

# Introduction to Transfer and Articulation Program Pathway Work Groups

## Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a member of a Pathway Work Group. This brief introduction is meant to provide some basic information about the task you will help to complete and to provide some general information about the Transfer and Articulation Program as well as broad guidelines for your work in the coming months. Your committee will be responsible for creating a two-year, 60-61\* credit transfer degree that, once completed, will prepare students to enter any one of the five state four-year institutions at junior status with 60 credits remaining to complete a bachelor's degree in your program or discipline. This 60-61 credit transfer degree will then ideally be common to all community colleges that offer the pre-requisite courses for the four-year program and will be accepted by all four-year institutions that offer the degree.

## Background

In 2012, the state legislature passed a law (Public Act 12-31) requiring the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) to create seamless transfer pathways on a system level for students completing transfer degree programs at the community colleges and then transferring to a four-year institution.

In the summer of 2012, a steering committee comprising 17 members—one from each CSCU institution—created a framework for a 30-31 credit competency-based general education core as part of the 60-61 credits to be completed at the community colleges. This 30-31 credit portion comprises 4 sections:

**Section A: Uniform Designated Competencies** provide the focus on 8 courses equal to 24-25 credits and are common to all 12 Community Colleges:

- Written Communication in English – 2 courses (6 credits)
- Quantitative Reasoning – 1 course (3 credits)
- Scientific Reasoning – 1 course (3-4 credits)
- Scientific Knowledge and Understanding – 1 course (3 credits)
- Historical Knowledge and Understanding – 1 course (3 credits)
- Social Phenomena – 1 course (3 credits)
- Aesthetic Dimensions – 1 course (3 credits)

**Section B: Campus Designated Competencies** provide the focus for 2 courses equal to 6 credits and are chosen by each Community College:

- Quantitative Reasoning
- Historical Knowledge and Understanding
- Social Phenomena
- Aesthetic Dimensions
- Oral Communication
- Continuing Learning/Information Literacy
- Critical Analysis/Logical Thinking



**Section C: Embedded Competencies** are the remaining required competencies not covered in section A or B.

**Section D: Required Embedded Competencies** are Ethical Reasoning and Written Communication (the latter needs to be embedded in at least one course in addition to the two courses in Written Communication in Section A).

Please see the framework provided in Appendix A for more details.

Because this 30-credit portion of the associate degree is competency based, it does not depend upon designating specific courses nor on existing disciplinary designations. It is not enough for a course to appear within an associated discipline for it to count as fulfilling a competency. Each community college will take responsibility for certifying the courses that meet the TAP competencies. These certified courses may or may not align with all of the existing disciplinary courses on any given community college campus. Each certified course must be shown both to teach and assess the TAP competencies for which it is certified. In order for a pathway to designate and require/recommend a specific course in this section, the course must be certified for the intended competency for each community college that offers the specific transfer degree program. The shape of the general education core on each campus should have already been determined and agreed upon by the standard curriculum approval process. See Appendix B for the specific selections made by each community college for Section B.

The remaining 30 credits of the community college degree will be determined by your Pathway Work Group with consideration, where appropriate, of the general guidelines outlined below. This section will designate either specific courses or traditional disciplines (such as social science or math) from which courses should be selected. These 30 credits will allow students to further complete general education requirements, pre-requisites to the major, and, in many cases, begin work on program specific courses.

### **General Guidelines**

Most importantly, it is up to your committee, whose members represent the faculty experts in your discipline, to design the 60-61 credit community college degree that will transfer to any of the four-year institutions that offer the pathway major. That said, we provide here some general guidelines that we ask you to consider and follow as much as possible. The general philosophy for these pathways is that they should be structured in such a way that students can graduate with a four-year degree without going over 120-121 credits. All the courses in the 60-61 credits of the community college transfer degree will transfer as designated courses within the general education core (for example, SCSU's LEP and ECSU's LAC) or degree program of the senior institution. If there are open electives, they must all count toward graduation in the 120-121 credit degree. In the spirit of the law, the 60-61 credits of the community college degree should, to the extent possible, not so limit the student's options that he or she needs to take courses beyond the 120-121\* credits required for a degree if he or she decides to switch majors entering the four-year institution. For the purposes of pathways work, the full four year degree can be broken down into three groups:

