

Introduction

Pennsylvania's statewide college credit transfer system was established in accordance with a 2006 law aimed at benefiting college students transferring between public colleges and universities in the Commonwealth. Specifically, the law requires Pennsylvania to have a seamless statewide transfer and articulation system that includes:

- The transfer of at least 30 credits of foundation-level courses among the participating institutions. An advising tool called the "[Transfer Credit Framework](#)¹" allows students to enroll in up to 30 credits of coursework and have those credits transfer and apply toward graduation any participating institution. Framework courses are the types of courses typically completed during the first and second year of any bachelor degree program.
- The full transfer of Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees into parallel bachelor degrees at the participating institutions;
- Uniform standards for determining academic credit for prior learning, including an Advanced Placement Program exam, International Baccalaureate Diploma Program exam, a College-Level Examination Program exam and Dantes Subject Standardized Tests; and
- A "one-stop" web portal that provides information to the public about the transfer system, the participating IHEs and the student transfer process.

Article XX-C of the Public School Code of 1949 mandates participation by Pennsylvania's 14 community colleges, the 14 universities in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) and the commonwealth's four state-related universities. Regionally accredited degree-granting IHEs in Pennsylvania may elect to participate. A current list of participating institutions is available at www.PAcollegetransfer.com.

The Pennsylvania Transfer and Articulation Center (PA TRAC) is a free interactive Web site that enables students to easily identify courses that transfer among the participating colleges and universities. Accessible at www.PAcollegetransfer.com, the site offers a variety of helpful transfer resources:

- Searchable databases, including course equivalencies, transfer agreements and degree programs
- Explanation of the "Transfer Credit Framework" and other transfer resources unique to Pennsylvania
- College profiles
- A College Transfer Events Calendar
- Step-by-step instructions for transferring

¹ For a detailed description of the Transfer Credit Framework, including course equivalencies, go to <http://www.pacollegetransfer.com/Student/TransferCreditFramework/tabid/323/Default.aspx>

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PDE coordinates, maintains and assesses the statewide transfer system through the Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee (TAOC). TAOC is comprised of representatives from the participating institutions, PASSHE's Office of the Chancellor, the Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges and PDE.

The participating institutions use a web-based electronic transfer and articulation system to:

- identify coursework and degree programs at their respective institutions that meet TAOC standards;
- establish and maintain course equivalencies with other participating institutions that meet TAOC standards;
- post transfer articulation agreements established with participating and non-participating institutions; and
- promote their institutions to transfer students.

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The *Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee Governance, Policies and Procedures* manual details policies and processes used to maintain the transfer system and carry out the transfer legislation.

This Introduction includes the Article XX-C of the Public School Code of 1949 (Appendix A) and a Glossary of Terms (Appendix B.)

The following sections are posted on PA TRAC and updated to as needed to reflect current TAOC policy.

- 1 Transfer & Articulation Oversight Committee**
- 2 Participating Institutions**
- 3 TAOC Subcommittees**
- 4 Transfer Credit Framework**
- 5 Dispute Resolution Subcommittee**
- 7 Assessment, Transfer Data and Annual Report**
- 8 Statewide Program Articulation**
- 9 Credit for Prior Learning**

Appendix A: Article XX-C of the Public School Code of 1949

**ARTICLE XX-C
TRANSFERS OF CREDITS BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

Section 2001-C. Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this article shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Advanced Placement Program." A program authorized by the college board that allows a student to study college-level subjects while enrolled in high school and to receive advanced placement and college credit for earning a qualified score on the course-related Advanced Placement Program exam.

"Career, technical or applied courses." Courses usually offered as part of an associate degree curriculum designed to prepare students for entry level professions not for transfer to baccalaureate programs for advanced studies.

"College-Level Examination Program." A set of standardized tests developed by the college board for various subjects, and on which a qualifying score can be used to earn college credit.

"Community college." An institution created pursuant to Article XIX-A or the act of August 24, 1963 (P.L.1132, No.484), known as the Community College Act of 1963.

"Credit for prior learning." College-level credit granted toward the award of a postsecondary degree or certificate for experiential learning that can be demonstrated through various means of assessment to be the equivalent of learning gained through formal collegiate instruction, including an Advanced Placement Program exam, International Baccalaureate Diploma Program exam, a College-Level Examination Program exam and Dantes Subject Standardized Tests.

