

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Education Postsecondary

BILL: SB 750

INTRODUCER: Senator Calatayud

SUBJECT: Articulation Agreements

DATE: March 21, 2023

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Jahnke	Bouck	HE	Favorable
2.			AED	
3.			FP	

I. Summary:

SB 750 modifies provisions related to statewide articulation agreements, the statewide course numbering system, and transfer degrees. Specifically, the bill:

- Requires the Articulation Coordinating Committee (ACC) to convene a workgroup to develop statewide “2+2” Associate in Science (AS) degree to baccalaureate degree articulation agreements in high-demand fields.
- Requires state universities to establish at least one local “2+2” AS degree to baccalaureate degree articulation agreement with one or more Florida College System (FCS) institutions.
- Requires the ACC to convene a workgroup to strengthen educator preparation programs in this state and provide seamless pathways to continued educational opportunities.
- Requires institutions to award transfer credit toward program requirements for courses with similar learning outcomes as identified in the statewide course numbering system.
- Creates Associate in Arts specialized transfer degree to allow students to complete required lower-level coursework at an FCS institution in preparation for transfer to a baccalaureate degree program, and requires the State Board of Education to establish criteria for the review and approval of new specialized transfer degrees.

The bill has no impact on state revenues or expenditures.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2023.

II. Present Situation:

Associate in Arts Degree

The Associate in Arts degree (AA) is designed for students who plan to transfer from a Florida College System (FCS) institution to a baccalaureate degree program, either at an FCS or state university system (SUS) institution.¹

The AA degree requirements consist of 60 total credit hours and include 36 credit hours of general education and 24 credit hours of electives. Students should choose elective courses required for admission to their intended program of study or major at the desired college or university. The Common Prerequisites Manual² is a catalog of lower-level courses that are prerequisites for entrance into baccalaureate programs offered by FCS and SUS institutions. Students are encouraged to discuss their intended program of study with an academic advisor at their college to ensure they are meeting all requirements to transfer upon completing their AA degree.³

A baccalaureate degree must be no more than 120 semester hours of college credit, unless prior approval has been granted by the Board of Governors (BOG) or the State Board of Education (SBE), as applicable, and include 36 semester hours of general education coursework.⁴

General Education Core Courses

Students initially entering an FCS or SUS institution in 2015-2016 and thereafter, are required to complete at least one identified general education core course in each of the subject areas of communication, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences. All public postsecondary educational institutions are required to accept these courses as meeting general education core course requirements.⁵ Beginning in 2022-2023, the general education core course requirement is extended to students in an associate in applied science (AAS) and associate in science (AS) degree program.⁶

General education core course options consist of a maximum of five courses in each identified subject area, but may exceed that limit with the SBE or the BOG approval. The general education core courses are established in SBE rule⁷ and BOG regulation.⁸

Transfer of General Education Courses

Each public postsecondary institution must accept transfer general education core courses taken at another institution. After completing the general education core course requirements, the

¹ Florida Department of Education, Florida College System, *Academics*, <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-college-system/academics/> (last visited March 20, 2023).

² Florida Shines, *Common Prerequisites Manual*, <https://cpm.flvc.org/advance-search> (last visited March 20, 2023).

³ Florida Department of Education, Florida College System, *Academics*, <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-college-system/academics/> (last visited March 20, 2023).

⁴ Section 1007.25(10), F.S. and Board of Governors Regulation 6.017

⁵ Section 1007.25, F.S.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Rule 6A-14.0303, F.A.C.

⁸ Board of Governors Regulation 8.005.

remaining courses and credits that fulfill the total 36-hour general education requirement for an associate in arts or baccalaureate degree are at the discretion of the FCS or SUS institution.⁹

General education programs in Florida, while consistent at the general education core requirements and the total of 36 hours for completion, vary in the selection of institutionally-required courses. Students who transfer with an AA or AS degree, or who have completed their block of 36 general education hours do not have to meet the receiving institution's general education program requirements. If a student does not complete the total 36-hour general education curriculum prior to transfer, each course, outside of courses taken as general education courses, will be reviewed individually to determine if it meets the general education requirements of the new institution.¹⁰

