

A low-angle shot of the Colorado State Capitol building's golden dome against a clear blue sky. To the left, a flagpole holds the American flag and the Colorado state flag. In the background, several fighter jets are flying in formation.

We're the
government, we're
here to help



COLORADO
Department of
Higher Education



Review of Transfer In Colorado

CCHE Policies that guide our work

- [Statewide Transfer & Pathways](#) (Section I, Part L)
- [Prior Learning Assessment](#) (Section I, Part X)
- [Admission Standards](#) (Transfer- Section I, Part F (4))
- [Student Complaints](#) (Student Bill of Rights- Section I, Part T)



An aerial photograph of a campus. In the foreground, there is a large green lawn with several tall, thin trees. To the right, a multi-story building with a dark roof and light-colored walls is visible. The middle ground shows a parking lot and more trees. In the background, there are rolling green hills and mountains under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. A white rectangular box with black text is overlaid in the center of the image.

Primary Elements of Transfer

- **Common course numbering (20 states)**

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

- **Transferable core of lower-division (38 states)**

A set of general education courses agreed upon across all public postsecondary institutions. It must be fully transferable at all public institutions. 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 (35 states)**

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

- **Reverse transfer (25 states)**

Requires all public institutions to implement the process of retroactively granting an associate degree to students who had not completed the requirements of an associate degree before they transferred to a four-year institution.

8 states have all 4 - CO, FLA, KS, LA, MO, NV, OR & TN

- **Common course numbering**
 - 1866 courses in gtPathways course catalog (link not active)
- **Transferable core of lower-division- ([GT Pathways](#)- 31 credits total)**
 - Written communication- 6 credits (CO 1&2)
 - Mathematics- 3 credits (MA 1)
 - Natural & Physical Science- 7 credits (SC 1&2)
 - Arts & Humanities- 15 credits (AH, HI, SS)
- **[Guaranteed transfer of an associate \(STAA\)](#)**
 - 37 statewide transfer agreements
- **[Reverse transfer](#)**
 - 2350 reverse transfer awards since May, 2021

Prior Learning Assessment

- Advanced Placement (24 exams- 3 or higher)
- International Baccalaureate (37 courses + IB Diploma)
- College Level Examination (CLEP)(27 exams)
- Military Experience
 - DSST (19 exams), DLIFLC , Military Occupations
- Work Experience/ Certifications (CCCS 60+, mostly in IT)
- **In Process (transfer adjacent)**
 - Stackable Credentials (CRS 23-5-145.6)
 - Quality In-Demand Credentials Rubric
 - Colorado RE-Engaged Initiative (CRS 23-1-131.5)

An aerial photograph of a university campus. In the foreground, there are several large, green trees. To the right, a multi-story building with a dark roof and light-colored walls is visible. The middle ground shows a parking lot and more campus buildings. In the background, there are rolling green hills and mountains under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. A large white rectangular box is centered over the image, containing the text "So what??" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A thin yellow line is visible on the right side of the image, extending from the top of the white box down to the building's roofline.

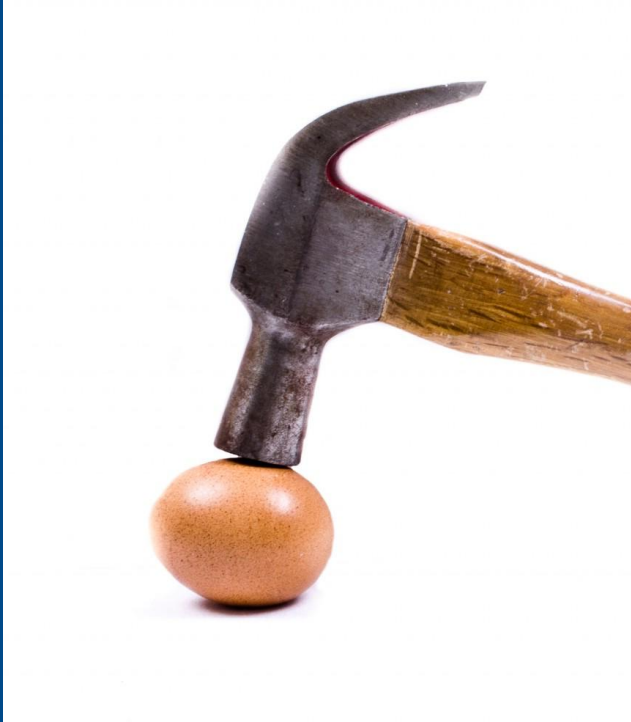
So what??



Our Assets

- Strong Legislative and policy framework
- National leader in transfer
- Robust portfolio
- Strong institutional buy in
- GE council that is committed to student success
- Lots of work in the transfer space over the last three years
- Students that participate in DWD's transfer at a higher rate, with less credit loss
- We have a student bill of rights and system for complaints

Our Opportunities



- Not an easily navigable system (PDF's, no searchable database)
- Too many what-if's
- Ease of transfer depends on good advising and/ or advocacy of students
- Equity gaps are too significant
- Not enough data/ research to assess the efficacy of PLA and other transfer

State Statutes Related to Transfer

§23-1-108(7)(a), C.R.S. “The commission shall establish, after consultation with the governing boards of institutions, and enforce statewide degree transfer agreements between two-year and four-year state institutions of higher education and among four-year state institutions of higher education...”

