

MassTransfer Implementation Guidelines; 2025: Executive Summary

This document is the result of the first review of *MassTransfer* implementation guidelines that has been executed since 2018. This review coincides with a shift in our approach, informed by current research and scholarship shared in the national dialog on vertical transfer. Our goal is to advance Systemness by examining and highlighting the important work being done between institutional dyads (defined as a community college and the baccalaureate institution to which the student is transferring), creating dyad-specified versions of A2B Maps, and *adding* these to our collection of System-wide transfer pathways. Expanding our practice in this way will allow us to investigate equivalencies and articulation agreements between regionally connected institutions and convene faculty from across the Segments to build System-wide consensus from the “ground up.” In so doing, we can expand the number of transfer pathways we share with students in the Commonwealth. In short, our hope is to:

- better-describe the important work individual institutions are doing
- encourage broader collaborations between all institutions in the System, and
- provide students throughout the Commonwealth with a more transparent view of what vertical transfer entails—no matter what their major is, which community college they’re attending, or to which baccalaureate institution they wish to transfer

The following are significant shifts in practice.

One Document—Three Initiatives

This year’s document will include implementation guidelines for not only the MassTransfer initiatives included in previous versions (GenEd Foundation, A2B Pathways, MassTransfer Tuition Waiver/Credit, Reverse Transfer, and the Common Transfer Principles), but will also contain practical guidelines for management of the MAST Database and the Commonwealth Commitment initiative.

The MAST Course Equivalency Database

The only significant changes to our practice in terms of the Database have been the creation of Community of Practice and the shift away from annual updates to monthly review. With the shift to monthly review, we seek to encourage campuses to execute more timely updates based on actions by their institutional governing entities. This shift is explained in greater detail on page 1.

The GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd

Previously, the 28-credit STEM GenEd was restricted from free-standing transfer and was not afforded GenEd Foundation-level benefits unless transferred as part of a completed STEM-focused associate degree. The revised language (page 5) allows institutions to grant benefits to students transferring with the free-standing STEM GenEd but does not require it.

Alternative Sources of Credit

Updated language (page 6) has been added, reinforcing that community colleges can indicate GenEd Foundation and A2B degree completion when students have used alternative sources of credit to complete the course/credit-hour blocks. Receiving institutions are still allowed to assign elective credit during content-based assessment of transfer equivalencies.

Campus to Campus (C2C) Pathway Maps (page 8 through 13)

These are the new, dyad-focused pathway maps. These maps are designed to be a more transparent view for community college students of how a larger number of courses in their associate degree will articulate to bachelor's degree completion requirements.

- Refer to page 8 for the differentiation between C2C pathway maps and the traditional System-wide A2B pathway maps.
- Refer to page 11 for the map-development process for these new pathways
- On pages 12 and 13, we have included new notes as part of the guidelines for pathway development. The Department is proactively trying to develop our mapped pathway offerings and is requesting that campuses creating new "Linked-" or "Additional Transfer Agreements" will work with our MassTransfer leadership personnel in order to build C2C maps you're your dyad pathways.

Registration Status of "Junior" (page 10)

We have refined the language on the point of students being guaranteed transfer "as a junior in the major."

- Because the traditional approach to mapping includes only a limited number of Major Foundational Coursework in System-wide maps, receiving institutions are not able to guarantee that transferring students will have completed a sufficient amount of coursework in the major during their associate degree to be considered in "lockstep" with the Junior class cohort that started at the baccalaureate institution as First-Year students.
- We have updated the language to reflect that which is used in the 2016 Memo of Understanding for the Commonwealth Commitment, indicating that, with at least 60 college-level credits, transfer students can be guaranteed the ability to register for future semesters in the resident cohort of students who have earned at least 60 credits—the "registration status of Junior."

The Commonwealth Commitment

The most significant change to ComCom is the guidance on full-time enrollment (page 16). To re-align the ComCom definition of full-time enrollment with that of Federal Student Aid, full-time enrollment at the baccalaureate institution is no longer defined as 14 credits. More thorough guidance is on page 16.

***MassTransfer* Tuition Waiver/Credit**

No Substantive Changes

Reverse Transfer

No Substantive Changes

Common Transfer Principles

No Substantive Changes.

MassTransfer Implementation Guidelines 2025

Massachusetts General Law, Part I, Title II, Chapter 15A, Section 48(a):

Following is the language adopted into Massachusetts General Law in August of 2024:

The department, in consultation with the *MassTransfer* Steering Committee... shall establish and administer a program to be known as the *MassTransfer* program, to allow students of public institutions of higher education... to transfer credits: (i) among public institutions of higher education in a comprehensive, accessible and efficient manner; and (ii) where appropriate, for courses at the state university segment and the university of Massachusetts segment, without loss of credit.

The implementation guidelines in this document are an incorporation and replacement of all previous transfer initiatives adopted by the Commonwealth (including the Commonwealth Transfer Compact, Joint Admissions, and Tuition Advantage programs). In total, the *MassTransfer* programs and protocols covered in this document are meant to provide a broad population of students with straightforward and understandable options toward the completion of associate and baccalaureate degrees, clearing the way for student access and student success in the Massachusetts public higher education system.

General Considerations:

Note 1: In special circumstances, System institutions may provide accommodation for all *MassTransfer* benefits to students who fall out of compliance or to transfer students who would not ordinarily benefit from *MassTransfer* when:

- a student presents compelling evidence of conditions beyond their control that lead to their lack of compliance
- granting the accommodation would be in the best interests of the student,
- granting the accommodation would not contradict the spirit of *MassTransfer* programs, and
- the accommodation is agreed to by campus leadership.
 - Accommodations should be granted as part of an official appeal process that includes documented approval by campus leadership.

Note 2: Students seeking readmission to a previously attended institution will be held to the receiving institution's policies. However, if eligible for readmission, receiving institutions are *strongly encouraged* to honor *MassTransfer* policies for the provision of appropriate benefits.

Note 3: High School Students

Because *MassTransfer* policies are built to support a student's transfer between a community college to a baccalaureate institution (vertical transfer) within the System, high school students are not typically considered *MassTransfer* participants, even if they are Dual Enrollment or Early College students. However, this does not prevent them from benefiting from *MassTransfer* provisions. The following cases are situations in which high school students would benefit from *MassTransfer* policies and tools:

- Since all Dual Enrollment/Early College courses are taught with the approval of, and have transcripts of completion issued by, a community college or baccalaureate institution, students must furnish a copy of their transcripts to any other institution they attend.
 - The courses on these transcripts are, very likely, included in the *MassTransfer* Database.
 - Students and high school/college administrators would be well-advised to access the database to ensure effective transfer of college level credits.
- Given the significant expansion of Dual Enrollment/Early College programs in recent years, it's important to note that students can complete an entire associate degree or the general education components of *MassTransfer* prior to, or concurrently with, earning their high school diploma. This qualifies them to be considered for the *MassTransfer* benefits afforded their level of credit/requirement accumulation.
- Even though they have already earned college-level credits, Dual Enrollment/Early College graduates should be advised to:
 - Apply as a First-Year Students if applying during their senior year of high school.
 - Inform the institution that, closer to the start of their application year, transcripts from a higher education institution will be submitted in addition to the high school transcripts they are submitting with their First-Year application.
 - Request official transcripts be sent from the community college at which they earned the credits.
 - Students should also be advised that:
 - Official transcripts are only finalized at the end of the last term in which they took courses.
 - Assessment of eligibility for any *MassTransfer* benefit will be based upon GPA and/or credits contained in a student's final community college transcript

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MAST Course Equivalency Database (the Database)

The Massachusetts Articulated System of Transfer (MAST) course equivalency database began in 2012 as a statewide database of community college course equivalencies. It has since been expanded to include course and equivalency information for baccalaureate institutions as well. It is the fundamental *MassTransfer* component that powers all other aspects of our programming. This course and equivalency information not only supports the institution-to-institution course equivalency search engine but also enables the dynamic data-driven GenEd Foundation and A2B Map search pages.

The Department aims for the Database to be a comprehensive resource for students, campus staff, and external stakeholders seeking information on course equivalencies and vertical transfer pathways within the System. We envision the Website's search tools as a central hub for transfer research, offering clear and accurate representations of inter-campus agreements, including course-to-course equivalencies and associate-to-bachelor's degree pathways. Each campus contributes significantly to these efforts, and the public-facing search engines are the Department's primary means of showcasing that work to students and their families, higher education professionals, and local policymakers and regulators.

With all of these as our guiding principles, the Department offers the following implementation guidelines for shared management and review of course equivalencies and academic pathway maps housed in the Database.

