

# The Public Connection

Statewide Articulation Agreements Between  
Iowa's Community Colleges and  
Public Universities

*A Report of the  
Liaison Advisory Committee on Transfer Students (LACTS)*

*Fall 2024*

*(Revised to DRAFT April 5, 2024)*

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## Liaison Advisory Committee on Transfer Students (LACTS)

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*Permission to copy this material need not be sought.*

## **About the Liaison Advisory Committee on Transfer Students (LACTS)**

Iowa has a long history of voluntary cooperation among the state universities, community colleges and their respective governing bodies to improve the transfer experience of students. In 1972 the Liaison Advisory Committee on Transfer Students (LACTS) was formed as a voluntary partnership comprised of representatives from the Iowa community colleges; the Regent Universities; the Board of Regents; State of Iowa; and the Iowa Department of Education.

Beginning with the approval of the first statewide articulation agreement in 1973, LACTS has developed each of the statewide agreements, including: the associate of arts, the associate of science, and a number of career and technical agreements. The agreements undergo an annual review and reaffirmation process under the direction of the LACTS Committee, and most of the agreements have been revised to enhance clarity and to improve course transfer.

The voluntary and collaborative nature of the efforts to improve the transfer process were acknowledged in part through the passage of legislation in 2007 which approved the development of a unified state transfer website, called TransferInIowa.org. In 2009, legislation titled: *Relating to the Articulation Agreements between Public Postsecondary Institutions and to the Dissemination of Articulation Information*, was signed into law and formalized much of the work being done to improve the transfer process. This legislation directs LACTS to submit an annual report to the general assembly as an update on the articulation efforts and activities implemented by the community colleges and regent universities. [Related Iowa Code sections: 256.9, 260C.14, and 262.9]

Today, LACTS continues to lead efforts to improve the process for students transferring from community colleges to the regent universities. The work of LACTS demonstrates our commitment to cooperation and is rooted in the notion that effective transfer of courses is vital to the success of students. LACTS supports completion of associate degrees whenever appropriate, as an evidence-based practice that leads to greater success after transfer, and particularly higher rates of completion of bachelor's degrees. However, some students will benefit from an earlier transfer to the four-year institutions and therefore, personalized advising based on the individual needs of students is also essential to their success.

The articulation agreements described in this guide promote a smooth, seamless transfer of courses, and they communicate our promise to and expectations of students and families. Thus, these agreements must be seen under the light of partnership – partnerships between the colleges and universities themselves and partnerships between the students and the institutions they attend.

These agreements are not intended to replace regular advising and support. Colleges and universities must provide quality advising and transfer assistance, and students must be empowered to seek out such guidance on a regular basis to ensure they are choosing the courses, programs, and pathways that best meet their personal, academic, and career

**PREVIOUS YEAR'S LACTS MEMBERS (2023-2024)**

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## Associate of Arts Articulation Agreement

It is understood that the following requirements will be met by all students transferring with an Associate of Arts degree from an Iowa community college to an Iowa public university, specifically Iowa State University, the University of Iowa, or the University of Northern Iowa:

1. The Associate of Arts degree will include a minimum of 60 semester hours of courses designed and acceptable for transfer, and may include up to 16 semester hours of career-technical courses.
2. General education courses are defined as those courses which broaden student knowledge in the arts and sciences. Forty (40) semester hours of transfer credit will be required within the following general divisions:
  - a. Communications — 8 semester hours
  - b. Humanities — 8 semester hours
  - c. Mathematics and Science — 8 semester hours (at least one course in each)
  - d. Social Science — 8 semester hours
  - e. Distributed Requirement — 8 semester hours taken from among the above four divisions.\*
3. The remaining 20 semester hours will be accepted from arts and sciences electives designed and acceptable for transfer, with the understanding that up to 16 semester hours of ungraded (pass/satisfactory) career and technical credit could be applied.
4. Students transferring an Associate of Arts degree to a public university must have maintained a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 on all graded arts and sciences courses acceptable for transfer. (**Note:** Transfer GPA does not typically include developmental or career-technical credits.)
5. Having fulfilled the above requirements, students transferring with an Associate of Arts degree to a public university will have met all freshman and sophomore level general education requirements for the college of liberal arts or other participating colleges within the public universities, except where world language proficiency and/or course(s) in world culture, multi-cultural, and/or diversity are required at a public university, students must meet those specific requirements.
6. Students satisfying the above requirements will be enrolled at junior level status in the college of liberal arts or other participating colleges within the public universities. \*\*

