COLORADO
Colorado Commission on Higher Education
Department of Higher Education

# CCHE Policy I.L Statewide Transfer and Guaranteed Transfer (GT) Pathways

Colorado Commission on Higher Education
Policies and Procedures
Section I. Academic Affairs, Part L. Statewide Transfer and Guaranteed Transfer (GT) Pathways

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# 1.00 Introduction

The Statewide Transfer and GT Pathways Policy[1] pertains to the state general education courses, known as Guaranteed Transfer Pathways (GT Pathways); Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreements; transfer of course credits from one higher education institution to another; intra-institutional transfer; and reverse transfer. The policy applies to most Colorado public higher education undergraduate degree programs.[2] The policy applies to student transfer from two-year to four-year institutions, four-year to four-year institutions, four-year to two-year institutions, two-year to two-year institutions, or within four-year institutions. Additionally, the guarantee of this policy currently applies to Associate of Arts and Associate of Science Degrees and students transferring into Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science Degrees. The guarantees established in this policy are limited to the degree types and transfer pathways explicitly identified herein and may not apply to other associate or bachelor's degree programs, including applied or specialized degrees, unless otherwise specified. This policy does not address transfer issues where the state has limited legal authority: the transfer of credits from private, non-accredited, or out-of-state institutions or the awarding of credit for non-credit bearing courses.

The effectiveness of Colorado's statewide transfer system depends on institutional reliance on transfer credit evaluations previously completed by Colorado public institutions. Accordingly, transfer credit that has been evaluated and awarded in accordance with Commission policy or a Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreement should generally be accepted without re-evaluation or submission of underlying documentation, except where a documented exception applies under this policy.

# 2.00 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote seamless transfer among Colorado institutions of higher education.
- Protect student transfer rights established in Colorado statute.

[1] Additional resources related to GT Pathways, statewide transfer degrees, and transfer of courses are available on CDHE's Colorado Transfer webpage.
[2] A listing of degrees for which GT Pathways requirements have been waived can be found within the CDHE Degrees & Certificates database. This includes all bachelor's degrees at the Colorado School of Mines, and professional degrees at other public institutions subject to specialty accreditation criteria (e.g., nursing, engineering, business, music).

- Ensure statewide consistency in the administration of GT Pathways and Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreements.
- Reduce unnecessary credit loss and barriers to degree completion.
- Clarify the responsibilities of students, institutions, the Department, the General Education Council, and the Commission.
- Support efficient completion of associate and bachelor's degree programs.

## 3.00 Authority

This policy is based on the following Colorado Revised Statutes:

- §23-1-108(7), C.R.S. (Statewide Degree Transfer Agreements)
- §23-1-108.5, C.R.S. (GT Pathways)
- §23-1-125, C.R.S. (Student Bill of Rights and General Education)
- §23-1-131, C.R.S. (Reverse Transfer)
- §23-5-122, C.R.S. (Institutional Transfer Policies)
- §23-5-145, C.R.S. (Military Credit and Prior Learning Assessment)
- §23-5-150, C.R.S. (Transfer Credit Review Process)
- §23-60-802, C.R.S. (Area Technical College Credit Transfer)
- §23-60-804, C.R.S. (Emily Griffith Technical College Associate Degrees)

See Appendix A for specific provisions from these statutes relevant to this policy.

## 4.00 Definitions

1. "**Commission**" means the Colorado Commission on Higher Education created pursuant to section Title 23, Article 1 of the Colorado Revised Statutes.
2. "**Core courses**" means the thirty-one credit lower division GT Pathways curriculum to which "…Individual institutions of higher education shall conform their own core course requirements…" (i.e., general education requirements). "The core of courses shall be designed to ensure that students demonstrate competency in reading, critical thinking, written communication, mathematics, and technology. The core of courses shall consist of at least thirty credit hours but shall not exceed forty credit hours" [§23-1-125(3), C.R.S.].[3]

[3] Note that this does not apply to every degree program at every institution; §23-1-125(3) gives the Commission authority to "…make allowance for baccalaureate programs that have additional degree requirements…" A list of degrees that have been waived of GT Pathways requirements is maintained on the Department's website.

3. "**Course numbering system**" means the common system of numbering used by all institutions for GT Pathways courses, such as GT-CO1 for an introductory written communication course, GT-CO2 for an intermediate written communication course, GT-MA1 for a mathematics course, and so on, pursuant to §23-1-108.5(2)(b), C.R.S.
4. "**Degree with Designation**" means a two-year degree with academic designation in a particular discipline or interdisciplinary field, and that is part of a Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreement), as described in §23-60-211, C.R.S. A Degree with Designation is a 60-credit Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree that includes the 31-credit GT Pathways curriculum, plus a collection of required and elective courses that provides students with a solid foundation for further study in a given discipline or program area. A community college may offer a two-year degree program with academic designation in dental hygiene without a valid student transfer agreement. Exceptions to the 60-credit limit, and to the GT Pathways requirement, may be made by the Commission to facilitate transfer in certain disciplines or fields, including where the associated bachelor's degree program has received a waiver from the 120-credit cap and/or GT Pathways curriculum requirements.
5. "**Department**" means the Colorado Department of Higher Education created and existing pursuant to section §24-1-114, C.R.S.
6. "**Elective Credit**" means credit that applies toward completion of a Degree with Designation but is not identified in the statewide transfer agreement as a specific required course.
7. **"Foreign University Credit"** means credit awarded for coursework completed at an institution of higher education outside the United States that has been evaluated and accepted for credit by a Colorado public institution.
8. "**GE Council**" means the General Education Council convened pursuant to §23-1-108.5(3)(a), C.R.S.
9. "**GT Pathways**" means the guaranteed transfer pathways matrix as described in §23-1-108.5, §23-1-125(3), and §23-1-125(6), C.R.S. GT Pathways courses are approved through the statewide faculty review process administered by the Department and General Education Council and must satisfy the approved GT Pathways competency and content criteria.
10. "**GT Pathways content criteria**" means the sets of criteria for the six content areas that make up the GT Pathways curriculum: 1) written communication, 2)

mathematics, 3) arts and humanities, 4) social and behavioral sciences, 5) history, and 6) natural and physical sciences.[4]

11. "**GT Pathways competency criteria**" means the ten competencies embedded in the GT Pathways content criteria in which students must demonstrate proficiency: 1) civic engagement, 2) creative thinking, 3) critical thinking, 4) diversity & global learning, 5) information literacy, 6) inquiry & analysis, 7) oral/presentational communication, 8) problem solving, 9) quantitative literacy, and 10) written communication, pursuant to §23-1-125(3), C.R.S.[5]
12. "**General education courses**" means the group of courses offered by an institution of higher education that every student enrolled in the institution must successfully complete to attain an associate or bachelor's degree" [§23-1-108.5(2)(c), C.R.S.] and that meet the requirements of §23-1-125(3), C.R.S. It should be noted that besides a general education core, degrees also have major, elective and other requirements (see Table 1 under section 7.00). It should also be noted that general education requirements may differ between degree programs at the same institution and that some degree programs at some institutions have received waivers from the Commission not to have to include the 31 credit GT Pathways curriculum in the general education cores for some baccalaureate degrees. These programs are documented in the Department's Degrees and Certificates database. Institutions may designate certain upper division courses as fulfilling requirements in their general education curriculum, but only lower division courses can be identified as part of GT Pathways, with the exception of courses designated as GT-CO3 (Advanced Written Communication), which are often numbered as 300/3000-level courses.
13. "**Native student**," for the purposes of this policy, means a student at a Colorado public four-year institution who did not transfer from a Colorado community or local-district college under a statewide transfer agreement.
14. "**Prior Learning Assessment**" is the evaluation—using approved practices—of learning that occurs outside of the institution where a student is enrolled or may enroll. Learning can be demonstrated by a student through achieving a certain score on a national exam; through achieving a certain score or rating on an institutionally devised exam or other assessment; through performance in a course taken at another institution; through completion of certain military training,

[4] Available on the Department's website.
[5] Available on the Department's website.

education, and occupational programs; and through work products and other professional achievements included in a student's portfolio.