"Dantes Subject Standardized Tests." A set of subject exams approved by the American Council on Education that tests knowledge of both lower-level and upper-level college material.

"Degree objective courses." Courses required for completion of a major in a subject area.

"Department." The Department of Education of the Commonwealth.

"Developmental or remedial courses." Courses typically consisting of reading, writing and math designed to prepare students for college-level courses and that are not transferable.

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"Equivalent courses." Courses determined to have generally equivalent content and level as determined by the faculty of an institution of higher education consistent with the policy at each institution.

"Foundation courses." Courses required to be completed by students that provide an academic foundation for the degree, general education or advanced study in a major.

"Independent institution of higher education." An institution of higher education which is operated not for profit, located in and incorporated or chartered by the Commonwealth and entitled to confer degrees as set forth in 24 Pa.C.S. § 6505 (relating to power to confer degrees) and to apply to itself the designation "college" or "university" as provided for by the standards and qualifications prescribed by the State Board of Education pursuant to 24 Pa.C.S. Ch. 65 (relating to private colleges, universities and seminaries).

"International Baccalaureate Diploma Program." An academically challenging two-year precollege diploma program comprised of three core requirements and six academic subject areas with final examinations that prepare students, 16 to 19 years of age, for higher education and life in a global society.

"Public institution of higher education." A community college or an institution which is part of the State System of Higher Education pursuant to Article XX-A.

"State-related institution." The Pennsylvania State University, the University of Pittsburgh, Temple University, Lincoln University and their branch campuses.

"Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee." The committee established under section 2004-C.

Section 2002-C. Duties of public institutions of higher education.

- (a) Completion.-- Each public institution of higher education shall complete all of the following by June 30, 2008:
- (1) Participate in the development and implementation of equivalency standards pursuant to section 2004-C(c)(1).
 - (2) Establish and maintain records and data detailing the credits transferred to and received from other public institutions of higher education as the department may prescribe.
 - (3) Make any reasonable changes and modifications to its foundation courses, including the strengthening of the courses, to ensure equivalency of those credits among the public institutions of higher education, as recommended by the Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee.
 - (4) Agree to accept for transfer foundation courses determined to meet equivalency standards under section 2004-C(c)(2).
- (b) Reporting requirements.-- A public institution of higher education shall submit to the department a series of interim reports outlining the actions that the

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public institution of higher education has undertaken or intends to undertake to comply with subsection (a), which shall be filed December 31, 2006, June 30, 2007, and December 31, 2007.

(c) **Other duties.**--Each public institution of higher education shall do all of the following:

- (1) Agree to accept with full junior standing the associate of arts or associate of science degree into a parallel baccalaureate program as outlined in paragraph (3) by the timelines established by the Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee but no later than December 31, 2011. For purposes of this paragraph, an associate of arts or associate of science degree is a degree designed primarily for transfer to a baccalaureate institution and must contain a minimum of 60 credits.
- (2) Submit to the Department of Education interim reports outlining the actions that the public institution of higher education has undertaken or intends to undertake to comply with paragraph (1).
- (3) As a member of the Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee established in section 2004-C:
 - (i) Consult with the Department of Education on a process and timeline, subject to approval by the department, to identify the associate of arts or associate of science degree aligned with the graduation requirements of the parallel baccalaureate degree in all public institutions of higher education in consultation with faculty and personnel.
 - (ii) Identify associate of arts or associate of science degree programs for transfer with full junior standing into a parallel baccalaureate degree in consultation with faculty and personnel in those degree programs by December 31, 2011.
 - (iii) Identify modifications that may be required in existing associate or baccalaureate degrees to satisfy external accreditation or licensure requirements in consultation with faculty and personnel. Approved modifications shall recognize all competencies attained within either the associate or baccalaureate programs.
 - (iv) Define requirements, in consultation with faculty and personnel, for education degrees, including early childhood education degrees, leading to certification to be included in an associate degree and to be accepted for transfer with full junior standing into a parallel baccalaureate degree program.
- (d) Credit for prior learning.-- Each public institution of higher education shall do all of the following:
 - (1) Adopt and make public uniform standards for determining academic credit for prior learning as outlined in paragraph (4) within 18 months of the effective date of this subsection.
 - (2) Agree to award academic credit for prior learning, which is determined to meet the standards established under section 2004-C(c)(6) and apply the credit toward graduation, unless prohibited by external accreditation or licensure.

