

Guaranteed (GT) Transfer Pathways + Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreements (STAAs)

Colorado's Statewide General Education and Transfer Frameworks

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Accessibility Notes



COLORADO
Department of
Higher Education

**Accessibility is a Priority
for our Department**

**This meeting may be
recorded and available
upon request**

**How to turn on closed
captions**

We will:

- Read messages in the chat aloud.
- Explain where things are with descriptive language

**We use people first
language when speaking**

**When it is your turn to
talk, please introduce
yourself**

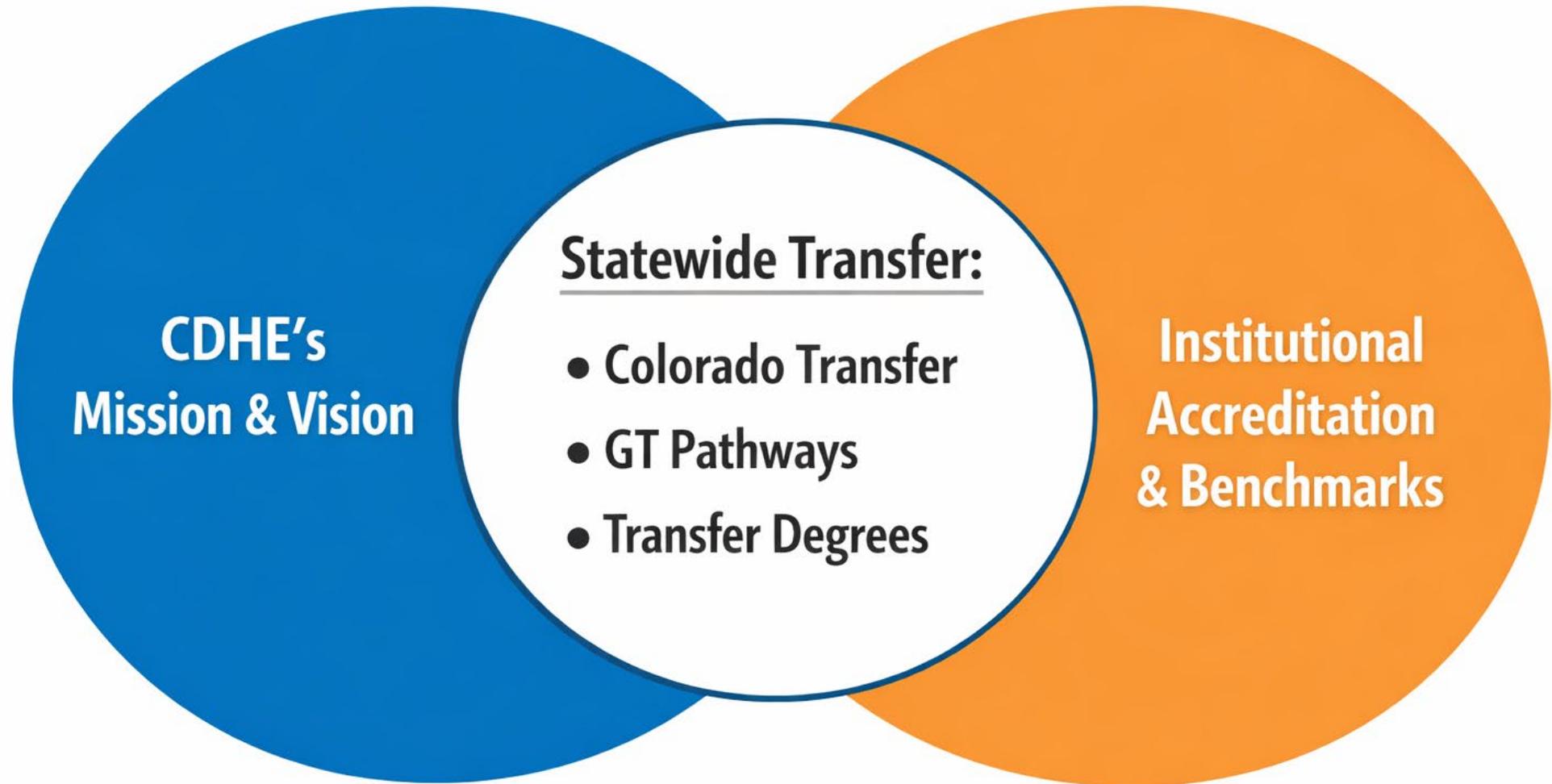
Questions? accessibility@dhe.state.co.us.

