

## Washington

### Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board

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

Governor Gregoire has just announced her intent to form a P-20 council.

- 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 Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) web site does not have a tool to help students locate an appropriate college or university. The web site does contain information on how students can access help paying for college and has web links to all the institutions within the state.

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

There is not a recommended college prep curriculum. The Office of the superintendent of Public Instruction provides a recommended high school curriculum on its web site for admission to competitive institutions of higher education.

To graduate, students must earn a minimum 19 high school credits; school districts can set additional requirements. Students must take classes in which content is aligned with our state’s academic content standards defined by Essential Academic Learning Requirements with Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) for ninth and tenth grade in Mathematics, Reading, Communication, Writing, and Science.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board sets minimum standards required for admission to public baccalaureate institutions.

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

In 2006 and 2007, the Higher Education Coordinating Board approved college readiness standards in mathematics and preliminary English and science college readiness definitions. However, the standards and definitions are neither required nor available for system-wide use at this time.

- 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?

A number of college-level learning opportunities are available to Washington high school students, including Running Start, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, College in High School and Tech Prep.

- 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?

The community and technical college system requires that all entering students take placement tests. The type of instrument used (Compass, ASSET, etc) as well as cut scores are determined at the discretion of each institution.

In 2007, the state passed a law to require a mathematics placement test to serve as a common college readiness test for all two- and four-year institutions, to be implemented by September 2009.

- 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 most visible policy for statewide transfer and articulation is contained in the Intercollegiate Relations Commission (ICRC) handbook. The Higher Education Coordinating Board is responsible for setting transfer policy within the state and the board has specified that the procedures that govern transfer will be contained in an agreement which is published, maintained, and updated by the ICRC and its appropriate subcommittees. The policies apply to both public and private institutions. Specific policies can be found at:

<http://www.washingtoncouncil.org/icrc/resources/documents/icrhandbook.pdf>

- 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?

Yes, The Intercollege Relations Commission has developed Associate Degree Guidelines under which an Associate degree offered by Washington community colleges may be used to satisfy the lower division general education program of baccalaureate institutions within the state. The guidelines include a list of courses generally accepted in transfer in associate transfer degrees. The guidelines also include courses that are accepted in transfer when no more than 15 of them are taken as part of a transfer associate degree. These are called "restricted credits" that wouldn't typically transfer if a student did not get a transfer associate degree. Testing is not used to certify competency.

- 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?

Yes, the AA and AS degrees from community and technical colleges meet general education requirements at public and some private four-year institutions provided that the AA and/or AS degrees meet the guidelines set forth by the ICRC. The Higher Education Coordinating Board adopted a policy in 1994 that specifies that students who earn an AA or AS receive priority consideration for transfer. In addition, the ICRC is responsible for providing ways to resolve disputes regarding degrees, course equivalencies, and other transfer-related problems between or among member institutions.

- 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?

Evaluation regarding how credits transfer into a receiving institution depends on whether the student earned a transfer associate degree as well as the policies at the receiving institution itself. If a student completes a transfer associate degree, then courses count toward total credits needed in specific general education distribution areas. In other words, when a student has a transfer associate degree courses are not individually evaluated for 1:1 applicability (i.e. American History counts for American History), rather all general education requirements have been satisfied. If a student transfers without a degree, then courses are typically evaluated to meet specific course requirements.

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

There is no statewide use of a standard system of assessment of prior learning beyond placement tests (math and English) and advance placement tests. Many institutions are working on developing prior learning assessments, especially in workforce education programs, that provide credit toward a degree or certificate. However, these assessments and their use are institution and program-specific and are not standardized across programs and institutions.

- 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?

No, Washington does not have an easily-accessible state supported alternative institution that allows students to complete their degrees.

- 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?

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges administers Washington Online (<http://www.waol.org>) a centralized shared resource for accessing and managing distance learning courses for the 34 community and technical colleges in the state. Most community and technical colleges and all public 4-year institutions offer additional on-line courses that are housed on their own distance learning course management platforms.

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)?

Degree production and time to degree is closely tracked and publicly reported by state oversight agencies, but there is no explicit incentive, financial or otherwise, for improvement.

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)?

Most state-funded scholarship programs limit students to four academic years of financial support, providing a disincentive for the student to extend the time to degree.