

**INDEPENDENT COMPREHENSIVE ARTICULATION AGREEMENT  
BETWEEN  
SIGNATORY INSTITUTIONS OF THE  
NORTH CAROLINA INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES  
AND  
THE NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM**

**Approved by the Presidents of the Signatory Institutions of the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities and the State Board of the North Carolina Community College System**

**Approved by Independent Transfer Advisory Committee on January 26, 2007  
Approved by the State Board of Community Colleges on July 20, 2007**

(You may also visit [www.ncicu.org](http://www.ncicu.org) to view this document and appendices.)

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This document contains the articulation agreement in sections I-IV. Supporting documentation is provided in the appendices.

## **I. PURPOSE**

The Independent Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (ICAA) between signatory institutions of the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU) and the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) is intended to provide smooth transfer for community college students who wish to continue their education at an NCICU institution which has signed the agreement, referred to hereafter as signatory institutions. First, the agreement establishes a general education core which, when completed, substitutes for the general education core of the signatory institution of the NCICU. Second, the agreement establishes a number of pre-major programs which prepare the transferring community college student for admission to the corresponding major at the NCICU institution. The ultimate goal of this agreement is seamless articulation from community college to the NCICU college or university with a minimum loss of credit or repetition of work. The signatory institutions which adopt this agreement do so for the benefit of the transferring student. The signatory institutions are listed in Appendix A.

## **II. ASSUMPTIONS AND INTENT**

The ICAA rests upon several assumptions. The primary assumption is that institutions recognize the professional integrity of post-secondary institutions that are regionally accredited for college transfer programs. All courses designated as approved for college transfer under this agreement will be taught by faculty who meet Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges credential requirements. A secondary assumption is that sufficient commonality exists in the lower-division general education requirements currently offered among all colleges and universities to develop a common general education component at community colleges for the purpose of transfer.

The general education transfer core is similar to each signatory institution's lower-division general education requirements but is not identical in that specific courses may differ. The underlying concept is that competencies and understandings developed by general education programs as a whole are more important than individual courses; therefore, the block transfer of a core is important. The general education requirements of the receiving institutions remain in effect for all students not participating in this ICAA; any upper-division general education requirements and graduation requirements remain unaffected by this agreement. Institution-wide, lower-division general education requirements serve as the starting point for determining specific general education courses in each baccalaureate major. The specific lower-level courses required for each major are the subject of the pre-major transfer articulation agreements developed by joint discipline committees. The history of the ICAA is provided in Appendix B.

## **III. POLICIES**

The ICAA applies to all fifty-eight North Carolina community colleges and all signatory institutions of the NCICU. The ICAA is applicable to all North Carolina community college students who have completed the 44-hour general education core or graduated with an AA or AS degree and transfer to a signatory institution of the NCICU. The regulations for implementation of the ICAA were originally approved by Presidents of signatory institutions of the NCICU and the State Board of Community Colleges. The Independent Transfer Advisory Committee (ITAC) oversees refinements of the

regulations and minor changes. Significant changes will be brought to the Presidents of signatory institutions of the NCICU and the State Board of Community Colleges for review.

#### **A. Independent Transfer Advisory Committee (ITAC)**

Authority to interpret the ICAA policy rests with the ITAC. The ITAC procedures are outlined in Appendix C. The ITAC is an eight-member committee appointed by the President of the NCICU and the President of the NCCCS. The members of the ITAC are listed in Appendix D.

Questions concerning the ICAA policy interpretations should be directed to the President of the NCICU or the NCCCS chief academic officer with an explanation of the institutional policy that may (appear to) be in conflict with ICAA policy. Unresolved questions will be forwarded to the ITAC for interpretation.

Questions about the transferability of the course work under the ICAA or any proposed changes to the policies, the general education core, or pre-major articulation agreements must be addressed by the ITAC. Changes to curriculum standards for the associate in arts, associate in science, and the associate in fine arts degree programs require the approval of the Presidents of signatory institutions of the NCICU and the State Board of Community Colleges.

#### **B. ICAA Student Grievance Procedure**

If a transfer student perceives that the terms of the ICAA have not been honored, he or she may follow the ICAA Student Grievance Procedure as outlined in Appendix E.

### **IV. REGULATIONS**

#### **A. Transfer of Credits**

The ICAA establishes the procedures governing the transfer of credits for students who transfer from a North Carolina Community College to a signatory institution of the NCICU. The ICAA does not address admission to a specific institution or to a specific major within an institution.