CDHE's Role in Statewide Transfer

As the state department of higher education and staff of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, we:

- Ensure compliance with state laws on transfer (e.g., CRS 23-1-108.5 on GT Pathways)
- Coordinate with and serve institutions (e.g., GE Council, student complaints)
- Ensure access to high-quality, affordable education for Colorado citizens (e.g., STAAs)

Our Shared Charges



Overview

Guaranteed
Transfer
(GT) Pathways

Statewide
Transfer
Articulation
Agreements
(STAAs)

Prior
Learning
Assessment
(PLA)

Guaranteed Transfer (GT) Pathways

Colorado's statewide General Education framework

GT Pathways History

GT Pathways was developed collaboratively with 2- and 4-year faculty, assessment directors, and assistance from Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) LEAP Framework Project.

Revisions occurred in 2005, 2007, and 2017.

Model recognized nationally for balancing institutional autonomy with seamless student statewide transfer guarantees.

GT Pathways 31 Credit-Hour Structure

- **Written Communication (6 credits)**
 - **2 courses** taken as:
 - **GT-CO1** Introductory Writing Course and **GT-CO2** Intermediate Writing Course, or
 - **GT-CO2** and **GT-CO3** Advanced Writing Course
- **Mathematics (3 credits)**
 - **1 course** from **GT-MA1** Mathematics
- **Natural & Physical Sciences (7 credits)**
 - **2 courses:**
 - At least one **GT-SC1** Course with Required Laboratory
 - Optional **GT-SC2** Lecture Course Without Required Laboratory

GT Pathways 31-Credit Structure Continued

Arts & Humanities, History, Social & Behavioral Sciences (15 credits total)

- **2 courses** (minimum 6 credits) in **Arts & Humanities** from:
 - **GT-AH1** Arts and Expression
 - **GT-AH2** Literature and Humanities
 - **GT-AH3** Ways of Thinking
 - **GT-AH4** World Languages
- **1 course** (minimum 3 credits) in **GT-HI1 History**
- **1 course** (minimum 3 credits) in **Social & Behavioral Sciences** from:
 - **GT-SS1** Economic or Political Systems
 - **GT-SS2** Geography
 - **GT-SS3** Human Behavior, Culture, or Social Frameworks
- **1 additional course** from any category above

GT Pathways 31 Credit-Hour Structure

Assigns course category designations (e.g., GT-CO1) instead of course-by-course equivalencies or common course numbers.

Provides institutions flexibility to create their own unique course offerings while guaranteeing universal applicability to general education requirements.