15. "**Required Course**" (for the purposes of a Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreement) means a course specifically identified in a Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreement as necessary to complete a Degree with Designation and intended to satisfy a designated degree, major, or program requirement upon transfer to a related bachelor's degree program.
16. "**Reverse Transfer**" means the process whereby a student who begins his or her postsecondary education at a two-year institution and transfers to a four-year institution prior to receiving an associate degree, or who has left the four-year institution prior to completing a bachelor's degree, and has accumulated at least 70 credits and completed the residency requirements at the two-year institution, may be eligible to receive an associate of arts or associate of science degree.
17. "**Responsible Third Party**" means a Colorado public institution of higher education that participates in a Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreement and that has formally evaluated and awarded transfer credit consistent with that agreement.
18. "**Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreement**," or STAA means a transfer agreement between Colorado's public two-year and four-year institutions that guarantees automatic transfer of all credit hours from an associate Degree with Designation into a related bachelor's degree program, pursuant to §23-1-108(7)(a), C.R.S. Further guidance is found in §23-1-108(7)(g)(III), C.R.S., which defines an STAA as a "Statewide degree transfer agreement," which "…means an agreement among all of the state institutions of higher education for the transfer of an associate of arts or an associate of science degree. A statewide degree transfer agreement applies to common degree programs and specifies the common terms, conditions, and expectations for students enrolled in statewide degree transfer programs," including provisions governing the acceptance and application of required courses, elective credits, and any foreign university credits applied to the associate degree.
19. "**Transfer**" means transferring the credit for courses taken at one institution of higher education to another. It is important to note that while most coursework can transfer, not all credit can be applied to a student's chosen major. That is, the receiving institution will usually accept coursework in transfer and list those courses on the student's transcript but may not be able to apply the credit for those courses to any of the requirements in the student's degree program.

20. "**Transfer Student**" means a student entering the reporting institution for the first time but known to have previously attended a postsecondary institution at the same level (e.g. undergraduate, graduate) after high school graduation (or passing an equivalency exam). The student may transfer with or without credit. This excludes students who completed remedial coursework and students who completed college-level coursework as a high school student through Concurrent Enrollment or as their homeschool curriculum.
21. "**Underlying Documentation**" means source materials used by a responsible third party to evaluate and award transfer credit, including but not limited to: course syllabi, exam score reports (e.g., AP, IB, CLEP), JSTs or other official military credit documentation, industry certifications, and official transcripts from other postsecondary institutions.

## 5.00 Policy Goals

The policy goals are to provide guidance on each entity's role in the implementation of:

1. **GT Pathways**, "that includes all state-supported institutions of higher education and that will ensure that the quality of and requirements that pertain to general education courses are comparable and transferable system wide," [§23-1-108.5(1), C.R.S.]; and
2. The **Student Bill of Rights**, which states that:
    - "(a) Students should be able to complete their associate of arts and associate of science degree programs in no more than sixty credit hours or their baccalaureate programs in no more than one hundred twenty credit hours unless there are additional degree requirements recognized by the commission (refer to Appendix B);"
    - "(b) A student can sign a two-year or four-year graduation agreement that formalizes a plan for that student to obtain a degree in two or four years, unless there are additional degree requirements recognized by the commission;"
    - "(c) Students have a right to clear and concise information concerning which courses must be completed successfully to complete their degrees;"
    - "(d) Students have a right to know which courses are transferable among the state public two-year and four-year institutions of higher education;"
    - "(e) Students, upon successful completion of core general education courses, regardless of the delivery method, should have those courses

satisfy the core course requirements of all Colorado public institutions of higher education;"

- "(f) Students have a right to know if courses from one or more public higher education institutions satisfy the students' degree requirements;"
- "(g) A student's credit for the completion of the core requirements and core courses shall not expire for ten years from the date of initial enrollment and shall be transferable;"
- "(h) Students have a right to transparency of the cost of postsecondary education programs, including information on fees, associated expenses, and financial aid in the form of scholarships, grants, and loans;"
- "(i) Students have the right to seamless transfer of courses in the guaranteed transfer pathway matrix, transparency in the process for transferring credits, a timely response on applications for transferring credits, and transparency in how and why a credit is accepted or rejected by an institution and how and why a credit is or is not applied toward degree requirements;"
- "(j) Students have the right to appeal an institution's failure to accept the student's request for transfer credit; and"
- "(k) Students have the right to know what work-related experiences or prior learning opportunities are awarded postsecondary academic credit at the institution in which the student is enrolled, pursuant to section 23-5-145.5." [§23-1-125(1), C.R.S.]

# 6.00 Roles and Responsibilities

## 6.01 Students

Students are responsible for acting in their own best academic interests and seeking the information necessary for making informed transfer choices, including:

1. Contacting academic advisors at both the sending and receiving institutions to understand the limitations on transfer;
2. Checking with the receiving institution for the availability of Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreements, Transfer Guides, other inter-institutional transfer agreements that may exist, and graduation requirements of the institution and the degree program into which the student hopes to transfer;
3. Understanding the limits in applying transfer credits within general education, major requirements, and elective categories for the institution and degree program into which the student hopes to transfer; and

4. Filing an appeal with the institution in a timely manner to resolve transfer disputes.

## 6.02 Governing Boards of Public Institutions or Systems

All Governing boards of public institutions or systems:

1. "…shall implement the statewide degree transfer agreements and the commission policies relating to the statewide degree transfer agreements." [§23-1-108(7)(a), C.R.S.]
2. "…shall implement the [student transfer] agreements [between degree programs offered on the same campus or within the same institutional system] and commission policies relating to the agreements." [§23-1-108(7)(f), C.R.S.]
3. "…shall modify its existing policies as may be necessary to accept the transfer of these [GT Pathways course] credits." [§23-1-108.5(5), C.R.S.]
4. "…shall have in place and enforce policies regarding transfers by students between undergraduate degree programs which are offered within the same institution or within the same institutional system. Such policies shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following provisions:
    - (a) If, not more than ten years prior to transferring into an undergraduate degree program, a student earns credit hours which are required for graduation from such undergraduate degree program, such credit hours shall apply to the completion of such student's graduation requirements from such undergraduate degree program following such transfer;
    - (b) A student who transfers into an undergraduate degree program shall not be required to complete a greater number of credit hours in those courses which are required for graduation from such undergraduate degree program than are required of students who began in such undergraduate degree program, nor shall there be any minimum number of credit hours required post-transfer other than the normal degree requirements for non-transferring students: and
    - (c) The grade point average which is required for a student to apply for and be fully considered for transfer into an undergraduate degree program shall be no higher than that which is required for graduation from such undergraduate degree program. [§23-5-122(1), C.R.S.]
5. "…shall adopt policies to ensure that, if a student completes a program of study at an area technical college and subsequently enrolls in an institution within the state system of community and technical colleges, or transfers from an area technical college to an institution within the state system of community and technical colleges, any postsecondary course credits earned by the student while enrolled in

the area technical college will apply in full at another area technical college or to an appropriate program leading to a certificate or to an associate degree at a community or technical college. Postsecondary credits earned by a student at an area technical college may be transferred into an associate degree program at a community college or into a degree program at a four-year institution of higher education as provided in section 23-1-108(7) and the state credit transfer policies established by the Colorado commission on higher education." [§23-60-802, C.R.S.]

