

Registered Apprenticeship-College Consortium Articulation Framework

Goals

The overarching goal in creating the Registered Apprenticeship-College Consortium (RACC) is to facilitate the articulation of the Registered Apprenticeship certificate for college credit on a national scale. This effort will provide an important opportunity for apprentices to continue on a career pathway and earn an associate's or bachelor's degree, creating a skills acquisition continuum from Registered Apprenticeship to college with gainful employment. It also opens a new pipeline of degree seekers that can help support the President's goal that by 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world. As important, the Consortium seeks to enhance the competitiveness of American businesses by enlarging the pool of highly-trained workers that possess in-demand skills and competencies.

Additionally, the consortium hopes to:

- Strengthen relationships among Registered Apprenticeship and two- and four-year post-secondary institutions nationwide;
- Facilitate the development of informed partnerships among Registered Apprenticeship and two- and four-year post-secondary institution stakeholders that recognize the resources, limits, and requirements of one another's systems;
- Enhance national understanding of and responses to the needs of apprentices as another working student population; and
- Advocate for the flexibility needed to enable apprentices to earn credit for their Registered Apprenticeship experience and pursue further credentials in post-secondary educational programs, as well as utilize transfer opportunities to four-year universities to earn bachelor's degrees.

Principles

To achieve its goals, the Consortium is founded on a set of overarching principles that guide this effort. Chief among these principles is a learner-centered focus on supporting the educational and occupational needs of students – and the workforce skill needs of employers – that is grounded in the context of lifelong learning and career pathway advancement. Recognizing that learning and competency development take place through a wide variety of avenues, including Registered Apprenticeship, the Consortium is committed to enhancing recognition of apprentices' prior and concurrent learning and valuing that learning for college credit in credential-granting programs. Through member partnerships, the Consortium seeks to address institutional and organizational barriers and create a more seamless and mobile pathways from Registered Apprenticeship to programs of study at two- and four-year post-secondary institutions.

The Consortium's principles are agreed to collectively by the higher education community; National Registered Apprenticeship sponsors; the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Apprenticeship; and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. The principles are drawn primarily from the cumulative experience of educational institutions and Registered Apprenticeship programs that have developed credit articulation agreements and have been judged successful in their work.

The principles embody a needed institutional flexibility with thoughtful development of programs and procedures appropriate to the needs of apprentices, yet recognize the necessity to protect and assure the quality and rigor of educational programs.

Principle 1. In order to enhance and to achieve their educational, vocational, and career goals and minimize the need to repeat coursework, successful Registered Apprenticeship program graduates should be able to receive appropriate college credit for prior learning obtained while in Registered Apprenticeship programs.

Principle 2. To facilitate apprentices' entry into two- and four-year post-secondary programs, educational institutions should maintain necessary flexibility in:

- Programs and procedures, particularly in admissions, credit transfer, and recognition of other applicable learning, including that gained through a Registered Apprenticeship;
- Scheduling and format of courses; and
- Academic residency requirements to offset apprentices' mobility, potential isolation from campuses, and part-time student status.

Principle 3. To ensure mutually-beneficial and productive partnerships, college and Registered Apprenticeship program sponsor Consortium members should exhibit a clear understanding of and support for their respective roles in articulation efforts.

Initial Conditions for Membership

Post-secondary institutional members must meet the following conditions:

- Be listed in the Council for Higher Education Accreditation's (CHEA) Database of Programs Accredited by Recognized U.S. Accrediting Organizations;
- Be a degree-granting institution that is duly accredited by a regional institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA);
- Agree to accept one another's assessment of students' prior learning for credit and to honor one another's credit awards, for purposes of facilitating the transfer of credit between Consortium member colleges; and
- Agree to provide program information for the RACC Guide.

Registered Apprenticeship sponsor members must meet the following conditions:

- Have a national, regional, or local program, or national, regional, or local guideline standards that are registered with either the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Apprenticeship or a State Apprenticeship Agency;
- Submit to a program review performed by a national, state, regional, or local educational entity, for purposes of assessing program quality and rigor and determining credit value for learning acquired during Registered Apprenticeship; and
- Agree to provide program information for the RACC Guide.

“Other “organization members must meet the following conditions:

- The organization or association must represent two- and/or four-year post-secondary institutions on the national, regional or state level; or

- The organization or association must represent Registered Apprenticeship sponsors on the national, regional or state level; and
- Organizations must serve in a coordinating role to facilitate membership in the consortium.

Criteria

Inherent in the principles are expectations and standards essential to their translation into performance and action. The RACC criteria express those expectations and standards and constitute an operational framework for RACC member institutions to extend undergraduate educational opportunities to apprentices that are sometimes distinct from common institutional practice. The criteria characterize flexibility essential to the improvement of access by apprentices to undergraduate educational programs. The criteria stipulate that institutional policies and practices be fair, equitable, and effective to apprentices.

Criterion 1. Crediting Learning from the Registered Apprenticeship Certificate.

A RACC post-secondary institution provides processes to determine credit awards and learning acquired for the Registered Apprenticeship certificate when applicable to an apprentice's degree program. A RACC post-secondary institution recognizes and uses the American Council on Education (ACE) Guide or other third-party accreditation in determining the value of learning acquired in a Registered Apprenticeship, and awards credit for appropriate learning acquired in the apprenticeship at levels consistent with ACE Guide or other third-party accreditation recommendations.

Criterion 2. Consistent Policies with Peer Colleges.

RACC post-secondary institutions that have not yet accepted credit awards for Registered Apprenticeship certificates will adopt credit-awarding policies used for similarly situated colleges, programs, degrees, accrediting bodies, and term lengths.

Criterion 3. Transfer of College Credit.

Since mobility makes it unlikely that an apprentice can complete all degree program requirements at one institution, a RACC post-secondary institution designs its transfer practices for apprentices to minimize loss of credit and avoid duplication of coursework, while simultaneously maintaining the integrity of its programs. It is recognized that RACC post-secondary institutions must maintain quality and integrity within a complex academic and regulatory environment where resource, regulatory, and academic realities sometimes mitigate against the broad spirit of flexibility that the RACC advocates. Consistent with this reality and with the requirements of an apprentice's degree program, a Consortium institution follows the general principles of good practice outlined in the Joint Statement on the Transfer and Award of Credit. Each institution may be required to submit documentary evidence that it generally accepts credits in transfer from other accredited institutions, and that its credits in turn are generally accepted by other accredited institutions.

Criterion 4. Academic Residency Requirements.

A Consortium institution limits academic residency requirements for apprentices to no more than 25 percent of the undergraduate degree program; recognizes all credit course work offered by the

institution as applicable in satisfying academic residency requirements; and allows apprentices to satisfy academic residency requirements with courses taken from the institution at any time during their program of study, specifically avoiding any “final year” or “final semester” residency requirement, subject to stated requirements in specific course areas such as majors. If a RACC institution offers 100 percent of an undergraduate degree online, that institution may require apprentices to take 30 percent of that degree program to obtain residency.

Criterion 5. Crediting Extra-Institutional Learning.

Recognizing that learning occurs in extra-institutional and non-instructional settings, a RACC institution provides processes to evaluate and award appropriate undergraduate-level credit for such learning through practices that reflect the principles and guidelines in the statement on Awarding Credit for Extra Institutional Learning. This shall include awarding credit through use of one or more of the nationally-recognized, non-traditional learning testing programs provided for apprentices including College Level Examination Program (CLEP), DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST), and Educational Credential Evaluators (ECE) whether or not they supplement institutional challenge examinations or test-out procedures.