements, institutional policy and advising. For this reason, each PAC shall consist of members with a collective knowledge and experience from the various academic, administrative and operational areas of higher education:

- Academics related to the PAC field of study area(s)
- Curriculum development
- Transfer and articulation, such as transfer admissions, development of articulation agreements, determination of course equivalencies, etc.
- Advising (i.e., undergraduate student advising, transfer student advising, major-specific advising)
- Administration (i.e., institutional policies related to the major, transfer of credits, admissions, financial aid)
- Pennsylvania's current statewide transfer system, including TAOC, the Transfer Credit Framework and course approval process, Curriculum Standards Subcommittees, PA TRAC website, etc.

Only representatives from participating institutions with degree programs in the PAC's field of study may serve as committee members.

² Approved by TAOC on August 18, 2011

Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee
Governance, Policies and Procedures
Revised: 1/14/13

8.3.2.2 PAC Selection Process

Each higher education sector of TAOC – the community colleges, PASSHE universities and “Opt-In” institutions – determines its respective representation for each committee. The Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges will coordinate and appoint PAC members from the community college sector. PASSHE’s Office of the Chancellor will coordinate and appoint PAC members from the state-owned universities. PDE will coordinate and appoint PAC members from the Opt-ins.

8.3.2.3 PAC Leadership

Each PAC will be led by co-chairs elected from its membership:

- One chair representing the associate-degree granting institutions.
- One chair representing the bachelor-degree granting institutions.

The PAC co-chairs are responsible for the following tasks:

- Organizing the PAC.
- Coordinating meetings, if needed.
- Keeping PAC members to task.
- Working with the PAC’s TAOC representative to submit all required deliverables, including the monthly progress reports and final agreement.

PDE appoints one TAOC representative to serve on each PAC. Except for voting, the TAOC member is expected to assume the same role as the other PAC members in addition to the following tasks:

- Serve as the PAC’s liaison with TAOC.
- Serve as PDE’s primary point of contact for the PAC.
- Help the PAC with understanding the following:
 - The Commonwealth’s college credit transfer system.
 - TAOC’s policies, procedures and processes.
 - The statewide program articulation process and PAC charge.
- Provide administrative support to the PAC co-chairs and assist with meeting facilitation and coordination of the PAC and related articulation project.
- Provide guidance to the PAC, as appropriate and needed, on issues or questions within the PAC.
- Work with PAC Co-chairs to ensure the PAC is on task and meeting the timeline and inform PDE when the PAC is not progressing.
- Submit the PAC deliverables to PDE on behalf of the PAC by the deadline indicated.
- Provide a project update at TAOC meetings.

8.3.2.4 PAC Member Responsibilities

In addition to the tasks assigned to the full PAC, each PAC member is also expected to do the following:

- Participate in PAC discussions and work with fellow PAC members to develop the final agreement.
- Collect data and information as needed to assist the PAC with its work.
- Meet all deadlines established by the PAC, TAOC and PDE.
- Vote on the agreement before it is submitted to PDE for TAOC review.
- Communicate with his/her TAOC member frequently.
- Assist with all other tasks as agreed upon by the PAC to make progress.

8.3.2.5 Voting

PAC members at the two- and four-year institutions are equal partners in developing the statewide program-to-program agreements. Therefore, all members have an equal vote,

except for the TAOC representative who serves as a non-voting member. The final articulation agreement submitted by the PAC to TAOC for approval must be approved by member consensus.

8.4 Approving Statewide Articulation Agreements

A statewide articulation agreement is final once TAOC votes to approve the agreement. Only voting members of TAOC may vote to approve or reject an agreement. The Primary TAOC member is responsible for voting on behalf of the institution. One vote per institution. All voting members are expected to vote, regardless if s/he represents an institution with an associate degree or parallel bachelor degree in the program of study. TAOC members have one week to review the agreement and submit their votes to PDE. A two-thirds majority is required to approve an agreement.

Rejected agreements are returned to the PAC for revision along with feedback and direction from TAOC. This process continues until the agreement is approved. TAOC members voting to reject an agreement must provide reasoning for their vote.

Once approved, PDE posts the agreement on PAcollegetransfer.com along with the effective date determined by TAOC and notifies TAOC members.