### 6.03 Public Institutions of Higher Education

All Colorado public institutions of higher education:

1. Shall publish the Student Bill of Rights [§23-1-125(1)(a-k), C.R.S.] in course catalogs and advising centers.
2. Shall honor the Student Bill of Rights.
3. Shall comply with "…the intent of the general assembly that academic degree programs at state-supported institutions of higher education be designed and implemented to assure and emphasize that undergraduate students have the maximum range of opportunities and assistance to complete their course of study and obtain their degree in a reasonable amount of time." [§23-1-108(13)(a), C.R.S.]
4. "…Each higher education institution shall submit its list of identified courses in the guaranteed transfer pathways matrix, including course descriptions and, upon request of the commission, summaries of course syllabi, for review and approval by the commission on or before March 1, 2003, and on March 1 of each odd-numbered year thereafter." [§23-1-108.5(4)(a), C.R.S.]
5. "…shall publish, and update as necessary, a list of course offerings that identifies courses offered by the institution that correspond with the courses included in the guaranteed transfer pathways matrix." [§23-1-108.5(4)(b), C.R.S.]
6. Shall re-evaluate the application of transfer credits to a student's new major or program requirements "if a student changes the student's major or declared program of study" and "…shall participate in the course numbering system." [§23-1-108.5(5), C.R.S.]
7. Shall develop effective transfer advising systems, including but not limited to, training faculty and academic advisors, providing freshman students with planning information, and providing transfer students with appeals information.
8. Shall develop advising partnerships among all four-year and two-year public institutions to jointly advise students.

9. "…shall implement the [student transfer] agreements [between degree programs offered on the same campus or within the same institutional system] and commission policies relating to the agreements." [§23-1-108(7)(f), C.R.S.]
10. "…shall implement the statewide degree transfer agreements and the commission policies relating to the statewide degree transfer agreements." [§23-1-108(7)(a), C.R.S.]
11. "…shall conform their own core course requirements with the guidelines developed by the department and shall identify the specific courses that meet the general education course guidelines." [§23-1-125(3), C.R.S.]
12. "…shall grant full course credits to students for the core courses they successfully test out of, free of tuition for those courses." [§23-1-125(4), C.R.S.]
13. "…shall adopt and make public a policy or program to determine academic credit for prior learning." [§23-1-125(4.5), C.R.S.]
14. Shall accept in transfer from within the institution and from other state institutions of higher education prior learning assessment credit awarded for GT Pathways requirements and shall not prohibit students from attempting to meet general education/GT Pathways requirements with prior learning assessment credit. Institutions shall not deny transfer of credit awarded for military training, education, or examination solely due to the absence of transcript-level detail, provided that the detailed course credit appears on the official transcript and the credit was awarded in accordance with institutional policy and Commission policy.
15. To approve degrees with designation, the institution shall submit the degree program designation to its governing board for review and approval. The institution may offer the degree program only after it has been approved by the board and by the Colorado commission on higher education. [6] The institution shall exclusively use the degree program designation name in official publications, course catalogs, diplomas, and official transcripts" [§23-60-211(1), C.R.S. and 23-71-123(3), C.R.S.].[7]
16. "…should work in collaboration with the commission to develop a process that reduces a potential barrier to degree completion by providing students with information about the student's eligibility for an associate degree" [§23-1-

[6] Refer to CCHE Policy I, V for more information on approval of new degree programs.

[7] GE Council agreed that if a two-year institution is unable to offer all coursework required for a Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreement, that institution should not offer the corresponding Degree with Designation.

131(1)(b)]. "The two-year and four-year institutions shall agree upon the contents of the notification to eligible students. At a minimum, the notification shall include the requirements for the degree audit by the two-year institution and information concerning the process for a student to be awarded an associate degree in the future if the degree requirements are not met or the student declines the associate degree at the time of the notification" [§23-1-131(3)(b), C.R.S.]. "Each two-year and four-year institution shall provide students with information concerning the process developed pursuant to this section" [§23-1-131(4), C.R.S.].

17. Shall follow their standard teach-out provisions for academic programs when statewide transfer articulation agreements are revised or when an institution discontinues a program that is part of a statewide transfer articulation agreement.
18. Shall maintain processes to identify transfer applicants for whom transcripts or other supporting documentation are outstanding and to track documentation received.
19. Shall communicate to applicants the potential impact of submitting official academic records and other documentation that may support the award of transfer credit.
20. Shall employ reasonable follow-up procedures to obtain outstanding documentation and maintain evidence of those efforts.
21. Shall, prior to issuing an official transfer credit evaluation, ensure that transfer decisions are based on the documentation available and maintain records demonstrating the efforts undertaken to secure any missing materials.
22. Shall not re-evaluate the academic merit of credit awarded pursuant to a Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreement, including elective and foreign university credit, as reflected on the official transcript of an awarded Degree with Designation from the originating Colorado public institution without requiring the student to submit underlying documentation that the responsible third party used to evaluate and award that credit.
    a. Receiving institutions may request underlying documentation when:
        i. Credit cannot be identified on an official transcript or evaluation;
        ii. Insufficient detail exists to identify the credit awarded or determine its applicability under this policy (e.g., originating institution, course identifier, credit hours, grade); or

iii. A documented exception applies (e.g., verified transcription error, accreditation or licensure requirement, documented evidence that the credit was not evaluated in accordance with statewide policy).

b. Any institution invoking an exception under this section shall notify the student in writing within 10 business days of the transfer evaluation, identify the specific exception invoked, explain what documentation is needed and why, and provide information about the student's right to appeal under Section 10.00.

c. Institutions must document and retain justification for any exception and provide this information to the student upon request.

23. When GT Pathways courses transfer but are not applied to a student's degree requirements, institutions shall take reasonable steps to ensure that students have access to information regarding:
    a. Which credits transferred and which apply toward degree requirements;
    b. The potential implications of non-applicable credit for degree programs and financial aid eligibility; and
    c. Available academic advising resources for degree planning assistance.

## 6.04 Participating Private Institutions of Higher Education

Private institutions of higher education may choose to participate in GT Pathways, provided an institution meets the statutory criteria outlined in §23-1-125(5)(e), C.R.S., including accreditation by an accrediting agency or association approved by the United States Department of Education; provision of an educational program for which it awards a bachelor's degree or a graduate degree; and determination by the United States Department of Education to be eligible to administer federal financial aid programs pursuant to Title IV of the federal Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended. Participation by private institutions of higher education in GT Pathways may include conforming their general education curricula to include the GT Pathways curriculum; being guaranteed their approved GT Pathways courses will transfer to all public and other participating nonpublic institutions, and agreeing to accept in transfer and apply credit for GT Pathways courses from other participating nonpublic and public institutions of higher education, pursuant to §23-1-125(5), C.R.S.