##### **1. Eligibility**

To be eligible for the transfer of credits under the ICAA, the student must graduate from the community college with an Associate in Arts (AA) or Associate in Science (AS) degree or have completed the 44-hour general education core as defined below and have an overall Grade Point Average (GPA) of at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale and a grade of "C" or better in all CAA courses.

##### **2. Definition of the 44-hour General Education Core**

The associate in arts and associate in science degree programs in the NCCCS require a total of 64-65 semester hours credit for graduation (see Appendix F). Within the overall total, the signatory institutions of the NCICU and the NCCCS have developed a general education core component. This

core reflects the distribution of discipline areas commonly included in institution-wide, lower-division general education requirements for the baccalaureate degree.

The general education core includes study in the areas of English composition, humanities and fine arts, natural sciences and mathematics, and social and behavioral sciences. Within the core, community colleges must include opportunities for the achievement of competence in reading, writing, oral communication, fundamental mathematical skills, and basic computer use. Students must meet the receiving institution's foreign language and/or health and physical education requirements, if applicable, prior to or after transfer to the senior institution. The semester hours credit (SHC) distribution of the general education core is as follows:

**English Composition (6 SHC)**

Two English composition courses are required.

**Humanities/Fine Arts (9-12 SHC)**

Four courses (AA) or three courses (AS) must be selected from at least three of the following discipline areas: art, dance, drama, foreign languages, interdisciplinary humanities, literature, music, philosophy, and religion. At least one course must be a literature course. (3 SHC in Speech/Communication may be substituted for 3 SHC in Humanities/Fine Arts. Speech/Communication may not substitute for the literature requirement.)

**Social/Behavioral Sciences (9-12 SHC)**

Four courses (AA) or three courses (AS) must be selected from at least three of the following discipline areas: anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, psychology, and sociology. At least one course must be a history course.

**Natural Sciences/Mathematics (14-20 SHC)**

*Natural Sciences* (8 SHC): At least two courses, including accompanying laboratory work, must be selected from among the biological and physical science disciplines. (A minimum two-course sequence from general biology, general chemistry, or general physics is required for the AS degree.)  
*Mathematics* (6 SHC): At least one introductory mathematics course (college algebra, trigonometry, calculus, etc.) must be selected; the other unit may be selected from among other quantitative subjects, such as computer science and statistics.

The specific number and distribution of courses used to fulfill the requirement in each of these areas will be identified by each community college as meeting its own general education requirements. The courses will be drawn from those courses designated in the North Carolina Community College Combined Course Library as being appropriate as part of a general education core. This will preserve the autonomy of each community college to develop its own general education program, including those aspects that make its program unique. Students are directed to the pre-major articulation agreements for specifics regarding courses and distribution (see Appendix F).

The general education core component, if completed successfully by a student with a grade of "C" or better in each course, shall be portable and transferable as a block across the NCCCS and from that system to signatory institutions of the NCICU, whether or not the transferring student has earned the associate degree. An institution to which the student is transferring may choose to accept additional credit hours.

### **3. Procedures for the Transfer of Credits**

- a. The ICAA enables North Carolina community college graduates of two-year associate in arts and associate in science degree programs who are admitted to signatory institutions of the NCICU to transfer with junior status.
- b. Community college students who have completed the general education core will be considered to have fulfilled the institution-wide, lower-division general education requirements of the receiving institution.
- c. Signatory institutions of the NCICU cannot place requirements on students transferring under the ICAA that are not required of their native students.
- d. Community college graduates of these programs who have earned 64 semester hours in approved transfer courses with a grade of "C" or better and an overall GPA of at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale will receive at least 64 semester hours of academic credit upon admission to a signatory institution.
- e. Requirements for admission to some major programs may require additional pre-specialty courses beyond the pre-major taken at the community college. Students entering such programs may need more than two academic years of course work to complete the baccalaureate degree, depending on requirements of the program.
- f. All courses approved for transfer in the ICAA are designated as fulfilling general education, pre-major or elective requirements (see Appendix H). While general education and pre-major courses may also be used as electives, elective courses may not be used to fulfill general education requirements.

### **B. Procedures for the Transfer of Credit for Special Populations**

#### **1. Transfer of general education core courses for non-graduates**

Upon admission to a signatory institution of the NCICU, students who have completed the general education core with the proper distribution of hours, but who have not completed the associate degree, will be considered to have fulfilled the institution-wide, lower-division general education requirements of the receiving institution. To be eligible for inclusion in this policy, a student must have an overall GPA of at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale at the time of transfer and a grade of "C" or better in all core courses. A non-graduate who has completed the general education core should be advised at the institution to take pre-major or cognate courses based on his or her chosen major.