§23-1-108.5(1), C.R.S. “The general assembly finds, therefore, that it is in the best interests of the state for the commission to oversee the adoption of a statewide articulation matrix system of course numbering for general education courses that includes all state-supported institutions of higher education and that will ensure that the quality of and requirements that pertain to general education courses are comparable and transferable systemwide.”

§23-1-125 et seq., C.R.S. Commission directive – student bill of rights – degree requirements – implementation of core courses – competency testing – prior learning.

§23-1-125(3), C.R.S. “In creating and adopting the [gtPathways] guidelines, the department and the commission, in collaboration with the public institutions of higher education, may make allowances for baccalaureate programs that have additional degree requirements recognized by the commission.”

State Statutes Related to Transfer (Cont.)

§23-1-131(3)(a), C.R.S. “The commission shall collaborate with the governing boards of the two-year and four-year institutions to develop and coordinate a process to notify students concerning eligibility for the award of an associate degree. The notification process shall apply to students at a four-year institution who have accumulated seventy credit hours at a four-year institution and who transferred to the institution after completing the residency requirements for an associate degree at a two-year institution.”

§23-5-122, C.R.S. “...the governing board of every state-supported institution of higher education shall have in place and enforce policies regarding transfers by students between undergraduate degree programs which are offered within the same institution or within the same institutional system.”

§23-60-802, C.R.S. Area technical colleges – credits – transfer.

[STATEWIDE TRANSFER AND GT PATHWAYS POLICY \(Revised December 2020\)](#)

Prior Learning Assessment

§23-1-108.5(5), C.R.S., “All credits earned by a student in any general education course identified as corresponding with a course included in the course numbering system [GT Pathways] shall be automatically transferable among all higher education institutions upon transfer and enrollment of the student... The commission shall adopt such policies and guidelines as may be necessary for the implementation of this section. Each governing board shall modify its existing policies as may be necessary to accept the transfer of these credits.”

§23-1-113.2(2), C.R.S., first-time freshman students who have successfully completed an international baccalaureate diploma program shall, at a minimum, be granted 24 semester credits, identified by the institution and that apply to the institution’s general education or other degree requirements. An institution may only grant less than 24 semester credits or their equivalent if the student has received a score of less than four on an exam administered as part of the international baccalaureate diploma program.

Prior Learning Assessment (cont)

§23-1-125(1), C.R.S., “(d) Students have a right to know which courses are transferable among the state public two-year and four-year institutions of higher education; (e) Students, upon completion of core general education courses, regardless of the delivery method, should have those courses satisfy the core course requirements of all Colorado public institutions of higher education; (f) Students have a right to know if courses from one or more public higher education institutions satisfy the students' degree requirements; (g) A student's credit for the completion of the core requirements and core courses shall not expire for ten years from the date of initial enrollment and shall be transferrable...”

§23-1-125(3), C.R.S., “The commission shall adopt such policies to ensure that institutions develop the most effective way to implement the transferability of core course [GT Pathways] credits.”

§23-1-125(4), C.R.S., “Competency testing. On or before July 1, 2010, the commission shall, in consultation with each public institution of higher education, define a process for students to test out of core courses, including specifying use of a national test or the criteria for approving institutionally devised tests. Beginning in the 2010-11 academic year, each public institution of higher education shall grant full course credits to students for the core courses they successfully test out of, free of tuition for those courses.”

Prior Learning Assessment (Cont)

§23-1-125(4.5), C.R.S., “Prior learning. Beginning in the 2013-14 academic year, each public institution of higher education shall adopt and make public a policy or program to determine academic credit for prior learning.”

§23-5-145(2), C.R.S., “Beginning June 1, 2018, accept in transfer from within the institution and from other state institutions of higher education prior learning assessment credit awarded for courses with guaranteed-transfer designation, unless the Colorado commission on higher education adopts a new policy prior to June 1, 2018, concerning the transfer of prior learning assessment credit for courses with guaranteed-transfer designation that requires each campus to accept in transfer credit awarded by a state institution of higher education pursuant to the provisions of subsection (2)(a) of this section. Each campus may also accept other prior learning assessment credit toward the student's program of study if the credit meets standards established by the campus.

§23-1-108(7)(b)(II)(A), C.R.S., “A state institution of higher education that admits as a junior a student who holds an associate of arts degree, associate of applied science degree, or associate of science degree that is the subject of a statewide degree transfer agreement shall not require the student to complete any additional courses to fulfill general education requirements.”

Prior Learning Assessment (Cont)

Pursuant to §23-5-145.5(3)(a), “On or before January 1, 2022, the [General Education] council, in collaboration with the commission, shall create, adopt, and implement a plan, referred to in this section as the “plan”, to award postsecondary academic credit for courses in GT pathways or a statewide degree transfer agreement for learning demonstrated from work-related experience.”

§23-5-145.5(7), “Beginning in the 2022-23 academic year, unless the plan is implemented prior to the beginning of the 2022-23 academic year, an institution shall accept in and transfer within the institution and to other institutions postsecondary academic credit awarded for work-related experience for a course that is GT pathways designated or part of a statewide degree transfer agreement.”

STATEWIDE PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT POLICY (revised December 2021)

A scenic view of a lake with a yellow kayak in the foreground, surrounded by forested hills and mountains under a blue sky with clouds. The kayak is yellow with black straps and a black hatch cover. The water is dark blue with ripples. The background features a dense forest of evergreen trees on the left and rolling mountains in the distance under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds.

Discussion Q&A