7. Students not completing the Associate of Arts degree may be admitted to any of the three public universities; however, this admittance will require a course-by-course evaluation of the student's transcripts.
8. The chair of the LACTS will initiate a meeting each spring, where the current agreement is reviewed by the following:
  - a. Arts and Science Administrators — Iowa Community Colleges
  - b. Deans of Liberal Arts — Iowa Public Universities
  - c. Chief Student Services Administrators — Iowa Community Colleges
  - d. Directors of Admissions — Iowa Public Universities
  - e. Career and Technical Deans — Iowa Community Colleges

Continuation of the agreement remains in effect until such time as all cooperating institutions formally approve any revisions.

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 Reaffirmed: 05/11/20  
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\*For Iowa State University, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, at least three of the eight hours must be in the humanities and at least three of the eight hours must be in natural (physical and biological) sciences. For Iowa State University, College of Business, general education coursework must include three hours of ethics and three hours in global perspectives.

\*\*Participating colleges include:

- Iowa State University, College of Business and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- University of Iowa, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; College of Education; Henry B. Tippie College of Business; and University College.
- University of Northern Iowa, all undergraduate colleges within the university

## Associate of Science Articulation Agreement

It is understood that the following requirements will be met by all students transferring with an Associate of Science degree from an Iowa community college to an Iowa public university, specifically Iowa State University, the University of Iowa, or the University of Northern Iowa:

1. The Associate of Science degree will include a minimum of 60 semester hours of courses designed and acceptable for transfer, and may include up to 16 semester hours of career and technical courses.
2. The Associate of Science degree will include 40 semester hours of transfer credit within the following general divisions:
  - a. Communications — 8 semester hours
  - b. Humanities and Social Science — 8 semester hours (at least one course in each)
  - c. Mathematics and Science — 20 semester hours (at least one course in each)
  - d. Distributed Requirement — 4 semester hours taken from among the above divisions
3. The remaining 20 semester hours will be accepted from arts and sciences electives designed and acceptable for transfer, with the understanding that up to 16 semester hours of ungraded (pass/satisfactory) career and technical credit could be applied.
4. Where world language proficiency and/or course(s) in world culture, multi-cultural and/or diversity are required at a public university, students must meet those specific requirements. This requirement may be met at the public university and is not a requirement for the Associate of Science degree at the community college.
5. Students transferring an Associate of Science degree to a public university must have maintained a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 on all graded arts and sciences courses acceptable for transfer. (**Note:** Transfer GPA does not typically include developmental or career and technical education credits.)
6. Students satisfying the above requirements will be enrolled at junior level status at the public universities. Additional general education requirements may be required by the public universities depending upon the major.
7. Students not completing the Associate of Science degree may be admitted to any of the three public universities; however, this admittance will require a course-by-course evaluation of the student's transcripts.



8. The chair of the LACTS will initiate a meeting each spring, where the current agreement is reviewed by the following:
  - a. Arts and Sciences Administrators — Iowa Community Colleges
  - b. Deans of Liberal Arts — Iowa Public Universities
  - c. Chief Student Services Administrators — Iowa Community Colleges
  - d. Directors of Admissions — Iowa Public Universities
  - e. Career and Technical Deans — Iowa Community Colleges

Continuation of the agreement remains in effect until such time as all cooperating institutions formally approve any revisions.