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- (3) Submit to the department interim reports outlining the actions that a public institution of higher education has undertaken or intends to undertake to comply with paragraphs (1) and (2).
- (4) As a member of the Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee established in section 2004-C:
 - (i) Consult with the department on a process and timeline, subject to approval by the department, to develop uniform standards for determining academic credit for prior learning, in consultation with faculty and personnel.
 - (ii) Develop and implement uniform standards for determining academic credit for prior learning, in consultation with faculty and personnel.
 - (iii) Participate in submitting a status report to the department, the Education Committee of the Senate and the Education Committee of the House of Representatives.
- (5) For each academic year, report to the department all of the following:
 - (i) The total number of students awarded credits for prior learning, including Advanced Placement Program exams, International Baccalaureate Diploma Program exams and College-Level Examination Program exams and Dantes Subject Standardized Tests.
 - (ii) The total number of credits awarded to students for prior learning, including Advanced Placement Program exams, International Baccalaureate Diploma Program exams and College-Level Examination Program exams and Dantes Subject Standardized Tests.
 - (iii) The number of credits awarded to matriculating students who present Advanced Placement Program, International Baccalaureate Diploma Program and College-Level Examination Program exams and Dantes Subject Standardized Tests that meet the standards established under section 2004-C(c)(6) and, of those credits, the number of credits applied toward major requirements and the number of credits applied toward elective requirements.
 - (iv) Any other information related to awarding of credit for prior learning as requested by the department or the Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee, including the usability of transfer credits.

Section 2003-C. Duties of public institutions of higher education and State-related institutions.

- (a) Agreements.--Each public institution of higher education and State-related institution shall provide the Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee with copies of all articulation agreements for inclusion in the electronic database or software program and portal provided for under section 2005-C(4), within 180 days of the effective date of this section.

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- (b) Reporting requirements.--The following shall apply to reporting requirements:
- (1) Each public institution of higher education and State-related institution shall submit to the department a series of interim reports that describe the status of the institution's articulation agreements, which shall include all of the following:
 - (i) The number of students who have transferred to the public institution of higher education or State-related institution by institution of origin within the last academic year or since submittal of the institution's last interim report required under this section.
 - (ii) The total number of credits completed by transfer students at the institution of origin.
 - (iii) The total number of credits from each institution of origin that transferred to the public institution of higher education or State-related institution for each academic year.
 - (iv) An explanation of the credit transfer process at the institution.
 - (v) Any other information related to the credit transfer process as requested by the department including the usability of transfer credits.
 - (2) Each public institution of higher education and State-related institution shall submit its first interim report required under this section 180 days after the effective date of this section.
 - (3) Each public institution of higher education and State-related institution shall submit a subsequent report every two years from the date of the first interim report. This paragraph shall expire on July 1, 2012.

Section 2004-C. Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee.

- (a) Establishment and membership.--
- (1) In order to develop and implement equivalency standards as provided for in subsection (c)(1), there is hereby established within the department, the Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee. The committee shall be comprised of the following members:
 - (i) The Secretary of Education or his designee, who shall serve as chair of the committee.
 - (ii) Members appointed by the secretary as follows:
 - (A) one member representing each of the community colleges and one member representing the Commission for Community Colleges;
 - (B) one member representing each institution of the State System of Higher Education and one member representing the Office of the Chancellor;
 - (C) one member representing each of the State-related institutions, who shall serve as a nonvoting member but shall retain all other duties associated with membership on the committee. If the State-related institution elects to participate under section 2006-C, the member

