
Chapter VIII: WASC Accredited Independent Colleges and Universities

A. Introduction

California's independent colleges and universities are known for their diversity, quality, and innovation. From the University of Southern California, with nearly 30,000 students, to the University of Judaism, with only 200 students, these institutions offer a wide range of academic programs in more than 130 fields of study.

The Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (AICCU) inventories articulation and transfer processes of the 76 colleges and universities enrolling nearly 20,000 transfer students each year. Approximately 60% of these transfers are former California community college students. 64 of California's independent institutions seek transfer students to complement diversity of their student populations. Approximately 21% of California's Baccalaureate Degrees are earned at AICCU colleges and universities. In total, the independent colleges and universities enroll 29% of the total student body in California at the four-year and graduate levels.

B. Process

Independent colleges and universities act autonomously in setting transfer credit policies. Since each institution is free to establish their own standards, there are few requirements that apply to all institutions. One hallmark of these colleges and universities is their tradition of flexibility and review of special circumstances in the admission process. Each individual applicant is reviewed with care and adjustments to their transcript evaluations are made if students demonstrate that their previous courses meet comparable standards at their new institution.

Statewide efforts in the area of CAN, CSU Certification and IGETC have assisted independent colleges and universities in the assessment of comparability of courses. As noted in the "AICCU Transfer Handbook", which is published yearly, many independent colleges and universities note that they accept CSU Certification and/or IGETC in lieu or as the major part of their lower division general education. Students may have to complete additional coursework in areas unique to the mission of that particular institution. The number of independent colleges and universities who, when surveyed by AICCU, state they accept CAN courses, CSU Certification and/or IGETC increases yearly.

In the majority of colleges and universities the responsibility for determining transfer credit is assigned to a Transfer Admissions Counselor and/or an official evaluator in the Registrar's Office. Each record is evaluated on an individual basis, according to guidelines usually established by the academic departments, or in consultation with the department faculty or division deans.

In some independent institutions transfer students are relatively few in number, therefore, a formal articulation process is not necessary. Those schools reporting formal articulation agreements have, for the most part, developed them within their geographic area. Generally, these agreements have focused on transferable community college courses for lower-division credit, general education courses, and some transferable courses applicable to the major (particularly in high demand major fields). For those institutions that develop more extensive formal agreements, the University of California course by course (TCAs) agreements may be used as a reference for their own agreements. Generally, catalog descriptions and/or course syllabi are required for course articulation. The CAN course designation assists independent colleges and universities in the recognition of comparable courses.

Increasingly, many independent colleges and universities are including their articulation agreements on their institution's web site. This assists potential student transfers and community college counselors in preparing students for transfer. Updates of articulation are generally done on a yearly basis.

C. Campus Articulation

Policies and procedures for developing and maintaining campus-specific General Education/Breadth, Course-to-Course, and Lower-Division Major Preparation agreements vary at each independent college and university.

A listing of the name of each campus Articulation Officer/Coordinator is available in the CIAC Directory, at: <http://enrollment.csusb.edu/articulation/ciac>. Contact these individuals directly regarding articulation questions, proposals, and procedures.