

Revising Baccalaureate Course Requirements That Impact Transfer Students and Revising Washington's Statewide Transfer Associate Degree Agreements

The "Policy on Intercollege Transfer and Articulation among Washington Public Colleges and Universities," commonly known as the "Umbrella Policy," governs statewide transfer policy and agreements in Washington state.¹ The policy states that:

Each college and university has the responsibility and the authority to determine the requirements and course offerings of its programs in accordance with its institutional mission. These requirements and course offerings shall be published and communicated to students and the public. Colleges and universities shall treat transfer students and native students on an equitable basis. In particular, all students shall be expected to meet equivalent standards for regular admission to programs and to satisfy comparable program requirements.

The following processes supplement the Umbrella Policy. They outline how to:

1. Revise lower division baccalaureate degree course requirements that impact **transfer students**.
2. Revise or create **transfer degree** agreements.
3. Withdraw from a **transfer degree** agreement.

Transfer Students refers to students with a statewide transfer associate degree who are transferring to a baccalaureate institution.

Transfer Degree refers to one of Washington's statewide transfer associate degrees. These include the Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA) associate degree, the Associate in Science-Transfer (AS-T) degree, and Major Related Programs (MRPs) based on the DTA or AS-T.

Process 1: Revising lower division baccalaureate degree course requirements that impact transfer students

Purpose: For revisions that are only made at the baccalaureate institution that may affect transfer students.

1. **Baccalaureate institution proposes revision** to lower division program requirements and/or courses.
2. **Institution determines if revision impacts a transfer student's** eligibility to enter a baccalaureate program or institution or affects the student's timely progress to degree completion.
 - a. **If revision does not impact a transfer student**, the institution makes the revision at the school, college, department, or institutional levels. It also publishes and communicates the revision to students, the public, and community and technical colleges. The revision is immediately effective; however, the institution shall institute a two-year grace period for transfer students who may be unintentionally negatively affected by the revision.
 - b. **If revision impacts a transfer student**, the institution will provide written notification to the Joint Transfer Council (JTC) when formally adopting the revision. The institution also publishes and communicates the revision to students and the public.
 - i. **When JTC receives the notification**, a two-year grace period begins before the revision is in effect for transfer students. At the end of the grace period, all transfer students are expected to meet the receiving institution's new requirements
 - ii. **JTC determines if revision requires an amendment to one or more transfer agreements**. If so, JTC will follow Process 2.

Process 2: Revising or creating statewide transfer associate degree agreements

Purpose: To change the DTA or AS-T or to change or create an MRP.

1. **Proposal place on JTC agenda through one of the following methods:**
 - An institution with a proposed revision to a transfer degree agreement or a proposal for a new transfer degree agreement may ask a JTC member to place the proposal on the JTC agenda.²
 - If JTC determines that a baccalaureate institution's lower division revision requires an amendment to one or more transfer agreements as outlined in Process 1, then the proposal is placed on the JTC agenda.³
2. **JTC discussion:**⁴
 - Should the proposal go forward for broad discussion?
 - Who needs to be informed of the proposal?
 - What is potential impact on transfer students? How does it affect a student's eligibility to enter a baccalaureate degree program or institution or affect the student's timely progress to degree completion?
 - How much time is needed for discussion?
 - Does the proposal meet transfer policy?
 - When would the proposal go into effect?
 - If the proposal is a new MRP, JTC will determine if it meets all of the following:
 - The number of courses specified as preparation for the major and needed in the first two years is substantial.
 - Several institutions award the bachelor's degree in the field.
 - A credit gap exists: Total number of credits earned by transfer students who graduate is substantially higher than credits earned by students who started at a baccalaureate institution.
 - Most transfer students show a pattern of under-preparation.
 - The major is in high demand by students.
3. **Workgroup facilitates broad discussion among stakeholders:** If needed, JTC will charge a workgroup to define a process and timeline for discussions within and among institutions, Intercollegiate Relations Commission (ICRC), faculty, staff, students, and others.
4. **JTC discussion:** If needed, JTC will discuss further to resolve any lingering concerns among stakeholders.
5. **Share draft recommendation among stakeholders:** Include rationale for the recommendation.
6. **JTC recommendation:** If there is stakeholder support for the draft recommendation, JTC will recommend that the academic leadership of the institutions party to the agreement under consideration approve the recommendation at their earliest convenience. On the date of implementation, a two-year grace period begins before the revision is in effect for transfer students. At the end of the grace period, all transfer students are expected to meet the transfer agreement's new requirements.
7. **Academic leadership approvals:** The Washington State Instruction Commission (IC) for Community and Technical Colleges, the Interinstitutional Committee of Academic Officers (ICAO), and representatives of the academic leadership of each independent institution party to the agreement will determine whether to sign the updated or new agreement.
8. **Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) maintains agreement:** WSAC will collect signatures of participating institutions and catalog the final agreement. WSAC is responsible for updating, publishing, sharing, and maintaining the agreement. By virtue of WSAC staff participation in JTC, the Council will be updated on the policy discussion as the proposal moves through this process. The Council of Presidents, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and Independent Colleges of Washington will notify institutions.

Process 3: Withdrawing from a statewide transfer associate degree agreement

Purpose: For baccalaureate institutions that want to withdraw from accepting a transfer degree.

1. **Notify JTC:** A signatory institution that no longer wants to accept a transfer degree will notify JTC in writing that they are withdrawing from the agreement.
2. **Two-Year Grace Period Begins:** When JTC receives the notification, a two-year grace period begins before the institution's withdrawal affects transfer students. At the end of the grace period, the withdrawing institution will no longer accept the transfer degree.

¹ Umbrella Policy. <http://www.wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/PolicyonIntercollegeTransferandArticulation-UmbrellaPolicy1986.pdf>

² Proposals must be received by the fall meeting. JTC will aim to complete this process by the subsequent spring meeting. This timeline may change depending on the proposal's complexity.

³ Amendments may not be needed for adjustments that can be addressed in an agreement's "clarifications" or "notes" section. These adjustments do not need to go through this process.

⁴ Discussion shall include the Washington Student Achievement Council, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Independent Colleges of Washington, and Council of Presidents due to their membership in JTC.