

Articulation Agreement Development/Revision Procedures

General Overview

Articulation agreements are a form of transfer agreement that identify related associate and bachelor's degree programs and establish terms by which credit from the two-year degree can transfer into the four-year one. The goal of any articulation agreement is to maximize credit transfer, simplify the transition for students, and create clear pathways for baccalaureate completion. Additionally, articulation agreements can help generate interest in specific, related programs at the four-year institution, thereby serving a recruiting/marketing function. Agreements at UWM mostly emphasize partnerships with schools in the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) but may be made with other associate-degree granting institutions. Agreements may be narrowly focused on individual programs or broaden their scope to create alignments between a range of related degrees.

Either UWM or the other educational institution may propose creating an articulation agreement. The process begins by consulting the relevant academic units at both campuses to determine whether sufficient curricular alignment exists to justify proceeding. Agreements should be pursued when all parties, especially students, can be shown to benefit. Each agreement begins by identifying the included programs, describing the rationale for development, and establishing admission requirements, terms of transfer, and graduation requirements. Articulation agreements should specify not only how courses taken at the other institution will transfer and apply to UWM degree requirements, but also what requirements remain to complete a bachelor's degree. Successful agreements help guide students in their course selection at the associate level to ensure that as many credits as possible will transfer and meet bachelor's level requirements. In some instances, substitute courses may be recommended at the associate level, especially for general education coursework. When at all possible, full program transfer should be sought.

The Assistant Director of Transfer Services in the Registrar's Office facilitates development and revision of articulation agreements, partnering with both appropriate academic unit representatives at UWM and counterparts at the partnering institution. Other UWM representatives may be consulted, depending on the specific terms of the agreement. For example, if guaranteed admission is proposed, Undergraduate Admissions should be involved. Deans of impacted academic programs and chief academic officers typically sign the agreements to formalize them. Agreements may remain valid for a period of years specified in the agreement and should be reviewed periodically for currency and efficacy in meeting academic, enrollment, and retention goals.

Articulation agreements are public documents and must be made available per the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA). UWM houses its agreements on the Registrar's Office website:

<https://uwm.edu/registrar/students/articulation-agreements/>. Agreements are organized by UWM school/college.

The UW System has established general guidelines for articulation agreements in Administrative Policy 140 (formerly ACIS 6.2):

<https://www.wisconsin.edu/uw-policies/uw-system-administrative-policies/uw-system-guidelines-for-articulation-agreements-between-uw-system-institutions-and-wtcs-districts/>.

Issues to Consider

In creating a new or revising an existing articulation agreement, every effort should be made to put student needs front and center. Among the considerations to bear in mind are:

- What is the overall goal of establishing the agreement? How will it serve prospective students, UWM, and the sending institution?
- What is the likely enrollment impact when compared to the status quo? Will the agreement encourage students to pursue a four-year degree who might not otherwise?
- How will students with the listed associate degree be positioned to continue their studies, particularly in comparison to the general transfer population? Where do their learned skills and competencies position them in relation to the baccalaureate curriculum? How can redundant coursework be effectively identified and eliminated?
- What are the financial implications? Will there be any waiver or reduction of the application fee, any special tuition pricing, etc.? Even without such, how will the costs of earning a four-year degree be impacted by credit transfer?
- If the agreement offers or implies guaranteed admission, what admission criteria are being used and what will the application process be for transferring students? Any special forms, procedures, or tracking of students required?
- What special considerations or exceptions can be made for articulating students? Completion of a related associate degree may be viewed in total as more than the sum of its parts, i.e. courses. How can program outcomes be used to identify meaningful learning that can apply to program requirements at the baccalaureate level? Are there combinations of courses that can be leveraged to meet UWM requirements and shorten the path to degree completion?
- How can the agreement be shared and promoted to encourage students to transfer under its terms? In many cases, students may choose not to pursue a bachelor's degree immediately after completing the associate degree. How do we reach those students?

Articulation Agreement Process

Contact/Inquiry initiated between institutions. Mutual interest determined through curriculum overview. Meetings may be scheduled to facilitate review of academic outcomes.



Assistant Director of Transfer Services prepares template with initial information/updates. Highlighted sections identify content to be updated by academic unit representative.



Academic unit representatives complete identified sections and return to Asst Dir for passing to partner institution.



Partner institution returns agreement draft with feedback. Any suggested edits considered and completed in consultation with academic unit rep.



Dean of School/College signs and forwards to Provost for signature. Partner institution signatures also obtained.



Signed agreements shared with both institutions and copy added to website.