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- representing the State- related institution shall be entitled to vote; and
- (D) one member representing each independent institution of higher education that elects to participate under section 2006-C.
- (2) Members shall be appointed to four-year terms. Terms of committee members shall be staggered.
- (b) Dispute resolution subcommittee.--
- (1) The chair of the committee shall appoint a dispute resolution subcommittee comprised of:
- (i) three members appointed under subsection (a)(1)(ii)(A);
 - (ii) three members appointed under subsection (a)(1)(ii)(B); and
 - (iii) one member appointed under subsection (a)(1)(ii)(D).
- (2) The chair of the committee may add members to the dispute resolution subcommittee.
- (3) The dispute resolution subcommittee shall develop dispute resolution policies and procedures to be utilized when disputes arise relating to the transfer and application of credits under this article.
- (c) Duties of Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee.--The committee shall:
- (1) Within 180 days of the effective date of this section, develop, in consultation with faculty and personnel, equivalency standards for foundation courses and provide these standards to the department, the Education Committee of the Senate, the Education Committee of the House of Representatives, the Appropriations Committee of the Senate and the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives.
 - (2) Within one year of the effective date of this section, determine equivalent courses for at least 30 hours of foundation courses, not including developmental or remedial courses or career, technical or applied courses, in consultation with faculty and personnel.
 - (3) Develop an assessment/evaluation plan and identify appropriate information and collect appropriate data to ensure the effectiveness of section 2002-C and make necessary revisions thereto over time.
 - (4) Review interim reports submitted to the department and, within 90 days of receipt of each report, recommend to the department action to be taken by the committee to enable the transfer of credits among public institutions of higher education and institutions that elect to participate under section 2006-C.
 - (5) Submit an annual report to the General Assembly that details the progress made by the public institutions of higher education and institutions that elect to participate under section 2006-C in furtherance of enabling the transfer of credits between such institutions and which recommends further action to be taken.
 - (6) Within one year of the effective date of this paragraph, develop and implement uniform standards for awarding academic credit for prior

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learning, in consultation with faculty and personnel for public institutions of higher education and institutions that elect to participate under section 2006-C.

Section 2005-C. Duties of department.

The department shall:

- (1) Convene a meeting, within 60 days of the effective date of this section, of the Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee.
- (2) Request information and data from the public institutions of higher education and institutions that elect to participate under section 2006-C, so as to identify foundation courses offered at the institutions and any articulation agreements currently established between the institutions that include foundation courses.
- (3) Provide technical assistance to the public institutions of higher education and the institutions that elect to participate under section 2006-C.
- (4) Provide for an electronic database or software program and portal for the purpose of providing access to all of the following information on an Internet website:
 - (i) Articulation agreements entered into by public institutions of higher education and institutions that elect to participate under section 2006-C.
 - (ii) The annual report to the General Assembly as required by section 2004-C(c)(5).
 - (iii) At the request of a public institution of higher education or an institution that elects to participate under section 2006-C, any articulation agreements.

Section 2006-C. Participation by independent institutions of higher education or State-related institution.

An independent institution of higher education or a State-related institution may elect to participate through the adoption of equivalency standards as provided for in subsection 2004-C(c)(1) by its governing body.

Section 2006.1-C. Participation by State-related institutions.

- (a) Identification.**--Each State-related institution shall identify 30 credit hours of course content from equivalent courses identified under this article that it will accept from a student accepted for transfer from an institution of higher education participating in this article. A State-related institution shall count a course in the same manner that it would count the same or equivalent course if taken by a student at the State-related institution. A State-related institution that previously identified 30 credit hours shall be deemed to have satisfied the provisions of this subsection.

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- (b) Posting.**--Each State-related institution shall make the information identified under subsection (a) available to the department for posting on the department's publicly accessible Internet website.
- (c) Construction.**--Nothing in this section shall be construed to do any of the following:
- (1) Require a State-related institution to apply a course to graduation or degree requirements if that course or its equivalent course would not be applied to graduation or degree requirements if taken at the State-related institution.
 - (2) Infringe on a State-related institution's sole authority to accept a student for transfer, to determine acceptance into a major, to determine the campus assignment of the student or to determine how many and which credit hours shall apply for the transfer student toward the completion of a degree. The manner in which accepted courses apply toward completion of a degree and whether they are counted for general education, major or free elective credit shall be subject to the requirements established by the accepting State-related institution for each individual major or program of study.
 - (3) Prohibit a State-related institution's ability to enter into discussions with the department to increase the number of credits under subsection (a).

Section 2007-C. Applicability.

Nothing in this article shall do any of the following:

- (1) Preclude any institution of higher education from establishing institution-to-institution articulation agreements.
- (2) Void articulation agreements that have been established prior to the effective date of this section.

Appendix B: Glossary of Terms

AcademyOne: AcademyOne is the software vendor selected to develop the course equivalency database for Pennsylvania and to develop a one-stop electronic portal for transfer students, advisors, faculty members, and administrators. For more information about AcademyOne, go to www.AcademyOne.com. For an example of their web-based transfer database, go to www.collegetransfer.net. The corporate address is 601 Willowbrook Lane, West Chester, PA 19382. Phone number is 610-436-5680. Fax number is 610-436-5685.