Associate in Science Degree

The Associate in Science (A.S.) degree is offered by each FCS institution. The A.S. degree is intended to provide programs of career and technical instruction consisting of lower division college credit courses to prepare for entry into employment. The A.S. degree is also a transfer degree and a basis for admission to a related bachelor's degree. The A.S. degree is awarded upon satisfactory completion of a planned program of instruction comprised of the standard credit hour length established, after demonstration of the attainment of predetermined and specified performance requirements. The standard credit hour length of all associate in science degree programs is defined in SBE rule,¹¹ and must include a minimum of 15 college credits of general education coursework.¹² Courses taken as a part of the A.S. degree to meet the 36-hour general education requirement will transfer and apply to the baccalaureate degree.¹³

Statewide Articulation Agreements

Each state university board of trustees, Florida College System board of trustees, and district school board must plan and adopt policies and procedures to provide articulated programs so that students can proceed toward their educational objectives as rapidly as their circumstances permit.¹⁴

Statewide articulation agreements help facilitate the seamless transition of students across and among Florida's educational entities. This supports the DOE's focus to expand opportunities for postsecondary degrees and certificates. These agreements are intended to be a minimum guarantee of articulated credit and do not preclude institutions from granting additional credit based on local agreements.¹⁵

⁹ Florida Board of Governors, *Regulation 8.005 General Education Core Course Options*, available at https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/8_005GeneralEducationCore_final.pdf and Rule 6A-14.0303(5), F.A.C.

¹⁰ Florida Department of Education, *Statewide Postsecondary Articulation Manual* (Jan. 2021), at 15, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5421/urlt/Statewide-Articulation-Manual.pdf>. See also Rule 6A-10.024(2)(c), F.A.C.

¹¹ Rule 6A-6.0571, F.A.C.

¹² Rule 6A-14.030(4), F.A.C.

¹³ Rule 6A-10.024(6), F.A.C.

¹⁴ Rule 6A-10.024(1), F.A.C.

¹⁵ Florida Department of Education, Career & Adult Education, *Statewide Articulation Agreements*, <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/career-technical-edu-agreements/> (last visited March 20, 2023).

2+2 Articulation in Florida

The SBE and the BOG shall enter into a statewide articulation agreement which the SBE shall adopt by rule. The agreement must preserve Florida's "2+2" system of articulation and facilitate the seamless articulation of student credit across and among Florida's educational entities.¹⁶

The Florida Statewide Articulation Agreement¹⁷ is the most comprehensive articulation agreement in the nation. Critical components of the statewide articulation agreement include:¹⁸

- Defining the AA degree as the transfer degree.
- Establishing requirements for awarding degrees and degree definitions.
- Guaranteeing transfer of the general education block of credit.
- Creating the ACC, its purpose, role, and membership.
- Guaranteeing transfer of credit via the SCNS.
- Establishing a process for determining credit-by-examination equivalencies.
- Providing for AS degree articulation.
- Establishing a common college transcript.

Students who graduate from an institution within the FCS with an AA degree are guaranteed the following rights under the Statewide Articulation Agreement:¹⁹

- Admission to an upper-division program at an SUS or FCS institution if it offers baccalaureate degree programs, except for limited-access programs.²⁰
- Acceptance of at least 60 semester hours by the SUS and FCS baccalaureate degree-granting institutions.
- Adherence to the university or college requirements and policies, based on the catalog in effect at the time the student first enters the FCS institution, provided the student maintains continuous enrollment.
- Transfer of equivalent courses under the SCNS.
- Acceptance by the SUS and baccalaureate degree-granting FCS institutions of credits earned in accelerated programs (e.g. Dual Enrollment, CLEP, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Advanced International Certificate of Education).
- No additional general education core or general education institutional requirements.
- Advance knowledge of selection criteria for limited access programs.
- Equal opportunity for native university students to enter limited-access programs.

A student who completes an AA degree may continue to earn additional credits at an FCS institution if courses to be completed are listed in the university catalog as required for the degree or as prerequisite to a course required for the degree.²¹ However, in order to be eligible

¹⁶ Section 1007.23(1), F.S.

¹⁷ Section 1007.23, F.S., Rule 6A-10.024, F.A.C, and Board of Governors, *Articulation Resolution*, available at <https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/ArticulationRegulation.pdf>.

¹⁸ Florida Department of Education, *Statewide Postsecondary Articulation Manual* (Jan. 2021), at 14, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5421/urlt/Statewide-Articulation-Manual.pdf>.

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ Board of Governors Regulation 8.013. Limited-access programs are degree programs may include additional admission requirements (e.g., higher grade point average and/or higher test scores, additional courses or prerequisites, or auditions and/or portfolios).

²¹ Section 1007.25(12), F.S.

for federal financial aid, a student must be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a regular student in an eligible degree or certificate program.²² Therefore, a student who completes an AA but needs additional courses for university requirements may not be eligible for additional federal student aid.

