

Pathways Guidelines

Revised on April 1, 2014

These guidelines are intended for advisors and others staff members and administrators at CUNY who are responsible for the implementation of the Pathways curriculum.

Opting in or out of Pathways

- Students who enter a CUNY college in Fall 2013 or thereafter, either as first-time freshmen or as transfer students from another CUNY college or from a non-CUNY college, will be automatically enrolled in the Pathways curriculum.
- Students who first enrolled in CUNY before Fall 2013, stop out for more than one semester, and reenroll in Fall 2013 or later will be required to follow the Pathways curriculum.
- Students who reenroll, as well as any other students who feel they will need to complete additional requirements under the new curriculum due to their particular course histories, may petition for a variance to continue to be held to the general education requirements that were in effect before Fall 2013.
- Continuing students may choose to opt in to the Pathways curriculum.

The Common Core

Course offerings: selection and availability

- With some exceptions, when colleges have provided options within Common Core areas, students must be able to choose from among the courses listed in each area, assuming that they meet prerequisites or other qualifications for a course. Particular courses within an area may not be required or prohibited, again assuming students meet course qualifications.
 - *Exceptions: Colleges may specify Common Core courses to be taken by students in AAS and BTech programs; liberal arts and sciences courses in these programs must be drawn from the Common Core. Some AS programs have received waivers to specify particular courses students must take in STEM areas of the Common Core (Math and Quantitative Reasoning, Life and Physical Sciences, and Scientific World). If students take other courses in these areas, they will be certified as having completed the Common Core area, but it may not be possible for them to finish their degree programs within the regular number of credits. Some programs also received waivers to specify courses that are required by New York State or accrediting bodies. Colleges may specify that the sixth Flexible*

Core course be taken in a particular area of the Common Core and may specify foreign language requirements for students who do not meet proficiency levels.

- Students must have 3 credit courses available to them within every area of the Common Core every semester. Students are not guaranteed a seat in any individual course or section, but each area of the Common Core must have courses available each semester.
- If colleges have linked courses across areas of the Common Core, or have created co-requisite Common Core and College Option courses, transfer students must have unlinked courses available to them so that they will not need to repeat Common Core requirements completed at another CUNY college or exceed the number of College Option credits required of students in their transfer category.
- In subjects with strong sequencing, such as math, colleges must insure that they have Common Core courses available at sufficient levels that each student can take courses appropriate to his or her level of knowledge and skill.
- Courses should be available such that every student who wishes to do so can complete the Common Core by taking 10 3-credit courses for a total of 30 credits, and (for baccalaureate students) the College Option in 6-12 credits (depending on the transfer category within which the student falls).
- Students may choose Common Core courses that also meet their degree program requirements. In many situations, colleges might advise or encourage them to do so. Students who select a course that fulfills both Common Core and degree program requirements cannot be assigned additional degree program requirements as a result.

Types of courses within the Common Core

- All courses in the Common Core must be liberal arts and sciences courses as defined by New York State (<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/ocue/lrp/liberalarts.htm>). Based on the course content, colleges may determine whether a course meets the definition of liberal arts and sciences. Colleges must submit courses with the liberal arts and sciences designation to the Chancellor's University Report and code courses as such in CUNYfirst.
- Colleges may choose to offer STEM Variant courses in one or more of the three STEM areas of the Common Core (Math and Quantitative Reasoning, Life and Physical Sciences, Scientific World). These courses must meet a requirement for at least one major and must be approved by the Office of Academic Affairs. Students in any field of study may fulfill these Common Core areas with STEM Variant courses if they choose to do so. STEM Variant courses may be any number of credits, while non-STEM Variant courses in the Common Core must be three credits.
- Courses in the Common Core, including STEM Variant courses, must be submitted to the Board of Trustees via the Chancellor's University Report in order to be formally approved by the University.

Completion of the Common Core

- Once completed, a Common Core area remains completed even if a student transfers to another CUNY college. This also applies in the case of partially completed Common Core areas, e.g., in situations where students have taken English Comp 1 but not English Comp 2.
- Transfer students must have a Common Core curriculum available to them that will allow them to complete the Common Core within 30 credits. For example, if a college specifies what students must take for the sixth course in the Flexible Core, transfer students must be able to complete this requirement without taking more than 30 total credits for the Common Core.
- If a college has overlay requirements of any type (for example, a requirement that a student must take a course that meets Writing Intensive overlay requirements), students must be able to complete these overlays while simultaneously completing other requirements for the Common Core, College Option, or their major. Courses must be available such that overlays will not entail students taking more credits than would otherwise be required.
- In cases in which a STEM variant course may satisfy more than one Common Core area, students will choose which area they want the course to fulfill. Each college that has one or more STEM variant courses that can satisfy more than one area of the Common Core will decide what procedure a student needs to follow (if any) if the student originally enrolled in a STEM variant course to satisfy one area of the Common Core, but subsequently decides that she or he wants to use that course to satisfy a different area of the Common Core.
- Students who receive a score of 4 or 5 on an AP exam in a Common Core area may receive Common Core credit and substitute the AP exam credit for a course in that area. Each college will decide on the award of AP credit in particular Common Core areas.
- Students deemed to be proficient via testing in English, math, or a foreign language do not necessarily gain exemption from fulfilling a relevant Common Core category. This will depend on a college's policy in this regard.
- For students who receive waivers for Pathways Common Core requirements, those waivers should remain on their record as meeting Common Core requirements upon subsequent transfer to another CUNY college. To ensure the waiver transfers properly, waivers should be recorded on a student's record in CUNYfirst as a pseudo course with 0 credits.
- Colleges may allow students to take Common Core courses on a Pass/No Credit basis.

