

Implementation Considerations for Transfer Agreements and Pathways



Various Types of Agreements and Arrangements

Transfer Partnership and Articulation Agreements	
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)	Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) typically focus on specific outcomes or responsibilities between parties. Some institutions, however, use a MOU to establish broad terms between parties. Maricopa's standard MOU is a good faith umbrella agreement with another institution that contains no legal/binding obligations. All articulation products, course, program, and exam equivalencies, crosswalks, etc. reside outside of the MOU.
Program to Program	Program to Program agreements/crosswalks are widely used to align community college associate degrees with comparable bachelor's degree options. These agreements detail how specific courses match up with and count towards major requirements, general education/core requirements, and electives. In most cases, comparable associate and bachelor's programs exist at both institutions, facilitating the alignment of degrees (e.g., Business to Business, Criminal Justice to Criminal Justice).
2 + 2 (60/60 credits split on a traditional 120 credit program)	2 + 2 programs are designed for students who take half of a degree at one institution and the second half at another institution. Usually, this is the completion of an associate's degree at a community college and subsequent transfer into a four-year institution for bachelor's degree completion. One of the hallmarks of this type of program is clearly defined degree completion goal and an explicit and expeditious pathway to get there. The timeline required to complete all requirements will depend on a student's enrollment status (full or part-time).
3 + 1 (90/30 credit split on a traditional 120 credit program)	A 3 + 1 partnership program is often designed when two institutions can collaborate for a specific outcome. This type of agreement is designed for a student to complete 75% of the coursework at an institution and transfer to another institution for the final, often senior level, coursework. A good example of this might be a nursing program, where prerequisite and clinical work can be completed at one institution, with culminating upper-division coursework being completed at another institution.
AAS to BAS (75/45 credit split on a traditional 120 credit program)	Students at Arizona's community colleges can transfer to Arizona's public universities with an Associate in Applied Science degree and apply as many as 75 credits from that degree towards a Bachelors of Applied Science degree. Typically the 45 credits of university coursework would include additional general education courses. The AAS to BAS option allows students to transfer more of their discipline-specific credits from the community college than in a more traditional 2+2 agreement where many of those major-specific courses are taken after transfer.

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<p>Data Sharing Agreements</p>	<p>A data-sharing agreement is a formal contract that clearly documents what data is being shared between institutions and how that data can be used (such as SIS). Such an agreement serves two purposes. First, it protects the agency providing the data, ensuring that the data will not be misused. Second, it prevents miscommunication on the part of the provider of the data and the agency receiving the data by making certain that any questions about data use are discussed. Before any data are shared, both the provider and receiver should talk in person or on the phone to discuss data-sharing and data-use issues and come to a collaborative understanding that is then documented in a data-sharing agreement.</p>
<p>Agreements Focusing On Admission/Enrollment</p>	
<p>Guaranteed Admission</p>	<p>Guaranteed (Transfer) Admission is granted when a student completes a certain set of requirements at one institution and moves onto the next institution. Typically Guaranteed Admission requires the completion of a credential with a minimum GPA at the first institution. Additional selective admission criteria and limited seats may be established as part of the arrangement.</p>
<p>Joint/Dual Admission</p>	<p>Joint/Dual Admission allows a student admission to both institutions simultaneously while they pursue their studies. When a student is eligible for joint/dual admissions, both schools have determined admissions reciprocity for their academic programs, allowing a student to move seamlessly between each school from semester to semester, to complete requirements for credentials at each. Often, students in joint/dual admission programs may have access to services and resources at both institutions while actually only enrolled at one institution at a time.</p>
<p>Dual Enrollment</p>	<p>In the Maricopa Community Colleges, Dual Enrollment refers to high school students taking courses at their high school for which they receive both credit toward their high school diploma and specific 100 or 200 level college courses. Students register for dual enrollment courses at their high schools, online, or at the colleges, however, all teaching and learning is done at their high schools. High school teachers teaching dual enrollment courses must apply to the Maricopa Community Colleges as adjunct faculty and meet the stipulated minimum hiring qualifications for their discipline. Students pay tuition just as they would if taking the courses at the colleges. Dual enrollment instructors receive supervision/evaluation/mentoring from the faculty lead at affiliated colleges. Dual enrollment courses are expected to meet the same instructional periods and achieve learning outcomes as a comparable class taught at the college. As such, the same course level assessment and evaluation also apply</p>