Targeted 2+2 Pathway Articulation Agreements

To strengthen Florida's "2+2" system of articulation and improve student retention and on-time graduation, each FCS institution was required to, by the 2019-2020 academic year, execute at least one "2+2" targeted pathway articulation agreement with one or more state universities, and each state university was required to execute at least one such agreement with one or more FCS institutions to establish "2+2" targeted pathway programs. The agreements were established to provide students who graduate with an associate in arts degree and who meet specified requirements guaranteed access to the state university and a degree program at that university, in accordance with the terms of the "2+2" targeted pathway articulation agreement. To participate in a "2+2" targeted pathway program, a student must:²³

- Enroll in the program before completing 30 credit hours, including, but not limited to, college credits earned through articulated acceleration mechanisms.²⁴
- Complete an AA degree.
- Meet the university's transfer requirements.

State universities were required to, as a part of the "2+2" targeted pathway articulation agreement:²⁵

- Establish a 4-year, on-time graduation plan for a baccalaureate degree program, including, but not limited to, a plan for students to complete an associate in arts degree programs, general education courses, common prerequisite courses, and elective courses.
- Advise students enrolled in the program about the university's transfer and degree program requirements.
- Provide students who meet the requirements under this paragraph with access to academic advisors and campus events and with guaranteed admittance to the state university and a degree program of the state university, in accordance with the terms of the agreement.

Some examples of the "2+2" targeted pathway agreements are DirectConnect to UCF²⁶, FUSE at the University of South Florida²⁷, and Connect4Success at Florida International University.²⁸

²² Federal Student Aid, *Eligibility Requirements*, <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility/requirements> (last visited Mar. 20, 2023).

²³ Section 1007.23(8), F.S.

²⁴ Section 1007.27, F.S.

²⁵ Section 1007.23(8), F.S.

²⁶ University of Central Florida, *DirectConnect to UCF*, <https://directconnect.ucf.edu/> (last visited March 20, 2023).

²⁷ University of South Florida, *FUSE*, <https://www.usf.edu/undergrad/transfer-student-success/fuse/> (last visited March 20, 2023).

²⁸ Florida International University, *Connect4Success, Overview*, <https://admissions.fiu.edu/how-to-apply/connect4success/index.html> (last visited March 20, 2023).

Statewide Career Pathways Articulation Agreements

Statewide career pathways articulation agreements help to facilitate the seamless transition of students across and among Florida's educational entities. These agreements are intended to be a minimum guarantee of articulated credit and do not preclude institutions from granting additional credit based on local agreements.²⁹

Associate in Science to Bachelor of Science Degree Articulation Agreements

The SBE and the BOG authorize several provisions for statewide articulation from an AS to a baccalaureate degree. The Department of Education (DOE), in consultation with institutions, periodically review, as necessary, the provisions of the state articulation agreements and the prescribed curricula to ensure the continued effectiveness of the articulation between the AS and baccalaureate degree programs. In addition, the AS degree is considered fully transferable within the FCS, and many FCS baccalaureate degree programs are directly aligned with related AS degrees.³⁰

There are currently nine approved statewide AS degree to baccalaureate degree articulation agreements.³¹

Early Childhood Education Articulation Agreements

The Early Childhood Education articulation agreement guarantees the award of course credits toward a postsecondary degree in early childhood education programs approved by the SBE and BOG which award a child development associate credential issued by the National Credentialing Program of the Council for Professional Recognition or award an approved credential³² as being equivalent to the child development associate credential, and include training in emergent literacy which meets or exceeds the minimum standards³³ for training courses for prekindergarten instructors of the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program.

Additional Career Agreements

Florida has additional statewide articulation agreements that allow students to transfer clock hours, credits, or industry certifications to college credit degree programs. These include:

- Applied Technology Diploma to AS/AAS Articulation Agreements.
 - The Applied Technology Diploma (ATD) consists of a course of study that is part of an AS or an AAS degree, is less than 60 credit hours, and leads to employment in a specific occupation.³⁴

²⁹ Section 1007.23, F.S. Florida Department of Education, Career & Adult Education, *Statewide Articulation Agreements*, <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/career-technical-edu-agreements/> (last visited March 21, 2023).

³⁰ Florida Department of Education, *Statewide Postsecondary Articulation Manual* (Jan. 2021), at 20, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5421/urlt/Statewide-Articulation-Manual.pdf>. Florida Department of Education, Office of Articulation, *Career Ladder Agreements*, available at https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7525/urlt/astobaccalaureate_agreemnts.pdf.