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Reaffirmed: 05/11/20  
Reaffirmed: 04/02/21  
Reaffirmed: 04/08/22  
Reaffirmed: 04/14/23  
Reaffirmed: 04/05/24

## Career and Technical Credit Agreement

Iowa's community colleges and Iowa's public universities agree that:

1. The public universities' college of liberal arts and/or other participating colleges within the public universities will accept up to 16 semester hours of career and technical credit that the sending Iowa community college accepts toward the Associate of Arts or Associate of Sciences Degrees.
2. Credit for these 16 semester hours is accepted on an ungraded (pass/satisfactory) basis. (Transfer GPA does not typically include career and technical credits.)
3. The chair of the LACTS will initiate a meeting each spring, where the current agreement is reviewed by the following:
  - a. Arts and Science Administrators — Iowa Community Colleges
  - b. Deans of Liberal Arts — Iowa Public Universities
  - c. Chief Student Services Administrators — Iowa Community Colleges
  - d. Directors of Admissions — Iowa Public Universities
  - e. Career and Technical Deans — Iowa Community Colleges

Continuation of the agreement remains in effect until such time as all cooperating institutions formally approve any revisions.

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Reaffirmed: 05/11/20  
Reaffirmed: 04/02/21  
Reaffirmed: 04/08/22  
Reaffirmed: 04/14/23  
Reaffirmed: 04/05/24

## Common Grading Symbols and Definitions Agreement

In order to facilitate the effective transfer of Iowa community college students to the public universities, we agree to the following:

1. Iowa's community colleges will use the common master list of grade symbols and definitions below.
2. Each of Iowa's community college will choose from the common master list the symbols and definitions which best reflect the philosophy of their institution.
3. The public universities will recognize without alteration, the common grading symbols as reported by the community colleges.
4. The use of common grading symbols does not guarantee the transferability of the credit attached to any specific symbol.
5. This agreement will be reviewed by the LACTS on an annual basis. Any suggestions for changes, additions, or deletions should be referred to the LACTS.

### Symbols Used in Calculating GPAs\*

A = Excellent

B = Above Average

C = Average

D = Below Average

F = Failure

FW = Failure to Withdrawal (*calculate as an F*)

### Symbols Not Used in Calculating GPAs\*

I = Incomplete

W = Withdrew

X = Course Repeated

N = Audit

P = Credit Earned/Pass

Q = No Credit/No Pass (used in Pass/No Pass Courses only)

R = Required—No Credit

S = Satisfactory

T = Credit Granted for Examination (test out)

L = Credit Granted for Experiential Learning

O = Grade Requitl (*to be used only when prior grade is removed*)

E = Excused Without Credit

\*Plus and minus are used by some colleges.

4. The chair of the LACTS will initiate a meeting each spring, where the current agreement is reviewed by the following:
  - a. Arts and Science Administrators — Iowa Community Colleges
  - b. Deans of Liberal Arts — Iowa Public Universities
  - c. Chief Student Services Administrators — Iowa Community Colleges
  - d. Directors of Admissions — Iowa Public Universities
  - e. Career and Technical Deans — Iowa Community Colleges

Continuation of the agreement remains in effect until such time as all cooperating institutions formally approve any revisions.

*\* In light of the extraordinary circumstances and events related to the COVID-19 virus and impacts on instruction, the public institutions of higher education in Iowa agree to temporary modifications of this agreement in accordance with the American Council on Education (ACE) [Joint Statement of Principles on Acceptance of Credit](#) for the spring 2020 term with the possibility of extension for future terms.*

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Reaffirmed: 04/06/18  
Reaffirmed: 04/12/19  
Revised: 05/11/20  
Reaffirmed: 04/02/21  
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Reaffirmed: 04/14/23  
Reaffirmed: 04/05/24

## Credit by Examination Agreement

This agreement pertains to the College Level Examination Program, Advanced Placement Program of the College Board, and Institutional Examinations.

- A. Credit by examination will be recorded on the academic transcripts of the granting community college using the grading symbol “T”.
- B. The type of examination (title and/or subject), should be noted on the transcript.
- C. Credit by examination will not be granted:
  - 1. if it duplicates courses previously passed or failed;
  - 2. for a course for which the student does not meet the stated prerequisite(s) listed in the granting community college’s catalog; and
  - 3. for a course which is a prerequisite to one for which credit has previously been earned.
- D. Credit by examination granted in accordance with this agreement will be accepted for transfer provided the transcript shows at least 12 semester hours of residence credit.