**FRAMEWORK30:** 30-31 credits of competency-based general education.

**PATHWAY30:** 30 credits of additional course work at the community college.



**UNIVERSITY60:** 60 credits of course work at the four-year institution required to complete the four-year degree. These requirements need not be identical across the four-year institutions.

In order to complete your work, you will need to look at the entire 120-121 credits necessary to complete the bachelor's degree and determine how the first 60-61 credits of your program can be allocated in the least restrictive way in terms of courses and requirements.

### **FRAMEWORK30**

As much as possible in your discipline, specific courses should not be required in this section. You may want to consider recommending, rather than requiring, specific courses. If you do need to require or recommend one or more specific courses in the Framework30, we ask that you, first, provide a clear rationale for that requirement, one that explains why it will not fit into either of the other two sections of the 120-121 credit four-year program (Pathway30 or University60) and, second, confirm that each such course has been certified by all of the relevant community colleges as meeting the competency the course is designated to fulfill. When degree-specific courses need to be taken at the community college, they should be chosen (as much as possible) so that students could switch majors upon entering the four-year institution without needing to take courses beyond 120-121 credit hours. As a rule, when degree-specific courses need to be taken at the community college, they should be placed in the Pathway30. The Framework30 should be kept as flexible and unencumbered as possible.

### **PATHWAY30**

Each of the five four-year institutions has a different general education component, both in terms of course requirements and in terms of number of credit hours. However, there are commonalities across the institutions. As much as possible, this section, the Pathway30, should ask students to fulfill the remaining general education requirements at the four-year institutions. That means that, whenever possible, consideration should be given to requiring general education courses rather than degree-program specific courses. The philosophy behind this guideline is that it allows students an extended period of flexibility, especially those students who are considering more than one option for a four-year degree program. Open electives should also be considered in this section if there is room for them and they will count for graduate at all five four-year institutions.

It may be necessary to designate more than a few degree-program courses in this section, for instance, because of the necessity to begin a sequence of courses—math or foreign language will undoubtedly require this sequencing—or because there is not enough room for all the degree program courses in the last two years of work at the four-year institution. We ask that you provide a rationale for each of the degree-specific courses you require in this section. That rationale should explain why the degree specific courses cannot be placed in the next section, the University60. When the requirements for the degree differ among the four-year institutions that offer the program, you will have to take that into account as you designate courses; you should not create separate paths for separate four-year institutions in this section of the transfer degree.

Remember: within your transfer degree, the Framework30 and Pathway30 will be, as much as possible, the same, no matter which community college(s) a student attends. Differences will inevitably arise when courses are not identical across the community colleges. Different tracks will appear once the student transfers to one of the four-year institutions.

It may also be advisable to include some discipline courses so that students can explore a potential major and make a sound choice about whether it is a good fit for them.

### UNIVERSITY60

This section will include all the courses the student needs to complete for the degree. Your group is doing the work of identifying these courses for each of the five four-year institutions. In many cases, this final 60 credits will not be common across the five institutions. When these requirements differ among the four-year institutions that have the degree program, you will describe the list of courses for each of those institutions. These courses may fulfill general education or degree specific requirements and, if there is room, any remaining courses to add up to 120 credits. In general and whenever possible, the bulk of the degree-specific courses should appear here. When these degree-specific courses cannot be completed within these 60 credits—due, for instance, to sequencing and prerequisites—then some of them should be dropped down into the Pathway30.

Your group should begin by looking at the full 120 credits and see what can be completed only in these final 60 credits. Ideally, a student who transfers from a community college with a transfer degree should not feel locked into one program. If your group can provide as much flexibility as possible, then you will have followed the spirit of the legislation: that degrees not exceed 120-121 credits and that students are able to apply all credits earned in a community-college transfer degree program to a 120-121 credit degree program.