8.5 Implementing Statewide Articulation Agreements

8.5.1 Identifying Articulated Associate Degree Programs

Once an agreement is approved by TAOC, the associate degree-granting institution are expected to:

1. Review all statewide program agreement, with appropriate faculty and personnel at the institution.
2. Identify AA and/or AS degree(s) by Name (i.e., Administration of Justice), Award (i.e., AA, AS), 6-digit CIP code and Effective Graduation Date (i.e., May 2012) for full transfer and acceptance into a parallel bachelor degree at a participating institution.
3. Review each associate degree against the articulation requirements to confirm foundational content and competencies are being met and to identify gaps, if any.
4. If necessary, modify the articulated associate degree to meet all requirements specified in the agreement.
5. The institution's point of contact for the PA TRAC Statewide Articulation Database enters the degree name/title and related articulation agreement into the database.

The transfer legislation specifically indicates the transfer of Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) degrees into parallel bachelor degree programs. The exception is in the field education. Per 24 P.S. Section 20-2002-C (c)(3)(iv), an AA, AS or Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree in education, including early childhood education, leading to certification may be identified as the articulated associate degree as long as the degree program meets all of the requirements prescribed in the related articulation agreement.

8.5.2 Identifying Parallel Bachelor Degree Programs

Once an agreement is approved by TAOC, the **bachelor degree-granting institution** is expected to:

1. Review the approved statewide program agreement, with appropriate faculty and personnel at the institution.
2. Identify parallel bachelor degree(s) by Name (i.e., Administration of Justice), Award (i.e., B.S., B.A.), 6-digit CIP code and Effective Matriculation Date (i.e., August 2012) for full

Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee
Governance, Policies and Procedures
Revised: 1/14/13

transfer and acceptance of the articulated associate degree under the TAOC-approved agreement.

3. If necessary, modify the parallel bachelor degree to allow for transfer with full junior standing to include credits being counted towards graduation.
4. The institution's point of contact for the PA TRAC Statewide Articulation Database enters the name/title of the parallel bachelor degree(s) and related articulation agreement into PA TRAC.

8.5.3 Statewide Articulation Database

8.5.3.1 Database Elements

Institutions will provide the following data elements in the Statewide Articulation Database on PAcollegetransfer.com:

- Associate Degree Institutions
 - Institution Name
 - Articulation Agreement Program of Study
 - Name of Articulated Associate Degree(s) (i.e., Administration of Justice)
 - Award Type (i.e., AA, AS)
 - 6-digit CIP Code
 - Effective Graduation Date
- Bachelor Degree Institutions
 - Institution Name
 - Articulation Agreement Program of Study
 - Name of Parallel Bachelor Degree(s) (i.e., Criminal Justice)
 - Award Type (i.e., BA, BS, etc.)
 - 6-digit CIP Code
 - Effective Matriculation Date³

8.5.3.2 Instructions for Entering Articulation Information in the Database

1. Each institution must assign one Point of Contact (POC), *plus one alternate*, at the institution who will be responsible for posting and maintaining the institution's Statewide Articulation information in PA TRAC.
2. TAOC Member sends the POC's name and contact information to PDE.
3. Primary and Secondary Statewide Articulation POCs attend a webinar hosted by PDE/AcademyOne to learn how to upload information to the Statewide Articulation database.
4. Upon completion of the instructional webinar, AcademyOne creates user accounts for the Primary and Secondary Statewide Articulation POCs.
5. Statewide Articulation POC enters required information into PA TRAC.⁴

Initially the Statewide Articulation Database will reside in a "test environment", meaning the information will not be posted publicly. Once a majority of institutions have identified articulated programs, the database will be activated on PAcollegetransfer.com. From that point forward all information entered will be posted in real time.

³ Adopted by TAOC on November 17, 2011

⁴ Adopted by TAOC on November 17, 2011

8.5.4 Institution Verification

Participating institutions and PDE will use data entered by the institutions in the Statewide Program Articulation Database on PAcollegetransfer.com to verify articulated associate degrees and parallel bachelor degrees offered at the institutions.⁵

8.5.5 Student Verification

Participating institutions will base student verification for statewide program articulation on students' "effective graduation date" rather than the institution's "effective implementation date". Students graduating with an associate of arts or associate of science degree from a participating institution, regardless of the program, are eligible to transfer under statewide program-to-program articulation starting with the effective graduation date.

Two-year institutions (and four-year institutions that offer parallel bachelor degrees) indicate the "effective graduation date" at the same time they identify the articulated degree program.

Students, advisors, faculty and the public will access the information by use a searchable dashboard on PA TRAC.⁶

During the transition to the effective dates of the various statewide program-to-program agreements, the participating institutions will strive to be student-centered and make the transfer of credits as seamless as possible for students."⁷

8.6 Amending Agreements

Once a statewide program-to-program articulation agreement has been approved by TAOC, no amendments to the agreement can be offered by any party within the initial six (6) months of the agreement. After that time, a TAOC member with a proposed amendment to an approved agreement should submit the change to PDE.

