

GUIDANCE ON THE STATEWIDE REVERSE TRANSFER ARTICULATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM AND THE STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA

UPDATED MAY 2021



STATE
UNIVERSITY
SYSTEM
of FLORIDA
Board of Governors



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
fldoe.org



THE *Florida*
COLLEGE SYSTEM

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Office of Articulation gratefully acknowledges the Florida College System Foundation, Inc. for its work to create the *Reverse Transfer Toolkit for Colleges and Universities* (2015). We also want to recognize our State University System and Florida College System partners for their tireless efforts to maximize access and provide seamless articulation for Florida’s students.

PREFERRED CITATION

Guidance on the *Statewide Reverse Transfer Articulation Agreement between the Florida College System and the State University System of Florida* (March 2021). Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Education.

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WHAT IS REVERSE TRANSFER?

Reverse transfer is the process by which a student is awarded an associate degree after transferring to and completing degree requirements at a four-year institution (Anderson, 2015).

The Statewide Articulation Agreement, established by Section (s.) 1007.23, Florida Statutes (F.S.), requires that “(T)he State Board of Education and the Board of Governors shall enter into a statewide articulation agreement which the State Board of Education shall adopt by rule” to preserve Florida’s 2+2 system of articulation.

To facilitate the seamless articulation of student credit between Florida’s public postsecondary institutions, s. 1007.23, F.S., was amended by the 2019 Florida Legislature to include the stipulation that the statewide articulation agreement must include a provision for reverse transfer. See excerpt from s. 1007.23(8), F.S. below.

“(8) The articulation agreement must specifically provide for a reverse transfer agreement for Florida College System associate in arts degree-seeking students who transfer to a state university before earning an associate in arts degree. Students must be awarded an associate in arts degree by the Florida College System institution upon completion of degree requirements at the state university if the student earned more than 30 credit hours toward the associate in arts degree from the Florida College System institution. State universities must identify each student who has completed requirements for the associate in arts degree and, upon consent of the student, transfer credits earned at the state university back to the Florida College System institution so that the associate in arts degree may be awarded by the Florida College System institution.”

In 2021, the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors adopted the *Statewide Reverse Transfer Articulation Agreement between the Florida College System and The State University System of Florida*. This document is intended to provide guidance to Florida’s public postsecondary institutions related to implementation of the *Statewide Reverse Transfer Articulation Agreement between the Florida College System and The State University System of Florida*.

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A Statement of Philosophy and Intent

The State of Florida, long a national leader in higher education, has given broad policy directions to the system of postsecondary education with regard to articulation between and among two- and four-year institutions. Section 1007.23, Florida Statutes, provides for the Board of Governors and the State Board of Education to enter into a statewide articulation agreement to establish an effective and orderly transfer process for students entering a Florida college, transferring to a state university and completing an associate in arts degree.

The State University System (SUS) is established in Article IX, section 7 of the Florida Constitution with a purpose of achieving excellence through teaching students, advancing research, and providing public service for the benefit of Florida's citizens, their communities and economies. Its 12 member institutions are identified in section 1000.21, Florida Statutes. The Board of Governors governs the SUS, and boards of trustees administer each university ("SUS institution").

The Florida College System (FCS) is established in Article IX, section 8 of the Florida Constitution with a purpose of providing access to undergraduate education; to originate articulated pathways to a baccalaureate degree; to ensure superior commitment to teaching and learning; and to respond quickly and efficiently to meet the demand of communities. Its 28 member institutions are identified in section 1000.21, Florida Statutes. The State Board of Education supervises the state college system, and district boards of trustees govern each college ("FCS institution").

The purpose of this reverse transfer articulation agreement is to set forth the conditions regarding statewide reverse transfer between the SUS and the FCS, and to provide the procedures whereby member institutions of the FCS and SUS must participate. It is intended to increase the options available for students enrolled at an SUS institution who have transferred credit from an FCS institution to earn an associate in arts degree from their former college.

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Agreement is to facilitate the implementation of reverse transfer to assist former FCS students who have transferred to a SUS institution to complete an associate in arts (AA) degree at an FCS institution. The Agreement applies to SUS students who have completed more than 30 credits at an FCS institution but who transferred to an SUS institution before earning an AA degree.

II. GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE

- A. Pursuant to s. 1007.23, Statewide articulation agreement: “The [statewide] articulation agreement must specifically provide for a reverse transfer agreement for Florida College System associate in arts degree-seeking students who transfer to a state university before earning an associate in arts degree. Students must be awarded an associate in arts degree by the Florida College System institution upon completion of degree requirements at the state university if the student earned more than 30 credit hours toward the associate in arts degree from the Florida College System institution. State universities must identify each student who has completed requirements for the associate in arts degree and, upon consent of the student, transfer credits earned at the state university back to the Florida College System institution so that the associate in arts degree may be awarded by the Florida College System institution.”
- B. SUS institutions must comply with Board of Governors Regulation 8.007, Articulation, which addresses reverse transfer. Specifically: “(3) (g)(2) Associate in arts degree awarded to FCS transfer students by the awarding FCS institution through the reverse transfer to credit earned at the SUS institution:

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- a. SUS students who transfer more than 30 semester hours from a single FCS institution are notified about being eligible to receive an AA degree at their home FCS institution if the student has earned at least a combined total of 60 semester hours, including the 30 or more semester hours from the home FCS institution with an overall cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or higher.
 - b. SUS institutions must notify transfer students meeting the requirements of subsection (3)(g)(2) of their possible eligibility to receive an AA degree from their home FCS institution. Students must consent to the sharing of information from the SUS institution to their home FCS institution regarding this option. If consent is given, SUS institutions must inform the appropriate FCS institution about the student's interest in receiving an AA degree and provide any applicable information."
- C. Rule 6A-10.024, Florida Statutes, Articulation Between and Among Universities, Florida Colleges, and School Districts, implements the statewide articulated acceleration mechanisms of s. 1007.23.
- D. Statewide and institutional policies/procedures must be in compliance with the standards of accreditation set forth by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) or the respective regional accrediting body.
- E. All student information shared between and among institutions to facilitate reverse transfer awards must be in compliance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requirements in 20 USC section 1232g and applicable Florida statutes, rules and federal regulations pertaining to the privacy of student information.
- F. The Articulation Coordinating Committee may adopt additional guidance in cooperation with the Board of Governors and State Board of Education to assist institutions in implementing the provisions of this Agreement.

III. PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

All SUS and FCS institutions identified in s. 1000.21 are required to participate in reverse transfer under this Agreement. Participation under the reverse transfer statewide articulation agreement supersedes existing local, regional or consortia arrangements.

This Agreement does not prohibit SUS or FCS institutions from entering into reverse transfer agreements with private or out-of-state institutions or consortia.

IV. STUDENT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

In order to participate in the reverse transfer process, a student must meet the following requirements:

- A. Be currently enrolled in a state university;
- B. Earned more than 30 hours of college credit at a single FCS institution;

The FCS institution where the student earned more than 30 semester credit hours is considered the home institution. College credit may include credit earned through acceleration, such as credit-by-examination, dual enrollment, and/or prior learning assessment if the home institution was the initial awardee. Credit awarded by other institutions and accepted by the home institution in transfer may not be included.

- C. Transferred to a state university before earning an AA degree;

The reverse transfer provision in the Statewide Articulation Agreement does not apply to associate in science degree-seeking students.

- D. Not previously earned an AA degree from the state university;

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- E. Completed a minimum of 60 hours of college credit;
- F. Completed general education requirements of either the home FCS institution or the SUS institution;

General education core course options were adopted in State Board of Education Rule 6A-14.0303, F.A.C. and Board of Governors Regulation 8.005. The remaining hours to complete the 36-credit hour general education requirement are at the discretion of the institution.

The Florida Automated System for Transferring Educational Records (FASTER) Postsecondary Course Demographic Record Format (P01) provides a "General Education Met" Yes/No indicator for students who have met an institution's general education and/or AA degree requirements.

- G. Not earned a baccalaureate degree;
- H. Be in good academic standing and be current with financial obligations at the SUS institution;
- I. Be in good academic standing and be current with financial obligations at the awarding FCS institution;
- J. Have met the civic literacy requirement per section 1007.25(4), Florida Statutes;
- K. Have met college-level communication and computation competency per SBOE Rule 6A-10.030, Florida Administrative Code;
- L. Demonstrate competency in a foreign language per s. 1007.25(8);

The Postsecondary Course Demographic Record Format (P01) in FASTER provides indicators related to the civics literacy competency requirement, college-level communication and computation competencies, and foreign language competencies.

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- M. Consent to allowing the SUS institution to transmit the necessary information to the FCS institution; and
- N. Meet any other AA degree graduation institutional requirement of the degree-granting FCS institution.

If a reverse transfer candidate attended more than one FCS institution prior to transferring to an SUS institution, the degree-granting institution will be the FCS institution where the student earned the most credits, provided the student earned more than 30 credits at that institution. In the event the student has earned the same number of credits and meets the degree requirements at two or more FCS institutions, the FCS institution that the student attended most recently will be considered as the degree-granting institution.