### College Level Examination Program (CLEP) Credit

- A. The credit-granting institution will determine the amount of credit to be awarded for the successful completion of each CLEP examination.
- B. No more than 30 semester hours will be awarded for the successful completion of CLEP examinations.
- C. Fifty (50) will be the minimum scaled score (equivalent to a grade of “C” in the corresponding course) for credit awarded in all subjects, with the exception of Level 2 French, German, and Spanish.

Sixty-two (62) for French language, 63 for German language, and 66 for Spanish language will be the minimum scaled scores (equivalent to a grade of “C” in the corresponding courses) for credit awarded in Level 2 (four-semester) world language examinations.

### Advanced Placement Program (APP) of the College Board Credit

- A. The credit-granting institution will determine the credit to be awarded for the successful completion of each advanced placement program exam.
- B. A score of “3” will be the minimum score for credit awarded.

## Institutional Examinations

- A. Examinations will be limited to courses offered in the current catalog of the granting institution.
- B. Credit granted will be equal to the catalog course.
- C. The minimum performance level for earned credit will be equal to a “C” grade or higher.

The chair of the LACTS will initiate a meeting each spring, where the current agreement is reviewed by the following:

- 1. Arts and Science Administrators — Iowa Community Colleges
- 2. Deans of Liberal Arts — Iowa Public Universities
- 3. Chief Student Services Administrators — Iowa Community Colleges
- 4. Directors of Admissions — Iowa Public Universities
- 5. Career and Technical Deans — Iowa Community Colleges

Continuation of the agreement remains in effect until such time as all cooperating institutions formally approve any revisions.

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Reaffirmed: 04/07/17  
Reaffirmed: 04/06/18  
Reaffirmed: 04/12/19  
Reaffirmed: 05/11/20  
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Reaffirmed: 04/05/24

## **Career and Technical Programs in Electronics/ Electronics-Based Technology Agreement (Discontinued)**

**This agreement was discussed and voted to be discontinued at the April 12, 2019 Liaison Advisory Committee for Transfer Students (LACTS) Business Meeting.**

Graduates of Iowa community college's electronics/electronics-based technology programs who are accepted at an Iowa public university will meet the standards as outlined below and will be granted transfer credit as outlined below.

1. The electronics/electronics-based technology curriculum is specifically recommended by the Iowa community colleges career and technical deans group in the statement of approved courses, competencies, and credit recommendations as agreed to by the public universities.
2. Students must have received the Associate of Applied Science degree (Associate of Sciences degree in the case of Northeast Iowa Community College) and must have attained a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.00 on a 4.00 scale.
3. This agreement will not supersede any existing program-to-program articulation agreements or substitute for any reached at a later date between any individual community college and a public university.
4. Students may choose the most appropriate transfer credit option offered by the receiving public university.
5. Regardless of the transfer option selected, students will receive 32 semester hours of ungraded transfer credit from the public university. This credit will reduce the additional credit required for a baccalaureate degree to the extent that course equivalencies can be established or that the hours can be applied as elective credit in the program selected by the student.
6. It is understood that the credit accepted for transfer under this agreement will be in addition to transferable and graded arts and sciences credit earned at the respective community college.
7. Of the course work earned at a community college, students may apply up to one-half the required total (but not more than 65) semester hours of credit toward a bachelor's degree at a public university.
8. This agreement is effective for students entering a public university beginning fall semester, 1996.

9. The chair of the LACTS will initiate a meeting each spring, where the current agreement is reviewed by the following:
- a. Arts and Sciences Administrators — Iowa Community Colleges
  - b. Deans of Liberal Arts — Iowa Public Universities
  - c. Chief Student Services Administrators — Iowa Community Colleges
  - d. Directors of Admissions — Iowa Public Universities
  - e. Career and Technical Deans — Iowa Community Colleges

Continuation of the agreement remains in effect until such time as all cooperating institutions formally approve any revisions.

