

New Hampshire

New Hampshire Postsecondary Education Commission

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

The Governor has issued an Executive Order to establish a Governor's P-16 Working Group. There are eight members: The Commissioner of the NH Department of Education, the Chancellor of the University System of NH, the Commissioner of the NH Community Technical College System, the Executive Director of the NH Postsecondary Education Commission, the President of the NH College and University Council, the President of the NH Workforce Opportunity Council, a leader from the NH Business Community and a designee of the Governor. The group is chaired by the Executive Director of the NH Postsecondary Education Commission.

- 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?

While under consideration, the P-16 Working Group has not yet established a web presence. However, the New Hampshire Postsecondary Education Commission (PEC), the New Hampshire College and University Council (NHCUC), the New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation (NHHEAF) provides links to all NH colleges and universities. Both the University System of New Hampshire (USNH) web site and the New Hampshire Community Technical College System (NHCTCS) web site include information and linkages to all of the state universities and colleges. Additionally, the NHCUC hosts a website, www.visitnhcolleges.org that provides college profiles; academic offerings, affordability information, campus links and information on campus tours for their member institutions.

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

The state's mandated requirements for graduation are intended to prepare New Hampshire's high school students for college entrance. In addition, the NH K-12 Curriculum Frameworks and Grade Span Expectation's articulate a rigorous college-ready curriculum for each student. While NH does not have a mandated curriculum (content), it does require that each graduate complete a series of courses that would enable them to enter the post secondary education level successfully.

The NH Department of Education (DOE) has drafted legislation for submission to the next legislative year that will further address this issue much more directly, requiring students to take a rigorous curriculum in high school to prepare them college and careers in order to earn a state level diploma.

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

The NH Grade Span Expectation's were written explicitly to represent competencies and skills that would align with college ready expectations and skills on the postsecondary level.

- 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?

Currently there are five initiatives sponsored by the NHCTC System that address this:

1. Running Start – Concurrent credit program where students take one of our college courses in high school taught by high school teacher who partners with one of NHCTCS faculty. Students receive transcribed college credit as well as meet high school requirements.
2. Project Lead the Way – a four course sequence taught in high school designed to spark interest in engineering. Courses can be taken in Running Start model at selected high schools. Faculty from the NHCTCS System train Project Lead the Way high school instructors.
3. The Bridge Program – Nashua – Students from Nashua High School take courses at the college for concurrent credit.
4. Early College Program – Berlin – Students from Berlin High School take courses at the college at a reduced rate for concurrent credit.
5. High School Articulation – colleges in the NHCTCS system have a few articulation agreements in place with high schools, particularly with Career and Technical Centers. Recently there has been increased activity in this area.

- 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?

Currently six NHCTC colleges use Accuplacer for assessing incoming students’ math, writing, and reading readiness. One college uses its own “home-grown” assessment for math and writing and the Nelson-Denny test for reading. Recommendations for placement in courses (developmental, remedial, e.g.) are based on scores. Where Accuplacer is used, common cut scores are not standard across the colleges. Each college sets its own cut scores (an issue the Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs across NHCTCS are currently discussing)

There is no statewide policy or system-wide policy for USNH. Each institution has its own policies and course placement criteria that is equal to or above national criteria. Granite State College uses the Accuplacer placement testing system for math and writing.

- 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?

Currently all NHCTCS General Education courses transfer to all colleges in the University System, though not always on a one-to-one basis (e.g., a Shakespeare course may not transfer as a Shakespeare course but as an elective). A signed document exists dating back to 2003. However, it does not address articulation in any detail, indicating only that each party will “develop and continually update transfer agreements in liberal arts and general studies, as well as develop articulation agreements for dual or joint enrollment of students.” Traditionally, however, most general education courses from the NHCTC System have transferred into the University System in some fashion. Much of this is outlined online at www.nhtransfer.org. It covers only public institutions.

