



RESOURCE TITLE:

50-State Comparison: Transfer and Articulation Policies

Transfer policies and articulation agreements aim to provide seamless transitions between and across technical or community colleges and four-year institutions. Clear and

accessible transfer pathways can support increased student persistence and completion rates, particularly for highly mobile students who may transfer between multiple institutions before degree completion. While many articulation agreements exist at the institution- or system-level, states are increasingly setting statewide credit transfer requirements, ensuring all students enter their postsecondary career with similar understandings of — and options for — success.

This comparison reviews four transfer metrics in all 50 states:

Common course numbering: A uniform numbering convention used at all public postsecondary institutions for lower-division courses.

Transferable core of lower-division courses: A set of general education courses agreed upon across all public postsecondary institutions. It must be fully transferable at all public institutions.

← SHARE THIS RESOURCE
ON



Institutions may have different naming conventions; however, if that is the case, there is a crosswalk for institutions to use in the transfer process.

Guaranteed transfer of an associate degree: Guarantees students who are awarded an associate degree before transferring to a four-year institution can transfer all their credits to the four-year institution and enter at the junior-standing level. Most policies state that students are not required to complete any further general education courses unless required for a specific major.

Reverse transfer: Allows all public institutions to implement the process of retroactively granting an associate degree to students who have not completed the requirements of an associate degree before transferring to a four-year institution.

A state received a “yes” if its policy includes participation from all public four-year and two-year institutions. Education Commission of the States searched state legislation, board/commission policies and memorandums of understanding. Sources do not include state programs, individual institution policies or state initiatives. States that use the latter three sources are highlighted in the description section.

Click on the metrics below for 50-State Comparisons showing how all states approach these policies. Or view a specific state’s approach by going to the **individual state profiles** page.

50-State Comparisons

- 1. All data points for all states.**
- 2. Statewide common course numbering.**
- 3. Transferable core of lower-division courses.**
- 4. Statewide guaranteed transfer of associate degree.**
- 5. Statewide reverse transfer.**

Key Takeaways

- **At least 31 states** have policies requiring a transferable core of lower-division courses and statewide guaranteed transfer of an associate degree.
- **25 states** have reverse transfer policies set in legislation, board policy or memorandums of agreement. An additional **18 states**

provide reverse transfer opportunities through institutional agreements and systemwide programs.

Related Resources

Recent **state legislation**. (Select “Credit Award and Transfer” from the list of sub-issue areas.)

Reverse Transfer: The path less traveled

Reverse Transfer: Paving the pathway


Reverse Transfer: What is the best route to take?

 **PUBLISHED:** July 28, 2022

 **AUTHOR(S):** Erin Whinnery, Lauren Peisach

 **RESOURCE TYPE:** **50-State Comparison**

 **EDUCATION LEVEL:** Postsecondary

 **STATE(S):** Nationwide

i MORE ON THIS ISSUE

Transitions 

Education Commission of the States is the trusted source for comprehensive knowledge and unbiased resources on education policy issues ranging from early learning through postsecondary education.

 **SUBSCRIBE**

Subscribe to our publications and stay informed.

 **REQUEST ASSISTANCE**

Need more information? **Contact** one of our policy experts.



[Contact Us](#) [Terms of Use](#)

©2023 Education Commission of the States.

All Rights Reserved.