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Revised: 04/16/04  
Revised: 04/15/05  
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Reaffirmed: 04/04/14  
Reaffirmed: 04/10/15  
Reaffirmed: 04/01/16  
Reaffirmed: 04/07/17  
Reaffirmed: 04/06/18  
Discontinued: 04/12/19



## Awarding and Transferring College Credit for Educational Experience in the Armed Services

Iowa's community colleges and public universities in Iowa agree that:

1. Credit for military courses will be granted according to the guidelines in the American Council on Education's (ACE's) *Guide to Credit for Educational Experiences in the Armed Services* when that recommendation is for vocational certificate and lower or upper division baccalaureate degrees.
2. Limitations of credit granted for vocational certificate recommendations made by the ACE will be in concurrence with the current Career and Technical Credit Agreement.
3. The receiving institution will determine applicability of transfer credit to specific degree programs.
4. Community colleges and public universities may adopt their own institutional policies for awarding credit for military experiences based on ACE recommendations on occupational credit.
5. The chair of the Liaison Advisory Committee for Transfer Students (LACTS) will initiate a meeting each spring, where the current agreement is reviewed by the following:
  - a. Arts and Science Administrators — Iowa Community Colleges
  - b. Deans of Liberal Arts — Iowa Public Universities
  - c. Chief Student Services Administrators — Iowa Community Colleges
  - d. Directors of Admissions — Iowa Public Universities
  - e. Career and Technical Deans — Iowa Community Colleges

Continuation of the agreement remains in effect until such time as all cooperating institutions formally approve any revisions.

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Reaffirmed: 04/08/22

Reaffirmed: 04/14/23

Reaffirmed: 04/05/24

## Evaluating International Student Academic Credentials (Discontinued)

This agreement was discussed and voted to be discontinued at the April 6, 2018 Liaison Advisory Committee for Transfer Students (LACTS) Business Meeting. It was determined that it is no longer needed due to the increased number of international credit evaluation services.

1. The public universities will, upon request of an Iowa community college and in accordance with their own policies and procedures, evaluate academic credentials of international students attending Iowa's community colleges who subsequently plan to transfer to one of the public universities. This service will be provided only once per student prior to application to the public university to which the international student plans to matriculate.
2. The community colleges will provide the necessary official documents. These transcripts must be certified as true copies of original documents. It is imperative that the community colleges have original documents from which they can make certified copies. Additional information needed for an evaluation (i.e., the student's educational chronology, or English translations of academic records), will be submitted by the community colleges if requested by the public universities.
3. The chair of the LACTS will initiate a meeting each spring, where the current agreement is reviewed by the following:
  - a. Arts and Science Administrators — Iowa Community Colleges
  - b. Deans of Liberal Arts — Iowa Public Universities
  - c. Chief Student Services Administrators — Iowa Community Colleges
  - d. Directors of Admissions — Iowa Public Universities
  - e. Career and Technical Deans — Iowa Community Colleges

Continuation of the agreement remains in effect until such time as all cooperating institutions formally approve any revisions.

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Reaffirmed: 04/07/17  
Discontinued: 04/06/18

## CURRENT YEAR'S LACTS MEMBERS (2024-2025)

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<p>Diane Bengtson          Assistant Director of Transfer Operations and Policy          Iowa State University          100 Enrollment Services Center          Ames, Iowa 50011-2042          515/294-0811          drbengt@iastate.edu</p>	<p>Amy R. Gieseke  <i>(Ex-Officio—Iowa Department of Education)</i>          Section Chief, Bureau of Community Colleges and Postsecondary Readiness          Iowa Department of Education          Grimes State Office Building          400 East 14th Street          Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146          515/858-2234          amy.gieseke@iowa.gov</p>
<p>Rachel McGuire          Vice President - Student Development &amp; Success          North Iowa Area Community College          500 College Drive          Mason City, IA 50401          Phone: 641/422-4104          rachel.mcguire@niacc.edu</p>	<p>Jill Budde  <i>(Ex-Officio—Iowa community college CAOs)</i>          Vice President, Learning &amp; Engagement          Indian Hills Community College          525 Grandview Ave          Ottumwa, IA 52501          641-683-5106          jill.budde@indianhills.edu</p>
<p>Michael Rohlena          Associate Dean of Career and Technical Education          Western Iowa Tech Community College          712-317-3128          712-274-8733 ext 3217          michael.rohlana@witcc.edu</p>	