³¹ Florida Department of Education, *Career Ladder Agreements*, available at https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7525/urlt/astobaccalaureate_agreemnts.pdf.

³² Section 1002.55(3)(c)1.b., F.S., or s. 402.305(3)(c), F.S.

³³ Section 1002.59, F.S.

³⁴ Florida Department of Education, Career & Technical Education, *ATD to AS/AAS Statewide Articulation Agreements*, <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/career-tech-edu/atd-as.stml> (last visited March 20, 2023).

- Career Certificate to Associate Degree Articulation
 - The Career Certificate, formerly known as the Postsecondary Adult Vocational (PSAV) certificate, is a course of study consisting of clock hours designed to prepare students for employment. These programs are of varying lengths. Students who complete designated programs can articulate credits into related AS/AAS degree programs.³⁵
- Gold Standard Career Pathways Articulation Agreements
 - Florida's Gold Standard Career Pathways Articulation Agreements are annually adopted by the SBE. These agreements guarantee the award of an identified number of college credits to students who have earned a specified industry certification and are enrolled in a designated AS or AAS degree program at an FCS institution.³⁶

Statewide Course Numbering System

The Florida statewide course numbering system (SCNS) is a taxonomy of courses offered by participating postsecondary institutions in order to improve program planning and communication among all delivery systems, and facilitate student acceleration and the transfer of students and credits between public school districts, public postsecondary educational institutions, and participating nonpublic educational institutions.

Any student who transfers among participating postsecondary educational institutions must be awarded credit by the receiving institution for equivalent courses satisfactorily completed at the previous institution. Courses are considered equivalent if they are judged by the appropriate SCNS faculty committees to be academically equivalent, and are then assigned an equivalent course number. Credits awarded for equivalent courses must satisfy institutional requirements on the same basis as credits awarded to native students.³⁷

All 12 of Florida's state universities, 28 FCS institutions, 40 participating nonpublic postsecondary institutions, and 44 career education centers participate in the SCNS.³⁸

Articulation Coordinating Committee

The Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the Chancellor of the SUS, establishes the Articulation Coordinating Committee (ACC), whose primary role is to recommend statewide articulation policies.³⁹ Specifically, the ACC must monitor articulation between education systems, propose guidelines for articulation agreements, publish lists of general education and common prerequisite courses, establish dual enrollment course equivalencies to high school credit, and annually review the Statewide Articulation Agreement.⁴⁰ The Office of K-20 Articulation within the DOE provides administrative support to the ACC.⁴¹

³⁵ Florida Department of Education, *Statewide Postsecondary Articulation Manual* (Jan. 2021), at 21, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5421/urlt/Statewide-Articulation-Manual.pdf>.

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ Section 1007.24(7), F.S. See also Rule 6A-10.024(2)(c), F.A.C.

³⁸ Florida Department of Education, *Statewide Postsecondary Articulation Manual* (Jan. 2021), at 3, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5421/urlt/Statewide-Articulation-Manual.pdf>.

³⁹ Section 1007.01(3), F.S.

⁴⁰ Section 1007.01(3)(a) and (b), F.S.

⁴¹ Section 1007.01(3), F.S.; s. 20.15(3)(h), F.S.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Articulation Agreements

Associate in Science to Baccalaureate Articulation Agreements

SB 750 modifies s. 1007.23, F.S., to require the Articulation Coordinating Committee (ACC) to, by September 1, 2023, convene a workgroup composed of State University System (SUS), Florida College System (FCS), and district career center faculty to facilitate the seamless transfer of the Associate in Science (AS) degree and reduce time to credential completion.

The bill requires the workgroup to develop a minimum of 8 statewide “2+2” AS degree to baccalaureate degree articulation agreements in high-demand fields. The agreements must be developed for programs widely offered at FCS and SUS institutions and must guarantee the transfer, acceptance, and credit application of the full AS degree toward the baccalaureate degree program requirements. The bill requires the workgroup to provide its proposed articulation agreements to the ACC by August 1, 2024.

Institution 2+2 Articulation Agreements

The bill requires each state university, by the start of the 2023-2024 academic year, to adopt a minimum of one “2+2” AS degree program to baccalaureate degree agreement with one or more FCS institutions. The agreements must guarantee transfer, acceptance, and credit application of the full AS degree program of study toward the baccalaureate program requirements. The bill requires each state university to, by March 1, 2024, submit the local “2+2” AS degree to baccalaureate degree articulation agreement to the Department of Education.

