

Connecticut State Universities and Colleges Board of Regents for Higher Education Policy Statement on Associate Degrees

The Associate Degree

CSCU associate degrees comprise two types:

1. **A.A.S. Degrees:** Degrees that provide skills and knowledge, often in the form of a credential or qualification, that allow for direct entry into the work force; these degrees may serve as transfer degrees with or without a guarantee that additional credits will not be needed at the baccalaureate level within the CSCU system
2. **A.A. and A.S. Degrees:** These degrees are of two types:
 - a. **CSCU Transfer Degrees:** Degrees that comprise 60-61 credits for transfer equally to all Connecticut State Universities that offer the degree program, and to Charter Oak State College if it offers the degree program, with no loss of credit and full junior year status; these degrees will each be designated as **CSCU Pathway Transfer A. A. and A.S. Degree: [Discipline Name] Studies**
 - b. Degrees without a guarantee that additional credits will not be needed to transfer within the CSCU system; such degrees may include transfer agreements with colleges outside the CSCU system; some A.S. degrees may be career degrees

All degrees granted by the BOR to students will clearly identify the purpose or purposes they serve. In most cases, A.A. and A.S. degrees designed for transfer to CSCU institutions will follow Transfer and Articulation Policy (TAP) guidelines and processes to become **CSCU Pathway Transfer A. A. and A.S. Degree: [Discipline Name] Studies** within the CSCU system. A.A.S. Degrees, whose only purpose is to provide qualifications for direct entry into the work force, will not be required to follow TAP guidelines and processes. A.S. degrees that are designed for direct entry into the work force may receive partial or complete exemption from TAP guidelines and processes. In all cases, when an A.A. or A.S. degree is not TAP compliant, the extent to which such degrees provide for transfer should be clearly identified. A.A. and A.S. degrees subject to outside accreditation may receive partial to complete exemption from TAP compliance in order to remain accredited. Degrees that are part of a larger consortium of articulations that include institutions outside the CSCU system may also receive partial or complete exemption.

Process for Creation of New Associate Transfer Degrees

All new **A.A. and A.S. degrees** should be screened by chief academic officers, division directors and campus Framework and Implementation Review Committee representatives for transfer possibilities within the CSCU system. Faculty creating associate transfer degrees should consult with the TAP Co-Managers. Only in exceptional cases – when, for instance, programs are not available at all campuses – should new transfer articulation agreements be made between one or several community colleges and fewer than all four-year CSCU campuses and Charter Oak. Even when such agreements are pursued, they should engage the process for creating transfer degrees outlined in the TAP Implementation Plan included as an appendix to this policy.

1. When a degree discipline has already been through the TAP process and completed an A.A. or A.S. pathway degree, then the TAP Pathway Degree will serve as the transfer degree for all community colleges. If a new A.A. or A.S. degree within the discipline targets a specific program or programs at the CSCU four-year schools that the existing TAP Pathway Degree will not serve, then a discipline-based work group will be convened to create a new CSCU TAP Pathway Degree. Campuses may propose changes to the TAP Pathway Degree in any discipline, but that change must go through the TAP process and be made for all CSCU institutions that can offer the program or degree.

2. When an A.A. or A.S. degree is proposed in a discipline that has not been part of the TAP process, the proposal should be submitted to the TAP Co-Managers who will help to make the decision about whether a work group should be formed to create a system-wide pathway degree.

3. If an A.A. or A.S. degree seeks to provide for transfer to one or more schools outside of the CSCU system, and its discipline has not already gone through the TAP process and completed a pathway degree, it should be vetted for possible TAP compliance and, to the extent possible, fulfill TAP guidelines. Such degrees must clearly specify the institutions they transfer to and should provide for seamless transfer to those institutions. Unless there is a compelling reason for exception, if the degree discipline has been through the TAP process and completed a pathway degree, then the proposed degree should follow 1 above. Every effort should be made for articulation agreements to match to CSCU TAP transfer degrees.

Maintenance of TAP Associate CSCU Pathway Transfer Degrees

Each pathway degree will be overseen by a work group of faculty from the discipline, one from each of the 17 colleges and universities; the group will meet as needed, but not less often than annually, to review the pathway and any necessary amendments to it. Any proposed changes to the TAP Pathway Degree must be vetted through this work group and, when appropriate, relevant governance processes at each campus.

If changes are made in any TAP degree program at the four-year institutions that offer the program, that change must be clearly communicated to the TAP Co-Managers who will then ensure that such changes are reflected in catalogues at all relevant CSCU institutions. If such changes affect the transferability of credits within the existing TAP Pathway Degree, then the appropriate work group must meet to make any changes necessary to maintain the full transferability of the pathway degree. A student will follow the degree requirements and policies in place at the community college and receiving four-year school at the time that he or she declares as a pathway degree student.

Existing A.A. and A.S. Degrees for Transfer within the CSCU System

Existing transfer agreements between community colleges and state universities or Charter Oak will continue unless the discipline of the degree becomes part of the TAP. In such cases, the existing agreement will be replaced by the pathway created by TAP.

Existing A.A. and A.S. Degrees for Transfer outside the CSCU System

Such agreements will continue and should clearly list the receiving schools and the extent to which the degree will transfer and count toward graduation. If degrees provide for transfer outside the CSCU system and no formal articulation agreements are in place for such transfer, then the pathway degree will take precedent with the assumption that the pathway degree will transfer no less effectively. The pathway degree should, in most cases, provide the frame for articulation agreements with institutions outside the CSCU system.

Existing Other A.A. and A.S. Degrees

Existing A.A. and A.S. degrees that provide for neither direct entry into a career or for seamless transfer to a four-year should continue but should clearly indicate their purpose. They should be screened for possible compliance with TAP guidelines.