

Regulation to Foster Undergraduate Transfer Student Success

- I. The purpose of this regulation is to assist constituent institutions with the implementation of transfer procedures in a manner that complies with the intent and directives included in UNC Policy 400.1.5.
- II. Goal.
 - A. The overall goal is to improve student progression and timely degree completion by facilitating the clear and consistent transfer of course credits for students transferring between a UNC institution and a North Carolina community college. To achieve this, the UNC System will focus on improving the guidance and governance of transfer processes by:
 1. Establishing rules, timelines, and processes for the creation, maintenance, and publication of Transfer Guides;
 2. Implementing official directives for the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA); and
 3. Establishing clear rules and procedures for transfer credit articulation.
- III. Definitions
 - A. "AACRAO." American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers provides policy-based guidance and training for higher education professionals.
 - B. "Articulation Agreement." A written agreement between post-secondary institutions that helps students transfer between programs. These include bilateral agreements (between one university and one community college), multilateral (between one university and more than one community college), and uniform (agreements that focus on specific degrees or disciplines).
 - C. "Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA)." A statewide agreement governing the transfer of credits between NC Community Colleges and UNC System Universities, providing certain assurances to a transferring student.
 - D. "Comprehensive Articulation Agreement Transfer Course List." A comprehensive list of courses that are guaranteed to transfer from North Carolina community colleges to UNC universities. The courses are designated in the following categories: General Education, Pre-Major/Elective, and Universal General Education Transfer Component (UGETC).
 - E. "Final Transfer Credit Evaluation." A final official transfer credit evaluation is provided to students by the receiving UNC institution after a preliminary transfer credit evaluation and upon

receipt of all final, updated transcripts from the student. This final transfer credit evaluation reflects transferable coursework accepted by the university from all official transcripts for courses that were not yet completed at the time of the student's application and when admission was offered.

F. "General Education Curriculum." Any coursework published on the General Education curriculum page in the institution's University Catalog is required of all students and consists of the coursework from which the General Education Requirements are fulfilled.

G. "General Education Waiver." A waiver of any General Education coursework that a university might otherwise require. UNC System constituent institutions shall grant a General Education Waiver to every student transferring into their institution who has earned an AA or AS degree from a North Carolina community college as outlined by the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement. Additionally, a General Education Waiver is to be awarded to eligible students under the protections of other Uniform Articulation Agreements, as well as UNC to UNC transfer students who have completed General Education requirements at another UNC institution and can be extended to other transfer students in qualifying situations determined by the receiving institution (I.E. bilateral/multilateral agreements, etc.)

H. "Graduation Requirements." The specific criteria that students must fulfill to successfully complete their academic program and receive a degree or diploma from a UNC constituent institution. Universities with institution-wide graduation requirements, separate from the General Education Curriculum, can still require students transferring via the CAA to complete the graduation requirements when a General Education Waiver is issued.

I. "North Carolina Community College System Common Course Library." A list of courses written for the associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs offered in the North Carolina Community College System. Individual colleges select courses from the Library to design all curriculum programs.

J. "Preliminary Transfer Credit Evaluation." An initial official transfer credit evaluation provided to students by the receiving UNC institution that reflects transferable coursework completed by the student at the time of application and accepted by the university from all official transcripts received at the time admission is offered.

K. "Transfer Credit Appeal Procedure." If a student from an NCCCS college believes the terms of the CAA have not been honored by a UNC constituent institution to which the student has been admitted, the student may invoke the CAA Transfer Student and Credit Appeal procedure. Students can appeal credit decisions from the preliminary and final transfer credit evaluations by using the Transfer Student and Credit Appeal Portal, after exhausting the institutional credit appeals processes as described in the CAA.

L. "Transfer Guides." Major-specific resources created by constituent institutions that identify community college courses in alignment with a university major and that lead to associate degree completion, admission into the major at the university, and baccalaureate degree completion. These are published and maintained by the UNC System Office and are available on constituent institution's websites and CFNC. These replace the previously designated Baccalaureate Degree Plans.

M. “Transfer Student and Credit Appeal Portal.” An online tool created by the UNC System Office to facilitate the digital processing and decisioning of Transfer Credit Appeal Procedures.

N. “Transfer Student.” As stated in UNC Policy 700.1.1.2[R], *Regulation on Transfer Student Admission*, an undergraduate transfer student is one who has attended another postsecondary institution after graduating from high school.

