



# Transfer and Articulation: Survey of State Practices

## Executive Summary

A recent survey by the American Association for Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, with responses from articulation-supervising entities from 22 states, has produced the following findings:

- Half (50%) of responding states have state-mandated transfer or articulation policies (although many states without a state mandate are also active in articulation and transfer matters).
- Vertical transfer (2- to 4-year) is the type of transfer most often addressed in state transfer or articulation policies – by 12 states out of 22, or 55%. Surprisingly, only 6 of the responses (27%) indicated that state policy addressed 2-2 transfers, and only 5 of the responses (23%) indicated that state policies addressed 4-4 transfer. In addition, very few state policies address transfer from public to private (non-profit) institutions (2 responses out of 22), or from public to proprietary ones (1 out of 22).
- Privately arrived at agreements are more inclusive. All 22 states responding indicated that there were voluntary transfer or articulation agreements existing within their state. Not surprisingly, three quarters (77%) of the states responded that there were privately-arrived at articulation agreements within the state involving 2-4 transfer or 4-4 transfer, and 68% indicated the same for 2-2 transfer. More surprisingly, however, 77% of responses indicated that there were private articulation agreements between public institutions and private (non-profit) ones within state, and 41% (9 of 22) stated that there were articulation agreements arrived at between public institutions and proprietary (for-profit) institutions. .
- State articulation policies are most likely to mandate transfer of general education (“core courses”), or transfer of associate degrees -- 50% and 45%, respectively.
- Only 18% of states with a state-mandated articulation system have an enforcement mechanism (usually a reporting, not a funding or de-funding mechanism).
- The majority (55%) make their articulation policies (and other advice) available online.

## **Conclusions**

The states are doing a good job of addressing transfer problems in the most traditional form of transfer: 2-year to 4-year institutions. However, they are only beginning to address horizontal transfer (2-2 or 4-4). Similarly, the states are doing well in addressing the transfer of general education (“core courses”) and associate degrees. Beyond that, however, few states have evolved common course-numbering systems or clear systems for transfer of courses within the major, although many are working on such mechanisms.

## **Discussion**

Much has been written about the need to facilitate student transfer. But what types of articulation agreements, or policies as to portability of credit, are actually available within the 50 states?

- In a recent survey, AACRAO received responses from 22 states, in a survey which addressed six major questions:
- Does your state have articulation agreements, or portability policies, and are they mandated by state legislation or regulation?
- For states with legislation or regulation, what types of transfer do they address?
- What types of articulation agreements exist by voluntary agreement in your state (i.e. between two institutions)?
- For states with state-mandated articulation or portability policies, what do such policies cover (general education or “core” courses, common course-numbering systems, transfer of associate degrees, transfer of courses in the major, etc.)?
- For states with a state-mandated articulation or portability policies, what enforcement mechanisms, if any, are there to encourage (or ensure) compliance?
- Do you make your articulation / portability policies publicly available (whether under a state-mandated articulation scheme, or not) and if so, what is your website?

## The Nature of the Survey

Responses were received in May 2002 from twenty-two state entities charged with overseeing or facilitating articulation of programs, or portability of credit. Those states were: Alaska, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington State, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Their responses are as follows:

## Results

*Does your state have articulation agreements, or portability policies,  
MANDATED by state legislation or regulation?*

Yes: 50% of those responding. (Arizona, California, Kentucky, Maryland, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington State, and West Virginia)

No: 50% of those responding. (Alaska, Connecticut, Idaho, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, South Dakota, Utah, and Wisconsin.)

Note: The lack of a state-mandated scheme does not mean that there are no efforts at articulation in those states. For example, as of summer 2002, all nineteen of New Jersey's community colleges were participating in partnerships with twenty-three four-year institutions. Such partnerships offer course equivalency and recommended transfer program data – data which is available on the website of the New Jersey Transfer Initiative ([www.njtransfer.org](http://www.njtransfer.org)). The project was undertaken initially by the New Jersey Presidents' Council in 2000, when it organized a Task Force on Transfer and Articulation. In that same year, an oversight board, named the Articulation and Transfer Coordinating Committee, was also appointed.<sup>1</sup>

*Among states which do mandate articulation or portability, what types of transfer do they address, or regulate?<sup>2</sup>*

Type of Transfer	Percentage Response
2-year to 4-year	45%
2 to 2	27%
4 to 4	23%
Public to private (non-profit)	9%
Public to proprietary (for profit)	5%

<sup>1</sup> Source: Response of the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education.

<sup>2</sup> Answers are not mutually exclusive; sums of percentages may be greater than 100 %

*What types of articulation agreements exist by voluntary agreement in your state, whether or not there is a state-mandated policy?*

Type of Transfer	Percentage Response
2-year to 4-year	77%
2 to 2	68%
4 to 4	77%
Public to private (non-profit), or reverse	41%
Public to proprietary (for-profit), or reverse	9%

*For states with state-mandated articulation policies, what do such policies cover?*

Type of Transfer	Percentage Response
General education or “core courses”	50%
Common course numbering system	27%
Transfer of associate degrees	45%
Transfer of courses in the major	36%

*Does your state provide for any enforcement mechanism to implement its state transfer/ articulation system?*

Yes	18%
No or N/R	82%

*If “yes,” what sorts of enforcement mechanisms are used in your state?*

Type of Mechanism	Percentage Response
Reporting	13%
Funding mechanisms	9%
Reduction of funding	0%

*Whether under a state-mandated articulation scheme or not, does your state make its articulation / portability policies publicly available?*

Yes:	55%
No:	5%
N/R	40%