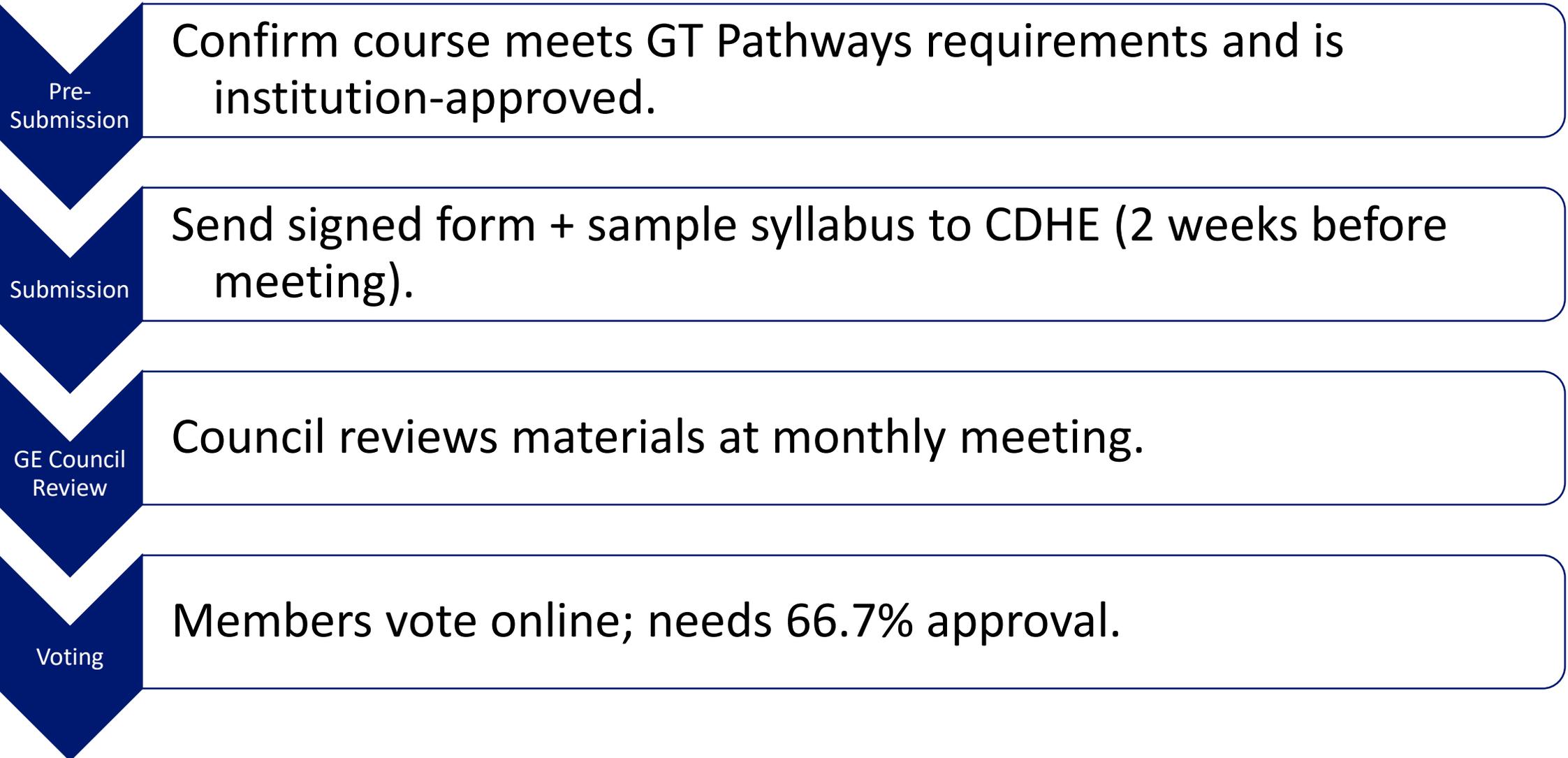
Outcomes and Rationale for GT Pathways

- Enhanced student learning, transfer, persistence, and completion.
- Faculty can count on students being proficient in certain competencies and content.
- Robust competencies with rubrics allow for reliable assessment of student learning, provide a tool for designing assessments, and will help institutions meet their assessment goals for the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).
- A citizenry with proficiency in these durable competencies ➔ skilled workforce ➔ robust economy ➔ benefits for all.

Important Considerations

- **HLC guidelines drive how faculty and institutions are expected to assess student learning outcomes.** There is no such state-level mandate.
- **Participation in and alignment with GT Pathways is required by law,** including that:
 - All public institutions participate in the General Education (GE) Council;
 - The 31 credit-hours of GT Pathways is included within institutions' degree offerings, unless granted an exception waiver by CCHE;
 - GT Pathways courses offered by the institution align with established, faculty-defined content criteria and competencies.
 - Institutions will submit courses through the GE Council to be approved as GT Pathways
- **Institutions can have their own GE requirements exceeding the 31 credit-hours of GT Pathways.**
- **Not all GE courses offered at an institution must be aligned with GT Pathways.**

Submission and Review Process of New GT Pathways Courses



CCHE Final Approval is Required

CCHE
Committee

Standing committee reviews and recommends.