O. “Universal General Education Transfer Component (UGETC).” A set of foundational courses at North Carolina community colleges that will meet certain general education requirements at all UNC institutions.

IV. Responsibilities of Constituent Institutions.

A. Transfer Guides

1. Transfer Guides replace the Baccalaureate Degree Plans (BDPs) first introduced in the CAA in 2014. Requirements for the creation, compliance, and maintenance of Transfer Guides are the same as the previously named BDPs, as detailed in existing CAA agreements.

2. Transfer Guides are to be published annually and can only be substantively amended during the academic year in which they are published due to extraordinary circumstances.

3. Each Transfer Guide shall indicate the academic year in which they can be utilized by North Carolina community college students and mark the first year of the four-year applicability of the recommendations as mentioned in the CAA. Per the CAA, UNC constituent institutions must honor and accept the courses detailed on a Transfer Guide or BDP that were in place at the time of the student’s initial enrollment at a North Carolina community college, if they complete their associate degree and transfer within four years of initial community college enrollment. Additional details regarding this provision can be found in the CAA.

a. Every effort should be made to ensure university curriculum changes that take place during the four-year enrollment timeline outlined in the CAA do not disadvantage or negatively impact the transfer and applicability of credits toward degree completion upon enrollment; departments will be expected to work with students who are negatively affected by any curriculum changes to mitigate any of these effects, including using course substitutions and catalog year changes as often as needed.

4. Publication of the Transfer Guides will only occur by submitting the draft Transfer Guide to the UNC System Office through the web-based tool, after which each Transfer Guide will be published after receiving approval from the UNC System Office.

a. Universities cannot publish Transfer Guides independently on their own websites. All universities are required to utilize this coordinated process for

submission and approval. Transfer Guides will be published by the UNC System Office on a centralized website.

b. Universities may create and publish transfer resources, separate from the Transfer Guides, for bilateral/multilateral agreements and/or other discipline-specific UAAs not supported by the Transfer Guide project.

5. Each year, universities are required to make edits and updates to their Transfer Guides between January 15 and May 15 to go into effect for the fall semester of that same calendar year. The UNC System Office will coordinate the editing and updating process.

a. Universities whose annual curriculum updates are not finalized by May 15 will still be required to create and publish an accurate Transfer Guide and are required to comply with IV.A.3.a of this regulation should changes to the curriculum not be finalized in time to be published on the annual Transfer Guide.

6. In the event of any discrepancy between versions of Transfer Guides published on individual constituent institution websites and the official UNC System website, the version published by the UNC System will be the official version of record.

7. Responsibility for updates.

a. Each constituent institution must delegate a Transfer Guide point of contact. When personnel changes occur, it is the responsibility of the constituent institution to appoint a new point of contact and inform the UNC System Office of the change.

b. Each constituent institution is responsible for updating Transfer Guides during the annual schedule.

i. Any changes needed outside of the annual update period are not guaranteed to be made immediately. Universities will need to request off-cycle edits by contacting the UNC System Office and will be permitted if inaccurate NCCC course recommendations or admissions requirements are published. Other changes, including curriculum reviews, will be reflected in future Transfer Guides.

B. Articulation Agreements (Comprehensive, Uniform, Bilateral, and Multilateral) & Related Items.

1. Each constituent institution shall grant the General Education Waiver for students who earn their AA or AS at a North Carolina community college before transferring. General education requirements included in this waiver are those specified as part of the General Education curriculum outlined in the constituent institution's Undergraduate Catalog.

a. This applies only to any students who have earned an AA or AS from a North Carolina community college, regardless of total credits earned (e.g., less

than 60) or how the community college applied any previously earned credit toward associate degree completion.

i. It is recommended that universities award equivalent course credit that aligns with the course equivalency determined by the North Carolina community college as applied to associate degree completion; however, all universities must award Credit in accordance with UNC Policy 700.10.1[R].

2. The General Education Waiver awarded to transfer students transferring under the protections of the CAA and/or any UAA that specifies a General Education waiver, cannot be rescinded after successful transfer to the constituent institution (i.e., if the student changes a major, additional courses may be required to meet major requirements, but once awarded, the General Education Waiver cannot be rescinded).