Database Shared Management

Monthly Updates

The Department will send monthly emails with lists of all course and equivalency edits that have been made in the past 30 days. Emails will be sent to each campus' Primary Contacts. We ask your PCs to share the lists with your campus' transfer partners with the following in mind:

- Sending institutions should be mindful of changes in equivalency for any of your courses.
 - Maps and/or Linked Agreements could be negatively impacted if equivalencies have been edited or discontinued.
 - Faculty and campus leaders should be consulted if pathways have been called into question
- Receiving institutions should survey the courses added or removed from the database for the same reasons.
- If any of your maps are impacted, outreach to the college in question could elicit convenings and collaboration to “save” the mapped pathway.
- Please copy the DHE’s Director of Academic Policy and Student Success (the DHE Director) so that Map edits can be made

Update Management

MassTransfer Campus Administration Login:

<https://www.mass.edu/forstudents/admissions/ceq/cLogin.asp>

Primary Contacts

- We request that campuses designate at least two Primary Contacts—a third is fine, at your discretion. Please update these designations if/when there are personnel changes at your institution:
 - Community Colleges, please designate
 - One Transfer Coordinator
 - One Registrar’s designee
 - Optional: admissions designee
 - Baccalaureates
 - One Admissions designee
 - One Registrar’s designee
 - Optional: representative from the advising community
- Campuses may include any number of representatives at the monthly Community of Practice meetings—we’d just like to control the size of the distribution list when sending monthly reminders about Database updates

Course Updates

- Using the “MAST Course & Equivalency Database” link on the “Administrative Function” list, click on the “Update Courses” link on the subsequent page to add or edit courses
- **If editing** existing courses:
 - Pull lists of your institution’s courses by subject
 - Click on the course code of any course on the list
 - Click edit on the subsequent page
 - Use the **“Edit” form** to correct errors or supply missing information for a course
 - Use the **“Change” form** if you are changing the courses name, number, description, credits, or the GenEd Foundation (GEF) code has changed
- **If adding a course**
 - After generating a list of your institution’s courses, click “Add Course”
 - Asterisks denote required fields
 - Please include course descriptions for each course that you add
 - Course descriptions will help faculty at receiving institutions assess your course for transfer equivalents
 - When adding text, please remove all “paragraph marks” before submitting the course for approval. Doing so allows the text to be better formatted on screens using optimization for mobile devices
 - Sending institutions designate courses as satisfactory of GenEd Foundation requirements based on whether the course satisfies their Institution’s general education requirements
 - Indicating the GEF category when adding the course to the Database will ensure that students see the course on our GEF search page
- Cross-listed courses can easily be listed in each academic area. If you’re uncertain about how to accomplish this, please reach out to the DHE Director
- Lecture and lab sections should be listed in the Database the same way that they are listed in your institution’s Academic Catalog with respect to:
 - pre- or co-requisite relationships
 - whether courses can be taken separately or must be taken together
 - Example if they must be taken together would be entered as a single course:
 - In your catalog: BIO 101: Principles of Biology I (3 credits) + BIO 101L: Principles of Biology I, Lab (1 credit)
 - Add it to the Database like this: BIO 101/101L: Principles of Biology 1 + Lab, with “3+1” in the credit column.
 - If taken together with different course numbers:
 - Your Catalog = BIO 103, Human Nutrition and Health (3 credits) and BIO 104, Human Nutrition and Health Laboratory (1 credit)
 - Database = BIO 103/104, Human Nutrition + Laboratory, with “3+1” in the credit column.
 - If taken separately, please enter two different courses
- Generally speaking, elective courses do not need to be added to the database, but if it allows you to better represent your academic catalog, please feel free to do so.

Equivalency Updates

- Using the “MAST Course & Equivalency Database” link on the “Administrative Function” list, click on the “Update Equivalencies” link on the subsequent page to add or edit equivalencies.
- You can generate a list of courses by filtering based on the community college sending institution and/or the course subject code.
 - Once the list is generated, click on the course title in the “To Course/Elective Title” column
 - On the subsequent page, you’ll be able to edit, change, delete, or add an equivalent to that course
 - If the course from your institution for which you would like to establish an equivalency is not already in the Database, you’ll need to add the course first
 - Please follow the steps above for adding a course to the Database
- Receiving institutions decide when and how a course is accepted as either a course equivalent or an elective equivalent
- The DHE would like to be consulted on credit-hour mismatches at the receiving institution.
 - If a course you are receiving has more credits than your course with the same content, please try to indicate how the transferring student’s excess credits will be received
 - The “Add'l elective credits awarded:” feature can account for this
- Please note that changing an equivalency is a two-step process:
 - The “Change” dialog screen will ask you to first discontinue the current equivalency to indicate it is no longer awarded
 - You will then be prompted to add the new equivalency for the course
- The “Add Equivalency” page allows you to
 - Add a course-to-course equivalency
 - It bears repeating that, if the course from your institution for which you would like to establish an equivalency is not already in the Database, you’ll need to add the course first—the Course-to-Course dialog box will redirect you to add a new course first
 - Add elective credits only
 - **You do not need to add an Elective course in order to assign elective credits**
 - Indicate that the course does not transfer
 - This is different from leaving a course un-evaluated—this option specifically means that the course does not transfer to your institution

The General Education Foundation

GenEd Foundation: The *MassTransfer* General Education Foundation is to be considered as representing a breadth of knowledge and set of student learning outcomes that is comparable to the receiving institution's general education/distribution/core requirements. A student completing the *General Education Foundation* will have earned the following 34 credit hours:

English Composition/Writing	6 credit hours
Behavioral and/or Social Sciences	9 credit hours
Humanities and/or Fine Arts	9 credit hours
Natural and/or Physical Science	7 credit hours
Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning	3 credit hours
Total	34 credit hours

STEM GenEd: The 28-credit STEM Gen Ed Foundation (*STEM GenEd*) should replace the 34-credit *GenEd Foundation* in A2B Pathways for STEM disciplines and for students transferring to state universities and UMass campuses in pursuit of degrees in STEM fields. A student completing the *STEM GenEd* will have earned the 28 credit hours outlined below:

English Composition/Writing	6 credit hours
Behavioral and/or Social Sciences	6 credit hours
Humanities and/or Fine Arts	6 credit hours
Natural and/or Physical Science	7 credit hours
Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning	3 credit hours
Total	28 credit hours

The *STEM GenEd* is intended to afford community college students more room in their degree pathways for STEM-focused coursework. With the approval of their institutional leadership, receiving institutions *may, but are not required to*, grant *STEM Gen Ed* Benefits.

**References below to the *STEM GenEd* will indicate that it is being transferred as part of a completed associate degree in a STEM field.

GenEd/STEM GenEd Foundation Benefits

Students completing the *GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd* with a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher will be entitled to the following benefits:

- Satisfaction of the receiving institution's general education/distribution/core requirements
 - *In accordance with the NECHE-established minimum of 40 general education credits, the receiving institution may add no more than 6 credits for students transferring with the GenEd Foundation or no more than 12 credits for students with the STEM GenEd.*
- Transferring students admitted to specific majors requiring additional pre-requisite courses or higher GPA standards may be required to take additional coursework
 - *Receiving institutions may require no greater number of courses or credits for MassTransfer students than the number required for resident students entering the same major.*

GenEd Foundation Implementation Guidelines

Certification:

For the purpose of determining whether a student meets the requirements of, and receives benefits for, the *GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd*:

- **“Sending institutions”** are responsible for:
 - calculating the student’s grade point average
 - Students must earn a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher to benefit from the *GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd*.
 - Grades of “D/D+” in individual courses do not prevent students from earning *GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd* certification as long as their cumulative GPA is 2.0 at minimum.
 - evaluating any non-traditional college-level credit and clearly indicating these credits when they are used to complete *GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd*
 - designating students’ transcript as “GenEd Foundation Complete” or “STEM GenEd Complete” when sending transcripts to System institutions
- **“Receiving institutions”** will:
 - accept the *GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd* as satisfactory of the receiving institution’s general education/distribution/core requirements.
 - receiving institutions *may, but are not required to*, afford *STEM GenEd* Foundation benefits to the free-standing *STEM GenEd* block, providing the following conditions apply:
 - the student is pursuing a STEM degree at the receiving institution
 - the student meets the 2.0 cumulative GPA standard
 - accept grades of “D/D+” in individual courses within the *GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd* when transcripts indicate completion of the block of courses and a minimum GPA of 2.0

Alternative Sources of Credit

In accordance with the *Sources of Alternative Credit* indications in the State University and University of Massachusetts Segments’ *Common Transfer Principles* declarations (appended at the end of this document:

- College-level credits awarded by the sending institution through sources like CLEP, institutional challenge examinations, credit for prior learning, or the Seal Biliteracy shall be included as part of *MassTransfer GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd* and the Minimum 60 credit guarantee for A2B degrees.
- ****This provision will not supersede transfer evaluation policies and practices of the receiving institution during content-focused course-to-course evaluation of credit.***

Institutional Transfer Policy

- Acceptance of transfer coursework beyond the scope of the *GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd* but not as extensive as a completed associate degree should be based upon the receiving institution’s transfer evaluation policies/practice and those equivalencies housed within the MAST Database (the Database).
- Grades of “D/D+” are acceptable for courses comprising the *GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd*. Accepting grades of “D/D+” in courses not transferred as part of the *GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd* should be governed by the institution’s existing transfer policy on the topic.
 - *In cases when resident students are awarded graduation credit for grades below “C,” receiving institutions are strongly encouraged to award similar credit to MassTransfer students with similar grades.*

- Receiving institutions will honor the awarding of non-traditional college-level credits as part of a student's *GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd*, as determined by the sending institution, grant the appropriate level of *MassTransfer* benefit.
 - ****This provision will not supersede transfer evaluation policies and practices of the receiving institution during content-focused course-to-course evaluation of credit.***
 - The transfer of all other non-traditional credits that are not part of the student's *GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd* should be governed by the receiving institution's transfer policy on the topic.
- Grades of Pass (P), Satisfactory (S) or similar indications should be governed by the institution's existent transfer policy on the topic.