Article XX-C: Article XX-C of the Public School Code of 1949, also referenced as 24 P.S. §§ 20-2001-C -- 20-2007-C, can be found in section of House Bill 185 that created the Transfer Articulation and Oversight Committee and mandated the related transfer policies for the PA community colleges and state-owned universities.

Course Equivalency Management Center (CEMC): A function provided on the portal by AcademyOne that enables a streamlined workflow to propose, review, evaluate, and track course credit evaluation decisions. CEMC offers a virtual workspace to manage distributed steps of course credit applicability, articulation, storage and maintenance in one solution.

Curriculum Standards Subcommittees: Committees charged by TAOC to create standards for the 30-credit framework and to approve course equivalencies related to that framework for participating institutions.

Data Reporting: Legislation mandates that all 14 Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) universities, the 14 state community colleges, and the four state-related universities must submit specific transfer data to PDE at least once a year. Private institutions only have this requirement if they opt to join TAOC for that academic year.

Dispute Resolution Subcommittee (DRS): Created by legislation, the DRS provides an avenue for resolution between a participating TAOC institution and a TAOC equivalency standards subcommittee concerning the evaluation and transfer of a course by TAOC.

Portal: The portal is the public face of the statewide transfer system. This web-based system provides public access to course equivalencies, transfer information and college profiles.

Equivalent courses: Courses determined to have generally equivalent content and level as determined by the faculty of an institution of higher education consistent with the policy at each institution.

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Foundation courses: Courses required to be completed by students that provide an academic foundation for the degree, general education or advanced study in a major.

House Bill 185: The legislative mandate that houses Article XX-C of the Public School Code of 1949, also referenced as 24 P.S. §§ 20-2001-C -- 20-2007-C. This house bill created the Transfer Articulation and Oversight Committee and mandated the related transfer policies for the PA community colleges and state-owned universities.

Independent Institution: An institution of higher education which is operated not-for-profit, located in and incorporated or chartered by the Commonwealth and entitled to confer degrees as set forth in 24 Pa.C.S. § 6505 (relating to power to confer degrees) and to apply to itself the designation "college" or "university" as provided for by the standards and qualifications prescribed by the State Board of Education pursuant to 24 Pa.C.S. Ch. 65 (relating to private colleges, universities and seminaries).

Interagency Opt-In Agreement: The office agreement signed by a state-related or private institution that decides to voluntarily join TAOC and abide by all of its policies and procedures. The agreement must be signed by an Academic Office at the institution and the Deputy Secretary for Postsecondary and Higher Education.

Interim Report: An annual transfer data report submitted to the PDE by all the 14 Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) universities, the 14 state community colleges, the four state-related universities and the participating "opt in" institutions.

Office of Access Initiatives: This office of PDE houses ACT 101, administers the Technical College Program grant, and oversees Transfer and Articulation and Community College initiatives as related to the Department of Education. OAI reports to the Deputy Secretary of Postsecondary and Higher Education.

Opt-In: A state-related or private institution that decides to voluntarily join TAOC and abide by all of its policies and procedures.

Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE): PASSHE is the governing body of the 14 state-owned universities in Pennsylvania.

Public Institution: A community college or an institution which is part of the State System of Higher Education pursuant to Article XX-A.

State-Related Institution: The Pennsylvania State University, the University of Pittsburgh, Temple University, Lincoln University and their branch campuses.

Student Appeal Process: Process by which students may appeal to PDE when dissatisfied with the way credits were evaluated by a participating institution.

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TAOC Steering Committee: A subcommittee of TAOC, this group works closely with PDE to set policy, resolve issues and make recommendations to the larger combined Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee. The committee meets as needed either in-person or via telephone when necessary to insure the smooth implementation of the legislation.

Transfer Agreement Management Center (TAMC): The Transfer Agreement Management Center (TAMC) enables academic departments and administrators to collect, revise and publish transfer agreements. TAMC offers a virtual workspace to codify present agreements while preparing and maintaining new agreements. This is database feature provided by AcademyOne.

Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee (TAOC): The Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee (TAOC) was established under section 24 P.S. §20-2004-C of Article XX-C of the Public School Code of 1949. The committee reports to the Pennsylvania Department of Education. TAOC is charged with establishing course equivalency standards; identifying a minimum of 30 hours of foundation courses for transfer at each of the 14 PASSHE and 14 community college institutions; resolving any conflict resulting from any of the above processes; working with PDE to develop a system for reporting transfer data; and working with PDE to develop an portal system that serves as a public entryway to data and information relevant to transfer and articulation.