## 6.05 Colorado Commission on Higher Education

The Commission, with the Colorado Department of Higher Education acting as its staff:

1. "…shall establish, after consultation with the governing boards of institutions, and enforce statewide degree transfer agreements between two-year and four-year state

institutions of higher education and among four-year state institutions of higher education." [§23-1-108(7)(a), C.R.S.]

2. "...shall establish and enforce student transfer agreements between degree programs offered on the same campus or within the same institutional system." [§23-1-108(7)(f), C.R.S.]
3. Shall, "...within existing resources, ...implement and revise appropriate policies, including financial incentives, to assure that students at state-supported institutions of higher education complete their academic degree programs in the most efficient, effective, and productive manner. The policy implementation and review shall include:
    - (I) Academic advising and counseling at such institutions and consideration of methods for the improvement of early and continuous availability of such academic advising and counseling in order to assist students with the completion of degree programs;
    - (II) The frequency and availability of courses essential to completion of degree programs at such institutions and evaluation of what changes may be necessary to assure that the course scheduling for degree programs by such institutions maximizes the opportunities for students to complete their course of study efficiently, effectively, and productively;
    - (III) Measures for minimizing and eliminating the restrictions against automatic transfer of credit hours of acceptable course work between such institutions and whether the provisions of transfer agreements between two-year and four-year institutions and among four-year institutions entered into pursuant to subsection (7) of this section are directed at easing such transfer restrictions;
    - (IV) Methods for minimizing the loss of credit hours when a student changes degree programs at such institution and assurance that such credit hours are transferred or substituted for appropriate course work in the other degree program;
    - (V) The review of possible solutions for access of nontraditional and part-time students to complete programs within the student's time frame goals;
    - (VI) What effect, if any, the reduction of degree programs would have on the increased availability of classes within existing degree programs;

- (VII) What effect increases in educational costs may have on the average length of time for a student to complete a degree program; and
- (VII) The implementation of core curricula as a measure for assisting students to graduate." [§23-1-108(13)(a), C.R.S.]

4. "oversee the adoption of a guaranteed transfer pathways matrix, which includes all higher education institutions and will ensure that the quality of the guaranteed transfer pathway matrix courses are comparable and transferable systemwide." [23-1-108.5(1), C.R.S.]
5. Consider for approval GT Pathways courses recommended by GE Council, pursuant to §23-1-108.5(3), C.R.S.
6. "…shall consult with the governing boards when convening representatives from the higher education institutions [to serve on GE Council]." [§23-1-108.5(3)(a), C.R.S.]
7. "…shall review the [GE] council's recommendations and adopt a guaranteed transfer pathway matrix for general education courses, including criteria for the courses…" [§23-1-108.5(3)(c)(I), C.R.S.]
8. "…shall adopt and implement such procedures [recommended by GE Council to document students' success in transferring among higher education institutions]." [§23-1-108.5(6)(a), C.R.S.]
9. "…in consultation with the governing boards and the higher education institutions, shall design and implement a statewide database to [document students' success in transferring among higher education institutions]." [§23-1-108.5(6)(b), C.R.S.]
10. Resolve student complaints regarding the requirements of this policy, pursuant to CCHE Policy I, T Student Complaint Policy. "The Commission shall have final authority in resolving transfer disputes." [§23-1-108(7)(a), C.R.S.]
11. "…shall adopt such policies to ensure that institutions develop the most effective way to implement the transferability of core course credits." [§23-1-125(3) C.R.S.]

## 6.06 General Education (GE) Council

GE Council:

1. "…shall create a process through which it shall seek input from and consult with various higher education student organizations for each articulation agreement and for the review of general education courses and the course numbering system as required in [§23-1-108.5(3)(c)]." [§23-1-108.5(3)(a), C.R.S.]
2. "…shall recommend to the commission a guaranteed transfer pathway matrix to which the general education courses for each higher education institution may be mapped." [§23-1-108.5(3)(b), C.R.S.]

3. "…shall recommend to the commission a list of courses to be included in the guaranteed transfer pathway matrix. In identifying the courses, the council shall review the course descriptions and may request summaries of course syllabi for review, focusing on lower division general education courses." [§23-1-108.5(3)(c)(I), C.R.S.]
4. "…shall annually review the list of courses and the guaranteed transfer pathway matrix, including the criteria, adopted by the commission and recommend changes necessary to maintain the accuracy and integrity of the guaranteed transfer pathway matrix. The council's annual review shall include consideration of the course descriptions, and the council may request summaries of course syllabi for further review." [§23-1-108.5(3)(c)(II), C.R.S.]
5. "…shall devise and recommend to the commission procedures for exchanging information to document students' success in transferring among higher education institutions." [§23-1-108.5(6)(a), C.R.S.]
6. Shall act as their respective institutions' liaisons to assist the Department in: the creation, adoption, and revision of statewide transfer articulation agreements; the review of proposed GT Pathways courses; training of academic advisors and other institutional staff members on the requirements of this policy; and providing guidance to the Department in the resolution of transfer disputes.
7. Shall assist the Department in reviewing and revising statewide transfer articulation agreements no less frequently than every five years; facilitating meetings for discipline-specific faculty to negotiate revisions to their agreement; recruiting discipline-specific faculty to participate in revision negotiations; and facilitating institutional adoption of revisions to statewide transfer articulation agreements.

# 7.00 Transfer and Credit Mobility Requirements

## 7.01 Credit cap for degrees.

1. "Students should be able to complete their associate of arts and associate of science degree programs in no more than sixty credit hours or their baccalaureate programs in no more than one hundred twenty credit hours unless there are additional degree requirements recognized by the commission" [§23-1-125(1)(a), C.R.S.]; and
2. "The commission shall establish a standard of a one-hundred-twenty-hour baccalaureate degree, not including specified professional degree programs that

have additional degree requirements recognized by the commission" [§23-1-125(2), C.R.S.]

### 7.02 Course/credit limitations and requirements: transfer students and native students.

1. "A state institution of higher education that admits as a junior a student who holds an associate of arts degree, associate of applied science degree, or associate of science degree that is the subject of a statewide degree transfer agreement shall not require the student to complete any additional courses to fulfill general education requirements" [§23-1-108(7)(b)(II)(A), C.R.S.]; and
2. "A student who transfers under a statewide degree transfer agreement may be required to complete lower-division courses that are part of the major, but are not part of the statewide degree transfer agreement, if taking the courses does not require the transfer student to take more total credit hours to receive the degree than a native student and does not extend the total time required to receive the degree beyond that required for a native student" [§23-1-108(7)(b)(II)(A), C.R.S.]; and
3. "A state institution of higher education…is responsible for the total cost of tuition, without participation by the student in the college opportunity fund…for any credit hours that exceed the total credit hours required for a native student or that extend the total time to receive the degree beyond that required for a native student" [§23-1-108(7)(b)(II)(A), C.R.S.].

### 7.03 Competency testing.

1. "…the commission shall, in consultation with each public institution of higher education, define a process for students to test out of core courses, including specifying use of a national test or the criteria for approving institutionally devised tests. Beginning in the 2010-11 academic year, each public institution of higher education shall grant full course credits to students for the core courses they successfully test out of, free of tuition for those courses." [§23-1-125(4), C.R.S.]
2. Standard practice is that institutions do not have to allow students to test out of every core course but there must be a means to test out of every GT Pathways category (e.g., GT-CO1, GT-MA1, and so on).
3. Institutions may choose the assessment instruments. Portfolio review and prior learning assessment are allowable instruments.