Enrollment Continuity

- If a student subsequently transfers to more than one System institution, the student retains *GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd* completion status.

STEM GenEd

- If A2B Pathways for STEM degrees in which your institution participates do not feature the *STEM GenEd Foundation*:
 - collaborate with your Department Chairs and Academic Deans to ascertain whether the *STEM GenEd* is appropriate for your students
 - contact the DHE Director to have the map edited

A2B Pathways

The Department began the development of associate degree-to-bachelor's degree (A2B) pathways in 2016. In addition to the primary goal of providing transparent tools for students and advisors in support of vertical transfer between System institutions, it was further hoped that these pathways would:

- lead to more equitable outcomes in terms of degree completion and effective vertical transfer
- further illustrate transparency of credit mobility, and
- create conditions in which transfer students would complete no more or no fewer courses/credits than resident students at the colleges and universities to which they transferred

To these ends, the Department convened faculty and transfer professionals from each campus. Faculty collaborated on articulating student learning expectations across all segments. Staff collaborated to create Web-based curriculum maps to illustrate recommended sequencing in support of timely degree completion at both associate and bachelor's levels. The results of these collaborations and convenings are discussed in the following section on A2B Pathways.

Types of Pathways

Each associate degree program under *MassTransfer* is classified as one of the following types of programs at Massachusetts state university or UMass campuses:

Mapped Pathways

- **A2B System-Wide Pathways:** These are the traditional pathway maps that were negotiated at the System-level and applicable between any participating community college and baccalaureate institution.
 - Pathway Maps are comprised of the *GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd* and the Major Foundational Courses (MFCs) that are accepted by any participating baccalaureate institution
 - The MFCs represent the minimum number of major-specific courses students must complete at the community college in order to still be able to complete a bachelor's degree within two years after transfer.
 - These pathways are most beneficial for students who know their intended major but are not sure which state university or UMass campus they wish to transfer.
- **A2B Campus-to-Campus (C2C) Pathways:** Concentrating on institutional dyads (community college-to-baccalaureate institutions), the DHE's C2C maps are focused on the graduation requirements of the receiving institution and encourage campus-to-campus collaborations/convenings to promulgate a more-focused articulation of course content and learning outcomes between the partnering institutions.
 - Pathway Maps are comprised of the *GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd* and all major-specific courses required of resident students within their first 60 credits of study that the baccalaureate faculty deem "transfer appropriate."
 - Completing all "major-specific" courses is recommended but not required
 - students should be granted all "A2B-level" benefits as long as they have completed the designated associate degree.
 - These pathways are most beneficial for students who have decided on a major and to which state university or UMass campus they wish to transfer.

Mapped Pathways (continued)

- **A2B Liberal Arts Pathways:**
 - Pathway Maps are comprised solely of the *GenEd Foundation*.
 - This pathway provides students with greater flexibility when selecting courses to complete their associate degree.
 - With this flexibility comes the need for careful planning pertaining to course selection.
 - Community college advising offices should guide students to connect with their intended receiving institutions.
 - Transfer leaders at dyad institutions should adopt collaborative and innovative approaches to inter-segmental information sharing in support of students' transfer research.
 - ***Please consult with the DHE Director to ensure that the Database is up to date; the DHE is intent on providing Segmental partners with support to customize pathways maps***
 - These pathways are most beneficial for students pursuing a major that does not have a direct pathway to a baccalaureate degree
- **Special Mission Pathways.**
 - Pathways have been created for the System's two special mission institutions—the Massachusetts College of Art and Design and the Massachusetts Maritime Academy. These pathways do not include 60 credits or a completed associate degree.
 - ***MassArt:*** A student completing a Special Mission Pathway for transfer to the Massachusetts College of Art and Design will have completed a 30-credit mapped pathway, exclusive of developmental courses.
 - ***Mass Maritime:*** A student completing a Special Mission Pathway for transfer to the Massachusetts Maritime Academy will have completed a 45-credit mapped pathway, exclusive of developmental courses.

Linked Pathways

- **A2B Linked Pathways**
 - Traditionally, the DHE created no maps for *Linked Pathways*—all advising materials were provided by the institutional dyads
 - A student completing an *A2B Linked Pathway* will have graduated with an associate degree (with a minimum of 60 credits) that included the *GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd* and will be eligible for full *MassTransfer* A2B-level benefits.
 - Although these agreements guarantee 60 credits will transfer, whether the credits are applied to a student's major, as general education, or as elective credit is at the discretion of the receiving institution.
 - These agreements are most beneficial for students in non-traditional or highly specialized fields of study
- **A2B Additional Pathways**
 - Formerly referred to as Additional Transfer Agreements, these pathways are differentiated from Linked Pathways by the fact that they do not need to feature the *GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd*.

A2B Pathway Benefits

A student completing an associate degree who seeks admission to a Linked/Mapped bachelor's degree under *MassTransfer* will be entitled to all of the *GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd* benefits as well as the following, based upon the final cumulative grade point average at the community college awarding the degree:

- **Students with a final cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher will receive:**
 - a waiver of admission application fees, essays, and letter(s) of recommendation
 - guaranteed transfer of a minimum of 60 non-developmental credits carrying a grade of “D” or higher
 - registration status of “Junior”
 - all credits will be applied to the Linked/Mapped baccalaureate degree with the effect that *MassTransfer* students will be required to complete no more course/credits than a resident student in the same major with the following stipulations:
 - A post-transfer change of major may adversely impact the student's credit accumulation and progress towards degree completion.
 - If the Linked/Mapped baccalaureate program requires a higher GPA or specific courses for the major which are required of resident students, the same will be required of *MassTransfer* students.
- **Students with a final cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher will receive:**
 - all previously enumerated benefits
 - guaranteed admission to the Linked/Mapped baccalaureate degree with the following stipulations:
 - If the Linked/Mapped baccalaureate program requires a higher GPA or other special requirements for admission for resident students, *MassTransfer* students should be held to the same expectations.
 - If, because of space or fiscal limitations, the receiving institution does not admit all qualified applicants to a given major or program, the receiving institution will use the same criteria for *MassTransfer* applicants as it does for its resident students.
 - Students must be in good academic, fiscal, and disciplinary standing with all previous institutions.
 - admissions guarantees do not supersede the receiving institution's policies pertaining to criminal background checks.
- **Students with a final cumulative grade point average of a 3.0 or higher will receive:**
 - all previously enumerated benefits
 - eligibility for the *MassTransfer Tuition Waiver/Credit* equal to 100% of the Massachusetts resident tuition rate at a state university or UMass campus for two years of undergraduate enrollment with the following requirements:
 - Enrollment must be continuous at the state university or UMass campus (excluding summer and winter intersessions).
 - The student must earn a cumulative grade point average of a 3.0 or higher for the first two semesters of enrollment at the state university or UMass campus.
 - The student must enroll within one academic year of associate degree completion.

Pathway Mapping Processes

Collaboration and convening have been the bedrock of *MassTransfer* development and practical implementation since the beginning of the program and will remain at the core of our equivalency-articulation and pathway-mapping activities. The following are mapping processes for *A2B Pathways*.

A2B System Pathways

- Faculty Segmental Leaders are convened in Spring and Fall Sessions.
 - One faculty member from each segment (community college, state university, and UMass campuses) are selected
- Segmental Leaders collaborate amongst themselves and with their colleagues across each of their segments to designate Major Foundational Courses.
- Each baccalaureate institution designates courses that represent their MFC requirements.
- The DHE builds maps for each baccalaureate institution and shares the link to the Beta site.
 - Primary Contacts at the baccalaureate institution share the link with faculty, deans, and executive leadership and request edits from the DHE if necessary.
- When the baccalaureate institution's academic leadership approves participation in the pathway, the link is shared with the Community College Segment.
 - Transfer coordinators at the community colleges share the link with faculty, deans, and executive leadership for approval of participation.
 - When approval is granted, Coordinators share the names and degree types (AA or AS) of the associate degree(s) they wished to be mapped to the baccalaureate institution.
- The DHE adds the linked institutional dyad to the A2B search results table, and the map becomes discoverable on A2B program search page.