Educator Preparation Articulation Agreements

The bill further requires the ACC to convene a workgroup composed of SUS, FCS, and district career center faculty to, by September 1, 2023, develop recommendations for the seamless transfer from one educational level to the next in teacher preparation programs for education paraprofessionals and individuals who have earned the child development associate credential. The bill requires the workgroup to also develop recommendations for the seamless transfer of teacher apprentices for the completion of their baccalaureate degree.

The bill requires the workgroup to review existing statewide, regional, and interinstitutional agreements to identify seamless pathways and course sequences through the attainment of a baccalaureate degree and develop a statewide articulation agreement that includes articulated postsecondary credit for the child development associate credential and college-level training, experience, and education acquired while serving as an education paraprofessional and a teacher apprentice to include the award of credit toward a baccalaureate degree for experience acquired in the teacher apprenticeship program.

The bill requires the workgroup to provide its recommendation and proposed articulation agreement to the ACC by March 1, 2024. State universities and FCS institutions must accept and apply articulated credit as stipulated in the articulation agreement.

Statewide Course Numbering System

The bill modifies s. 1007.24, F.S., to require participating postsecondary institutions to award transfer credit toward program requirements for courses with similar learning outcomes as identified in the statewide course numbering system (SCNS). The bill prohibits participating postsecondary institutions from requiring students to repeat equivalent coursework, as described in the bill, if the student earned credit for the coursework at a prior institution.

While equivalent courses with the same course number are guaranteed transfer under the SCNS, the bill appears to require the guaranteed transfer of similar courses that have not been determined equivalent by SCNS faculty reviewers. This may require additional institution or SCNS faculty committee review to determine those courses that may also transfer.

Additionally, in order to maximize the satisfaction of course requirements, the bill requires transfer course credit that is not applied to satisfy general education requirements to be applied as satisfying institution and program-specific requirements before being applied as elected credit.

Associate in Arts Specialized Transfer Degree

The bill modifies s. 1007.25, F.S., to create an Associate in Arts (AA) specialized transfer degree to include 36 semester hours of general education coursework and 60 semester hours or more of college credit.

The bill specifies that transfer degrees are designed for FCS institution students who need to supplement lower-level coursework in preparation for transfer to the upper level. The bill requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to establish criteria for the review and approval of new specialized transfer degrees. The approval process must require:

- Each FCS institution to submit a notice of its intent to propose a new AA specialized degree program to the Division of Florida Colleges. The notice of intent:
 - Must include the recommended credit hours, rationale for the specialization, the demand for students entering the field, and the coursework being proposed to be included beyond the 60 semester hours or general transfer degree.
 - May be submitted by an FCS institution at any time.
- The Division of Florida Colleges to forward the notice of intent within 10 business days after receipt to the Chancellor of the SUS and all FCS institutions. State universities and FCS institutions have 60 days after receipt of the notice to submit comments.
- After submission of comments, the requesting FCS institution must submit a proposal that includes:
 - Evidence that the coursework for the AA specialized transfer degree includes demonstration of competency in foreign language and demonstration of civic literacy competency as provided in law.
 - Demonstration that all required coursework will count toward the AA degree or the baccalaureate degree.
 - An analysis of demand and unmet need for students entering the specialized field of study at the baccalaureate level.
 - Justification for the program length if it exceeds 60 credit hours, including references to the common prerequisite manual or other requirements for the baccalaureate degree. Including documentation of alignment between the exit requirements of an FCS

- institution and the admissions requirements of a baccalaureate degree program at a State University to which students would typically transfer.
- Articulation agreements for graduates of the associate in arts specialized transfer degree.
- Responses to comments received.

The bill requires the Division of Florida Colleges to review the proposal within 30 days of receipt, provide written notification to the FCS institution of any deficiencies, and provide it with an opportunity for correction. The Commissioner of Education must recommend approval or disapproval of the new specialized transfer degree to the SBE within 45 days following receipt of the completed proposal by the Division of Florida Colleges, and the SBE must consider the recommendation at its next meeting.

The bill authorizes the FCS to offer the AA specialized transfer degree once the SBE approves, and must report data on student and program performance as prescribed by the DOE. The bill requires the SBE to adopt rules to prescribe format and content requirements and submission procedures for notices of intent, proposals, and compliance reviews.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2023.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 1007.23, 1007.24, and 1007.25.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.