Transfer credit evaluation for the Common Core

- General transfer guideline: Once given, Common Core credit cannot be taken away, but a subsequent CUNY receiving college can designate additional completed courses as meeting Common Core requirements.
- For within-CUNY transfers: The sending college will designate which of a student's completed courses have fulfilled Common Core requirements on their campus. Receiving colleges cannot subtract from a student's list of completed courses that fulfill the Common Core. Courses that were not included in the Common Core at the sending college but are equivalent to courses that fulfill Common Core requirements at the receiving college will be coded as fulfilling the requirement upon transfer. The receiving college may also evaluate additional courses not designated by the sending college as fulfilling Common Core requirements regardless of course equivalency based on an evaluation of whether the course meets the Pathways learning outcomes. In consultation with the student, the receiving college may change the Pathways requirement designation for a course to a different Pathways requirement designation, **if** doing so would be in a student's best interest, and **if** the receiving college finds that the course meets the learning outcomes of the other Pathways area.
- For transfers from outside CUNY: Receiving colleges will evaluate courses in the context of the Common Core learning outcomes. Courses evaluated as fulfilling Common Core requirements by the first CUNY receiving college will maintain that designation if the student later transfers to another CUNY college. The second (or later) CUNY receiving college must accept Common Core designations as determined by the first CUNY college, but may also evaluate any additional courses not designated by the sending college as fulfilling Common Core requirements to assess whether these courses meet the second (or later) CUNY receiving college's own requirements.
- The rules above apply only to the evaluation of courses for the Common Core and not to any courses taken for the major or as electives. In the evaluation of credits for the major, each CUNY college will evaluate the courses if there are multiple transfers.
 - *Exception: Courses that have been designated as Gateway Courses into Majors will be accepted for major credit and/or credit as prerequisites for that major at all CUNY colleges that offer that major. That designation will be accepted at any CUNY college to which the student might subsequently transfer.*

The College Option

What are College Option credits?

Within CUNY's Pathways curriculum, baccalaureate colleges will specify general education requirements in addition to the Common Core. These additional general education requirements

are known as the College Option. Colleges select their own College Option requirements in accord with their academic priorities for their students. College Option courses are not required to be liberal arts and sciences courses.

Once a student has completed the College Option, or any part of it, the requirement remains fulfilled (or partially fulfilled, as appropriate) regardless of any future transfers to another CUNY college or other changes in status. For example, if a college chooses to require different College Option credits for students in particular majors, the college may not require students who change majors after completing College Option credits to complete additional College Option credits.

How many College Option credits will students take?

The CUNY Board of Trustees specified in its June 2011 Pathways Resolution how many College Option credits are required of students in different transfer categories.

The following categories of students will be required to take 12 College Option credits:

- Students who enter a CUNY baccalaureate program as freshmen (non-transfer students)
- Students who transfer from a baccalaureate program at one CUNY college to a baccalaureate program at another CUNY college
- Students who transfer from a non-CUNY baccalaureate program to a baccalaureate program at a CUNY college

*Students who transfer from associate programs to baccalaureate programs will take varying numbers of College Option credits depending on how many overall credits these students had completed at the time of transfer. **These rules apply to students who transfer from associate programs within CUNY and from outside of CUNY.***

- Students who transfer from associate to baccalaureate programs with 30 or fewer credits will take 12 College Option credits.
- Those who transfer from associate programs with more than 30 credits but without having received an associate degree will take 9 College Option credits.
- Students who transfer with associate degrees will take 6 College Option credits.

Students who transfer multiple times will be required to complete varying numbers of College Option credits depending on whether they first enrolled in an associate or baccalaureate program, and on their status at the time they first transferred.

- A student who begins in a CUNY baccalaureate program, transfers to an associate program, and ultimately transfers back to another CUNY baccalaureate program will still be required to take a total of 12 College Option credits. For transfer students, any College Option courses taken in a baccalaureate program at a different CUNY college will count toward the College Option requirement at the ultimate receiving college.