A2B Campus-to-Campus Maps

Any segmental partner can initiate this articulation relationship. Please include the DHE Director in your outreach to the institution with which you wish to create the agreement—they will coordinate the following process:

- Faculty at the receiving institution identify the major-specific coursework taken by resident students in their first 60 credits that are appropriate for transfer from community college
 - If the receiving institution utilizes recommended sequencing for its resident students, or if a transfer curriculum map already exists between the dyad, it can be shared with the DHE and the map will be constructed using it as a guide.
 - In some cases, faculty do not accept specific lower-division major courses in transfer; in other cases, there is a major-specific residency requirement—these limitations will be honored and specified courses will not be listed on the C2C Map.
- The DHE builds maps for each baccalaureate institution and shares the link to the Beta site.
 - Primary Contacts at the baccalaureate institution share the link with faculty, deans, and executive leadership and request edits from the DHE if necessary.
- When the baccalaureate institution's academic leadership approves participation in the pathway, the link is shared with the Community College Segment.
 - Transfer Coordinators at the community colleges share the link with faculty, deans, and executive leadership for approval of participation.
 - When approval is granted, Coordinators share the names and degree types (AA or AS) of the associate degree(s) they wished to be mapped to the baccalaureate institution.
- The DHE adds the linked institutional dyad (community college-to-baccalaureate) to the A2B search results table and the map becomes discoverable on A2B program search page.

Linked Pathways:

The following aspirational guidance was included in editorial content from the 2017 review of the Implementation Guidelines:

“A2B Linked Pathways (formerly known as MassTransfer agreements) will be discontinued after five years once a corresponding A2B Mapped Pathway has been established.”

This, coupled with the mounting research citing a more-positive correlation between transfer solutions based upon institutional dyads as opposed to System-level approaches, finds the DHE intent upon updating *MassTransfer* implementation to align with researched exemplary practice. Current scholarship on vertical transfer shows that practices including early academic advising and intense collaboration between institutional dyads are more effective at supporting credit mobility in the vertical transfer process and helping institutions create the conditions in which their students are more likely to efficiently achieve post-transfer degree completion.

Because of these developments around vertical transfer, ***the Department’s goal is to create a Campus-to-Campus Map for all Linked and Additional Pathways moving forward.***

Either institution can initiate the mapping process for new pathways. In these situations, please include the DHE Director in your outreach to the institution with which you are proposing the agreement; the Director will coordinate the Campus-to-Campus mapping process described above.

A2B Pathway Implementation Guidelines

General Transfer Considerations

- All A2B Mapped or Linked pathways guarantee that a minimum of 60 credits will be accepted and applied to a student's bachelor's degree.
- All A2B Mapped or Linked pathways are eligible for the *MassTransfer* Tuition Waiver/Credit in accordance with the guidelines below.
- Receiving institutions must ensure the *MassTransfer* students are required to take no more courses than resident students pursuing the same degree.
- If receiving institutions allow grades below "C" to satisfy graduation requirements or course prerequisites for resident students, then these grades should be acceptable in transfer for *MassTransfer* students.

A2B Linked or A2B Additional Pathways

- As a general condition, students completing *A2B Linked* or *A2B Additional* pathways are entitled to all the *A2B Pathway-Level* benefits.
 - If the recommended course sequencing associated with an "Additional Transfer Agreement" does not include the *GenEd Foundation* or the *STEM GenEd*, these benefits would obviously not apply.
- Given the flexibility provided in these pathways, transfer advisors at community colleges should connect their students to all available resources to help them plan their academic schedules to maximize their efforts towards timely degree completion and to maximize credit transfer.
- Ideally, recommended sequencing and degree requirements for resident students at receiving institutions should be made available to *MassTransfer* students in the community college Segment in support of their schedule planning and to improve the student's chances of completing courses that satisfy both their associate degree and bachelor's degree requirements.
- New *Linked-* or *Additional Pathways* can still be proposed by either institution in the dyad.
***However, A2B Campus-to-Campus Pathway Maps should be created for all new Linked- or Additional agreements.**
 - The DHE is intent on broadly sharing and proactively promoting the collaborative work of institutional dyads in the System—publication of these pathway maps is our best channel for sharing this information with our students.

GPA Designation

- The GPA established on the student's final transcript from the sending institution will be used for the purposes of determining whether the student meets the requirements of *MassTransfer*.
- Receiving institutions need not recalculate the grade point average.

Enrollment Continuity

- Students may continue to take courses, but may not enroll as "degree seeking," at any other public or private higher education institution after completion of the associate degree and before matriculating into the linked or mapped baccalaureate program.
- Admission may be deferred to a subsequent semester due to unanticipated space limitations at the discretion of the receiving institution.

Alternative Courses of Credit and institutional Transfer Policy

- Notes on alternative courses of credit and individual institutional transfer policies, as stated above on pages 6 and 7 pertaining to *GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd* also apply broadly to A2B Pathways.

The Commonwealth Commitment Program

In 2016, the Presidents of the System institutions signed a memorandum of understanding to establish the *Commonwealth Commitment* program (*ComCom*). The stated goals were to strengthen collaboration within the System and ensure affordable, high-quality education by ensuring effective and efficient vertical transfer between the community college and baccalaureate Segments in the System. Using the A2B pathways as one of the primary mechanisms with which students maintain *ComCom* eligibility, the program enhanced previous *MassTransfer* benefits by adding financial incentives to the credit hour and application benefits featured in then *A2B* and *GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd* provisions.

ComCom Benefits

Program Benefits

Students who attend college full-time in an A2B Mapped Pathway and maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 will be eligible for:

- A 10% rebate of their tuition and fees at the community college level, and a 10% rebate of mandatory/applicable fees at the baccalaureate level, payable at the end of every semester completed in compliance with eligibility criteria.
 - The rebate is payable for each semester the student maintains eligibility, for up to five semesters at the community college and four semesters at the baccalaureate institution.
- A freeze on tuition and fees:
 - Frozen at the rates in place at the community college, state university, and/or University of Massachusetts campus during the semester in which the ComCom Participation form was signed.
 - The same rate will be charged for each semester the student maintains eligibility, for up to five semesters at the community college and four semesters at the baccalaureate level.
 - This freeze does not include discretionary fees such as: equipment, special programs, parking, or technology fees, housing, health insurance, meal plans, books, study abroad/study away expenses, supplies, or other college-related expenses.
- *MassTransfer* Tuition Waiver/Credit
 - Eligible students under the *MassTransfer Tuition Waiver/Credit* Program will be entitled to a tuition waiver/credit equal to 100 percent of the Massachusetts resident tuition at a state university or a tuition credit equal to 100 percent of the Massachusetts resident tuition at a University of Massachusetts campus for two consecutive years after transfer.
 - The tuition waiver/credit for the second year of matriculation is contingent upon the student maintaining a cumulative 3.0 grade point average for the first two semesters of enrollment at the state university or University of Massachusetts campus.
 - Students whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0 as a result of a grade earned during an intersession or summer term will become ineligible.
- Guaranteed acceptance into the corresponding A2B mapped bachelor's degree pathway, space permitting, at state universities and UMass campuses.
 - Transfer with the enrollment status of junior to the state university or UMass campus after completing the A2B mapped associate degree pathway for all programs.
 - Transfer with sophomore status to the Massachusetts Maritime Academy after completing 45 mapped pathway credits at the community college.
 - Transfer with sophomore status to the Massachusetts College of Art and Design after completing 30 mapped pathway credits at the community college.

ComCom Eligibility

To be eligible to participate, students must:

- be Massachusetts residents eligible for in-state tuition under the terms of the Board of Higher Education's residency policy
- have earned a high school diploma or its equivalent
- sign the Commonwealth Commitment Participation form prior to earning 15 credits at the community college (excluding developmental coursework and dual enrollment/Early College credits).

To maintain eligibility:

At the community college, students must satisfy all of the following conditions:

- Enroll as a degree-seeking student in an approved A2B pathway
- Maintain full-time, continuous enrollment (exclusive of summer and winter intersessions)
- Complete an A2B associate degree within 2.5 years of signing the Participation Form
- Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 (excluding developmental course work)
- Apply for admission to a System baccalaureate institution for the consecutive fall or spring semester following the completion of their associate degree
 - Community colleges are encouraged to accept ComCom participants transferring from other community colleges provided they are in compliance with all program requirements.

At the baccalaureate institution, students must satisfy all of the following conditions:

- Enroll as a degree-seeking student in the major corresponding to their A2B associate degree in the consecutive fall or spring semester following the completion of their associate degree
- Maintain full-time, continuous enrollment (exclusive of summer and winter intersessions)
- Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0, excluding developmental course work
- Complete a bachelor's degree within two years of transferring

At the Massachusetts Maritime Academy (MMA), students must satisfy all of the following conditions:

- enroll at MMA as a degree-seeking student in the major corresponding to their A2B mapped pathway in the term immediately following completion of the required 45 credits
- Maintain full-time, continuous enrollment (exclusive of summer and winter intersession terms)
- Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 (excluding developmental course work)
- Complete a bachelor's degree within three years of transferring (may require more than 120 total credits to graduate)
- Reverse transfer credits back to the community college to complete an associate degree.

At the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, students must satisfy all of the following conditions:

- Enroll as a degree-seeking student in the next consecutive fall semester following completion of the 30 credit A2B pathway
 - MassTransfer students are *not exempt* from portfolio submission as part of MassArt's admissions process—advisors should connect potential students with MassArt's transfer admissions personnel to verify portfolio requirements and recommendations.
- Maintain full-time, continuous enrollment (exclusive of summer and winter intersession terms)
- Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 (excluding developmental course work)
- Complete a bachelor's degree within three and a half years of transferring (may require more than 120 total credits to graduate)
- Reverse transfer credits back to the community college to complete an associate degree.

