

## Missouri

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1) Does the state have an identifiable “P-16” effort visible? Who is in charge of this effort?

In 2006, Governor Matt Blunt signed legislation creating what has become known as Missouri’s “P-20 Council”, a statutory coordinating body comprised of the Commissioners of Education and Higher Education, the Director of the Missouri Department of Economic Development, and the presiding chairs of the Coordinating Board for Higher Education and the State Board of Education. The Council, similar to what have become known as “workforce/education roundtables” in other states, is directed by statute to work towards positively impacting student success at “transition points” e.g. high school graduation to college enrollment; to strengthen collaboration across education sectors and into the business community; to work toward greater alignment of educational expectations across systems; and to promote greater feedback to all stakeholders regarding the needs and academic progress of students. The Council meets regularly to better coordinate the work of presiding agencies and other stakeholders, and is required to submit an annual report to the Governor and General Assembly.

Currently consideration is being given to appoint a permanent P-20 director as full time staff for the P-20 Council. The P-20 director would also be actively involved in advising the governor on P-20 initiatives. Major priorities for the upcoming year include:

- the Workforce 2025 initiative, synthesizing detailed analyses of educational supply and workforce demand and continued support of lifelong learning / training
- ongoing strategic planning to support quality improvement in METS (Mathematics, Engineering, Technology, and Science) education and workforce development, and a second focused statewide METS summit
- development of synergies with the statewide METS Coalition

In addition, other agency-specific and ad hoc groups exist in this vein, including an education and training committee in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and a Missouri Training and Employment Council (MTEC) within the Department of Economic Development (DED). As detailed further below, the MDHE is also coordinating P-16 initiatives which are directed to strengthen student preparation and postsecondary success across the state.

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?

Yes, an online degree program inventory is available at:

<http://highered.mo.gov/ProgramInventory/search.jsp>

The MDHE website and program inventory have recently been redesigned to provide more accessible and customized information to students, institutions, and other stakeholders.

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

The CBHE-recommended High School Core Curriculum Policy Guidelines were revised in June, 2006. These guidelines prescribe coursework identified as predictive of success in postsecondary institutions in the state. 92% of first-time freshmen attending public four-year institutions in fall 2006 completed the CBHE-recommended high school core curriculum. The revised core curriculum was adopted by the CBHE in June 2006 for adoption for high school graduates in the class of 2010, is substantially aligned with revised graduation requirements adopted by the State Board of Education, and can be reviewed in detail here: <http://www.dhe.mo.gov/corecurriculum.shtml>

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

The MDHE is currently initiating efforts to define course-level competencies for entry into collegiate-level coursework in a number of core disciplines, as well as exit competencies directed at further strengthening student transfer across the state. The MDHE is convening faculty-led discipline workgroups in mathematics, science, English / writing, social studies, foreign languages, engineering and technology, and humanities to define entry- and exit-level competencies which will then be adopted as state policy across public higher education (and ideally adopted voluntarily by many major independent institutions as well). The MDHE will work with higher education faculty and administrators across sectors to define course competencies in beginning-level collegiate courses in order to project a more consistent message regarding student preparation and expectations upon entry into and exit from the first collegiate course in major disciplines.

Drivers for this important work include a directive within major higher education omnibus legislation passed in 2007 by the Missouri General Assembly (Senate Bill 389), as well as the interests and strategic goals of:

- the P-20 Council, as detailed above
- the statewide METS Coalition, which grew out of a charge by Governor Blunt to strengthen educational participation and economic development in METS fields in the state, and has begun working toward stronger curriculum alignment in METS disciplines, both in K-12 and postsecondary education.
- the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), which is working to implement a directive from the State Board of Education to replace some of its current statewide low-stakes assessments with standardized end-of-course exams in core courses (initially in algebra, biology, and English).

- 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, there are many references on the MDHE website to AP, dual enrollment, and checklists for middle school and high school students to make sure they are on the right path and/or are able to accelerate progress. In 2006, 11,501 high school students in Missouri took AP exams. For more information, please see the web site at:  
<http://www.dhe.mo.gov/preparingforcollege.shtml>  
<http://www.dhe.mo.gov/dualcreditpolicy.shtml>
- 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 not currently a statewide policy regarding assessment instruments and/or cut scores for placement in remedial/developmental education. The independent Missouri Developmental Education Consortium (MODEC) has worked to publicize the range of placement policies employed across public two-year institutions in the state, and there is certainly the potential for definition of common competencies into entry-level college coursework across the state, as detailed above, to impact further work regarding placement policy.
- 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?  
There is a statewide transfer and articulation policy, which outlines a set of common statewide goals across four knowledge and four skill areas along with illustrative competencies that are incorporated into a 42-hour block of general education transfer credit. Distribution of common competencies is delegated to the institutions, which provides flexibility in program structure across institutions. Transfer students are encouraged to complete a general education program at a single institution.

As further detailed below, the articulated block of general education credit is accepted by participating institutions as equivalent to general education for native students, and no further general education coursework is to be required with the exception of a *limited* number of program-specific requirements at some institutions. Current efforts aimed at the definition of exit competencies for beginning general education courses in all disciplines will complement existing general education policy by promoting seamless transfer for students who move among / between institutions outside the structure of the 42-hour block.