3. UNC universities can still require AA and AS degree earners from North Carolina community colleges, upon receiving the General Education Waiver, to complete other institution-specific or degree-specific graduation requirements. These requirements, however, must be clearly identified and specified as separate from the General Education curriculum outlined in the University Catalog. It is expected that universities with graduation requirements beyond the General Education curriculum ensure said requirements do not prevent transfer students who have earned an AA or AS from North Carolina community colleges from progressing with major-specific requirements upon transferring.

a. Additional institution-specific or degree-specific graduation requirements must be clearly stated in each Transfer Guide and on a constituent institution's transfer website.

b. It is recommended that universities with graduation requirements currently embedded within or categorized as part of the General Education curriculum, separate those graduation requirements from General Education requirements to ensure General Education waivers are awarded appropriately to eligible North Carolina community college students. It is recommended that this change be reflected in the university's course Catalog, to clearly show that general education requirements are separate from graduation requirements.

4. As required in the CAA, all universities must allow students to appeal preliminary and final transfer credit evaluations. The UNC System Office has a digital, online tool to facilitate credit appeals related to the CAA called the Transfer Student and Credit Appeal Portal. Additional details of the appeals process can be found in the [CAA](#).

a. Each constituent institution is required to host their own digital, online process for handling institution-specific transfer student and credit appeals. This tool must be developed and deployed for incoming Spring 2026 transfer students.

b. Each constituent institution must inform the UNC System Office of the location of their online appeals tool by March 1, 2026. If that location changes, each constituent institution must update the UNC System Office within 30 days.

c. The UNC System Transfer Student and Credit Appeal Portal, along with individual constituent institution transfer credit appeals processes, must be linked and made readily available to students on the primary transfer website of each constituent institution.

i. Additionally, universities must provide appeals process information to students along with the student's preliminary and final transfer credit evaluation. Students can appeal credit decisions from both the preliminary and final transfer credit evaluations, following the appeals process guidelines outlined in the CAA.

5. Additional articulation agreements.

a. If Uniform Articulation Agreements indicate that earning the associate degree included in that agreement guarantees that general education requirements are complete, that must hold true regardless of the number of credits transferred in and cannot be removed if a student changes their major of study.

i. All UNC universities must collect and review all existing bilateral and multilateral articulation agreements with North Carolina community colleges and other postsecondary institutions.

ii. All agreements still in effect must be sent to the UNC System Office by Spring 2026 to be maintained in a public repository.

iii. All agreements must be reviewed by the universities every two years beginning in academic year 2027-28 to determine their effectiveness, applicability, and ongoing utility. Updates will be sent to the UNC System Office, including which agreements have been terminated.

iv. Any new bilateral and multilateral articulation agreements must be shared with the UNC System Office (for the purpose of including them in a central repository) within 30 days of being signed.

6. Additional General Education Waiver considerations

a. Students who complete general education requirements at a UNC institution and then transfer to another UNC institution will receive a General Education Waiver at their transfer destination.

i. It is the responsibility of each UNC institution to indicate on a student's official transcript that general education requirements have been completed.

C. Transfer Credit Articulation Reviews

1. Effective for incoming transfer students beginning Spring 2026, each constituent institution will have no more than 15 business days after offering admission and receiving all required official transcripts to review the transfer student's transcript(s), determine accurate transfer equivalency information, and notify the student of their transfer credit by providing a preliminary transfer credit evaluation.

a. For transfer students with international transfer credit and/or those with 4 or more transcripts, universities will have no more than 30 business days after offering admission and receiving all required official transcripts to review the transfer student's transcript(s), determine accurate transfer equivalency information, and notify the student of their transfer credit by providing a preliminary transfer credit evaluation.

b. The timelines above apply to transfer students who have been admitted for the upcoming term.

i. For transfer students who apply and are admitted more than a semester in advance (ex: applying during a fall semester for the following summer/fall term), universities are encouraged to make admissions decisions in a timely manner and are required to provide preliminary transfer credit evaluations to students no more than 15 business days after census of the term proceeding the term in which the student has been admitted.

c. Equivalencies will be determined based on the AACRAO¹ recommendation that 70% of content should match to create an equivalency; no equivalency will be expected to have a 100% match.

d. Universities must provide transfer student and credit appeals procedure information to students with the results of transfer credit evaluations. Additional information about the Transfer Student and Credit Appeals Portal can be found in section IV.B.4 of this regulation.