ComCom Implementation Guidelines

Full-time Enrollment

- Full-time enrollment should be defined according to your institution's definition for Federal Student Aid reporting
 - If the student was counted as full-time at the FSA census date, they are full-time with respect to ComCom eligibility.
 - As with Federal Student Aid, withdrawals from individual courses should not disqualify a student from ComCom eligibility, whereas withdrawal from the full semester would.
- Students in their final semester of study are allowed to be enrolled part time if their remaining graduation requirements do not equate to a full-time course load.
 - In these instances, students do not need to file an appeal.
 - Your financial aid office can petition the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA), on a student's behalf, for an override of the credit requirement.
 - For guidance on this topic, your financial aid office can reach out to the Office of Student Financial Assistance.

Minimum GPA

- A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required in order to benefit from the *MassTransfer Tuition Waiver/Credit* (developmental coursework is excluded from this calculation).
- Students whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 will have one semester to raise their GPA. Students will not receive the 10% rebate for the semester during which their cumulative GPA fell below 3.0 and will have their benefits reinstated at the end of the semester in which they return to GPA eligibility.
- Transfer applicants with a GPA below 3.0 at time of application will be ineligible for ComCom benefits but should not negatively impact their application as a general transfer student.

Participation Forms and the Semi-Annual Report

- Community colleges must collect *Commonwealth Commitment Participation Forms* for each student prior to their having earned 15 credits at the institution (excluding developmental coursework, dual enrollment, or Early College credits).
 - By signature on these forms, students will authorize community colleges to share personally identifiable information beyond "Directory Information" with their intended state universities or UMass campuses.
- Community colleges will share participation updates with students' intended transfer institutions at the completion of each fall and spring semester by way of the *Semi-Annual Report*.
 - Community colleges should forward reports to the primary and any secondary or tertiary institutions indicated on each student's participation form.
 - For additional record-keeping support, the DHE Director should be copied on *Semi-Annual Reports*.
 - Reports should be sent by February 1 for fall participants and June 15 for spring participants
 - Reports should include the student's community college email address, home mailing address, and their phone number if available, A2B Pathway, intended major at the baccalaureate institution, their current ComCom Eligibility status, and the semester in which they began participation.

Change of Major

- *Major change* alone is not grounds for ineligibility. However, students should be advised that doing so may jeopardize their eligibility for continuation in the program. Students should be advised of the following scenarios when considering a change of major:
 - If the change of major will extend a student's time to degree completion at either the associate or bachelor's level
 - if the new major is not one of the designated A2B mapped pathways

Ineligibility and Student Appeals

- Students will not be expected to return the benefits they have already received if they become ineligible for the Commonwealth Commitment program.
- In cases of hardship or when unexpected disqualifying events occur for a student, they are allowed to appeal for a continuation of participation and benefits.
- Institutions are obligated to create an appeals process and communicate it to your MassTransfer population.
- Institutions are obligated to grant no more than two appeals but may extend this limitation at their discretion.

Transfer Admissions

- There are *no special admissions protocols* for ComCom applicants.
 - Students must follow admission application processes according to the receiving institution's expectations.
- It is the sole discretion of the community colleges and baccalaureate institutions at which the student is enrolled to indicate continuation or discontinuation of each student's eligibility for ComCom benefits.

Ten Percent Rebate (the Rebate) Criteria

- The ComCom 10% rebate applies to tuition and mandatory fees at the community college; to mandatory fees at state universities, MassArt, and Mass Maritime; and to applicable fees at UMass Campuses.
- The Rebate is exclusive of developmental courses, housing, health insurance, meal plans, books, study abroad/study away expenses, parking, supplies or other college-related expenses, and discretionary fees such as equipment, special program, parking or technology fees.
- If the Rebate results in an "over-award" status in terms of the student's total cost of attendance, other financial aid awards should be reduced. Institutions should strive to reduce the amount of loan-based aid before reducing grants or scholarships.

Rebate Schedule

- The Fall rebate for successfully completed Fall courses will be disbursed once grades have been submitted and rebates have been calculated.
- The Spring rebate for successfully completed Spring courses will be disbursed once grades have been submitted and rebates have been calculated.
- Reimbursement Process:
 - Reimbursements will be made at the end of each semester.
 - Reimbursement will follow the same process used by the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) for its grant programs.
 - The reimbursement form will be available on the OSFA website.
 - The OSFA will reimburse institutions within 30 days of submission of the reimbursement form.

Financial Aid

- Institutions must comply with federal and state financial aid guidelines.
- Rebates must be issued directly to the student by an established process unless an outstanding balance is owed for direct billed charges. If a balance is owed, the rebate may be applied to the student's account.
- If an over-award of a student's "total cost of attendance" results from the ComCom rebate, the institution must reduce other financial aid so that the total aid does not exceed the total cost of education.

Student Records

- Community colleges will certify Commonwealth Commitment completion in the same way that they certify other levels of *MassTransfer* benefits on students' final transcripts.
- Community Colleges will complete the *Semi-Annual Report* at the end of each fall and spring semester and share it with baccalaureate institutions to which ComCom students have indicated their intention to transfer. The report will include:
 - The names and contact information for all continuously eligible students targeting the particular institution
 - The associate degree they are completing and the bachelor's degree to which it is mapped
 - The report should be completed and individual universities should be emailed these reports by February 1 for fall semesters and June 15 for spring semesters.

Family Educational Rights and Protection Act (FERPA) Compliance

- All institutions must comply with FERPA Guidelines as applicable by law.
- While students who are participating in the Commonwealth Commitment are still enrolled in the community colleges, "personally identifiable information" beyond "Directory Information," including academic information, may be shared with the baccalaureate institutions only for students who have signed the authorization on the Commonwealth Commitment Participation Form.

Higher Education Information Resource System (HEIRS) Reporting Requirements:

- At the end of each Fall and Spring semester, institutions will submit a file with data for all new, continuing and former Commonwealth Commitment participants at that institution. The file will be due approximately one month after the completion of the semester.
- In addition to campus and student identifiers and characteristics, the file will collect the following fields: Commonwealth Commitment participation status, A2B mapped pathway, intended baccalaureate program, intended *MassTransfer* institutions (for community college students), Commonwealth Commitment ineligibility explanation (if relevant), total registered credits, total completed credits, term GPA, cumulative GPA and degree completion status.

Department of Higher Education Collaboration

Program Review

- Annually, the *MassTransfer* Steering Committee will review all aspects of the program, including cost structures, program operations, implementation, accreditation and licensure-related issues, and will recommend operational changes or adjustments as deemed necessary.
- Based on feedback received from the *MassTransfer* Steering Committee, Department staff will report back to the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education and will make any necessary recommendations to help further the goals of this initiative.

MassTransfer Tuition Waiver/Credit Program

Definitions:

Eligible Institution:

Any two-year or four-year institution within the system of public institutions of higher education under Section 5 of Chapter 15A of the General Laws.

Eligible Program:

Any state-supported undergraduate degree program offered by an institution. Institutions are encouraged, where appropriate, to extend waiver eligibility to students enrolled in non-state-supported degree programs.

Eligibility Requirements:

To be eligible for the MassTransfer Tuition Waiver program, the student must:

- a. be enrolled in a state college or University and has completed one of the following:
 - i. an associate degree at a public community college approved under the MassTransfer program;
 - ii. MassTransfer Pathways 60-credit map; or
 - iii. An associate degree under an Additional Transfer Articulation Agreement program.
- b. meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) according to institution's requirements and federal standards and meet the minimum required 3.0 Grade Point Average (GPA) for continued eligibility;
- c. physically reside in Massachusetts for at least one year, as of the start of the enrolled term, with an intent to remain in Massachusetts consistent with Board of Higher Education (BHE) policy;
- d. be a U.S. Citizen, lawful permanent resident, or non-citizen eligible under Title IV regulations; or have an approved eligibility status designated by the BHE pursuant to the Massachusetts Tuition Equity Law or otherwise;
- e. complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the Massachusetts Application for State Financial Aid (MASFA) as applicable for eligible students under the Massachusetts Tuition Equity Law annually;
- f. comply with financial aid verification requirements; and
- g. not be in default on any federal or state student loans for attendance at any institution, or owe a refund for any previous state financial aid program.

Award Value:

Eligible students under the MassTransfer Tuition Waiver Program will be entitled to a tuition waiver equal to 100 percent of the resident tuition rate at a state college or University for the two (2) years of matriculation which immediately follow their community college enrollment. The tuition waiver for the second year of matriculation is contingent upon the student maintaining a cumulative 3.0 grade point average for the first two semesters of enrollment at the state college or University.

Annual Review:

The Department of Higher Education is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the MassTransfer Tuition Waiver program. Institutions that have signed an agreement to participate in the Massachusetts State financial aid programs are required to share data for all students with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE) or its designee, and the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) for this purpose. The program may be evaluated annually to determine any immediate impact or to determine if adjustments are required for various processes, such as disbursement of funds.

Participation Agreement: All institutions receiving funds under the MassTransfer Tuition Waiver Program must have an active Massachusetts State Financial Aid Participation Agreement on file with the Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA).

