

The Ohio Consortium for Transfer Pathways to the Liberal Arts

Building and Approving Transfer Pathways in Biology, English and Psychology

In June 2021, The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) and The Ohio Foundation of Independent Colleges (OFIC) received a four-year grant from the Teagle Foundation and Arthur Vining Davis Foundations to launch the **Ohio Consortium for Transfer Pathways to the Liberal Arts**. The Ohio project brings together 25 colleges and universities (14 independent and 11 community colleges) to strengthen inter-institutional cooperation, identify common coursework recommended for students to transfer as college juniors, and encourage faculty leadership in establishing three transfer pathways in biology, English and psychology.

Years 1 and 2 of the grant focus on building and approving pathways for students transferring from partner community colleges to independent colleges and universities in Ohio. After nearly a year of focused work and discussion between faculty and administrators at these 25 institutions, as well as consultations with members of the ODHE Ohio Transfer and Articulation team, the Consortium is finalizing pathways in biology, English and psychology. All three pathways follow the state-approved curriculum of the Ohio Guaranteed Transfer Pathways for public institutions. This is a significant step in providing clarity and extending opportunity for transfer students with consistent curriculum and transfer credit approvals across institutions.

Faculty Collaboration in Building Pathways

To facilitate the work of 25 faculty members for each major pathway, primary work groups of ten faculty members (5 community colleges, 5 independent colleges) were established for each major. Each **faculty work group** had two co-chairs, one from a community college and one from an independent college, who guided the group, planned meetings, and provided leadership to faculty members working on the pathways. Faculty work groups began meeting in January 2022 to take a deep dive into the Ohio Guaranteed Transfer Pathways (OGTPs) already approved by public institutions and evaluate optimal courses for smooth transfer, preparing community college students with an AA/AS degree to transfer as college juniors with maximum credit, on track to graduate with the bachelor's degree.

Faculty work group considerations included:

- Review and evaluation of the OGTP to determine whether the statewide pathway approved by public institutions would work for this group of independent colleges as well.
- Identification and agreement on introductory coursework in the major that should be completed as part of the associate degree program.
- Community college faculty members shared background and process on the extensive work by public 2-year and 4-year institutions to identify and vet courses for approval as TAG, OT36 and OGTP courses.
- Faculty review of qualifying courses from the partner community colleges to better understand equivalent/approved courses statewide, especially helpful for 4-year faculty who may have only been familiar with a local community college.
- Discussion and evaluation of learning outcomes that meet course requirements. State institutions, including our 2-year partners, have defined common learning outcomes for introductory major courses. Faculty members at 4-year institutions reviewed these learning outcomes for comparable courses at their institutions.
- Pairing off with other 2-year and 4-year institutions to see how courses would transfer between their colleges, and then sharing the results with the rest of the faculty work group to gain consensus across all 25 partner institutions.
- Consultation with members of the ODHE Ohio Transfer and Articulation Network team.

Faculty liaisons (those faculty not serving on the primary faculty work group) were brought into discussions in March 2022 to learn about the findings of the primary work group and weigh in on considerations from their institutions. Pairs of 2-year and 4-year faculty liaisons met to see how courses from the OGTP would transfer between their institutions. With a better understanding of the ODHE framework and faculty-led approval process, faculty members working on all three pathways were successful in affirming that their pathways would align with statewide OGTPs in biology, English and psychology.

Ohio Transfer 36 and General Education Requirements

As part of aligning and approving the transfer pathways, 4-year institutions reviewed the Ohio Transfer 36 curriculum to determine how closely their institution's general education requirements align with OT36. OT36 is the general education curriculum approved by all public 2-year and 4-year institutions in Ohio. This evaluation revealed that all 14 independent colleges in the consortium would accept transfer credit for the OT36 curriculum so that most or all general education requirements are met. In addition, 4-year institutions had the opportunity to identify 1-3 signature courses that transfer students would still need to complete in earning the bachelor's degree from their college or university. That being said, all 4-year partners confirmed that students transferring with an associate's degree in one of the approved pathways would be able to earn the bachelor's degree in four semesters when enrolled as a full-time student.

Finalizing the Transfer Pathways

During fall 2022, all pathway faculty were asked to meet with key stakeholders at their colleges (chief academic officers, other faculty, registrar, advising, enrollment, etc.) to share the transfer pathways and identify any work still to be completed. Final transfer pathways from the 4-year institutions had a final deadline of November 1 to submit their pathways to the project director of the Ohio Consortium for Transfer Pathways to the Liberal Arts for approval, in advance of the signing ceremony and reception in December. At that December meeting, approval of the transfer pathways will be officially confirmed and presidents of the 14 independent colleges and 11 community colleges will sign the Ohio Consortium Transfer Pledge.