



Division of  
Community Colleges

Bureau of Career and  
Technical Education

# Career and Technical Education Articulation Agreement Guidelines

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The Iowa Department of Education (Department) is providing this guidance document as a resource for public school districts in the State of Iowa. The intent is to provide clarification regarding the requirement for each career and technical education (CTE) program to be articulated with at least one postsecondary institution.

## Legal Basis for Articulation Agreements

The requirement for CTE articulation agreements is contained in Chapter 46 of the Education section (281) of Iowa Administrative Code (IAC):

**Articulation.** Teachers and administrators from both secondary and postsecondary instructional levels shall (when applicable) meet to identify competencies required at each level, and to jointly prepare agreements of articulation between secondary and postsecondary levels for specific occupational areas. Such joint articulation efforts will facilitate the secondary-postsecondary transition and help reduce duplication between the two levels. Articulation agreements shall be signed with at least one postsecondary institution per program offered at the high school level (as appropriate), i.e., community colleges, apprenticeship programs, or private postsecondary institutions. 281 IAC 46.7(3)

The requirement is further emphasized in the general accreditation standards for high school vocational (CTE) programs. 281 IAC 12.5(5)(i) states these programs, "...shall be articulated with postsecondary programs of study, including apprenticeship programs..."

Eligible agencies (i.e., states) receiving funds granted through the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 (a.k.a., *Perkins IV*) are also required to describe how they will support eligible recipients (i.e., districts and community colleges in developing and implementing articulation agreements. Sec. 122 (c)(1)(C)

## Meeting the Articulation Requirement

The articulation requirement for a CTE program can be met by any one of the following options, each of which will be explained in greater detail:

- Use of a recognized statewide articulation agreement
- Establishment of a district-to-postsecondary institution agreement
- Use of a contracted postsecondary CTE course
- Use of a completed, verified, Program of Study



## Statewide Articulation Agreements

The Department currently offers statewide articulation agreements for the following program areas:

- Child Growth and Development
- Introduction to Early Childhood Education
- Nutrition
- Marketing Field Experience

Information regarding each of these agreements can be found in the [Career and Technical Education](#) area of the Department's website, within the related service area information section.

When pursuing use of one or more statewide agreements, consider the following questions:

- How will students and parents be made aware of the agreement?
- Have copies of the agreement been distributed to students and/or parents?
- How will the district assess and document that students have met the competencies listed within the agreement?
- Who should students contact when they matriculate to a community college?
- Who in the district will be responsible for tracking the number of students who have utilized the agreement?

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## District-to-Postsecondary Institution Agreements

A district-to-postsecondary institution agreement is designed to build a strong partnership between a secondary and postsecondary CTE program. While similar to a statewide agreement from a content standpoint, a district-to-postsecondary institution agreement allows for more individualized, specific alignment between the participating entities.

When creating a district-to-postsecondary agreement, the following guidelines apply:

- The agreement must clearly identify which CTE course(s) from the secondary school is articulated to the postsecondary institution (e.g., community college) and what postsecondary program/course is impacted.
  - ⇒ An agreement stating the two parties will articulate, but does not provide a description of what will be articulated does not meet minimum compliance.
- The agreement must be signed by the college and the district within the last five years. As changes in the impacted course(s) occur, an updated agreement should be created.
- The agreement must identify how the student will benefit from the articulation. For example, a student completing the specified secondary course (or courses) will be given credit for a certain course (or part of a course) at the postsecondary institution.
- A single, signed agreement may include agreements for multiple CTE program areas; however, the details stated above must be provided for each program area.

The questions for consideration listed in the statewide articulation agreement section are applicable to this section as well.

## Contracted Postsecondary Courses

Contracted postsecondary courses result in both secondary and postsecondary credit being granted. Direct college credit is the ultimate form of articulation.

Contracted courses can be divided into two categories—those meeting the definition of concurrent enrollment per Iowa Code 260E and those used by a district to meet minimum CTE accreditation requirements. Courses from either category can be used to meet the articulation requirement.

To meet the articulation requirement, the joint enrollment course must align with the CTE program for which it is being used. For example, if the district has an agreement in place to provide an Automotive Collision Repair course, this course would not meet the articulation requirement for a secondary Manufacturing program.

Arts and Sciences (A&S) courses, such as Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science, and Humanities courses will not suffice for meeting a CTE articulation requirement. An exception might be made for certain courses, such as Introduction to Accounting, which community colleges sometimes offer as part of an A&S Accounting program versus a CTE program. These unique situations should be discussed with a Department CTE consultant to ensure they are acceptable for meeting the articulation agreement requirement.

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## Completed Program of Study

By design, a completed CTE Program of Study (POS), based on Department criteria, includes grades 9-14. As such, the POS requires collaboration with, and participation of, a postsecondary institution (i.e., community college).

One piece of documentation required for a POS is the cooperating postsecondary institution's formal (signed/dated) approval of the program's critical program competencies. To meet the articulation guidelines, the approval must be signed within the last five years, unless the Program of Study includes a current contracted course (refer to the previous section).

Department criteria for CTE Programs of Study are posted in the [Career and Technical Education](#) area of the Iowa Department's website, within the Programs of Study section.

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