Amendments that are offered as clarifying or technical but do not alter the substantive portions or intent of the agreement must be forwarded to TAOC. TAOC representatives will have at least thirty (30) days to review, comment and approve or deny the proposed amendments.

Amendments that seek to alter the substantive nature or intent of the agreement in any part must be forwarded to the appropriate PAC for review and consideration. The PAC will then make a recommendation to the TAOC, and TAOC shall approve or deny the proposed amendments.

⁵ Adopted by TAOC on November 17, 2011

⁶ Adopted by TAOC on November 17, 2011

⁷ Adopted by TAOC on November 17, 2011.

Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee
Governance, Policies and Procedures
Revised: 1/14/13

Appendix A: General Statewide Program-to-Program Articulation Agreement in Pennsylvania (Revised April 11, 2012)

WHEREAS, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania enacted Act 114 of 2006, which added to the Public School Code of 1949, Article XX-C entitled “Transfers of Credits Between Institutions of Higher Education” (referred to in this Agreement as the “Statewide Transfer System”);

WHEREAS, Act 114 of 2006 requires all community colleges in Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) universities to participate in the Statewide Transfer System;

WHEREAS, Act 114 of 2006 permits independent and state-related institutions of higher education in Pennsylvania, as each is defined in Article XX-C, to elect to participate in the Statewide Transfer System;

WHEREAS, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania enacted Act 50 of 2009, which requires institutions participating in the Statewide Transfer System to accept the transfer of Associate of Arts and Associate Science degrees into parallel baccalaureate programs and recognize all competencies attained within the associate degree program;

WHEREAS, Act 50 of 2009 defines an Associate of Arts (AA) or Associate of Science (AS) degree containing a minimum of 60 college-level credits and designed primarily for transfer to a baccalaureate institution;

WHEREAS, Act 50 of 2009 requires the Transfer Articulation Oversight Committee (TAOC), as established in section 2004-C of the Public School Code of 1949, to identify Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degree programs for transfer with full junior standing into parallel baccalaureate degrees annually; and,

WHEREAS, Act 50 of 2009 requires members of the Transfer Articulation Oversight Committee established in section 2004-C of the Public School Code of 1949, to identify modifications that may be required in existing associate or baccalaureate degrees to satisfy external accreditation or licensure requirement;

All Institutions participating in the Statewide Transfer System enter into this Articulation Agreement and mutually agree as follows:

1. The statewide program-to-program articulation agreement ensures that students who complete an AA or AS degree from a participating institution will have their coursework and credits transfer into a parallel baccalaureate program with full junior standing and without the need for course-by-course equivalency.
2. Students are subject to the admissions and transfer credit policies of the participating institutions. The admissions and transfer credit policies for all of the institutions participating in Pennsylvania’s college credit transfer system can be found at www.PAcollegetransfer.com.
3. The AA or AS degree must include a minimum of 60 college-level credits designed and acceptable for transfer, not including developmental or remedial courses or career, technical or applied courses.
4. The transfer of coursework with a grade less than a C (2.0 on a 4.0 scale) in the AA or AS will be consistent with the policies of native students at the participating college or university.
5. Students and institutional personnel will be able to find out which institutions offer articulated programs by accessing a searchable database located at www.PAcollegetransfer.com. PDE will maintain this database through program information provided to TAOC by the individual participating institutions.
6. References to courses in all agreements designate competencies and are not to be construed as making a reference to a specific course at a specific institution. Course titles in the agreements are presented for

Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee
Governance, Policies and Procedures
Revised: 1/14/13

guidance in advising students as to which coursework they should take even though the course at the student's college may not have the specific title mentioned in the agreement.⁸

7. Responsibilities of Associate Degree Institutions

- a. The AA or AS degree leading to a parallel bachelor degree will include the minimum number of credits and competencies of major-specific coursework as defined by the Agreement.
- b. Any remaining AA or AS degree requirements will be accepted from arts and sciences electives designed and acceptable for transfer, not including developmental, remedial, career, technical or applied courses.
- c. By awarding the AA or AS, the Associate Degree Institution is validating that the student has met the competency requirements outlined in the Agreement.

8. Responsibilities of Bachelor Degree Institutions

- a. The Bachelor Degree Institution will recognize all competencies attained within the AA or AS degree and accept a transfer student who has earned the associate degree with full junior standing into a parallel baccalaureate degree program.
- b. All decisions made with respect to the transfer process shall be based on the principle of equivalence of expectations and requirements for native and transfer students.
- c. A transfer student's admission into the parallel baccalaureate degree will be subject to the Bachelor Degree Institution's specific requirements for admission to that major and be consistent with such requirements for native students.