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<p>Concurrent Enrollment</p>	<p>Differing from Joint/Dual Admissions, Concurrent Enrollment is an arrangement where students are enrolled in and often actively pursuing a credential and taking courses at two institutions at the same time (e.g., high school and a community college or community college and a university). Concurrently enrolled students may be. This may be done to meet financial or academic needs. An institution unable to offer certain specialized or advanced coursework due to cost, space or institutional mission may find that a concurrent enrollment option provides a cost-effective model that allows students to efficiently achieve their academic goals without needing to leave their current institution. This type of agreement is usually more legal in nature, and usually requires review by Legal Services, Financial Aid, Institutional Research, Academic and Student Systems, and Admissions and Records.</p>
<p>Agreements Focusing On Credit Transfer</p>	
<p>Career Pathways</p>	<p>The focus of these arrangements is to provide a direct connection between career progression and the forward momentum that occurs when a student advances their studies through stacking credentials or by recognizing alternative career-oriented credit. Stackable credentials provide a pathway in which content builds from a more foundational/introductory credential to progressively more advanced/specialized awards; such stackable credentials are designed to align with workforce/career-specific knowledge, skills and habit of mind desirable in a specific career-field. For example, a community college may offer one or a progressive series of certificates (CCLs), designed to prepare students for an industry-recognized certification(s) and for which the credits for which also apply toward a related associate degree at the community college. The student would then be able to transfer that associate degree seamlessly to a university and continue their learning progression toward a baccalaureate degree with advanced preparation in their field.</p>
<p>High School Districts/CTEDs Transitions (On-ramps)</p>	<p>These agreements enable high school students to take classes at a local college-and potentially earn college credit. It leverages Dual Enrollment, prior learning assessment, WBE experiences to better onboard students into post-secondary. For Maricopa, efforts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backwards mapping early college course offerings with a Guided Pathways lens • Streamlining the instructor qualifications process for academic and CTE disciplines • Creating a repository of instructor files to expedite instructor qualifications • Creating a system for file sharing between Maricopa and partner high school districts to expedite occupational instructional qualifications • Facilitating sustained discussions for curriculum sharing that promotes shared goals and outcomes for student learning

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating opportunities to empower dual enrollment instructors as agents of change for college access Work with the college and district curriculum offices to capture and reflect any PLA decisions in ACRES and on any websites where appropriate.
<p>Reverse Transfer</p>	<p>As part of the “completion agenda,” more states and institutions are implementing reverse transfer options, where students who have moved onto another college or university transfer credits from their continued studies back to a previously attended institution in order to complete a degree they never quite finished at that initial school. These agreements realize that students often transfer before completing a degree and that having one may offer current workforce benefit while they are completing their education along with a personal feeling of accomplishment. It is also recognized that some percentage of transfer students are, for a variety of reasons, unable to finish their bachelors degree and for them, having at least an Associates degree demonstrates their ability to complete a college degree . Eligible candidates for Reverse Transfer may be identified through collaborative efforts between institutions. The sending (original) institution assists students by identifying remaining degree requirements that students can complete at their current institution. Institutions collaborate closely, obtaining necessary paperwork and submitting the official transcripts necessary for the formal awarding of that degree.</p>
<p>Non-Credit or Workforce Based Credits</p>	<p>These agreements maximize workforce-based education, either via credential or certification, or via continuing education coursework offered primarily at the community college.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students who are often defined as “non-traditional” may find these agreements to be extremely beneficial. • Institutions typically retain the ability to apply these credits as appropriate, without committing to specific transferability.
<p>Prior Learning Assessment</p>	<p>An emerging area in dual and transfer agreements is prior learning transferability. This includes awarding college credit for workforce training and industry-recognized credentials and clock-hour programs, as well as continued acceptance of pre-defined scores on nationally-recognized subject matter-related exams such as AP (Advanced Placement), CLEP (College Level Exam Program), International Baccalaureate (IB) and DSST. It may also include military credit as identified on the Joint Services Transcript (JST) or as evaluated through a portfolio or competency review. Generally, the more standardized the evaluation backing the prior learning - like ACE (American Council on Education) or the College Board – the more likely institutions will agree to articulate alternative credit in the same manner. Institutions typically retain the ability to apply these credits as appropriate, without committing to specific transfer applicability.</p>