### 7.04 Credit for prior learning.

1. "…each public institution of higher education shall adopt and make public a policy or program to determine academic credit for prior learning." [§23-1-125(4.5), C.R.S.]
2. Institutions shall accept in transfer from within the institution and from other state institutions of higher education prior learning assessment credit awarded for GT Pathways requirements, including credit awarded for military training, education, and examination, and shall not prohibit students from attempting to meet general education/GT Pathways requirements with any form of prior learning assessment credit.

## 8.00 GT Pathways Curriculum and General Education

The GT Pathways curriculum is the core of the general education requirements of most Liberal Arts & Sciences bachelor's degrees. This takes some of the guesswork out of transfer because GT Pathways courses, in which the student earned a C- or higher, will always transfer[8] and the credit will apply[9] to GT Pathways requirements in every Liberal Arts & Sciences bachelor's degree at every public Colorado institution. Depending on the bachelor's degree, GT Pathways course credit may also be applied to major and elective requirements at the receiving institution's discretion. GT Pathways courses taken beyond the required 31-credit GT Pathways curriculum will transfer (and be listed on the student's transcript) but the credit is not guaranteed to apply to general education or major requirements or to electives (or count towards the 120 required credits for the bachelor's degree). Appendix C highlights where GT Pathways courses fit in a bachelor's degree.

To complete the GT Pathways curriculum, students are required to complete the minimum 31 semester credit hours and earn a C- grade or better in each course. The guarantee of applicability of credit of GT Pathways coursework to the receiving institution's general education requirements is limited to the minimum number of semester credit hours in each category**.** So, for instance, if a student takes two GT-MA1 courses and then transfers, the receiving institution must apply only one of the GT-MA1 courses. The remaining GT-MA1 course may be applied to major or elective credit at the discretion of the institution.

[8] Transfer of credit means the receiving institution notes on its own transcript the credit earned at another institution. Credits that transfer do not reduce time to degree completion unless they are applied to degree requirements at the receiving institution.
[9] Application of credit means the receiving institution applies credit earned at another institution to its own degree requirements, whether as general education, major requirements, or electives. Application of credit to degree requirements reduces time to degree completion.

## 8.01 Limitations and Applicability

Students and academic advisors should note that not all of a degree's general education courses may be GT Pathways approved. Courses that are GT Pathways approved are designated as such in each institution's Course Catalog. Generally speaking, as long as a student does not take more general education courses than are required for his or her degree or change his or her major, then GT Pathways courses completed at one public or participating private institution with a C- or better shall be applied to the degree's general education requirements or the requirements of the declared major at the receiving institution, given that the degree's general education core contains GT Pathways courses. These limitations are explained below in more detail.

***8.01.1 Limitation #1: Not All Degrees Contain the GT Pathways Curriculum.***
Some degrees do not contain the GT Pathways curriculum in whole or in part. These degrees have waivers from the Commission not to have to include GT Pathways in their general education cores. Waivers are indicated within the Department's Degrees & Certificates database available on the Department's website. It should be noted that although the general education cores of these degrees do not contain the GT Pathways curriculum, they are still in line with the general education course guidelines in §23-1-125(3), C.R.S. That is, they are "…designed to ensure that students demonstrate competency in reading, critical thinking, written communication, mathematics, and technology". It is also important to note that institutions are still required to accept GT Pathways courses in transfer and apply the credit when these degrees contain GT Pathways courses in their general education cores.

Applied science degrees follow different general education structures than traditional liberal arts and sciences programs. Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) degrees frequently do not include the full 31-credit GT Pathways curriculum. In these cases, students who continue into a Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.) program must either complete the remaining GT Pathways requirements as part of the B.A.S. degree or the institution must obtain a waiver from the Commission under §23-1-125(3), C.R.S.

B.A.S. degrees are required to include the full 31-credit GT Pathways curriculum unless the Commission grants a waiver. The Commission will automatically grant waivers for B.A.S. programs that are technical in nature and do not share an

equivalent Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Science (B.S.) program at the institution. When a B.A.S. degree overlaps with an existing B.A. or B.S. program (e.g., Elementary Education), the institution must submit a formal waiver request demonstrating that the program meets Colorado's core course requirements in §23-1-125(3), C.R.S.

Since not every degree contains the GT Pathways curriculum, this has several implications for students who will, or believe they may, transfer:

(a) The GT Pathways curriculum will satisfy at least 31 credits of general education requirements in most degrees, but not all degrees.

(b) If the bachelor's degree into which the student intends to transfer contains the GT Pathways curriculum, or an academic advisor for that degree affirms that the student's GT Pathways courses will apply to major or elective requirements, then GT Pathways courses are a good choice for that student.

(c) If the degree does not contain the GT Pathways curriculum, and the academic advisor indicates that none or few GT Pathways courses will apply to the degree requirements, then the student should be advised that, although all coursework will transfer, it may not apply so it won't get the student closer to completing the bachelor's degree. Early transfer may be a good option in these instances.

***8.01.2 Limitation #2: Similarly Named Courses May Not Be Equivalent.***

It is important to note that GT Pathways courses are not based on course equivalencies but meet content and competency criteria. Same or similarly named GT Pathways courses at different institutions are not guaranteed to be equivalent to one another. Students should not presume that because they took a GT Pathways course at one institution that the same or similarly named GT Pathways course at a different institution contains the same material. This is important because receiving institutions will sometimes advise students to take a course at their institution that has the same or similar name to a course they previously took at a different institution. Institutions advise students to do this when it has been determined that the student's previous coursework has not prepared them for subsequent coursework at the receiving institution. However, all completed GT Pathways courses that satisfy the requirements of this policy shall still be transferred and

apply to the receiving institution's applicable GT Pathways or general education requirements.

#### *8.01.3 Limitation #3: Application to Other Associate Degrees*

AGS, AES, and AFA degrees, and other associate degree programs that are not Degrees with Designation may be governed by institution-specific or program-specific transfer agreements. The existence of a transfer agreement for one institution, system, or academic program does not create a statewide guarantee of applicability for all similarly named degree programs. Students should consult the applicable transfer agreement, transfer guide, or receiving institution for information regarding the application of credit.

AGS programs generally require at least 30 semester hours of general education, of which a minimum of 15 credits must be GT Pathways courses designated for statewide transfer; "technical transfer" AGS programs are built upon written articulation agreements that specify how credits apply at designated receiving institutions.

Receiving institutions shall apply completed GT Pathways coursework from AGS/AES/AFA toward the applicable lower division general education requirements, consistent with Section 8.01 (transfer of GT Pathways courses). Additional applicability of non-GT coursework from these degrees to major or elective requirements remains at the discretion of the receiving institution or as specified in a relevant transfer or articulation agreement.

### 8.02 Waivers of GT Pathways Curriculum Requirements

Per §23-1-125(3), C.R.S., the Commission "may make allowances for baccalaureate programs that have additional degree requirements recognized by the commission", thereby enabling institutions to develop academic programs that do not contain the full GT Pathways curriculum.

A waiver from GT Pathways curriculum requirements modifies the curricular requirements of an academic program and does not alter institutional obligations regarding the transfer, acceptance, or application of credit otherwise protected by state statute, Commission policy, or applicable transfer agreements. Program waivers and student transfer rights shall be considered separately.