9. Agreement Revision and Assessment

- a. Once a statewide program-to-program articulation agreement has been approved by TAOC, no amendments to the agreement can be offered by any party within the initial six (6) months of the agreement. After that time, a TAOC member with a proposed amendment to an approved agreement should submit the change to PDE.

Amendments that are offered as clarifying or technical but do not alter the substantive portions or intent of the agreement must be forwarded to TAOC. TAOC representatives will have at least thirty (30) days to review, comment and approve or deny the proposed amendments.

Amendments that seek to alter the substantive nature or intent of the agreement in any part must be forwarded to the appropriate PAC for review and consideration. The PAC will then make a recommendation to the TAOC, and TAOC shall approve or deny the proposed amendments.⁹

- b. PDE and TAOC will exercise responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the Agreement and its implementation.
- c. PDE shall collect data annually from the participating institutions that will enable the Department and TAOC to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the Agreement in fostering a seamless transfer process and the academic success of transfer students at the senior institutions.

10. Transfer Appeal Process

- a. In accordance with Pennsylvania's Statewide Transfer System, each Bachelor Degree Institution shall have a procedure through which a transfer student can appeal a decision that he/she believes is not consistent with this Agreement.

⁸ Adopted by TAOC and added to the agreement on April 11, 2012.

⁹ Approved by TAOC and added to agreement on August 18, 2011.

Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee
Governance, Policies and Procedures
Revised: 1/14/13

- b. The Transfer Appeal Process shall be published, at minimum, in the institution's catalog and posted to the Commonwealth's official website of the Statewide Transfer System, www.PAcollegetransfer.com.

11. Institutional Resolution of Disputes

- a. In the event that an Associate Degree Institution considers the decision of a Bachelor Degree Institution to be inconsistent with this Agreement, the Associate Degree Institution shall consult directly with the Bachelor Degree Institution and attempt to resolve the matter.
- b. If the institutions are unable to resolve the issue, the Associate Degree Institution may submit their concern to PDE for consideration by the TAOC Dispute Resolution Committee. The Dispute Resolution Subcommittee will act according to the policies and procedures developed by TAOC as part of the Statewide Transfer System. The determination made by the Dispute Resolution Subcommittee will be binding upon the parties.

12. Implementation Date and Applicability

Having fulfilled the requirements outlined in the Program-to-Program Articulation Agreement, students transferring with an AA or AS degree from a participating institution will be considered by the receiving baccalaureate degree institution to have received adequate preparation in the field of study at the foundation level and therefore eligible to transfer as a junior into advanced major coursework.

Participating institutions will enact the Agreement in accordance to the timeline outlined by the TAOC, but no later Fall 2013.¹⁰

Continuation of the agreement remains in effect until such time as all cooperating institutions of the Statewide Transfer System formally approve any revisions.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Articulation: The aligning of curriculum between institutions of higher education to ensure the efficient and effective movement of students among those institutions.

Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) Degree: A degree consisting of at least 60 college-level credits and designed for transfer into a baccalaureate degree program.

Foundation Coursework: Courses at a level of comprehension usually associated with freshman and sophomore students and typically offered during the first half of a baccalaureate degree program. Such coursework typically does not have course prerequisites.

Native Student: A student who entered a given college or university without first matriculating at another college.

Parallel Baccalaureate Degree: A bachelor degree program in a comparable field of study and with similar foundation-level major-specific competencies as an associate degree program.

Receiving Institution: The college or university where a transfer student plans to enroll and to apply previously earned credit toward a degree program.

Transfer Credit: The credit granted by a college or university for college-level courses or other academic work completed at another institution.

¹⁰ Agreements approved by TAOC prior to August 31, 2011 must be implemented by the institutions by Fall 2012. Agreements approved by TAOC after August 31, 2011 but before May 1, 2012 must be implemented by the institutions by Fall 2013.

Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee
Governance, Policies and Procedures
Revised: 1/14/13

Transfer Student: A student who enters a participating college or university after earning college-level credit at another college or university.

Transfer: The process by which a student moves from one postsecondary institution to another. Also refers to the mechanics of credit, course and curriculum exchange between institutions.

Advanced Coursework: Courses with advanced depth of content knowledge in the field of study and carry the expectation of more complex competencies identified in the expected student learning outcomes is referred to as advanced coursework. These courses often have prerequisites and are usually beyond the “Introduction to...” or “Foundation of...” level.