Audit Requirements:

- a. It shall be the responsibility of each college to maintain documentation of a recipient student's eligibility for the MassTransfer Tuition Waiver program.
- b. The Commissioner shall require each college to furnish annually to the BHE a report detailing specific information regarding recipients of the MassTransfer Tuition Waiver program. OSFA will establish the timeline, specifications, and procedures for this report.
- c. All financial books, records and documents pertaining to this program shall, at all times, be open to inspection, review and audit by the Commissioner, the State Auditor or their authorized representatives who shall have access to the premises wherever such books, records, and documents are for seven years. An institution may retain such records for a period of five years, if approval is received from the Records Conservation Board in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 30, Section 42

Reverse Transfer

Preamble

The *Reverse Transfer* component of the *MassTransfer* Programs allows students to use coursework and credits earned at the baccalaureate level to retroactively satisfy the requirements of an associate degree. By satisfying the eligibility standards below, students can leverage the completed associate degree to enhance their resume and improve their chances for advancement in the workplace.

Requirements

Students who transfer from a Massachusetts community college prior to completing their associate degree may request reverse transfer credits earned at the baccalaureate institution in order to satisfy associate degree requirements they had not completed at their transfer. The following stipulations apply:

- The student must have completed at least 30 credits toward their associate degree, with a GPA of 2.0 or higher.
 - Community colleges *may, at the institution's discretion*, extend *Reverse Transfer* benefits to students who completed fewer than 30 credits
 - Restrictions based upon the community college's residency requirement apply to reverse transferred credits.
- The student must have been a degree-seeking student at the community college from which they transferred.
- Students must complete the degree requirements of the major they were seeking prior to transfer.
 - *Retroactive change of major is at the discretion of community college Leadership.*
- At the baccalaureate institution, students must meet GPA standards enforced by the community college.
- Unless allowed by the baccalaureate institution, associate degrees completed through *Reverse Transfer* will not earn other *MassTransfer* A2B-level benefits; students can earn GenEd Foundation/STEM GenEd benefits if they have completed these components of the degree prior to transfer.
- Community colleges and baccalaureate institutions will waive any transcript, transfer and/or associate degree completion fees that they charge, unless the fees are charged by an outside entity.

Implementation

The DHE has established a Web-based portal through which students can apply for Reverse Transfer. Campus-based transfer coordinators and MAST Database managers will execute workflows in the Database to guide the student's process.

Common Transfer Principles

Community Colleges

Preamble

The community colleges of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in order to ease and clarify the process of transferring earned credit from one college to another, whether among themselves or from other public or private institutions; to provide standards for the evaluation of alternative sources of credit; to reduce the time and cost of completing a college education; and to increase the opportunities for graduation of their students, establish this common transfer policy. This policy respects the academic standards, quality and integrity of each of the Massachusetts community colleges.

Introduction

In accepting undergraduate transfer credit from other institutions, the Massachusetts community colleges apply this policy to ensure that credit accepted reflects appropriate levels of academic quality and is applicable to students' programs. Each community college makes this policy publicly available to students and prospective students on their websites and other communications. This policy reduces unnecessary barriers to protect the colleges' academic quality and integrity. This policy addresses issues of academic credit earned through coursework completed at one institution and transferred to another. It also addresses the related issue of credit earned through alternative sources of credit, such as examinations, professional courses, military training and other prior learning experiences.

The Department of Higher Education has no state policy prohibiting institutions from awarding and accepting in transfer college-level academic credit for English Language Learner (ELL), English as a Second Language (ESOL), or any similar courses. Institutions are encouraged to consider the "Position Statement on Credit and Transfer of Community College Academic ESL Courses" of the Massachusetts Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages (MATSOL), which includes the following:

In accordance with the [TESOL Position on Academic and Degree-Granting Credit for ESOL Courses in Post-Secondary Education](#), and consistent with the [Board of Higher Ed Strategic Plan on Equity \(mass.edu\)](#), MATSOL advocates that academic ESL courses carry degree-granting credit and be accepted for transfer at four-year institutions of higher education. Community colleges should award Elective credit (Humanities, Liberal Arts, General or other transferable graduation credit) and four-year institutions should uniformly accept that credit. Rigorous academic ESL courses are no different from other college language courses in terms of content, critical thinking skills, and culturally-responsive pedagogy.

English Language Learner (ELL) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses are offered as both college-level and developmental-level across the state. Where they are offered as college-level courses, they should be treated as any other college-level course, and not treated as developmental.

General Conditions

- a. For credit to transfer, the courses must have been taken at an institution accredited by one of the six regional accreditation agencies in the United States or, when allowed by college practice, by a national accreditation agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Consult your college about any special requirements for online courses.
- b. Credit earned at international institutions not accredited by one of the six regional United States accreditation agencies may transfer.
- c. Colleges require official transcripts from the institutions where credit was earned for credit to transfer.
- d. Students must be accepted by the institution and have declared their major programs of study for credit to be transferred.
- e. At minimum credit will be granted for courses that apply to students' current programs of study.
- f. Once credit is transferred it becomes part of students' permanent records.
- g. Only credit for college-level coursework will transfer.
- h. Credit for pre-college-level or developmental coursework does not transfer.
- i. Colleges may choose to use developmental coursework for student placement purposes.
- j. Grades do not transfer; only credit transfers. Therefore, transfer credit grades are not used in calculating grade or quality point averages. Consult your college for any exceptions.
- k. Transfer credit is designated on transcripts with an appropriate letter or symbol in the grade field.
- l. Credit will transfer as (1) the course equivalent at the receiving institution, if it exists, or (2) as an elective equivalent within a comparable department, if it exists. Some colleges transfer credit with an appropriate transfer code and number, when neither the course equivalent, nor a comparable department, exists.
- m. Credits earned in a quarter-hour system will be converted to semester-hour equivalents.
- n. Audited coursework does not transfer.
- o. Credit will not be granted for duplicate coursework or for two courses that cover the same or similar content.

Minimum Grades *(numeric expressions of grade value in this section are based upon a 4.00 grade-numbering scale)*

- a. Most colleges require a minimum grade of C (2.00) or higher for courses and credits to transfer. Some colleges will accept grades of C- or higher for transfer.
- b. Grades of D, D+, C- and CD (1.00 to 1.99) may transfer if they are for courses that are part of the 34-credit General Education Foundation and students have completed the Block with a cumulative grade or quality point average of 2.00 or higher.
- c. Grades higher than C (2.00) may be required for admission to certain programs, for use as pre-requisite courses, and/or for application of credit to certain program requirements. The colleges will publish the higher standards and the programs to which these higher standards apply.
- d. Grades of Pass (P), Satisfactory (S) or similar grades will transfer only when official transcripts indicate that such grades are equivalent to a grade of C or higher.

Residency Requirement/Maximum Transfer Credit Allowed

Institutions require students to complete at least one quarter (25%) of the credits of the first associate degree at that institution in order to graduate (referred to as the residency requirement). Transfer of up to the remaining three-quarters of the credits will depend upon the associate degree program's requirements and elective options. Requirements for a second and subsequent degree vary depending on institutions' practices. The number of credits transferable toward a certificate program varies by college and certificate.

Alternative Sources of Credit

- a. Credit will be granted for satisfactory scores on Advanced Placement (AP) based on institutions' policies.
- b. Credit will be granted for satisfactory scores on College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams based on institutions' policies.
- c. Official score reports from the College Board are required in order to receive credit for AP and CLEP.
- d. Credit will be granted for satisfactory scores on challenge or credit examinations based on institutions' policies.
- e. Credit may be granted for formal courses or examinations offered by various organizations, including businesses, unions, government and military based on the recommendations of the American Council on Education (ACE) as found in its National Guide to College Credit for Workforce Training, a resource of its College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT).
- f. Credit also may be granted for learning from experience at work, volunteering in the community, military service, job training, independent reading, open source courseware study, and hobbies based on the Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) standards of the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL).
- g. Members of the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) Consortium adhere to the Consortium's Academic Residency Requirements for servicemembers at their institutions.
- h. Academic credits earned through the evaluation of military occupation, training, experience and coursework are transferable within the Massachusetts public higher education system in accordance with the Mass Transfer agreement.
- i. Credit granted by one institution from alternative sources other than that included by item H above may be deemed non-transferable by another institution.

Time Limits

- a. Credit will be transferred without time limits, unless otherwise specified in college catalogs for specific courses or programs.
- b. Certain programs, courses or admission standards may require courses to be taken within a specified time period based on institutions' policies. The colleges will publish the programs, courses or admission standards with specified time limits.

Student Appeals

- a. Institutions maintain and publish a process for students to appeal decisions made about transfer credit.
- b. Institutions designate and publish the contact information of an ombudsperson who ensures institutional compliance with transfer policies and procedures.

Review and Amendment

- a. The community colleges will periodically review this policy and propose amendments with the guidance of the Department of Higher Education.
- b. This policy may be amended with the unanimous consent of the community colleges.

Contact

Interested parties with comments or questions may contact Art Esposito of the Department of Higher Education at 857-278-9280 or aesposito@dhe.mass.edu.