Florida public secondary and postsecondary institutions are required to use FASTER to transmit official student records between and among institutions.

However, this Agreement does not preclude a sending institution, as part of its local process, from using the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) for exchange of reverse transfer data, as long as the receiving institution is also a member of the NSC.

To adhere to the FERPA requirements, the student must actively affirm and agree (“opt in”) to the exchange of course histories and/or official transcripts among all the institutions attended. The SUS institution must obtain written consent (e.g., hard copy, electronic consent) from those students who appear to have the credits for associate degree completion prior to sending information to the FCS institution. Non-responding students will be considered to be non-consenting and will not be eligible. Students who do not consent shall not be considered further for reverse transfer in subsequent terms, unless the student initiates a request for reverse transfer. Institutions may obtain consent at the time of student admission, transfer, or notification of eligibility to participate in the reverse transfer process.

V. REVERSE TRANSFER PROCESS

Annually, SUS institutions shall determine which students meet the eligibility criteria outlined above to identify potential degree candidates.

SUS and FCS institutions may establish additional institutional processes in line with the requirements of this Agreement.

At a minimum, SUS institutions shall determine potential student eligibility annually. This Agreement does not preclude an institution from establishing an alternative frequency. Additional information will be forthcoming related to best practices for student identification.

Once potential degree candidates are identified, each SUS institution shall provide notification to potential candidates about the reverse transfer provision of the statewide articulation agreement. This notification must:

- A. Specify that “opting in” does not guarantee the student will automatically be awarded the AA; it simply means the FCS institution will evaluate the student’s transcript to determine if they are eligible for the degree.
- B. Include the statement of purpose, the name of the FCS institution to which the student’s information will be sent, and instructions for opting out of the process at any time.

SUS institutions may determine the method and frequency in which potential candidates are notified. This could include, but is not limited to, emails, alerts through advising systems, text messages or letters.

Upon consent by the student, the SUS institution will transmit transcripts or academic data files for potential candidates to the FCS institution with a notation that the student has indicated that they intend to seek a reverse transfer.

Academic data files are the electronic education records transmitted using FASTER.

The Department of Education is researching notification options related to the reverse transfer process and records transmissions to ensure consistency statewide.

The FCS institution will conduct a degree audit to determine whether the potential candidates meet all eligibility criteria, including criteria specified in subsection IV.

A student who intends to seek an AA degree under the terms of this Agreement will be governed by the graduation requirements set forth by the FCS institution.

Upon the successful completion of the degree audit described and, if applicable, the successful completion of any additional procedures or requirements, the FCS institution will confer the AA degree during the semester in which the audit was successfully completed. The FCS institution will notify the student of the award of the AA degree. The student's transcripts will be updated accordingly to reflect the awarding of the AA degree.

The FCS institution will inform students who are not eligible to be awarded a degree which course(s) and/or other requirement(s) remain to be completed. Students shall be afforded due process under the appeals process and procedures outlined in the catalog at the degree-granting FCS institution.

The FCS institution will notify the registrar at the SUS institution regarding the outcomes of the degree audits.

VI. INSTITUTIONAL OBLIGATIONS

- A. Each SUS and FCS institution will designate an institutional staff person to provide oversight for the reverse transfer program.
- B. Each SUS and FCS institution will create a webpage containing information about the reverse transfer program.
- C. Each SUS and FCS institution will provide academic counseling to students.
- D. Each SUS and FCS institution will ensure that all educational records created, disclosed, or maintained pursuant to the terms of this articulation agreement are confidential and shall be created, disclosed, and maintained pursuant to the requirements of FERPA and applicable state laws.
- E. Each SUS institution will maintain records on the number of students who met the eligibility criteria and the number of transcripts sent to FCS institutions.
- F. Each FCS institution will maintain records on the number of students evaluated, the number of students who were awarded an AA degree, and the number of students who were not awarded an AA degree.

VII. INSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

Each institution reserves the right to add, discontinue or modify its institutional policies at any time.

Each institution reserves the right to establish data sharing agreements with other institutions related to the transmittal of student records, which must comply with the requirements of FERPA and the implementing federal regulations.

VIII. REPORTING

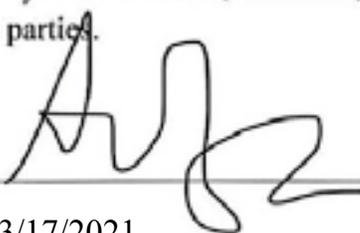
FCS and SUS institutions will submit any data or reports that might be required by the Office of the Board of Governors for the SUS or the Department of Education's Division of Florida Colleges.