Further information on the statewide transfer and articulation policy is available here:  
<http://www.dhe.mo.gov/genedtransferpolicy.shtml>

All public institutions and several independent institutions participate in this program. While not all institutions in the state are currently signatories to the policy, a list of participating institutions (public and independent) may be found here:  
<http://www.dhe.mo.gov/gectinstitutions.shtml>

Specifics of the policy:

CBHE policy guidelines include a plan for the transfer of general education credits and for the transfer of associate of arts degrees among public institutions and independent signatory institutions. Other transfer issues are addressed by institution-to-institution articulation agreements. Furthermore, policy guidelines include an appeals process to follow when the system is not functioning to the satisfaction of students or institutions.

- 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?

There is a statewide transferable general education requirement. As noted above, institutions may define a 42-hour block of courses that are stipulated to address a common set of statewide goals and illustrative core competencies. The policy does not name courses or credit hours to be included, or a consistent instrument for assessment of competencies, although it does include a framework for institutions to submit a matrix mapping competencies to courses and assessments for mutual review, and further efforts are underway to define common competencies for beginning courses in key disciplines. This system provides both institutional flexibility and commonality in expectations for students transferring among participating institutions in the state.

<http://www.dhe.mo.gov/cotafaqs.shtml>

Scroll down to “*Credit Transfer Policy*”

“Previously, Missouri's approach to general education had been based on seat time and credit hour production, relying on course titles and descriptions to facilitate the transferability of credit from one institution to another. Increasingly, states are looking at competency or proficiency-based systems as a way to promote educational reform, to ensure better alignment between K-12 and higher education, and to encourage better preparation and performance of students. According to the statewide guidelines, general education:

- a. Establishes the curricular foundation of the institution.
- b. Encourages students to acquire and use the intellectual tools, knowledge, and creative capabilities necessary to study the world.
- c. Furnishes students with skills that enable them to deepen that understanding and to communicate to others.
- d. Equips students for success in specialized areas of study and to become educated persons, active citizens, and effective contributors to their own life and to the general welfare of others.
- e. Introduces students to the traditional disciplines of the arts and sciences.
- f. Alerts students to the connections between the traditional disciplines and the world.
- g. Informs students that the world is understood in different ways.

- h. Provides students with the means to come to terms, intelligently and humanely, with this diversity of understanding.
- i. Helps students acquire appropriate investigative, interpretative, and communicative competencies.

Designing a 42-hour block of general education credit and encouraging students to complete that block at one institution are perceived to be the best means to achieve these goals for student mastery of general education knowledge and skills.”

- 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?

The associate of arts (AA) degree is designed as the statewide general studies transfer degree. The 42-hour block is used at the community colleges and in the four-year colleges. While the specific courses and curriculum design may vary, each institution’s program is aligned with common statewide goals and illustrative competencies. All the institutions that are part of the consortium are required to 1) have a person identified as the transfer expert on campus; 2) agree to the terms set forth in the Credit Transfer Guidelines; 3) agree to have the policies posted on web; and 4) transcripts from sending institutions contain a seal or stamp attesting to the student's completion of that institution's 42-hour block. Additionally, there is an appeals process for students if an institution does not comply. Institutions are also provided access to appeal the policies and/or practices of other institutions. Upon completion of the associate of arts degree, students are presumed to have completed general education coursework with the exception of *limited* program-specific additions at some institutions. In addition, AS degrees must be articulated with a receiving institution in order to be approved by the CBHE, though they do not incorporate the 42-hour block. Other awards (e.g. certificates or the AAS) are generally subject to course-by-course evaluation at the receiving institution.

- 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?

Upon degree completion, the 42-hour block is expected to fulfill general education degree requirements at the receiving institution, with the exception of *limited* program-specific additions at some institutions. Additionally, an addendum to the General Education and Credit Transfer Policy states that in cases of differences between institutions in the classification of a course as lower- or upper-division, these differences alone should not result in transfer students being required to repeat coursework at the receiving institution. “Receiving institutions should avoid duplication of learning and effort by transfer students by requiring the completion of a related but non-duplicative upper-division course that would enrich the curriculum of the student.” Other credit may also be articulated as elective credit by the receiving institution.

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

Generally speaking, there are not statewide policies or processes in this area. There may be degree-specific processes, e.g. a process for alternative certification in teacher education governed by DESE. Missouri does have an active dual credit program that provides high school students with the opportunity to earn both high school and collegiate credit from courses delivered in high schools for students who meet eligibility standards to do collegiate work prior to high school graduation.

- 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?

One model for accelerated progress by high-achieving students is the The Missouri Academy of Science, Mathematics and Computing at Northwest Missouri State University. There, entering high school juniors enter a residential program through which they can concurrently complete a high school diploma and an associate's degree. Of course, online coursework through public institutions can also support accelerated time-to-degree; Missouri does not currently have statewide policy governing the approval of online degree offerings at public institutions, provided the degree has been approved for onground implementation.

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? The state's program inventory does not currently identify programs which can be completed exclusively online. A project to capture this information was initiated a number of years back, but was put on hold due to lack of funding. Further information would require contacting individual institutions which offer the desired program.

- 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)?

While no formal statewide incentives exist in this area, Missouri has a history of performance funding built on measurable indicators of student success in the state. There is currently work on a revised funding formula for public higher education, which could include recommendations for an integrated system of performance funding, which could certainly incorporate graduation rates or time-to-degree as a reported measure. In the interim, many relevant measures are tracked and reported in the Statistical Summary of Missouri Higher Education for purposes of public accountability and institutional comparability.

<http://www.dhe.mo.gov/statsum.shtml>

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)?

See above.