Adoption

- Endorsed by Chief Academic Officers of Massachusetts Community Colleges, December 13, 2013.
- Moved by Academic Affairs Committee of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, May 9, 2017
- Adopted by unanimous consent by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, June 20, 2017.

State Universities

Preamble

The state universities of Massachusetts, in order to ease and clarify the process of transferring earned credit from one institution to another, whether among themselves or from other public/private institutions at the point of admission or reverse transfer; to provide standards for the evaluation of alternative sources of credit; to reduce the time and cost of completing a college education and to increase the opportunities for graduation of their students, establish these State University Transfer Principles. These Principles respect the academic standards, quality and integrity of each Massachusetts state university.

Introduction

In accepting undergraduate transfer credit from other institutions, the Massachusetts state universities apply these Transfer Principles to ensure that credit accepted reflects appropriate levels of academic quality and is applicable to students' programs. Each state university makes these Transfer Principles available to students and prospective students on their websites or through other communications. These principles reduce unnecessary barriers and protects the academic quality and integrity of each campus.

These Transfer Principles address issues of academic credit earned through coursework completed at one institution and transferred to another. They also address the related issue of credit earned through alternative sources of credit, such as examinations, professional courses, military training, and other prior learning experiences.

The Department of Higher Education has no state policy prohibiting institutions from awarding and accepting in transfer college-level academic credit for English Language Learner (ELL), English as a Second Language (ESOL), or any similar courses. Institutions are encouraged to consider the "Position Statement on Credit and Transfer of Community College Academic ESL Courses" of the Massachusetts Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages (MATSOL), which includes the following:

In accordance with the [TESOL Position on Academic and Degree-Granting Credit for ESOL Courses in Post-Secondary Education](#), and consistent with the [Board of Higher Ed Strategic Plan on Equity \(mass.edu\)](#), MATSOL advocates that academic ESL courses carry degree-granting credit and be accepted for transfer at four-year institutions of higher education. Community colleges should award Elective credit (Humanities, Liberal Arts, General or other transferable graduation credit) and four-year institutions should uniformly accept that credit. Rigorous academic ESL courses are no different from other college language courses in terms of content, critical thinking skills, and culturally-responsive pedagogy.

English Language Learner (ELL) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses are offered as both college-level and developmental-level across the state. Where they are offered as college-level courses, they should be treated as any other college-level course, and not treated as developmental.

General Conditions

- a. Proof of high school graduation/GED/HiSet is required in many cases from those applying without an associate degree. Students should consult the state university of their choice regarding its policy. Those utilizing a State-approved transfer program, inclusive of *MassTransfer* A2B Pathway are not required to submit documentation of high school graduation/GED/HiSet.
- b. Submission of ACT/SAT scores for admission is required by many state universities. Some state universities qualify this requirement by applying it only when students have earned fewer than 24 college credits and have been out of high school fewer than three years. Students should consult the state university of their choice regarding its policy. Note: Students who complete a *MassTransfer* A2B Pathway are not required to submit ACT/SAT scores for admission.
- c. For credit to transfer, generally courses must have been taken at an institution accredited by one of the six (6) regional accreditation agencies in the United States or, when allowed by college/university practice by a national accreditation agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). An institution may consider courses taken at a non-regionally-accredited institution on an individual basis. Students should consult the state university of their choice about any special requirements for on-line courses as well as its policy and process used in evaluating credit.
- d. Credit earned at international institutions will be considered only after an official review from the Center for Educational Documentation (CED), World Education Services (WES), or other comparable credential evaluation service. Students should consult the specific state university regarding its policy.
- e. Official transcripts from each institution at which students attempted one or more credit-bearing courses are required by each state university for credit to transfer. This includes international institutions and colleges/universities at which the student completed Dual Enrollment courses while still enrolled in high school.
- f. At minimum, credit will be granted for courses that apply to students' overall degree requirements. Transfer credit may need to be reviewed if students change their major programs of study post-matriculation.
- g. Once credit is transferred, it becomes part of students' permanent records. However, for students who choose to enroll in a course for which they already received credit in transfer, the transfer course will be removed.
- h. Only credit for college-level courses will transfer.
- i. Credit for developmental coursework does not transfer. Satisfactory completion of developmental coursework may result in students being cleared to register for college-level courses. Students should consult the state university of their choice regarding their specific policy.
- j. Credit, not grades, transfer in most cases. Grades of transfer courses are not utilized in calculating grade or quality point averages at the majority of state universities.
- k. Transfer credit is designated on transcripts with an appropriate letter or symbol in the grade field.
- l. Credit will transfer as either the course equivalent at the receiving institution, as elective credit within a specific department or as a general/free elective. Some state universities may transfer credit with an appropriate subject prefix code/number when neither the course equivalent nor comparable department exist.
- m. Credits earned in a quarter-hour system may be converted to semester hours. Students should consult the specific state university regarding its policy.
- n. At state universities, most majors are available to new transfers though space may be limited. Students should consult the specific state university they are interested in regarding program availability.
- o. Audited coursework does not transfer.

- p. Credit will not be granted for duplicate coursework or for two courses that cover the same/similar content.
- q. Commonwealth Honors Programs courses may transfer and satisfy Commonwealth Honors program requirements at the receiving institution. Students should consult the specific state university regarding its policy.
- r. Internship, co-op or field experience may be deemed non-transferable by another institution or, if transferred, may not satisfy major requirements. Students should consult the specific state university regarding these experiences.

Minimum Grades

- a. Most state universities require a minimum grade of a C- (1.70 on a 4.00 scale) for courses/credits to transfer. Students should consult the specific state university they are interested in regarding the minimum grade for transfer.
- b. Grades of D, D+, C- and CD (1.00 to 1.99 on a 4.00 scale) will transfer if they are for courses that are part of the General Education Foundation (formerly known as *MassTransfer* Block) and students have completed the Gen Ed Foundation with a cumulative grade point average of a 2.00 or higher. This does not apply to the Massachusetts Maritime Academy or Massachusetts College of Art and Design where a minimum grade of C (2.0) must be received for a course to transfer.
- c. Grades higher than C (2.00) may be required for admission to certain majors, for use as pre-requisite courses, and for application of credit to specific major requirements. If the minimum grade is not earned for such courses at the sending institution, students may have to repeat the course(s) at the receiving institution.
- d. Grades of Pass (P) will transfer to all state universities provided official transcripts/college catalogs stipulate that such grades are equivalent to a C/C-. Students should consult the state university of their choice regarding its policy.

Course Residency Requirement/Maximum Transfer Credit Allowed

All state universities require students to complete at least one-quarter (30 credits) of the credits of a bachelor's degree at that institution to be eligible to graduate. Some institutions require students to complete more than one quarter (30 credits), but not more than one-half (60 credits) of the credits be completed at that institution. Members of the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) Consortium must adhere to the Consortium's Academic Residency Requirements for service members at their institutions. Some institutions also have a course residency requirement for the major and a minor (if declared). If students change their major post-matriculation, credits in excess of the total number of credits required for a baccalaureate degree program may be required. Students should consult the specific state university regarding its policy. Some institutions may also have additional residency requirements for the receipt of degree or departmental honors. Students should consult the specific state university regarding its policy. The maximum amount of credit students may transfer varies by institution and in some cases by major. Students should consult the state university of their choice regarding its policy.

Alternative Sources of Credit

- a. Based on an institution's policy, credit may be granted for satisfactory scores on the following:
 - i. Advanced Placement (AP) exams
 - ii. College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
 - iii. International Baccalaureate (IB) Higher level exams
 - iv. Advanced Level (A-Level) exams
 - v. Joint Services Transcript (JST) as certified by the American Council on Education (ACE)
 - vi. DSST/SANTES (Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support) exams.
- b. Official score reports are required in order to be considered for transfer credit, even when the official score reports have been provided to the sending institutions. Students should consult the specific state university regarding its policy.
- c. Credit will be granted for satisfactory scores on challenge or credit examinations based on an institution's policy.
- d. Credit may be granted for formal courses or examinations offered by various organizations, including government and military, based on the recommendation of the American Council on Education (ACE) as found in its National Guide to College Credit for Workforce Training, a resource of its College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT).
- e. Credit may also be granted for learning from experience at work, volunteering in the community, military service, job training, etc. by some institutions for certain majors.
- f. Academic credits earned through the evaluation of military occupation, training, experience, and coursework are transferable within the Massachusetts public higher education system in accordance with the *MassTransfer* Agreement.
- g. Credit granted by one institution from alternative sources may be deemed non-transferable by another institution.
- h. Limitations or exclusions to granting of alternative or prior sources of credit may exist in some academic programs due to external accreditation or licensing rules and regulations. Students should consult the specific state university with regard to its credit-granting policies.

Time Limits

Credit will transfer to the majority of state universities without time limits. Some stipulations may apply to courses required for certain majors. Students should consult the specific state university regarding this policy.

Student Appeals

All state universities maintain and publish a process for students to appeal decisions made about transfer credit. Students should contact the state university of their choice regarding the institutional appeal process and policy.

Review and Amendment

The Department of Higher Education (DHE) every five (5) years will convene a group of state university transfer professionals to review these Principles and recommend amendments to the Department.