2. Admitted transfer students shall have their final transfer credit evaluations (reflecting coursework from all official transcripts received by the university) no later than 24 hours prior to the end of the add/drop deadline of the students' first term of enrollment.

a. This applies across all terms in the academic year.

¹ https://www.aacrao.org/docs/default-source/signature-initiative-docs/trending-topic-docs/transfer/guide-to-best-practices.pdf?sfvrsn=4820bb55_6

- b. Transfer students who apply and are admitted within 15 business days of the add/drop deadline should receive timely notification of their transcript evaluation, understanding that it may not be possible to complete by the add/drop deadline.
 - c. Universities will develop and deploy communication for admitted transfer students reminding them to submit updated official transcripts if coursework was in progress at the time of applying to help ensure students receive transfer credit for all eligible coursework.
3. Every three years, the CAA Transfer Course List (found in the CAA) must be reviewed by each constituent institution to ensure ongoing and consistent equivalency decisions.
 - a. Constituent institutions will use the NCCCS Common Course Library during this process to review course descriptions, learning outcomes, prerequisites, and co-requisites, and to establish appropriate equivalencies for CAA courses.
 - b. For every UGETC course on the CAA transfer course list, universities must award 1:1 equivalency, unless that course is not offered by the constituent institution.
 - c. For pre-major/elective courses on the CAA Transfer Course List, 1:1 equivalency should be awarded if an equivalent course is offered at the constituent institution, using AACRAO's recommendation of 70% content match as the standard for review. If a pre-major/elective course is determined to not be an appropriate equivalent, justification must be submitted to the UNC System Office and will be recorded.
4. For other elective courses from any postsecondary institution, if the course is not offered at the constituent institution, elective credit may be awarded.
 - a. Electives should be used sparingly, unless it is beneficial to the student.
 - b. Constituent institutions should interpret this guidance as a means to decrease a student's time-to-degree and the total cost of their education. There should be consideration given to differentiating between general electives and major electives.
 - c. The transferability of credit is important, but the applicability of that credit to a student's degree and timely graduation must be the primary motivator when reviewing equivalencies.
5. By the beginning of the Spring 2026 term, each constituent institution must clearly state their policy for thresholds and processes related to evaluating transfer

student transcripts, including the timeline for reviewing transcripts and returning results to students. These policies must be approved by the institution's Board of Trustees.

V. Responsibilities of the UNC System Office. The UNC System Office will:

A. Transfer Credit Articulation Reviews

1. Ensure that transfer credit articulation reviews are conducted within the timeline described in this regulation by conducting evaluations regularly.

B. Reporting to the Board of Governors

1. Compile an annual report of transfer activities, data, course equivalency data, and overall outcomes, including constituent institution compliance with these regulations.

C. Compliance with the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement.

1. Report to the Transfer Advisory Committee semi-annually the status of constituent institution compliance with the statewide agreement and report annually the number and percentage of Transfer Guides that are incomplete by June 30 of that year.

D. Provide collection resources to constituent institutions as means for submitting the institution-specific agreements, transfer credit equivalency justification, and other items outlined in this regulation.

VI. Evaluation.

A. The effects of this regulation, at the level of the UNC System and across its constituent institutions, shall be assessed by the UNC System Office across two years of implementation, and then on a regular cycle. Recommendations for altering this regulation shall be made accordingly to the president based on appropriate evidence.

VII. Reporting Requirements for Constituent Institutions.

A. Using guidelines from the UNC System Office, institutions will submit by June 30, 2025 a report describing the planning for and implementation of new policies and practices pertaining to transfer articulation credit reviews. These will be reviewed and approved by the UNC System Office to meet the deadline for publication of these policies and practices by the beginning of the Spring 2026 term (see IV.A.5 of this regulation).

B. Using guidelines from the UNC System Office, institutions will report at the conclusion of each semester the number of transcripts reviewed, a transfer credit analysis, number of transcript reviews that did not meet established timeline in IV.C.1 of this regulation, and number of transfer credit appeals submitted to the constituent institution.

VIII. Effective Date. The requirements of this regulation shall be effective on the date of adoption of this regulation by the president.

IX. Relation to State Laws. The foregoing regulation as adopted by the president is meant to supplement, and does not purport to supplant or modify, those statutory enactments which may govern or relate to the subject matter of this regulation.