The transcripts of students who transfer before completing the general education core will be evaluated on a course-by-course basis by the receiving institution. The transferring student who has not completed the core must meet the receiving institution's general education requirements.

#### **2. Transfer of pre-major agreements or professional specialty courses**

Beyond the general education core, a program of study leading to the associate degree contains courses related to a student's major or program emphasis. Joint academic discipline committees developed system-wide guidelines for community college curricula that will prepare students for intended majors or professional specializations at the baccalaureate level. Statewide pre-majors for AA and AS degree programs have been developed for specific major fields (see Appendix F). If a pre-major articulation

agreement requires or recommends 64-65 SHC, then it becomes incumbent upon the community college to make appropriate adjustments in its local graduation requirements.

### **3. Transfer of Associate in Fine Arts (AFA) degree course credits**

Upon admission to a signatory institution of the NCICU, a community college student who was enrolled in an AFA degree program will receive credit for those courses designated for college transfer if a grade of “C” or better was received. The receiving institution will determine whether the courses will count as general education, major, or elective credit. Because the AFA curriculum standard includes only 28 SHC for general education (see Appendix G), AFA students who transfer must meet the general education requirements of the receiving institution.

### **4. Transfer of Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree course credits**

Upon admission to a signatory institution of the NCICU, a community college student who was enrolled in an AAS degree program will receive credit for those courses designated for transfer if a grade of “C” or better was received.

Articulation of AAS degree programs will be handled on a bilateral articulation agreement basis rather than on a statewide basis. Under bilateral agreements, individual institutions and one or more community colleges may join in a collaborative effort to facilitate the transfer of students from AAS degree programs to baccalaureate degree programs.

### **5. Transfer of courses not originated at North Carolina community colleges**

Transfer credit for courses that originate at a UNC institution or signatory institution of the NCICU is acceptable as part of a student’s successfully completed 44-hour general education core or associate in arts or associate in science program under the ICAA.

Transfer courses which do not originate at a NC community college or at a UNC institution or a signatory institution of the NCICU may be used under the ICAA with the following stipulations:

- a) Courses must meet general education requirements;
- b) Courses must be from a regionally accredited institution; and
- c) Courses must total no more than twenty-five percent (four courses) of the general education core.

Advanced Placement (AP) course credits, awarded for a score of three or higher, are acceptable as part of a student's successfully completed 44-hour general education core under the ICAA. Credit for two successive courses can only be awarded with a score of five. Students who receive AP course credit at a community college but do not complete the general education core will have AP credit awarded on the basis of the receiving institution's AP policy.

All College Level Examination Program (CLEP) credit will be evaluated on the basis of the receiving institution's policy.

**C. Impact of the ICAA on articulation agreements in effect prior to Fall 2007**

Effective Fall 2007 the ICAA took precedence over bilateral articulation agreements established between NCICU signatory institutions and institutions of the NCCCS but did not necessarily preclude such agreements. Institution-to-institution articulation agreements that fall within the parameters of the ICAA and enhance transferability of students from community colleges to senior institutions are encouraged. Institutional articulation agreements conflicting with the CAA are not permitted.

**V. APPENDICES**

## **Appendix A**

### **Signatory Institutions of the NC Independent Colleges and Universities**

**Barton College**  
**Belmont Abbey College**  
**Bennett College for Women**  
**Brevard College**  
**Campbell University**  
**Catawba College**  
**Chowan University**  
**Gardner-Webb University**  
**Johnson C. Smith University**  
**Livingstone College**  
**Louisburg College**  
**Mars Hill College**  
**Montreat College**  
**Mount Olive College**  
**North Carolina Wesleyan College**  
**Peace College**  
**Pfeiffer University**  
**Queens University of Charlotte**  
**St. Andrews Presbyterian College**  
**Saint Augustine's College**  
**Salem College**  
**Shaw University**  
**Warren Wilson College**  
**Wingate University**

## Appendix B

### History

In 1995 the North Carolina General Assembly passed a bill to “simplify the transfer of credit” between one community college to another and between community colleges and constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina. House Bill 739 required the boards of the two public higher education sectors to develop a plan for the transfer of credits and a timetable for its implementation. As a first step in making a plan possible, the legislation required the State Board of Community Colleges to implement a common course numbering system, including common course descriptions, for all community college programs. A progress report was submitted to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Education on March 1, 1996.

