

Understanding Transfer Community and Technical Colleges to Four-Year College and Universities

What are the general differences between a first-time, first-year student and a transfer student?

First-Time, First-Year Student

- A “first-time, first-year student” is a student who enters a four-year college or university with no college coursework completed directly *after* high school graduation and *prior* to enrolling at an institution.

Transfer Students

- A “transfer student” is a student who enters a four-year college or university with college coursework completed *after* high school graduation, but not including the summer *immediately* following high school graduation.

Washington Transfer Pathways

Washington offers multiple robust higher education pathways that provide students with a range of opportunities to attain a bachelor’s degree.

- **Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA) Associate degree:** Students complete the lower-division general education requirements toward most bachelor’s degrees at Washington’s four-year colleges and universities. The degree consists of 90 quarter credits or 60 semester credits. This includes a combination of academic general education courses (60 quarter credits or 45 semester credits) with the remaining credits focused on courses required for completion of a bachelor’s degree, including major requirements and electives. The degree provides students with the opportunity to explore several fields of study through elective courses and complete some prerequisites for a future major. All public four-year college and universities accept the DTA and most private nonprofit four-year colleges and universities.
- **Associate of Science – Transfer (AS-T):** Students focus on math and science courses in preparation for a bachelor’s degree in the STEM fields. Students complete fewer academic general education courses to allow for additional math and science courses at the community and technical colleges. Students may complete one of two tracks: Track 1 – Biological Sciences, Environmental/Resource Sciences, Chemistry, Geology and Earth Science and Track 2 – Engineering, Computer Science, Physics and Atmospheric Sciences. The degree provides students with the completion of lower-division academic general education requirements in a distribution similar to that completed by bachelor engineering or science students in their first two years and the opportunity to complete math and science prerequisites in order to transfer and begin upper-division work in the major. All public four-year college and universities accept the AS-T degree and many private nonprofit four-year colleges and universities accept the degree.

- **Major Related Pathways (MRP):** Students focus on specific majors, within the structure of either a DTA or AS-T degree. The MRPs are focused on majors that are offered at multiple four-year colleges and universities, have significant prerequisites in the freshman and sophomore year and are in high student demand. There are ten active MRPs, eight of which are based on the DTA degree and two on the AS-T degree: Biology, Business, Computer Science, Construction Management, Math Education, Music, Nursing, Pre-Nursing, Engineering and Engineering Technology. Each MRP has a different set of participating four-year colleges and universities. Those colleges and universities who do not participate in a specific MRP will accept the degree as the institution would for the DTA or AS-T degree.
- **Professional/Technical Associate Degrees:** Students earn professional/technical degrees that meet industry standards for direct employment in the workforce. Professional/Technical degrees include the Associate of Applied Science-Transfer (AAS-T) Degree, Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Degree, Associate of Arts Tech (AAT) Degree and Associate in Technical Arts (ATA) Degree. Professional/Technical Associate degrees may include a combination of academic general education courses and professional/technical courses. The transfer of professional/technical degrees is limited. Some credits, such as academic general education course credit, may transfer to a four-year college or university or a bachelor of applied science degree program.
- **Transfer without an Associate Degree:** Students may choose for a variety of reasons to transfer before completing an associate degree. Washington's four-year colleges and universities have each developed course equivalencies between community and technical colleges and four-year colleges and universities.

How do Associate Degrees and courses within Associate Degrees transfer?

Courses within an Associate Degree

Courses within an Associate Degree that parallel the first two years at a four-year college or university typically transfer to four-year colleges and universities. The Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA) Associate degree, the Associate in Science – Transfer (AS-T) Degree and Major Related Programs (MRPs), built on the DTA or AS-T, are structured to parallel courses taken in the first two years at a four-year college or university.