\*The extra credits beyond 60 and 120 are accounted for by degrees that require lab science courses, which are generally four credits each. There may be cases that add one or more additional credits, for either additional lab courses or a course that carries four rather than three credits (such as in foreign language or business) at some community colleges.



## Appendix A

### Framework for Community College Designated Transfer Degree Program Requirements

#### Section A – (24-25 credits) Designated Competencies

- 2 courses in Written Communication (6 credits)
- 2 courses in Scientific Knowledge/Understanding (1 lab science with Scientific Reasoning is required) (6-7 credits)
- 1 course in Quantitative Reasoning (above intermediate algebra) (3 credits)
- 1 course in Historical Knowledge/Understanding (3 credits)
- 1 course in Social Phenomena Knowledge/Understanding (3 credits)
- 1 course in Aesthetic Dimensions (3 credits)

#### Section B – (6 credits) Designated Competencies - 2 courses (to be decided at the local level) selected from among the following with no more than 1 course in each competency area:

- Quantitative Reasoning (above intermediate algebra)
- Historical Knowledge/Understanding
- Social Phenomena Knowledge/Understanding
- Aesthetic Dimensions
- Oral Communication
- Continuing Learning/Information Literacy
- Critical Analysis/Logical Thinking

#### Section C – (0 credits) Embedded Competencies – Any competency area below that has not been addressed in Section B, must have all of its outcomes embedded in the curriculum and must be included in assessment. How these outcomes are embedded will be determined at the local level.

- Oral Communication
- Continuing Learning/Information Literacy
- Critical Analysis/Logical Thinking

#### Section D – (0 credits) Embedded Competencies - Must be embedded

- Written Communication (in addition to the designated courses in Section A)
- Ethical Dimensions (embedded only)

### Explanatory information for the TAP Framework

The diversity found in the unique general education cores of the ConnSCU institutions is valued; therefore a homogeneous common design is not required. This framework leaves significant latitude to the discretion of faculty at the local level. Below are guidelines to assist in understanding the proposed framework:

#### I. Background and terminology

**a. Competency Areas** – The competency areas transcend traditional department designation. For example, it is conceivable that a course that meets the learning outcomes for the Historical Knowledge and Understanding competency may be a course in history, anthropology, political science, etc., as designated by each institution.

There are 11 competency areas as follow:

Competency Areas	Credits	Section A All must be Designated	Section B 2 must be Designated	Section C Must be Embedded (unless Designated in Section B)	Section D Must be embedded
1. Written Communication	(6)	X			X
2. Oral Communication	(0-3)		X	X	
3. Scientific Reasoning (lab science required)	(6-7)	X			
4. Scientific Knowledge and Understanding		X			
5. Quantitative Reasoning	(3-6)	X	X		
6. Critical Analysis/Logical Thinking	(0-3)		X	X	
7. Continuing Learning/Information Literacy	(0-3)		X	X	
8. Historical Knowledge/Understanding	(3-6)	X	X		
9. Social Phenomena Knowledge/Understanding	(3-6)	X	X		
10. Appreciation of Aesthetic Dimensions of Humankind	(3-6)	X	X		
11. Appreciation of Ethical Dimensions of Humankind	(0)				X

**b. Learning Outcomes** – Each competency area has a goal and measurable learning outcomes (separate documentation). Rubrics are being developed to guide institutions in assessment.

**c. Designated Competency course** – A course that meets all of the learning outcomes for a competency area (Sections A and B).

**d. Embedded Competencies/courses** – An embedded competency area is one that is addressed within a course without being the primary focus of the course. An embedded competency course will include at least one learning outcome (but may include as many as all learning outcomes) for a competency area. All of the learning outcomes of an embedded competency must be met; this means that they will typically be spread over more than 1 course. Redundancy of learning outcomes in multiple courses across the curriculum is encouraged in order to improve student learning through multiple exposures to material.



