

Illinois

Illinois Board of Higher Education
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- 1) Does the state have an identifiable “P-16” effort visible? Who is in charge of this effort?
In its statutes, Illinois has an entity called the Joint Education Council (JEC) that was active for a number of years under the charge of the Deputy Governor for Education. The purpose of the JEC was to bring together all levels of education in the state to address P-16 issues and as a result of this collaboration three major grants were awarded to Illinois—TQE, PT3 and GEAR-UP. Each of the state education agencies was responsible for the administration of one grant. Since 2002 the JEC has been inactive under the new state administration.

There are three bills currently in play that will repeal the JEC and create a new P-16 Council, each proposes a different configuration of representatives. All bills propose responsibility of the Council to come under the Office of the Governor.

- a) Does the agency include a utility or function on its website designed explicitly to help potential students locate an appropriate college or university to attend?

The Illinois Board of Higher Education has a program inventory on its website that will allow students to identify institutions that offer the program of study they are interested in. The Illinois Community College Board has a similar tool. The IBHE is also developing a searchable map that will identify programs offered in particular regions of the state. The IBHE and ICCB sponsor a web portal www.iTransfer.org, which provides access to a vast array of information about transfer. Although marketed for transfer, the portal’s tools, including the Course Applicability System and the Illinois Articulation Initiative, provide useful information for high school students.

- 2) Is a mandated or recommended college preparatory curriculum in place in the state’s public high schools?

The state high school graduation requirements do not align with required public university admission requirements. Although the State has raised its base high school requirements, which will be fully implemented in 2008-2009, they fall short of expected university requirements.

	State Requirements	University Requirements
Lang. Arts	4 yrs.	4 yrs.
Math	3 yrs.-Alg. 1 & 1 geo.	3 yrs.-Alg., geo, trig or computer
Science	2 yrs	3 yrs.

Soc. Stud.	2 yrs.	3 yrs.
Other	1 yr.-art, music, for. lang, voc.	2 yrs.art, music, for. lang. voc ed
Total	12	15

- 3) Has the state articulated a set of explicit competencies or skills that define what it means to be “college ready?”

The state does not have a set of competencies or skills that define “college ready”.

- 4) Are systematic programs in place in the state that encourage students to accelerate progress by taking college-level courses while still enrolled in high school?

Yes. The community college system has a robust system of dual credit courses in place. These vary between community college districts and between the community colleges and school districts. Illinois also has a growing number of AP courses available as a result of federal and state grant funding to develop and implement these courses. Additionally, Illinois has an on-line institution, called the Illinois Virtual High School, which provides AP courses to high school students. This is particularly useful for rural students who do not have access to advanced coursework at their local school.

- 5) Is there a statewide policy present that governs placement into college-level courses or remedial courses? Is a standard set of placement tests recommended or required? If yes, are common cut scores for placement decisions in place or do institutions get to set their own?

There is no statewide policy governing college/university placement. There is no standard set of placement tests recommended or required.

- 6) Is there a visible statewide transfer and articulation policy? Does this cover all institutions or only public institutions? What are the specifics of this policy?

The Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) is a voluntary agreement among 110 Illinois institutions. The IAI General Education Core Curriculum is a 37-41 semester-hour package accepted by participating senior institutions as fulfilling native general education requirements. The GECC includes:

- 9 hours of Communication: Comp I, Comp II and Speech
- 3-6 hours of Math
- 3-4 hours of Life Sciences
- 3-4 hours of Physical Sciences
- 9 hours of Humanities and Fine Arts
- 9 hours of Social and Behavioral Sciences

The IAI also includes a number of major/discipline agreements that provide guidance for a student who knows what area of studies they would like to pursue, but is unsure about the baccalaureate completion institution they will attend.

Additional information on the IAI can be found at www.iTransfer.org/iai.

- a) Is the transfer/articulation policy accompanied by a statewide transferable general education requirement? Does this name actual courses and/or credits? Are specific competencies identified that the student should meet through this coursework? Is testing used to guarantee student competency for progress or transfer?

Please refer to the IAI information above and at www.iTransfer.org/iai.

- b) More specifically, does an AA or AS degree from a community college in the state meet general education requirements at public four-year institutions? What mechanisms are in place to make sure this actually happens?

In the 1970s, many senior institutions in the state signed a compact agreement allowing a completed AA or AS degree to fulfill all general education requirements at the receiving institution. This compact did not include the flagship institution, the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign. Over the past three-plus decades, most institutions have normalized the acceptance of the AA or AS as meeting the GE requirements, even if the institution was not a compact signatory.

- c) Does credit from transfer courses meet specific course requirements at the transfer institution (e.g. American History counts for American History) or do just the credits transfer to count against the total needed for graduation?

Course-to-course articulation is an institutional decision. If a course has been reviewed by an IAI panel and approved, it is generally (although not necessarily) accepted as an equivalent.

- 7) Are there statewide test-out or competency-based provisions that will allow a student to accelerate progress toward a degree?

This is done on an institution-by-institution basis.

- 8) Does the state have an easily-accessible state-supported alternative institution that allows students to complete their degrees more quickly or conveniently than through attendance at a traditional public institution?

The Illinois Virtual Campus (IVC) is a clearinghouse for distance learning courses. The IVC does not deliver courses nor grant degrees. Instead, it identifies courses available through distance delivery modes and facilitates registration.

- a) Does the state have an accessible central bank or catalog of on-line courses contributed by many institutions that enable students to do “one-stop shopping” for electronic courses?

Please see the information about the IVC above.

- 9) Does the state provide incentives to institutions for improvements in degree production or graduation rates? For minimizing the number of students graduating with excessive numbers of credits (e.g. more than 120 SCH)?

There are no specific incentives. However, we do use graduation rates as a performance indicator. The indicators are used to assess the institution's performance and can impact funding, program approval, etc...

10) Does the state provide incentives for students who successfully complete their degrees (e.g. tuition rebates or cash bonuses)? For students who complete their programs without amassing additional credits (e.g. within 120 SCH)? Are there financial disincentives for students to take more than the number of credits needed to graduate (e.g. full or out-of-state tuition)?

No, the state does not provide incentives for students who successfully complete their degrees, or for completing degree without taking additional credits, nor are there financial disincentives for students taking more than the number of credits needed to graduate.