Courses within Professional/Technical Degrees

The Associate of Applied Science-Transfer (AAS-T) Degree, Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Degree, Associate of Arts Tech (AAT) Degree and Associate in Technical Arts (ATA) Degree are professional/technical degrees that prepare students for direct entry into the workforce. These degrees are not intended for transfer. However, courses within a professional/technical degree may transfer to applied bachelor's degree programs and some four-year colleges and universities have articulation agreements with community and technical colleges*. In addition, a maximum of 15 credits of professional/technical-related courses may transfer as part of the Direct Transfer Agreement and a maximum of five credits may transfer as part of the Associate of Science-Transfer Degree. Outside of the 15 credits for the DTA and five credits for the AS-T, courses taken as part of applied degrees in general do not transfer to four-year colleges and universities.

* Check with the transfer institution for details.

Courses transferred without an Associate Degree

Individual community and technical college courses earned without completing an associate degree are transferred on a course-by-course basis by four-year colleges and universities. Four-year colleges and universities have developed course-equivalencies to guide this process. In addition, Washington’s community and technical colleges and public four-year colleges and universities developed [Washington 45](#), a list of selected general education courses that will transfer at any Washington public and most nonprofit, private colleges and universities in the state. In general, courses taken that are similar to those traditionally offered by a four-year college or university will transfer.

Do developmental courses transfer?

No. Four-year colleges and universities do not count these courses toward a bachelor’s degree and do not accept them in transfer.

Do College Preparatory Programs with Exams and Concurrent Enrollment Programs completed in high school transfer?

Yes. College preparatory programs with exams and concurrent enrollment opportunities completed in high school may transfer to or be awarded credit by four-year colleges and universities as follows:

- **College Preparatory Programs with Exams** (Advanced Placement, Cambridge, International Baccalaureate) – College credit may be awarded for college preparatory programs with exams based on examination scores. College preparatory programs with exam are high school courses for which students may earn college credit through recognized standardized exams. To see how Washington’s colleges and universities award credit, visit WSAC’s dual credit look-up tool: http://readysetgrad.org/rsg_cred_wiz/form.
- **Concurrent Enrollment** (College in the High School, Running Start and CTE Dual Credit) – College courses offered by colleges and universities - either at a college, university or in a high school - transfer similarly to college courses taken at a college. Concurrent enrollment programs are partnerships between K-12 schools and postsecondary education institutions through which students who have not yet received the credits required for the awarding of a high school diploma complete credit-bearing college courses that are offered by a college or university and taught by higher education faculty or appropriately qualified high school teachers. Earned credits for concurrent enrollment are recorded on a college or university transcript. CTE Dual Credit is a concurrent enrollment program, providing career pathways for high school students.

How Courses** Transfer for the following associate degrees

	DTA or AS-T (or MRP)	AAS-T, AA-S, ATA, or AAT	No Degree
<p>Will all courses successfully transfer to a bachelor's degree, if a student transfers with a transfer degree (e.g. DTA or AS-T), professional/technical degree (e.g. AAS-T, AA-S, ATA, or AAT) or no degree?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At participating four-year colleges and universities within limits, including the maximum credit limit within college and university total transfer credit policies, limits on the transfer of professional/technical and developmental courses and GPA/grade requirements. 	<p>Sometimes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, academic general education courses will generally transfer. Professional/technical courses will typically not transfer unless a student transfers to an applied bachelor's degree program, The Evergreen State College, Seattle Pacific University, Western Washington University, Whitworth University*** or a four-year college and university with an articulation agreement with a community or technical college(s)*. • No, if students transfer to a bachelor's program that does not accept the degree, a max. of 15 credits can transfer as part of a DTA or a max. of 5 credits as part of the AS-T. 	<p>Sometimes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, if four-year colleges and universities offer similar course(s). • No, if four-year colleges and universities do not offer similar courses**** <p>Note: Courses and credits may be limited as described above.</p>

** All Washington community and technical colleges and all public four-year college and universities operate on the quarter system, with the exception of Washington State University, which operates on the semester system. Most Washington private nonprofit colleges and universities operate on the semester system. A typical course in the quarter system is offered for 5 credits with a full-load equal to 15 credits for the term, 45 credits for the year. Courses in the semester system may either be 3 credits or 5 credits, with a full-load equal to 15 credits, 30 credits for the year. A yearlong sequence of courses – for example first year world language courses – is offered as three 5 quarter credit courses or two 5 semester credit courses.