In addition, the NHCTCS has a framework for transferring graduates from our Teacher Preparation program into Plymouth State University’s education program. Individual colleges in NCCTCS also have a number of departmental articulation agreements with departments within each of the colleges and universities in the University System (e.g., Business, Nursing, Applied Science, Early Childhood Ed, Engineering Technology). Credits transferred vary, depending on the agreement.

All of the NHCTCS institutions have similar individual departmental articulation agreements with private colleges in the state, most notably Southern NH University, Rivier College, New England College, Franklin Pierce College and St. Anselm’s College. Private colleges have consistently sought to bring in all credits taken by a student at an NHCTC college.

- 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?

As stated in the previous response, there is a statewide transferable general education requirement for transferring from NHCTCS to USNH institutions, however it does vary from institution to institution. Courses and credits are specified at each institution’s web site and course catalog. Testing is used only at Granite State College. Other institutions rely on grades as the measure of competency and will only transfer a grade of C or higher for eligible courses.

- 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 AA degree in the NHCTC System is designed to ensure full transfer of all general education credits into the colleges and universities in the University System. As indicated above, however, credits transfer but not always course for course. Transfer officers in the University System are aware of the AA degree and through the Transfer Committee (a committee of representatives from each of the two public systems) keep us informed of any curriculum changes within the University System that might affect transfer. The Transfer Committee also authored a transfer website (www.nhtransfer.org) that targets

students, parents and high school personnel on the opportunities for transfer within our respective Systems.

- 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?

Yes, based on those that are addressed through transfer articulation agreements between the two systems. Courses that do not fit into specific degree requirements can be used toward meeting overall credit requirements for graduation.

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

There are no statewide test-out or competency-based provisions that will allow a student to accelerate progress toward a degree.

- 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?

Though not an “alternative” institution, NHCTC-Manchester will be launching a 100% online degree in AA, Business, and Accounting starting in the fall 2007 semester. NHCTCS also has satellites in Keene, Derry, Littleton and Woodsville, where students can take classes towards degrees. Granite State College similarly has sites around the state and a substantial online presence for degree completion. Granite State College also offers several four-year degrees that can be earned completely online, providing students with an alternative way to accelerate their degree completion.

- 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?

At USNH, Granite State College manages a call center that inventories all online and off-campus course offerings from across the university system. It can be accessed through a toll-free number and online at www.granite.edu. The NHCTC System, markets all online courses from all of its college at a central site.

- 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)?

The state does not provide incentives to institutions to improve graduation rates, however USNH institutions include the tracking of graduation rates as one of the Board of Trustee’s strategic indicators, and each institution sets annual goals for graduation rates. Compared to peer institutions, they compare very favorably.

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)?

Both public systems have no full-time “cap.” Most colleges have a full-time tuition rate based on a cap of 12 credits which allows a student to take more than 12 credits for the price of 12. Students pay for every credit they take. The financial disincentives are very apparent however, as tuition rates at USNH and NHCTCS institutions are among the highest nationally.

KEY DEFINITIONS:

NH Department of Education (DOE) - State Agency responsible for k-12 education

University System of NH (USNH) - This four-year public system is not considered a state agency, the colleges and universities in this system are: Granite State College, Keene State College, Plymouth State University, University of NH (state flagship)

NH Community Technical College System (NHCTCS) - This two-year public system is seeking authority from the legislature to have the same autonomy the 4-year state public system has and to remove the word "technical" from their title to more accurately represent the variety of degrees offered. They are, as of today, considered a state agency. Main campuses are located in Concord, Manchester, Stratham, Claremont, Nashua, Laconia and Berlin, NH. Note: As of July 2007 this entity has been renamed to the “Community College System of New Hampshire” and is no longer a state agency and has autonomy equal to the four year public system.

NH Postsecondary Education Commission (PEC) - A coordinating state agency charged with protecting students, providing financial aid and conducting research. All sectors of postsecondary education are represented - public, private, profit, non-profit, degree granting institutions as well as career schools.

NH College and University Council (NHCUC) - A member organization that is a consortium of public and private, two and four-year non-profit institutions.