## II. Explanation of Framework

- a. Section A – This section requires 24-25 credits (variability due to potential additional credits for science laboratory courses) of designated competency courses as outlined in the Framework.
- b. Section B – This section requires 6 credits of designated competency courses. Each CC will select 2 competency areas from among the 7. The designation of these 6 credits will be the same for all transfer degree programs from that institution. If an institution selects Oral Communication as 1 of the 2 competency areas, any course that meets the learning outcomes for that competency area will be accepted. This provides the latitude for a general oral communication course, business communication, etc.
- c. Section C - Oral Communication, Critical Analysis/Logical Thinking, and Continuing Learning/Information Literacy must either be selected in Section B or be embedded in Section C.
  - i. Example 1 – Institution selects Oral Communication and Social Phenomena in Section B. In order to satisfy Section C, Continuing Learning/Information Literacy and Critical Analysis/Logical Thinking must be embedded.
  - ii. Example 2 - Institution selects Continuing Learning/Information Literacy and Critical Analysis/Logical Thinking in Section B. In order to satisfy Section C, Oral Communication must be embedded.
- d. Section D
  - i. Written Communication must be embedded in addition to being designated in two written communication courses in Section A. At minimum one Written Communication learning outcome must be addressed in one course.
  - ii. Ethical Dimensions may not comprise a designated course; it must be embedded. All Ethical Dimensions learning outcomes must be met.

## III. Additional important information

- a. Students at all ConnSCU institutions will demonstrate competency in the foundational skills and content areas outlined by the Board of Regents (BOR) in the Transfer and Articulation Policy (TAP) Implementation Plan, based on New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) Standard 4.
- b. All CC programs that are designated as ConnSCU transfer programs will develop *one* 30 credit transfer core based on the framework that will be utilized for all its transfer degree programs.
- c. Connecticut State Universities (CSUs) and Charter Oak State College (COSC) have 42-48 credits in their general education programs. All CSUs and COSC will accept the 30 credit cores from CC designated transfer program graduates and will apply the credits to specific requirements of their general education programs (not as open electives). The remaining 12-18 credits will be outlined so that it will be clear what remains to be completed in the general education programs. Some of these courses may be completed at the CCs.
- d. This is a work in progress. There will be many challenges along the way, but it is the assumption of the Steering Committee that all are working toward a coherent system

## Appendix B

### Community College Section B Designations

Community College	Section B Selected Competencies
Asnuntuck	CL, OC
Capital	SP, AD
Gateway	OC, CA
Housatonic	AD, SP
Manchester	OC, CL
Middlesex	OC, SP
Naugatuck Valley	CL, OC
Northwestern	CL, SP
Norwalk	CL, OC
Quinebaug Valley	OC, CA
Three Rivers	OC, CA
Tunxis	CL, CA

Key: AD = Aesthetic Dimensions  
 CA = Critical Analysis / Logical Thinking  
 CL = Continued Learning / Information Literacy  
 OC = Oral Communication  
 SP = Social Phenomena

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**Transfer Pathway and Degree Program**

**Template 1**

**Central Connecticut State University**

Complete four-year degree with articulation of community college degree to four-year degree

[Name of Program]

[List here any additional requirements for admission to the program, such as prerequisites, GPA and minimum grades in specific courses]

Community Colleges*:		CCSU	
	Credits		Credits
<b>General Education Requirements</b>			
<b>Framework30**</b>			
<b>Competency:</b>			
<b>Section A</b>			
Written I			
Written II			
Scientific Reasoning			
Scientific Knowledge			
Quantitative			
Historical Knowledge			
Social Knowledge			
Aesthetic Dimensions			
<b>Section B</b>			
Competency:			
Competency:			
<b>Framework30 Credits (30-31):</b>			
<b>Additional General Education Courses</b>			
<b>General Education Credits:</b>			
<b>Major Program Courses</b>			