Institutions that seek a waiver from GT Pathways curriculum requirements for a particular academic program must submit a formal request to the Department that includes responses to the following questions:

1. Why it is important that a GT Pathways waiver be granted for this program (address the nature of the degree relative to the profession, if applicable, including work pathways for students entering the program)?
2. Which specific components of the GT Pathways curriculum are requested to be waived or modified?
3. How will the institution ensure that the program includes a "core of courses" that provide a general education through which "students demonstrate competency in reading, critical thinking, written communications, mathematics, and technology", as articulated in Colorado Revised Statutes §23-1-125(3)? How will the general education provided respond to the 10 competencies of the GT Pathways curriculum?
4. What additional degree requirements, such as those associated with accreditation and licensure, make it impossible to include the full GT Pathways in the program curriculum?
5. How will the absence of a GT Pathways waiver potentially harm students (if, for example, it extends the time to degree beyond four years, or results in certain critical courses being left out of a program)?
6. How will the institution ensure that the GT Pathways waiver will not create barriers to student transfer?

For B.A.S. degree programs, the Commission distinguishes between technical and non-technical applied science offerings. B.A.S. programs that are technical in nature, with no equivalent bachelor of arts or sciences program among Colorado institutions, may receive an automatic waiver when requested. B.A.S. programs with equivalent bachelor of arts or science programs must submit a full waiver request and demonstrate alignment with the statutory core course requirements.

Upon receipt of an institutional request for a GT Pathways waiver, Department staff will place the request on the agenda of the upcoming meeting of the GE Council and invite institutional representatives to attend the meeting to answer questions. The GE Council may offer a recommendation to the Department based on information provided by the requesting institution. Department staff will then determine whether to recommend to the

Commission 1) a full/blanket waiver of GT Pathways curriculum requirements; 2) a modified/limited waiver; or 3) no waiver. In the event a modified/limited waiver is recommended by staff and approved by the Commission, the staff would enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the institution or system to include details on the parameters of the curriculum variation, the waiver duration, and the verification process.

### 8.03 Colorado GenEd Foundational Skills Credential

The Colorado GenEd Foundational Skills Credential is a mechanism to formally recognize students when they have fulfilled all GT Pathways requirements. The credential rewards students for achieving a significant milestone in their degree pathways and highlights the in-demand skills and competencies that are developed through general education – competencies that employers indicate regularly are foundational for workplace success, including civic engagement, creative thinking, critical thinking, diversity and global learning, information literacy, inquiry and analysis, problem solving, quantitative literacy, and written communication.

The Colorado GenEd Foundational Skills Credential is designed to be awarded to students who have completed all GT Pathways requirements and appear on the academic transcript similar to other academic credentials including degrees, certificates, minors, and areas of concentration. Recognizing that some institutions require additional general education courses that go above and beyond GT Pathways, institutions may require students to meet the institution's full general education requirements before issuing the award. It is the prerogative of institutions to determine whether to award the credential, as well as the credential name, documentation, and method of award.

## 9.00 Transfer Options and Transfer Agreements

The following parts of this Section 9.00 describe the options for students to transfer coursework among Colorado's public and participating private institutions of higher education. To be effective, these transfer options require institutions of higher education to advise students on which courses are most appropriate for their intended major programs of study. Also, students need to consult with their academic advisors when registering for courses to make informed decisions if planning to transfer to another institution. Informed decision-making is the best strategy for successfully transferring coursework among institutions and ensuring this policy's effectiveness.

### 9.01 Transfer of GT Pathways Courses

When evaluating a transfer student's transcript, each public higher education institution will apply GT Pathways credits to its general education requirements (where the degree's general education core contains GT Pathways courses), subject to the limitations listed above. In some cases, an institution, at its own discretion, may apply GT Pathways courses to both general education and major requirements. Receiving institutions may not require students to demonstrate that the GT Pathways courses they took at another institution adequately prepared the student for subsequent coursework at the receiving institution. Institutions shall apply GT Pathways courses to the appropriate content category regardless of course prefix, department, or institutional naming conventions, as long as the course is approved in the GT Pathways Matrix.

All GT Pathways courses completed with a grade of C- or better shall transfer and be recorded on the receiving institution's transcript in accordance with state statute and Commission policy. This requirement includes GT Pathways credit awarded through prior learning assessment, including credit based on military training, education, or examination. Transfer of credit does not require application of credit when a GT Pathways course is not eligible for application to the student's declared degree program, general education structure, major, or elective space. When GT Pathways courses are not applied to degree requirements, institutions shall disclose to the student which credits transferred but did not apply. Institutions retain discretion regarding the mechanism of communication, but are encouraged to leverage degree audit, transcript notation, transfer evaluation, advising materials, student information systems, or other institutional processes sufficient to inform students that the credit has transferred but does not apply toward degree completion requirements.

## 9.02 Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreements

A Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreement (STAA) is an agreement among Colorado public institutions offering common associate and baccalaureate degree programs, such as an Associate of Arts and a Bachelor of Arts in History. Each agreement specifies for the participating institutions the required coursework and the number and type of elective credits that must be earned to complete an associate Degree with Designation, which is guaranteed to transfer and apply to an approved four-year degree bachelor's degree program.

STAAs allow students to:

1. Graduate from an associate degree-granting institution with a 60-credit Associate of Arts (A.A.) or Associate of Science (A.S.) Degree with Designation, such as an Associate of Arts in Business [§23-60-211 and §23-71-123(3), C.R.S.]. Exceptions to the 60-credit limit may be made by the Commission to facilitate transfer in certain disciplines or fields, including where the associated bachelor's degree program has received a waiver from the 120-credit cap and/or GT Pathways curriculum requirements.
2. Enroll, with junior status, at a 4-year institution if the student successfully completes the A.A. or A.S. degree that is the subject of the Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreement. It is important to note, however, that successful completion of the A.A. or A.S. degree does not guarantee admission into the four-year institution or the degree program at the four-year institution [§23-1-108(7)(b)(I), C.R.S.]. Students should always seek advising from the appropriate advisor at their two-year institution and the four-year institution into which they plan to transfer.
3. Complete the bachelor's degree program that is subject to the STAA in no more than 60 additional credits at the receiving four-year institution (for a total of 120 credits) [§23-1-108(7)(b)(II), C.R.S.], except where the degree program has received a waiver from the Commission to exceed 120 credits [§23-1-125(1)(b), C.R.S.].
4. Transfer a completed Degree with Designation and all applied credits from a Colorado public institution, including electives and foreign university credits, without submission of underlying documentation used by the originating institution to award transfer credit, except as permitted under Section 6.03.22, when that credit was evaluated consistent with a statewide transfer agreement and is documented with individual course detail on the originating institution's official transcript.

## 9.03 Institutional Transfer Guides

Institutional Transfer Guides ensure that a student who completes an A.A. or A.S. degree with a grade of C- or better in all courses will have at least 60 credits of his or her A.A. or A.S. degree applied to the bachelor's degree requirements at the receiving institution and the students will be granted junior status if admitted. Because most liberal arts and sciences degrees are designed to be completed in 120 credit hours, a transfer student can complete many degrees in 120 credit hours and 4 years, given that the transfer student follows the degree plan outlined in the transfer guide and does not take courses that are

not required. It should be noted, however, that not all degrees for which there are transfer guides can be completed with an additional 60 credits. Completion of the curriculum prescribed within Institutional Transfer Guides does not guarantee admission to a participating receiving institution. Students must meet all admission and application requirements at the receiving institution including the submission of all required documentation by stated deadlines.