The following summer the Legislature passed Senate Bill 1161 to implement the recommendations of the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Education, essentially a compromise between the two public higher education systems. First, the two boards would develop a plan to provide students with accurate and understandable information regarding the transfer of credits. The plan would include provisions to increase the “adequacy and availability” of academic counseling for transfer students. Second, the boards would establish a timetable for the development of guidelines and transfer agreements for program majors, professional specializations, and associate in applied science degrees. A report was to be made within six months to the Education Oversight Committee. Third, the community colleges were to make any rule changes necessary to implement the plan, including policies and rules regarding the common course numbering system, Combined Course Library, reengineering initiative, and the system wide conversion to a semester-based academic year. Full implementation of the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA) happened September 1, 1997.

By that time the two boards already had approved plans and appointed members of the first Transfer Advisory Committee (TAC), made up of four community college representatives and four UNC representatives. The TAC, as it has come to be known, was charged with interpreting the CAA policies. The TAC first met on May 28, 1996. Faculty committees from the two sectors were charged with reaching consensus on which community college courses in each discipline were to be accepted for transfer at UNC institutions as part of the general education core. Additional joint academic committees developed curriculum programs for various majors to establish the major transfer articulation agreements. Community college graduates could now transfer to a UNC campus with junior class status, having completed the general education requirements of the receiving institution. A major transfer information system was then put in place.

In the fall of 1996, the Executive Committee of North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities discussed whether private colleges and universities should sign the CAA. Legislative leaders suggested that the agreement was broad enough to include private colleges and universities that wanted to participate. The decision was left to each institution. By the spring of 1998, 11 private colleges and universities had signed the agreement. One representative of independent colleges and universities was added to the TAC. By 2006, 23 private colleges participated in the CAA.

In 2006, the NCICU withdrew from the TAC in order to establish a new Independent TAC with four representatives of community colleges and four representatives of private colleges and universities. At their first meeting in the summer of 2006, the new TAC agreed to rewrite the CAA as it applied to transfers to private colleges and universities, tracking the public university transfer agreement as much

as possible. The result of that undertaking is the Independent Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (ITAC).

## **Appendix C**

### **Independent Transfer Advisory Committee Procedures**

Because articulation between the signatory institutions of the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU) and the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) is a dynamic process, occasional modifications to the ICAA may be necessary. These modifications may include the addition, deletion, and modification of courses on the transfer list, addition and revision of pre-major articulation agreements, and changes in course designation from general education core to electives. The ITAC will receive requests for modification only upon the recommendation of Presidents of signatory institutions of the NCICU or the chief academic officers of the NCCCS. Additions, deletions, and modifications may be subject to faculty review under the direction of the ITAC. Because the modification process involves faculty and administrative review, this process may require up to 12 months for final action.

Course work detailed under the ICAA general education core or under approved pre-major agreements will be accepted as agreed upon. Questions arising over the use of electives in meeting institution-specific graduation requirements may be appealed to the chief academic officer of the receiving institution.

#### **I. Procedures to Recommend Revision to the Transfer Course List**

Occasional revisions to the list of community college courses approved for transfer are necessary. Consequently, the following procedures will be used to recommend that specific revisions be made to the ICAA transfer course list.

#### **II. Revised Status of Course**

##### **a. Pre-Major/Elective Course Status to General Education Core Course Status**

Courses already identified on the list of approved transfer courses as pre-major/electives will be recommended as general education core courses following this procedure:

1. The Chief Academic Officer (CAO) of any signatory institution submits a written request for a change in course status to the NCCCS Vice President of Academic and Student Services. The request should include the rationale for the revised status.
2. The NCCCS Vice President of Academic and Student Services then submits the request for action to the ITAC thirty days prior to the ITAC meeting.
3. The ITAC reviews and acts upon the request.
4. The NCCCS Office will distribute notification of action taken to the requesting institution and the entire NCCCS if applicable. The NCICU ITAC co-chair will distribute notice of actions as appropriate to its colleges and universities.

**b. Addition/Deletion of Courses on Transfer List**

Because of accrediting issues and/or substantial impact of college transfer programs system-wide, courses in the Combined Course Library that are not on the transfer list will be recommended for inclusion or courses that are on the transfer list and that will be recommended for deletion will use the following process:

1. The CAO of any signatory institution or the CAO of a community college submits a written request to the NCCCS Vice President of Academic and Student Services for the addition of a course to the transfer list either as a pre-major/elective or as a general education core course or the removal of a course from the list.
2. The NCCCS Office acts on a community college request by soliciting a response from all community colleges approved to offer the course, and a two-thirds favorable response is required for the change to be pursued. The CAO at a signatory institution of the NCICU may seek input from its campuses as he/she deems appropriate.
3. The NCCCS Vice President of Academic and Student Services then submits the request for action to the ITAC thirty days prior to the ITAC meeting.
4. The TAC reviews and acts upon the request.
5. The NCCCS Office will distribute notification of action taken to the requesting institution or to the entire NCCCS, if applicable. The NCICU ITAC co-chair will distribute notice of actions as appropriate to its colleges and universities.