- A student who begins in an associate program, transfers to a baccalaureate program, and then transfers to a baccalaureate program at a different college will be responsible for a total of 6, 9, or 12 College Option credits depending on the student’s status when they first transferred from the associate program. Their College Option requirements may be fulfilled at the first college, the second college, or through a combination of College Option courses taken at both colleges.

Overview of College Option Requirements for Students in Baccalaureate Programs

	Total Credits Required
Non-transfer students	12
Transfers from a CUNY or non-CUNY associate program	
Transfers with 30 or fewer credits	12
Transfers with more than 30 credits, no associate degree	9
Transfers with associate degree	6
Transfers from CUNY or non-CUNY baccalaureate program	12
Students who transfer multiple times	
Began college in associate program	6, 9, or 12
Began college in baccalaureate program	12

How can students receive College Option credit?

- Students can receive College Option credit by taking courses that have been officially designated as satisfying the College Option.
- College Option credit can also be granted based on an evaluation of students’ transfer credits.
- Receiving colleges must accept College Option credits taken by a transfer student from another CUNY baccalaureate program. The number of College Option credits required at a receiving college will be reduced by the number already taken at another CUNY college.
- Colleges may choose to waive College Option requirements for students who are proficient in a particular area or for students who have completed these requirements as part of the Common Core at another CUNY college.

- For students who receive waivers for Pathways College Option requirements, those waivers should remain on their record as meeting College Option requirements upon subsequent transfer to another CUNY college. To ensure the waiver transfers properly, waivers should be recorded on a student's record in CUNYfirst as a pseudo course with 0 credits.

If a student is required to complete fewer than 12 College Option credits at a college, how will it be determined which specific requirements will apply to the student?

- The college may specify which particular course requirements apply to students who are required to take various numbers of College Option credits. Alternatively, colleges may tailor College Option requirements depending on a student's academic history, or allow students to select from among a list of College Option courses.

Can colleges specify courses of more than 3 credits for College Option requirements?

- Yes, they can. Colleges must, however, make it possible for students to complete their College Option requirements within the number of credits required of their transfer category. A student who transfers into a college with an associate degree, for example, and who thus has a 6-credit College Option requirement, cannot be required to take courses totaling more than 6 credits. This is true for each of the possible credit amounts (6, 9, and 12 credits) required of students in different transfer categories.
- Colleges can offer students the choice of taking College Option courses that total more than the total number of College Option credits required of that student, and students can make the choice to take those courses if they wish. However, it must always be possible for every student to complete the College Option within the number of credits required for their transfer category (6, 9, or 12 credits).

Requirements for Students who Already Hold Degrees

- Students who have earned a Bachelor's, Associate in Arts, or Associate in Sciences degree from an accredited and recognized institution of higher education and who transfer to a CUNY college (whether from a CUNY or non-CUNY institution) will be deemed to have automatically fulfilled the Common Core requirements for a CUNY degree.
- Students with AAS degrees (whether from CUNY or non-CUNY institutions) who transfer to a CUNY bachelor's degree program will need to complete any areas of the Common Core that they did not complete when obtaining their AAS degree, and they must also complete six College Option credits.
- Students who have earned a Bachelor's degree from an institution that is accredited and recognized by a regional accrediting U.S. agency who transfer to a CUNY baccalaureate

college will be deemed to have automatically fulfilled the College Option as well as the Common Core.

- Students from international universities with degrees that are equivalent to a baccalaureate degree as determined by CUNY will be deemed to have automatically fulfilled the College Option as well as the Common Core. If CUNY colleges have questions about a particular institution's standing, they may consult with the Office of Academic Affairs.
- Students with associate degrees (two-year degrees) of any type from foreign institutions must have their credits evaluated on a case by case basis, as two-year degrees are highly variable across countries.
- Students with international degrees may have to demonstrate English language competency via TOEFL or other means and may be required to take ESL courses as appropriate.

Financial Aid Eligibility

- Colleges will meet TAP requirements if they state in their catalogs that 30 credits and 10 courses are required for the Common Core.
- To insure TAP eligibility, all courses taken by students must fulfill degree requirements, and those requirements include the Common Core, the College Option, the degree program, and elective courses. Taking courses that are in these categories will insure that the courses will be TAP-eligible regardless of the credits that they carry.

Waivers for Some Degree Programs

- Colleges can request waivers allowing them to specify particular courses within Common Core areas or the College Option that students must take in order to complete the degree program within the regular number of credits allowable for the degree. For instance, colleges might request such a waiver if needed due to specific licensing or accreditation standards for particular degree programs or majors. Waiver requests will be closely examined to ensure that the specification of particular Common Core or College Option courses is necessary.
- Colleges may also request waivers in the rare situations where a degree program or major requires so many credits that it is not possible for students to fulfill all areas of the Common Core or College Option.