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Area Considerations

Area	Steps
<p>Practice and Procedures</p>	<p>University Transfer, Dual Enrollment, and Prior Learning Assessment are centralized functions at the Maricopa District Office. Please contact the following areas when contacted about formalizing an agreement, pathway, or partnership:</p> <p>For any transfer or articulation agreement, contact the Center for Curriculum and Transfer. The Center serves at the point of contact for all university partnerships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assess if the agreement is in the best interest for student by asking the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How is this agreement beneficial to the student? ○ What makes this agreement unique for this institution/the partnering institution? ○ How does this agreement establish a pathway? ○ Is the pathway clear? ○ Can we implement and assess the agreement? ○ Could the arrangement exist without a formal agreement? ● Determine what kind of agreements are needed, and the scope of those agreements. ● Identify components of agreements. What items are required by both your institution and the partnering institution? Will any of these components need to be negotiated? Will they require legal review? <p>For any high school arrangement or dual enrollment, contact Enrollment Management and College Transitions.</p> <p>For Prior Learning Assessment, contact Transfer and Articulation Services. These requests can come from anywhere – from faculty, staff, leadership, workforce needs, existing partnership agreements, high school partners, or even students.</p>
<p>Policy</p>	<p>Before entering into an agreement, ensure that the terms are consistent with current regulatory, catalog, and</p>

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	<p>academic policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assess policy, including which data will be shared, what the measures of success (and failure) are, and how to identify next steps to improve the agreement. ● Review general education, degree, transfer and PLA policies to ensure that the agreement/pathway is in compliance. ● Identify policy restrictions and notified appropriate area at the District Office for guidance and/or consultation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ For Transfer and PLA Policies contact Transfer and Articulation Credits Services. ➢ For general education and degree policies, contact the Center for Curriculum and Transfer. ➢ For policies impacting Student Services, contact District Student Affairs. ➢ For general questions regarding administrative regulations, contact the Office of Public Stewardship.
Pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Determine what agreement best supports the arrangement. ● Establish conditions for admission. For example, elements such as the number of earned/transferrable credits, GPA, deadline dates, and/or forms required to establish participation. ● Develop any course-to-course equivalencies, degree equivalency grids, or curricular crosswalks aligning the programs to be articulated between the two institutions, substitutions for such (if appropriate), and recommended choices for electives that will facilitate on-time completion. Individual program alignment spreadsheets for visual ease and student understanding might be provided. ● Create a clear illustration of application of credits and/or time to graduate when possible. ● Non-academic opportunities (or exclusions), e.g. honors, guaranteed admission, scholarships, advising, etc. ● Identify other degree requirements such as standardized test scores, required clinical hours outside the coursework, residency requirements, etc. ● Identify PLA access points and opportunities (industry recognized credentials, standardized exams (AP, CLEP, DSST, IB, Cambridge) military credit, non-credit, clock hours, etc.
Communication	<p>Once the agreement, has been approved work with appropriate college stakeholders to implement the agreement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide an information session to key stakeholder groups to provide details and answer any questions. ● Announce the agreement in any college publications, internal communication, or social media or digital platforms. ● (If newsworthy), work with the college’s Communication/Public Relations Office on a press release.
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agree on marketing process and responsibilities ● Create a joint marketing collateral - print and digital

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media • TV screens around campus • Computers in the library • A rotating carousel on the college website or campus portal • Flyers or posters in program buildings
Data/Tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data sharing requirements, opportunities, and limitations • Identify data tracking needs - success metrics, milestones, student satisfaction
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign point of contact at each institution. • Review arrangement annually for process and area improvements
Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore any new or existing grant opportunities to support the agreement/arrangement.
Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classrooms (Virtual and Physical). If the arrangement has identified gateway courses for a particular major, and you recently signed an agreement in that area, plan to visit each of those classes to share the information. Or, email faculty (residential and adjunct) to share the information with students. • Faculty and staff. Make sure that the campus community knows the agreement has been signed. Send an email to all advisors, faculty, chairs, deans, admissions, marketing/communications department, etc. with updated agreements. Please coordinate with your leadership team and obtain the necessary approvals. Schedule information sessions to provide faculty and staff on overview of the agreement and how to encourage students to utilize it. • Distinct populations. The same could be done for other distinct populations – honors students, athletes, Phi Theta Kappa members, underrepresented/high need youth, adult students, etc. • Information sessions in person and online. Invite partner institutions to table on campus, or host an information session, to share information about the agreement.