**c. Addition of a new course from the Combined Course Library (CCL) to the Transfer Course List**

Colleges often respond to their community needs by proposing the addition of new courses to the CCL. When these proposed courses are intended to be used in Associate in Arts (AA), Associate in Science (AS) or Associate in Fine Arts (AFA) programs, the following process should be used:

1. The CAO of a community college submits a written request to the NCCCS Vice President of Academic and Student Services for the addition of a new course to the CCL. This request should also indicate that the proposed course should be considered for addition to the Transfer Course List.
2. The NCCCS Office staff prepares the request of the addition of the CCL course for review by the Curriculum Review Committee (CRC).
3. The CRC will decide if the course is appropriate as an addition for the CCL.
4. If the CRC's action is favorable, the Vice President of Academic and Student Services will submit the request for action to the ITAC thirty days prior to the ITAC meeting.
5. The ITAC reviews and acts upon the request.

6. If the CRC approves the addition of the new course to the CCL, but the ITAC does not approve the addition of the course to the Transfer Course List, then the course will be designated for AAS use only or removed from the CCL depending on the intent of the initial request.

7. The NCCCS Office will distribute notification of action(s) taken to the requesting institution or to the entire NCCCS, if applicable.

## Appendix D

### Independent Transfer Advisory Committee

#### NC Community College System Members

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## **Appendix E**

### **Independent Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (ICAA) Student Grievance Procedure**

A student may file a grievance prior to or within the first six weeks of the beginning of the term for which admission was offered at the college or university. The student may terminate the grievance procedure at any point.

Step 1: Student obtains an ICAA Student Grievance Form from the admissions office of the college or university to which he/she was admitted.

Step 2: On the form, the student will specify the nature of the complaint, citing specific language of the ICAA which is in contention, and will submit the form with any relevant supporting documents to his/her transfer counselor or advisor at the community college. This individual will route the form to the community college's designated grievance official (CC-DGO) for signature and comments. Depending on the structure at the community college, this will likely be either the Chief Student Affairs Officer or Chief Academic Affairs Officer. The CC-DGO will complete the appropriate section with signature and comments and forward the form along with any relevant supporting documents back to the Director of Admissions at the college or university (copy to the Chief Academic Affairs Officer at the college or university).

Step 3: Upon receipt of the form, the Director of Admissions will conduct a thorough investigation to include contacting the student and the CC-DGO.

Step 4: If the grievance is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the Director will forward the form and the recommendation for action to the ITAC co-chairs.

Step 5: If the ITAC chairs concur with the recommendation, the matter is resolved. All interested parties will be informed. If the ITAC chairs do not concur, the matter will be referred to the full ITAC for action.





## **Appendix F**

### **Associate in Arts and Associate in Science Curriculum Standards and Pre-major Agreements**

*The AA and AS standards will remain the same with the exception of:*

#### ***Application to a University***

*Admission application deadlines vary; students must meet the deadline for the university to which they plan to transfer. Upon successful completion of the associate degree, students who meet the requirements outlined in this pre-major articulation agreement will be eligible to be considered for admission as juniors to the signatory institutions offering the baccalaureate degree as listed in the NC Independent Colleges and Universities Handbook. This handbook is available online at [www.ncicu.org/publications](http://www.ncicu.org/publications). Students are encouraged to contact the senior institution to confirm degree offerings.*

## Appendix G

### Associate in Fine Arts Curriculum Standards and Pre-major Agreements

*The AFA standards will remain the same with the exception of:*

#### ***Application to a University***

*Admission application deadlines vary; students must meet the deadline for the university to which they plan to transfer. Upon successful completion of the associate degree, students who meet the requirements outlined in this pre-major articulation agreement will be eligible to be considered for admission as juniors to the signatory institutions offering the baccalaureate degree as listed in the NC Independent Colleges and Universities Handbook. This handbook is available online at [www.ncicu.org/publications](http://www.ncicu.org/publications). Students are encouraged to contact the senior institution to confirm degree offerings.*

## **Appendix H**

### **Approved Transfer Course List**

*The approved transfer course list will remain the same*