### 9.04 Transfer of Associate Degrees Not Covered by STAAs

The acceptance of transfer credit and the application of transfer credit to degree requirements are distinct determinations. Credit that transfers may be applied to general education, major, prerequisite, elective, or other requirements in accordance with statewide agreements, Commission policy, and receiving institution degree requirements.

A student who earns an Associate of Arts (A.A.) or Associate of Science (A.S.) degree (that is not a Degree with Designation) at a Colorado public institution, including completing the GT Pathways curriculum with a grade of C- or better in all courses, will transfer, upon admission, with junior standing into all liberal arts and sciences bachelor degree programs offered by a Colorado public four-year university. The credits earned in the associate degree program will apply at minimum to 31 credit hours of lower division general education and 29 credit hours of additional graduation credits. The receiving institution will evaluate credit for prior learning following its standard policy, and in alignment with the Commission's Prior Learning Assessment policy (Section I, Part X). Students should follow the Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreement (if one exists for the chosen bachelor's degree) or the receiving institution's Transfer Guide while considering what courses to complete as part of the A.A. or A.S. degree.

Students who earn an Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree may continue their education through a Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.), Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Bachelor of Science (B.S.), or other bachelor's degree program. The transferability and applicability of credits earned in an A.A.S. degree may vary depending on the receiving program, statewide transfer agreements, institutional transfer guides, applicable articulation agreements, and degree-specific requirements.

Nothing in this section shall be interpreted to limit transfer opportunities for A.A.S. graduates to Bachelor of Applied Science programs. Institutions shall provide students with information regarding the extent to which technical, applied, general education, and

elective coursework may be applied toward the requirements of the receiving degree program.

### 9.05 Reverse Transfer

Students who have some college completed but who have not yet attained a degree may be eligible for an associate's degree if they meet the following criteria:

1. The student has completed 15 credit hours at a community college in Colorado;
2. The student has a minimum of 70 credit hours, including coursework at a four-year institution;
3. The student has completed those 70 credit hours within 10 years of enrollment at any institution;
4. The student's completed credit hours meet the requirements for an Associate of Science, Associate of Arts or Associate of General Studies, to be determined via degree audit at the community college; and
5. The student has not requested that her or his data be withheld at either institution.

### 9.06 Career and Technical Education Transfer

Students who successfully complete Career and Technical Education (CTE) coursework may be able to transfer the credit for those courses into an Associate of General Studies (A.G.S.) degree, an Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree or a related certificate program. In regard to coursework completed at Area Technical Colleges, (including, but not limited to, Emily Griffith Technical College, Pickens Technical College, and Technical College of the Rockies) pursuant to §23-60-802, Colorado Revised Statutes:

> ...if a student completes a program of study at an area technical college and subsequently enrolls in an institution within the state system of community and technical colleges, or transfers from an area technical college to an institution within the state system of community and technical colleges, any postsecondary course credits earned by the student while enrolled in the area technical college will apply in full at another area technical college or to an appropriate program leading to a certificate or to an associate degree at a community or technical college. Postsecondary credits earned by a student at an area technical college may be transferred into an associate degree program at a community college or into a degree program at a four-year institution of higher education as provided in section 23-1-108

(7) and the state credit transfer policies established by the Colorado commission on higher education.

Community colleges and 4-year institutions may accept credits earned from an area technical college as long as that school is accredited to offer the credit. Area technical colleges except for Emily Griffith Technical College are not accredited to offer general education (GT Pathways).

### 9.07 Emily Griffith Technical College Transfer Provisions

Emily Griffith Technical College, as authorized by 23-60-804, C.R.S. to offer associate degrees, may award postsecondary credits and credentials consistent with that authority. Credits earned through associate degree programs at Emily Griffith Technical College are subject to applicable statewide transfer policies, including GT Pathways where approved, and general transfer provisions established by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education.

## 10.00 Transfer Evaluation and Notification

### 10.01 Transfer Credit Evaluation Timelines

Per §23-5-150(1), C.R.S., students (undergraduate and graduate) who apply for admission and are accepted into an institution of higher education have the right to a timely response regarding the acceptance or denial of transfer credit. Institutions of higher education shall provide students with a determination of the acceptance or denial of transfer credit within 30 calendar days after the student has met the following criteria (if the last day of the 30-day period is a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the period is extended to include the next day which is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday):

1. The student is admitted; and
2. The institution receives official college transcripts and/or official documents for course credit (including official transcripts and documents received after admission).

An admitted and enrolled student who has an approved major, or program of study change, is equally entitled to the right to a timely response regarding how their transfer credits will be re-evaluated and applied toward their new major or program of study.

Institutions of higher education must conduct a re-evaluation of a student's transfer credits within 30 calendar days of a student's approved request to change a major or program of study.

Per §23-5-150(2), C.R.S., an institution shall publish the institution's process and timeline for reviewing and making a decision regarding transfer credit requests on the institution's website. The institution shall update its website within thirty days after making a change to its process and timeline for reviewing and issuing decisions regarding transfer credit requests.

### 10.02 Reliance of Prior Transfer Evaluations

In the context of Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreement students, originating transfer evaluations conducted by participating Colorado public institutions shall be presumed valid and complete, and receiving institutions shall rely on the originating transcript and shall not require additional underlying documentation except as permitted within this policy.

### 10.03 Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress Considerations

Institutions shall recognize that automatic application of excess or non-required GT Pathways credits may increase attempted or earned credit counts without advancing degree progress, potentially affecting a student's eligibility for federal financial aid under Title IV standards, including Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). Accordingly, receiving institutions:

1. Shall not apply non-needed GT Pathways credits toward a student's degree program requirements. Such credits may remain recorded as transfer credit but not applied toward degree requirements.
2. Shall provide clear disclosure to the student when transferred GT Pathways credits are recorded as non-applicable to the degree; and
3. Shall not require students to apply non-needed GT Pathways credits in a manner that could reasonably be expected to jeopardize financial aid eligibility.

## 11.00 Student Complaints and Appeals

If disagreement regarding the transferability of credits for coursework or a degree occurs between a student and a receiving institution, or disagreement regarding courses required of students transferring under a Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreement that result in the transfer student taking more total credit hours to receive the degree than a native

student in the same academic program, students are required to file an institutional appeal in advance of submitting a complaint to the Department. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Department will facilitate an expeditious review and resolution of the matter pursuant to Commission Policy, Section I, Part T: Student Complaint Policy. Complaints can be filed online. Per §23-1-108.5(8)(d), C.R.S., a student enrolled at an institution may appeal an institution's decision regarding the denial of credit for courses in the guaranteed transfer pathway matrix that the student seeks to transfer through an appeals process established by the department and per §23-1-108(7)(a), C.R.S., "The Commission shall have final authority in resolving transfer disputes".

