

ASSIST Transfer Channel

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Articulated vs. Transferable

It seems like a simple question, one that should get a simple yes or no answer.

Is my course transferable?

And if that's the right question to ask, the answer *is* simple. Too many times, though, it's not the right question. The right question might be,

Is my course articulated?

There's an important difference between those two terms, transferable and articulated, but they often get used as if they're interchangeable. Let's take a look at both, so when you talk to your counselor or look up information in ASSIST, you can be sure you're asking the right questions or looking for the right information.

I'm going to concentrate on transferability and articulation in terms of transferring from a community college to a UC or CSU campus, since this is the emphasis in ASSIST.

Transferable Courses

A transferable course is a course taken at a community college that can be used for unit credit at a university. The fact that a course is transferable does not necessarily mean it applies toward your major or other academic goal. It simply means the university will give a certain number of units as credit for completing the course. The units could count toward the total needed to transfer or graduate; they could be units you need for general education or your major; they could apply toward some other academic goal.

To use ASSIST to see if a community college course is transferable for unit credit:

1. Go to www.assist.org.
2. Choose the community college on the first screen.
3. On the second screen, click one of these links:

[CSU Transferable Courses](#)

[UC Transferable Courses](#)

4. You can then choose a department, or all departments.



Many times students ask about the transferability of their courses using phrases like "transferable as..." or "transferable for..." A better way to ask that question would be to ask if a course is articulated.

Articulated Courses

All articulated courses are transferable, but most transferable courses are not articulated.

An articulated course is a course taken at one college or university that can be used to satisfy specific subject matter requirements, such as lower-division major preparation or general education requirements at another college or university.

Sequences of courses can also be articulated, and sometimes it may take more than one community college course to take the place of a single university course, or sometimes a single college course can be used in place of more than one university course.

You can't tell if courses are articulated by looking at course numbers, titles, or even descriptions in the catalogs. The only way you can tell if and how a course is articulated is by looking at an articulation agreement.

Articulation agreements are formal agreements between two campuses. Articulation agreements in ASSIST are developed and entered into the ASSIST database by the receiving campus (the university campus in our examples). Each university campus is responsible for all of the details of its own articulation.

To use ASSIST to see if a course is articulated:

1. Go to www.assist.org.
2. Choose either the college or the university campus on the first screen.
3. On the second screen, choose the other institution.
4. On the next screen, you can choose a major, a department, or General Education, depending on how the university formats its articulation.

Not all university campuses provide articulation with every college or for all of their majors or departments. Many university campuses concentrate on their primary feeder colleges and their most popular transfer majors. That doesn't mean you can't transfer. It means that you need to talk directly to an admissions advisor and a departmental advisor at the university.

Each university campus will have different articulation with different colleges, even when they are colleges in the same district. For example, Foothill College and DeAnza College have different articulation agreements, even though they're sister colleges. You also can't assume that a community college course will be accepted the same way at different campuses of the same university system. UCLA, for example, does not automatically use a course the same way that UCSD does.

Another point that can be confusing is that articulation is not necessarily reciprocal. This is especially important to know when transferring from one university campus to another. If San Francisco State accepts a course from CSU East Bay in place of one of their own, CSU East Bay does not automatically use the course from San Francisco State in the same way.

To Wrap Up...

The details about articulation, and transfer in general, can be very confusing, which is why it's absolutely critical that you talk to your community college counselor, Transfer Center advisor, an admissions advisor, and a departmental advisor at the university campus you plan to attend.

And when you ask your advisors questions, remember to ask the right ones. It's important to know if your course is transferable, but it's also important to ask the next question: "Is my course articulated?"