*** For details visit The Evergreen State College <http://www.evergreen.edu/admissions/transfer>, Seattle Pacific University <http://spu.edu/catalog/undergraduate/20189/admissions/acceptance-two-year-degree/other-wash-degrees>, Western Washington University <https://fairhaven.wvu.edu/upside-down-degree>, and Whitworth <https://www.whitworth.edu/cms/administration/registrar/transfer-info/transfer-policies-for-students-holding-aas-degrees/>.

**** As determined by the four-year college or university.

<p>Will professional/technical courses successfully transfer to a bachelor's degree, if a student transfers with a transfer degree (e.g. DTA or AS-T), professional/technical degree (e.g. AAS-T, AA-S, ATA, or AAT) or no degree?</p>	<p>Yes, with the following limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>DTA</u> – A maximum of 15 credits. • <u>AS-T</u> – A maximum of 5 credits. 	<p>Sometimes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, academic general education courses will generally transfer. Professional/technical courses will typically not transfer unless a student transfers to an applied bachelor's degree program, The Evergreen State College, Seattle Pacific University, Western Washington University, Whitworth University*** or a four-year college and university with an articulation agreement with a community or technical college(s)*. • No, if students transfer to a bachelor's program that does not accept the degree, a maximum of 15 credits can transfer as part of a DTA or a maximum of 5 credits as part of the AS-T. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally No <p>In general professional/technical courses will not transfer. However, some professional/technical courses may transfer to an applied bachelor's degree program in the same field.</p>
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<p>Will courses successfully transfer to a bachelor's degree if a student changes their major and transfers with a transfer degree (e.g. DTA or AS-T), professional/technical degree (e.g. AAS-T, AA-S, ATA, or AAT) or degree?</p>	<p>Yes w/ possible additional credits required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students who change majors may have to take more courses at four-year colleges and universities to meet the new major's requirements or to be prepared for the new major. Students will still receive transfer credit and junior standing. 	<p>Sometimes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, if students transfer to a bachelor's program and change their major, additional courses at four-year colleges and universities may be required to meet the new major's requirements and remaining general education requirements and/or to be prepared for the new major. <p>No, if students transfer to a bachelor's program general education courses may transfer; though degree specific courses will not transfer if the bachelor's program does not accept the degree.</p>	<p>Sometimes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, if four-year colleges and universities offer similar courses. No if four-year colleges and universities do not offer similar courses***
<p>Will students be required to repeat courses completed at the CTC, if a student transfers with a transfer degree (e.g. DTA or AS-T), professional/technical degree (e.g. AAS-T, AA-S, ATA, or AAT) or no degree?</p>	<p>Generally, No.</p> <p>Students who change majors and/or students who complete only part of a yearlong course sequence may have to repeat major-specific courses and/or part of the sequence to be prepared for the next course in the sequence. Students may also have to repeat a course if they do not meet a minimum GPA requirement.</p>	<p>Generally, No.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students, in general, will not be required to repeat the same professional/technical course but may be required to complete courses that cover similar material depending on the technical focus of the course. 	<p>Sometimes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students who change majors and/or students who complete only part of a yearlong course sequence may have to repeat major-specific courses and/or part of the sequence to be prepared for the next course in the sequence. Students may also have to repeat a course if they do not meet a minimum GPA requirement. Students may need to complete a course that overlaps the content of prior completed course if the prior course does not meet all of the learning outcomes of the transfer institution's course/program.