## 12.00 Revision History

| Date | CCHE Agenda Item | Action | CDHE Staff |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3/14/2014 | V, D | Approved initial policy draft providing state guidance for complex transfer scenarios for students, faculty, and staff. | Dr. Ian MacGillivray |
| 4/11/2014 | III, I | Approved comprehensive overhaul (renamed to Statewide Transfer and GT Pathways policy) to reflect core GT Pathways curriculum, statutory roles, and transfer credit options. | Dr. Ian MacGillivray |
| 2/7/2019 | V, C | Presented revisions to align with SB18-069 penalties and integrate expanded GTP framework | Dr. Chris Rasmussen |
| 3/8/2019 | III, B | Approved revisions meeting SB18-069 preventing transfer students facing excess credit versus native students and adoption of competency framework | Dr. Chris Rasmussen |
| 5/3/2019 | III, A | Approved minor revisions following SB18-069 | Dr. Chris Rasmussen |
| 5/1/2020 | IV, A | Approved revisions requiring GT Pathways courses to be lower division except for GT-CO3 | Dr. Chris Rasmussen |
| 10/22/2020 | IV, E | Discussed codifying lower-division course boundaries and | Dr. Chris Rasmussen |

| Date | CCHE Agenda Item | Action | CDHE Staff |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | preserving faculty PLA authority for GT Pathways | |
| 12/3/2020 | III, A | Approved revisions restricting GT Pathways to lower division (except GT-CO3) to prevent out-of-sequence scaffolding of courses and skills | Dr. Chris Rasmussen |
| 6/6/2024 | III, D | Approved updates establishing a 5-year review cycle for STAAs, codifying teach-out provisions, and introduced Colorado GenEd Foundational Skills Credential | Christina Carrillo |
| 1/3/2025 | III, A | Approved revisions codifying SB24-164 transfer language updates, allowing GT-AH4 credit after a single semester, and removing legacy CU MAPS requirements. | Christina Carrillo and Dr. Chris Rasmussen |
| 3/7/2025 | II, A | Approved revisions codifying SB24-164 mandate requiring institutions to notify students of transfer credit determinations within 30 days of admission or major changes. | Christina Carrillo and Dr. Liliana Diaz-Solodukhin |
| 10/22/2026 | III, E | Comprehensive revision implementing recommendations from the Office of the State Auditor Higher Education Transfer Credit Audit, clarifying transfer credit evaluation requirements, student complaint and appeal processes, GT Pathways provisions, and Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreement requirements. | Brad Griffith |

# Appendix A - Statutory Authority Detail

This policy is based on the following Colorado Revised Statutes:

1. §23-1-108(7)(a), C.R.S. "The commission shall establish, after consultation with the governing boards of institutions, and enforce statewide degree transfer agreements between two-year and four-year state institutions of higher education and among four-year state institutions of higher education…"
2. §23-1-108.5(1), C.R.S. "…The general assembly finds, therefore, that it is in the best interests of the state for the commission to oversee the adoption of the guaranteed transfer pathway matrix, which includes all higher education institutions and will ensure that the quality of the guaranteed transfer pathways matrix courses are comparable and transferable systemwide."
3. §23-1-125 et seq., C.R.S. Commission directive – student bill of rights – degree requirements – implementation of core courses – competency test – prior learning – prior work-related experience – policies – definition – repeal.
4. §23-1-125(3), C.R.S. "In creating and adopting the [guaranteed transfer pathways matrix] guidelines, the department and the commission, in collaboration with the public institutions of higher education, may make allowances for baccalaureate programs that have additional degree requirements recognized by the commission."
5. §23-1-131(3)(a), C.R.S. "The commission shall collaborate with the governing boards of the two-year and four-year institutions to develop and coordinate a process to notify students concerning eligibility for the award of an associate degree. The notification process shall apply to students at a four-year institution who have accumulated seventy credit hours at a four-year institution[10] and who transferred to the institution after completing the residency requirements for an associate degree at a two-year institution."
6. §23-5-122(1), C.R.S. "…the governing board of every state-supported institution of higher education shall have in place and enforce policies regarding transfers by students between undergraduate degree programs which are offered within the same institution or within the same institutional system."
7. §23-5-145, C.R.S. Credit for military education and training, including requirements for prior learning assessment policies, evaluation of military learning, and transfer of GT Pathways credit awarded through military prior learning assessment.

[10] Note that statute has been interpreted to mean that students must have accumulated 70 credit hours in total, at all two- and four-year institutions attended, not just at a four-year institution.

8. §23-5-150, C.R.S. Transfer credit review process and nontransferable credit – notice – definition.
9. §23-60-804, C.R.S. Authority of Emily Griffith Technical College to offer associate degrees.
10. §23-60-802, C.R.S. Area technical colleges – credits – transfer.

# Appendix B - Credit Cap Waiver History

At its April 1, 2004, meeting, the Commission granted waivers to exceed the 120-credit cap to the following degree programs (new credit limits in parentheses):

(a) nursing (126 cr.).
(b) teacher preparation (126 cr. with the stipulation that students can complete the program in 4 years).
(c) engineering, engineering technology, computer science and related programs (exempt from the 120-credit limit but with the stipulation that all programs must "guarantee that students will be able to complete the program requirements in 4 years").
(d) all degree programs at Colorado School of Mines (exempt from the 120-credit limit).
(e) and landscape architecture at CSU (132 cr.).

At its June 4, 2009, meeting, the Commission approved a credit waiver of 138 credits and lifted the 4-year graduation agreement requirement for all science teacher preparation programs.

# Appendix C - Parts of a Bachelor's Degree and the GT Pathways Curriculum

The following table demonstrates how the GT Pathways curriculum fits into a traditional bachelor's degree.

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Bachelor's Degree<br>(usually 120 credits)<br><br>Examples:<br>Bachelor of Arts<br>Bachelor of Science</td><td>General Education Requirements, includes:<ul><li>GT Pathways (31 credits) and/or</li><li>other courses specified by the institution or major department, not to exceed 40 credits[11]</li></ul></td></tr>
<tr><td>Major Requirements (number of credits varies)<br>Examples:<ul><li>Biology</li><li>English</li><li>Political Science</li></ul></td></tr>
<tr><td>Electives (number of credits varies)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Other graduation requirements</td></tr>
</table>

[11] Per §23-1-125(3), C.R.S.

# Appendix D - GT Pathways Curriculum

As shown in the table below, the GT Pathways curriculum is organized into six categories: 1) written communication, 2) mathematics, 3) arts and humanities, 4) history, 5) social and behavioral sciences, and 6) natural and physical sciences, and several sub-categories**.**

| Semester Credit Hours | *GT Pathways Curriculum* |
|---|---|
| **6** | **Written Communication:**<br>GT-CO1: Introductory Writing course (minimum 3 credits)<br>GT-CO2: Intermediate Writing course (minimum 3 credits)<br>GT-CO3: Advanced Writing Course (minimum 3 credits)<br>*Students may take GT-CO1 and GT-CO2 or they may take GT-CO2 and GT-CO3. |
| **3** | **Mathematics:**<br>GT-MA1 (minimum 3 credits) |
| **15** | **Arts & Humanities** – 2 courses (minimum 6 credits); courses can be from different sub-categories or from the same sub-category:<br>GT-AH1: Arts and Expression<br>GT-AH2: Literature and Humanities<br>GT-AH3: Ways of Thinking<br>GT-AH4: World Languages<br><br>**History** – 1 course (minimum 3 credits)<br>GT-HI1<br><br>**Social and Behavioral Sciences** – 1 course (minimum 3 credits)<br>GT-SS1: Economic or Political Systems<br>GT-SS2: Geography<br>GT-SS3: Human Behavior, Culture, or Social Frameworks<br><br>*Students must select one more course from any of the above categories/sub-categories to equal at least 15 credits. (Multiple courses from the same sub-category are allowed.) |
| **7** | |

| Semester Credit Hours | *GT Pathways Curriculum* |
|---|---|
| | **Natural and Physical Sciences** – 2 courses, at least one of which must be GT-SC1<br>GT-SC1: Course with Required Laboratory<br>GT-SC2: Lecture Course without Required Laboratory |
| **31** | **TOTAL MINIMUM CREDITS** |