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The Department of Education and Board of Governors staff are working to determine the reporting requirements for students served and degrees conferred.

Minimally, Florida College System institutions must report student completions through the Student Database, Data Element 2122, Reverse Transfer Code, which was implemented during the 2020-21 reporting year. AA degrees awarded via the statewide articulation agreement must be assigned table value B: The AA was earned under the Statewide Reverse Transfer Articulation Agreement.

This Statewide Reverse Transfer Articulation Agreement is entered into this 17 day of March, 2021, by and between the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors on behalf of the Florida College System and State University System, respectively. This Agreement shall take effect immediately and shall remain in effect until terminated by either party. Any modifications, additions, or deletions to this Agreement must be in writing and signed by both parties.

By:  _____
Date: 3/17/2021

Chair, State Board of Education

By:  _____
Date: 3/23/2021

Chair, Board of Governors

REVERSE TRANSFER STUDENT PATHWAY: FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM THROUGH STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Student attends an FCS and completes 30+ credit hours.



Student transfers to an SUS.



Student completes 60 credit hours and the requirements for an Associate
in Arts (AA) degree.



SUS notifies the student that they are eligible for their AA degree from the
FCS and the student may request the degree to be awarded.



Student requests degree audit and awarding of their AA degree of their
college through their university.



SUS sends the student's transcripts to the FCS.



FCS reviews the student's transcript and either:
A. Awards the student the AA degree or
B. Notifies the student of any incomplete degree requirements.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1: A student has completed the requirements for an AA degree at an SUS institution after completing 40 hours at an FCS institution, but does not want the FCS institution to award their AA degree. May the SUS institution award the degree?

A1: Yes; the SUS institution may award the student an AA degree if the student requests the degree and has met the requirements for the degree.

Q2: If a student has attended more than one FCS institution, which would be the degree-granting institution?

A2: If a reverse transfer candidate attended more than one FCS institution prior to transferring to an SUS institution, the degree-granting institution will be the FCS institution where the student earned the most credits, provided the student earned more than 30 credits at that institution. In the event the student has earned the same number of credits and meets the degree requirements at two or more FCS institutions, the FCS institution that the student attended most recently will be considered as the degree-granting institution.

Q3: What information should be included in the notification?

A3: The notification must specify that “opting in” does not guarantee the student will automatically be awarded the AA; it simply means the FCS institution will evaluate the student’s transcript to determine if they are eligible for the degree. It must also include the statement of purpose, the name of the FCS institution to which the student’s information will be sent, and instructions for opting out of the process at any time.

Q4: What if a student opts in for reverse transfer, the SUS institution sends the information to the FCS institution, and then the student opts out?

A4: A student may opt out at any time up to the point that the FCS institution has been informed.

Q5: While electronic data exchange is optimum, can data be exchanged in other ways, including sending paper transcripts, if necessary?

A5: State policy requires the use of FASTER to transmit student records between and amongst Florida’s public secondary and postsecondary institutions.

Q6: How will both FCS and SUS staff involved in the reverse transfer process know who the point of contact is at each institution?

A6: The Office of Articulation is collecting this information to share with the institutions.

PARTICIPATING FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM INSTITUTIONS

Broward College	Northwest Florida State College
Chipola College	Palm Beach State College
College of Central Florida	Pasco-Hernando State College
Daytona State College	Pensacola State College
Eastern Florida State College	Polk State College
Florida Gateway College	Santa Fe College
Florida SouthWestern State College	Seminole State College of Florida
Florida State College at Jacksonville	South Florida State College
Gulf Coast State College	St. Johns River State College
Hillsborough Community College	St. Petersburg College
Indian River State College	State College of Florida, Manatee- Sarasota
Lake-Sumter State College	Tallahassee Community College
Miami Dade College	The College of the Florida Keys
North Florida College	Valencia College

PARTICIPATING STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM INSTITUTIONS

Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University	New College of Florida
Florida Atlantic University	University of Central Florida
Florida Gulf Coast University	University of Florida
Florida International University	University of North Florida
Florida Polytechnic University	University of South Florida
Florida State University	University of West Florida

RESOURCES

Anderson, L. (2015). *Reverse Transfer: The path less traveled*. Education Commission of the States. Retrieved from <https://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/18/77/11877.pdf>.

Reverse Transfer Toolkit for Colleges and Universities (2015). Tallahassee, FL: Florida College System Foundation.

The 2020 Florida Statutes, Section 1007.23, Statewide articulation agreements (http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=1000-1099/1007/Sections/1007.23.html).

Florida Automated System for Transferring Educational Records User Manual (2021), <http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/faster/man12021/index.htm>.