Contact

Interested parties with comments or questions may contact Art Esposito of the Department of Higher Education at 857-278-9280 or aesposito@dhe.mass.edu.

Adoption

These Massachusetts State University Transfer Principles were reviewed and initially approved by the DHE Academic Affairs Committee on January 28, 2020 and adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education on February 4, 2020.

University of Massachusetts

Preamble

The University of Massachusetts campuses, in order to ease and clarify the process of transferring earned credit from one institution to another, whether among themselves or from other public/private institutions; to provide standards for the evaluation of alternative sources of credit; to reduce the time and cost of completing a college education and to increase the opportunities for graduation of their students, establish these UMASS Transfer Principles. These Principles respect the academic standards, quality and integrity of each UMASS campus.

Introduction

In accepting undergraduate transfer credit from other institutions, the UMASS campuses apply these Transfer Principles to ensure that credit accepted reflects appropriate levels of academic quality and is applicable to students' programs. Each UMASS campus makes these Transfer Principles available to students and prospective students on their websites or through other communications. These principles reduce unnecessary barriers and protect the academic quality and integrity of each campus.

These Transfer Principles address issues of academic credit earned through coursework completed at one institution and transferred to another. They also address the related issue of credit earned through alternative sources of credit, such as examinations, professional courses, military training, and other prior learning experiences.

The Department of Higher Education has no state policy prohibiting institutions from awarding and accepting in transfer college-level academic credit for English Language Learner (ELL), English as a Second Language (ESOL), or any similar courses. Institutions are encouraged to consider the "Position Statement on Credit and Transfer of Community College Academic ESL Courses" of the Massachusetts Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages (MATSOL), which includes the following:

In accordance with the [TESOL Position on Academic and Degree-Granting Credit for ESOL Courses in Post-Secondary Education](#), and consistent with the [Board of Higher Ed Strategic Plan on Equity \(mass.edu\)](#), MATSOL advocates that academic ESL courses carry degree-granting credit and be accepted for transfer at four-year institutions of higher education. Community colleges should award Elective credit (Humanities, Liberal Arts, General or other transferable graduation credit) and four-year institutions should uniformly accept that credit. Rigorous academic ESL courses are no different from other college language courses in terms of content, critical thinking skills, and culturally-responsive pedagogy.

English Language Learner (ELL) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses are offered as both college-level and developmental-level across the state. Where they are offered as college-level courses, they should be treated as any other college-level course and not treated as developmental.

General Conditions

- a. Proof of high school graduation/GED/HiSet is required by each UMASS campus from those applying without an associate degree. Some UMASS campuses qualify this requirement by applying it only when students, at the time of application, have earned fewer than 24 college credits and have graduated from high school less than three years prior. Students should consult the UMASS campus of their choice regarding its policy. Those utilizing a State-approved transfer program inclusive of *MassTransfer* A2B Pathway are not required to submit proof of high school graduation/GED/HiSet at time of application. This does not include Dual Enrollment.
- b. Submission of ACT/SAT scores for admission is required by some UMASS campuses. Some UMASS campuses qualify this requirement by applying it only when students have earned fewer than 24 college credits and have been out of high school fewer than three to five years. Students should consult the UMASS campus of their choice regarding its policy. Students who complete a *MassTransfer* A2B Pathway are not required to submit ACT/SAT scores for admission. This does not include Dual Enrollment.
- c. For credit to transfer, generally courses must have been taken at an institution accredited by one of the six (6) regional accreditation agencies in the United States or, when allowed by college/university practice by a national accreditation agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). An institution may consider courses taken at a non-regionally accredited institution within or outside the United State on an individual basis. Students should consult the UMASS campus of their choice about any special requirements for on-line courses as well as its policy and process used in evaluating credit.
- d. Credit may transfer as either the course equivalent at the receiving institution, as elective credit within a specific department or as a general/free elective. Some UMASS campuses may transfer credit with an appropriate transfer code/number when neither the course equivalent nor comparable department exist.
- e. Credits earned in a quarter-hour system will be converted to semester hours.
- f. Official transcripts from each institution at which students attempted one or more credit-bearing courses are required by each UMASS campus for credit to transfer. This includes international institutions attended as well as colleges/universities at which students completed Dual Enrollment courses while enrolled in high school.
- g. Students must be accepted by a UMASS campus and have declared their programs of study for credit to transfer.
- h. At minimum, credit may be granted for courses that apply to students' current programs of study.
- i. Once credit is transferred, it becomes part of students' permanent records maintained by the Registrar.
- j. Only credit for college-level courses may transfer.
- k. Credit for developmental coursework does not transfer. Satisfactory completion of developmental coursework may be used for placement purposes, resulting in students being cleared to register for college-level courses. Students should consult the UMASS of their choice regarding their specific policy.
- l. Credit, not grades, transfer. Grades of transfer courses are not utilized in calculating grade or quality point averages.
- m. Transfer credit is designated on transcripts with an appropriate letter or symbol in the grade field.
- n. Most majors are available to transfers on UMASS campuses though space may be limited. Students should consult the UMASS campus they are interested in regarding program availability.
- o. Audited coursework does not transfer.
- p. Credit will not be granted for duplicate coursework or for two courses that cover the same/similar content.

Minimum Grades

- a. Each UMASS campus requires a minimum grade for courses to transfer. Students should consult the UMASS campus of their choice regarding their policy.
- b. Grades of D, D+, C- and CD (1.00 to 1.99 on a 4.00 scale) may transfer if they are courses that are part of the General Education Foundation (formerly known as *MassTransfer* Block) and students have completed the Gen Ed Foundation with a cumulative grade point average of a 2.00 or higher. Students should consult the UMass campus of their choice regarding its policy.
- c. Grades higher than C (2.00) may be required for admission to certain majors, for use as pre-requisite courses and for application of credit to specific major requirements.
- d. Grades of Pass (P) may transfer to UMASS campuses provided official transcripts/college catalogs stipulate that such grades are equivalent to a C- or higher. Students should consult the UMASS campus of their choice regarding its policy.

Residency Requirement/Maximum Credit Allowed

All UMASS campuses require students to complete between one-quarter (30 credits) and three-eighths (45 credits) of the credits of a bachelor's degree at that institution to be eligible to graduate. The maximum amount of credit students may transfer varies by institution and in some cases by major. Students should consult the UMASS campus of their choice regarding its policy.

Alternative Sources of Credit

- a. Based upon an individual institution's policy, credit may be granted for satisfactory scores on the following:
 - a. Advanced Placement (AP)
 - b. College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
 - c. International Baccalaureate (IB) Higher level exam
 - d. Advanced Level (A-Level) exams
 - e. Joint Services Transcripts (JST) as certified by the American Council of Education (ACE)
 - f. DSST/SANTES (Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support) exams.
- b. Official score reports are required in order to be considered for transfer credit. Students should consult the specific UMASS campus regarding its policy, even when the official score reports have been provided to the sending institutions.
- c. Credit may be granted for satisfactory scores on challenge or credit examinations based on an institution's policy.
- d. Credit may be granted for formal courses or examinations offered by various organizations including government and military based on the recommendations of the American Council on Education (ACE) as found in its National Guide to College Credit for Workforce Training, a resource of its College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT).
- e. Credit may also be granted for learning from experience at work, volunteering in the community, military service, job training, etc. by some institutions for certain majors.
- f. Members of the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) Consortium adhere to the Consortium's Academic Residency Requirements for servicemembers at their institutions.
- g. Official score reports are required in order to be considered for transfer credit. Students should consult the specific UMASS campus regarding its policy, even when the official score reports have been provided to the sending institutions.
- h. Credit may be granted for satisfactory scores on challenge or credit examinations based on an institution's policy.
- i. Credit may be granted for formal courses or examinations offered by various organizations including government and military based on the recommendations of the American Council on

Education (ACE) as found in its National Guide to College Credit for Workforce Training, a resource of its College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT).

- j. Credit may also be granted for learning from experience at work, volunteering in the community, military service, job training, etc. by some institutions for certain majors.
- k. Members of the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) Consortium adhere to the Consortium's Academic Residency Requirements for servicemembers at their institutions.
- l. Academic credits earned through the evaluation of military occupation, training, experience, and coursework are transferable within the Massachusetts public higher education system in accordance with the *MassTransfer* agreement.
- m. Credit granted by one institution from alternative or prior sources other than that included by item G may be deemed non-transferable by another institution.

Time Limits

Credit will transfer to some UMASS campuses without time limits. Some stipulations may apply to courses required for certain majors. Students should consult the specific UMASS campus regarding this policy.

Student Appeals

Transfer students should consult the UMASS campus of their choice regarding courses/credit that did not transfer to ascertain what review process may be available.

Review and Amendment

The Department of Higher Education (DHE) from time to time will convene a group of UMASS transfer professionals to review these Principles and recommend amendments to the Department.

Contact

Interested parties with comments or questions may contact Art Esposito of the Department of Higher Education at 857-278-9280 or aesposito@dhe.mass.edu.

Adoption

These University of Massachusetts Transfer Principles were reviewed and approved by the Academic Affairs Committee on January 28, 2020, and adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education on February 4, 2020.