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<p>Prior Learning Assessment</p>	<p>Identify any PLA opportunities as part of the arrangement. PLA is the evaluation of verifiable learning gained through (but not limited to) the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Standardized exams ● Work experiences ● Licenses, certifications and other credentials ● Military training ● Online and Open Educational Resources (OER) ● Seminars, workshops, in-service training ● Continuing professional education ● Non-credit courses ● Online ed platforms (Coursera, Study.com, Straighterline, etc)
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Stakeholder Group Roles and Responsibilities

Stakeholder Group	
<p>College and District Senior/Executive Leadership</p>	<p>The extent of the involvement at this college or district level may be driven by climate, culture or existing procedure. However it is determined, senior leadership should be involved to approve all agreements. They can be involved at the beginning to get the agreement started, support as decisions are being worked on and then a final review to be sure the agreement from both parties is in line with the institution’s mission and vision.</p> <p>The District’s Provost, as the Chief Academic Officer, provides oversight of all formal transfer agreements and is the authorized official to sign MOU/agreements.</p>
<p>Deans</p>	<p>Deans are responsible for coordinating activities within specific divisions or departments. A dean’s duties include liaising with faculty and staff on what support is needed to achieve academic goals and providing budgetary oversight for their designated areas. As it relates to dual enrollment and transfer, responsibilities include developing new programs, revising existing programs, evaluation of programs and faculty, promoting and supporting prior learning requests, budget preparation and management, collecting data and using it to make programmatic decisions, planning, and scheduling of courses and</p>

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	staff.
Center for Curriculum and Transfer	The designated area of articulation agreements, university partnerships, or transfer should be heavily involved. These representatives usually have the most experience and training in working with other institutions, degree and curriculum alignment, barriers facing students, guiding regulations, and best practices.
Transfer and Articulation Credit Services (includes PLA)	<p>This designated area provides the following services and functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds standard processes related to transfer credit/PLA • Performs extensive research of curriculum from outside institutions • Creates and maintain standard equivalencies that are documented and automated for district-wide use • Support for student services staff; assist with evaluation backlog, provide training resources, conduct ongoing training sessions, etc. • Collaborates with all stakeholders to identify needs and concerns related to transfer credit • Collaborates with Instructional Councils and Program Directors to assist with equivalency decisions for non traditional credit.
College Faculty/ Instructions Councils (ICs)	Faculty need to be involved in the review of curriculum and how articulated credit will apply to the degree program. Many articulation agreements require an in-depth look at course content and applicability of coursework. Additionally, if credit for prior learning is being assessed, faculty need to determine how that will be applied. The extent to which faculty are involved can be determined by the institution; however, faculty need to have a say and at times be the decision makers on articulation content and completion toward a degree.
Director, Admission and Records/Admission and Records Council (DAR)	Any type of articulation agreement will need to be promoted by the admissions office. It's essential to have a representative from this area to speak about the abilities to promote the agreements. Additionally, admissions can provide a good analysis of prospective student interest and the potential market. These staff will be speaking to potential students and will need general knowledge about how the articulation agreement works, enough to explain it correctly to students or partners. The more they are aware of the particulars of an agreement, the better the message will make it to the students who are part of the agreement.

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<p>Marketing/Public Relations</p>	<p>Once signed, an agreement needs to be promoted. Having a marketing/communications representative in the loop will help with getting the correct information out. The message needs to be sent externally and internally. It's equally important to share the message with prospective students and constituents at both of the partnering institutions. Those areas include staff, faculty, current students, alumni, key stakeholders, and other related partners</p>
<p>College Advisors/ Advising Council (DAAC)</p>	<p>The area that will advise for all of the specifics of an articulation agreement should be part of the conversation. Important factors such as how credits fit into a degree program and what a student has left to complete the degree need to be determined as part of the process. Additionally, advisors need to be aware of what the agreement says, what an institution has the capacity to do, and how it impacts the students and advisors. Policies and procedures for the agreement could also be determined during these conversations.</p>
<p>Student Outreach and Recruitment (SOAR)</p>	<p>Recruiters must be aware of transfer agreements to properly inform and successfully recruit students. While some students who enroll at the community colleges are planning to transfer to a university, other students may prefer to start college at a university or may not plan to transfer at all. Recruiters who accurately convey the benefits of a transfer partnership may help increase the likelihood that students start at a community college.</p>
<p>Financial Aid</p>	<p>Agreements that allow for students who take courses at a discounted or flat rate, scholarships, and arrangements that apply more than the traditional 60 credits should involve the financial aid office. This will help with developing a process and procedure for the agreement and to ensure the financial aspect runs smoothly and compliance requirements are met as part of the arrangement.</p>

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