

Fact Sheet:

Articulation Agreements Among Nursing Education Programs

Articulation agreements are important mechanisms that enhance access to baccalaureate level nursing education. These agreements support education mobility and facilitate the seamless transfer of academic credit between associate degree (ADN) and baccalaureate (BSN) nursing programs. Typically negotiated by faculty from both types of academic institutions, these renewable agreements help to ensure equivalency between community college and university courses. Though a formal contract is not necessary to transfer credit between junior and senior colleges, these frameworks do help to inform students' course selection, eliminate curriculum redundancies, streamline the application review process, and promote collaboration among educators across nursing programs.

Though some agreements exist to facilitate progression from associate degree to master's level nursing programs, this report focuses on ADN to BSN articulation. Currently, 32 states and the District of Columbia maintain broad articulation agreements between ADN and BSN programs, including 8 states that mandate credit transfer between programs at public institutions. Most agreements were developed through statewide collaborations among nurse educators, boards of nursing, and other interested parties.

In the remaining 18 states, hundreds of individual school-to-school articulation agreements exist to facilitate credit transfer and baccalaureate degree completion. Though each agreement is different and unique to nursing programs within each state, most allow for the transfer of 60 semester credits, which is consistent with transfer agreements between two- and four-year institutions for other academic disciplines.

Types of Articulation Agreements

Articulation agreements among nursing education programs fall within three general categories: Mandated, Statewide, and Individual.

Mandated Articulation Agreements: These formal agreements exist as part of legislation and mandate credit transfer between nursing programs. In Florida, for example, State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.024 provides that all graduates of approved ADN programs in the state will be granted admission into a baccalaureate program offered by any state institution with few exceptions. The law further states that 72 credit hours, including 42 hours of nursing core courses, will be transferred into BSN programs, which cannot exceed 128 credit hours to complete. States with mandated articulation agreements include:

Connecticut, Florida, Maryland, Minnesota, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Washington

Statewide Articulation Agreements: These voluntary articulation plans and models are usually developed through the collaborative effort of nurse educators, regulators, legislators, and other stakeholders wishing to enhance educational mobility for registered nurses (RNs). These agreements are generally accepted by all community colleges and public universities in a given state, though private institutions often choose to participate as well. For example, all state-funded nursing programs in Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, and Wyoming have adopted the nursing education articulation model and use this framework to guide credit transfer and admissions decisions. Statewide articulation agreements and models exist in the following states:

Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Wyoming

Individual School-to-School Articulation Agreements: In states without mandated articulation plans and statewide models, individual agreements are often established between ADN and BSN programs. These arrangements typically delineate which nursing courses will transfer between programs as well as the maximum number of credits accepted. Several states including California, Illinois, and Indiana offer online resources to help students and educators identify

which courses will transfer from junior to senior colleges. Hundreds of individual articulation agreements have been created in the following states:

California, Hawaii, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia

Finally, private schools and nursing programs located in areas with statewide articulation models and/or plans in place often develop individual school-to-school agreements as well.

AACN Research and Online Resources

AACN has compiled the following resources related to articulation agreements among nursing education programs:

- A [directory of state nursing workforce reports](#), which often describe local approaches to academic progression and nursing program articulation.
- Online [nursing program directory](#) to locate degree completion programs, including RN to Baccalaureate, RN to Master's, and LPN to Baccalaureate Degree Programs
- AACN position statements on [Academic Progression in Nursing and Educational Mobility](#)
- Joint statements on [Academic Progression for Nursing Students and Graduates and the Educational Advancement of RNs](#)
- AACN fact sheets on [Degree Completion Programs for Registered Nurses and AACN's Support for Articulation](#)

AACN member schools interested in receiving samples of Statewide or Individual articulation agreements may request copies by contacting rrosseter@aacnnursing.org.

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