
Chapter I: Introduction

About This Handbook

This *Handbook of California Articulation Policies and Procedures* has been written to assist Articulation Officers and others involved in the articulation process. It is intended to be a guideline and comprehensive resource of articulation policies and practices for California's postsecondary educational institutions. It establishes common language and definitions of terms, includes explanations of system-wide policies, conceptual models, explanations of CAN, ASSIST, and IGETC, and examples of articulation agreements, glossary of terms and acronyms.

In California there are four postsecondary educational segments comprised of:

- A. Ten campuses of the University of California providing undergraduate and graduate programs through the doctorate, as well as professional schools.
- B. Twenty-three main campuses of the California State University providing undergraduate and graduate programs through the Master's Degree.
- C. 108 California Community Colleges whose dual missions are to provide vocational education, and the lower-division preparation for transfer to four-year colleges and universities.
- D. Approximately 90 WASC accredited degree granting independent colleges and universities.

There are also a large number of private, non-accredited, but state-approved, schools that provide career or occupational instruction. Credit may be accepted on a provisional basis subject to validation as prescribed by the receiving institution.

The size, complexity, and diversity of postsecondary education in California has necessitated the ongoing development of articulation policies and procedures. This enables students to transfer between and among these segments and to streamline the transfer process.

Definition of "Articulation"

When the word "articulation" is used in education, it often has different meanings and connotations, depending on the setting. Articulation, for purposes of this Handbook, however, refers specifically to **course articulation**—that is, the process of developing a formal, written and published agreement that identifies courses (or sequences of courses) on a "sending" campus that are comparable to, or acceptable in lieu of, specific course requirements at a "receiving" campus. Successful completion of an articulated course assures the student and the faculty that the student has taken the appropriate course, received the necessary instruction and preparation, and that similar outcomes can be assured, enabling progression to the next level of instruction at the receiving institution.

Role of Faculty in the Articulation

The actual process of developing and reviewing curriculum and coursework to determine course comparability between institutions rests with the **faculty** at the respective institutions. Faculty in each discipline are responsible for the review of course content, the identification of comparable courses, and the authorization of acceptance of specific courses for transferring students. Once this review, identification, and formal written acceptance process has occurred, a course (or set of courses) is said to have been "articulated." Implicit in the articulation process is involvement, communication, and cooperation between the respective faculties who mutually develop curriculum and establish requirements and standards for articulated courses.

It is important to note that articulated courses are not to be construed as "equivalent" but rather as comparable, or acceptable in lieu of each other. The content of the courses on the respective campuses is such that successful completion of the course on one campus assures the necessary background, instruction, and preparation to enable the student to progress to the next level of instruction at another campus. It is important to note that changes in courses at either institution may affect the articulation and should be communicated to the other campus in a timely fashion and periodic changes should be reported formally with each new academic year or catalog cycle, via a curriculum update. All members in this partnership share in the vital role of determining appropriate course equivalency.

This process of course articulation between and among campuses is the foundation of the vital "transfer" function in California. The public institutions publish this information via the ASSIST and CAN Web sites. This enhancement provides articulation information 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Course articulation is the "roadmap" by which students and counselors "navigate" the transfer process. It creates a seamless curriculum that allows a smooth academic transition and progression between the segments of higher education in California.

Role and Responsibilities of an Articulation Officer

The process of faculty review leading to the articulation of courses between institutions is coordinated, facilitated, and published by the **Articulation Officer** on each campus. The campus Articulation Officer is a vital, professional-level role requiring an extensive academic knowledge base, highly developed communication skills, and the ability to facilitate and coordinate every aspect of the complex and detailed articulation process on the campus. This highly sensitive function requires the ability to quickly analyze, comprehend, and explain the nature of articulation issues to the respective parties, diffuse conflict, and diplomatically negotiate and implement resolutions.

Specifically, the Articulation Officer:

- A. **Initiates faculty-approved articulation agreements** between institutions of higher education.
- B. Serves as a **consultant** to faculty and academic units, providing needed materials, and information about course articulation proposals and acceptances.
- C. Serves as an **advocate for the faculty** and campus academic programs.
- D. Serves as an **advocate for the other articulating institution**, responsible for accurately communicating and conveying information and concerns about that institution's curriculum to the faculty.
- E. Serves as a **moderator and mediator** of problems or disagreements between the faculties of the home campus and the articulating institutions.
- F. Serves as the **campus liaison to the segmental system-wide office** – often responsible for disseminating policy changes and update information.
- G. Serves on appropriate **campus committees** such as General Education, Curriculum, Academic Policies, Catalog, etc. to provide input and to receive information about proposed changes in campus policy and curriculum.
- H. **Monitors each stage of the articulation process** and follows up with departments and/or faculty for timely responses and decisions.
- I. **Manages and updates campus articulation data** and information.
- J. **Disseminates current, accurate, articulation data** to appropriate departments, staff, students, and campuses.
- K. **Attends and participates in conferences and workshops** on articulation issues.
- L. **Facilitates campus participation in intersegmental programs** (i.e., CIAC, CAN, ASSIST, ICC, ICAS, counselor conferences, and segmental meetings).
- M. **Is a well-informed resource person** for campus faculty, administration, counseling, advising staff, and students on curriculum, articulation, and related matters.
- N. **Gatekeeper** of course outlines, IGETC, CSU GEB, baccalaureate lists, TCA lists, CAN, and ASSIST.
- O. Proactive agent for **enhancing, improving existing articulation**.
- P. Is an **advocate for the transfer student** and seeks to ease the transfer process.