CCHE
Approval

Full Commission approves (usually consent).

Notification

CDHE sends results within 24 business hours.

GTP Syllabus Minimum Standards

Every instructor of every section of a GT Pathways course shall include on their syllabus:

1. The required GT Pathways content criteria and competencies either:
 - a. Copied & pasted verbatim into the syllabus, **OR**
 - b. Mapped explicitly to institution's own content/competencies/student learning outcomes including the number and the narrative text.
2. The state-approved statement identifying the course as GT Pathways.

Example of Student Learning Outcome (SLO) Mapping Not Meeting Expectations

This PSY 1001 course competency:

Apply critical thinking skills in the analysis, discussion, and exploration of psychological theories, concepts, and findings (GTP Critical Thinking: 1a; 2a, b, c; 5a, b).

Got mapped to these GT Pathways Critical Thinking SLOs:

- 1a: Use information to describe a problem or issue and/or articulate a question related to the topic.
- 2a: Evaluate the relevance of context when presenting a position.
- 2b: Identify assumptions.
- 2c: Analyze one's own and others' assumptions.
- 5a: Establish a conclusion that is tied to the range of information presented.
- 5b: Reflect on implications and consequences of stated conclusion.

In this case, how would a student understand the connection between the GT Pathways (state), institution, and course-level outcomes?

GT Pathways SLOs need to be made explicit.

Example of SLO Mapping Meeting Expectations

Course-Level Student Learning Outcome	Institution-Level Gen Ed Goals, &/OR Program Goal	State-Level GT Pathways Competency: Written Communication and Required Student Learning Outcomes
Improve their ability to read and write effectively, accurately, and critically,	Gen Ed Goal 1,3	2a: Create and develop ideas within the context of the situation and the assigned task(s). 3a: Apply formal and informal conventions of writing, including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices, in particular forms and/or fields. 5a: Demonstrate proficiency with conventions, including spellings, grammar, mechanics, and word choice appropriate to the writing task.

Required Syllabus Statement for GT Pathways Courses

“The Colorado Commission on Higher Education has approved [Course prefix, number] for inclusion in the Guaranteed Transfer (GT) Pathways program in the [GT-@@#] category. For transferring students, successful completion with a minimum C– grade guarantees transfer and application of credit in this GT Pathways category. For more information on the GT Pathways program, go to <http://higher.ed.colorado.gov/academics/transfer/s/gtpathways/curriculum.html>.”

Most Common Reasons for GT Pathways Credits Not Accepted in Transfer

1. **Minimum Grade Requirement** - Credits with grades below C- (e.g., D, F, W) were universally rejected.
2. **Duplicate Credit** - Institutions avoid awarding credit for courses already completed or previously transferred.
3. **Age of Credits** - GT Pathways courses have a 10-year transfer guarantee if completed with a C- or better. Older credits, especially those in STEM or selective programs, were not accepted.
4. **Residency & Credit Limits** - Policies such as 25% residency requirements or maximum transfer caps (e.g., 90 credits for bachelor's degrees) prevent acceptance of additional credits.
5. **Course Evaluation Issues** - Missing course descriptions or inability to verify course content against catalog standards, especially credit for prior learning.

Most Common Reasons for GT Pathways Credits Not Applied to Degrees

1. **Degree Plan Incompatibility** - Courses do not fit the requirements of the declared program, especially in structured or accredited programs (e.g., Nursing, BAS).
2. **Elective Overflow** - Students with many credits exceed elective capacity; extra credits remain unused.
3. **General Education Already Met** - GT Pathways courses duplicate requirements already satisfied by prior coursework.
4. **Program Changes or Undeclared Majors** - Students changing majors or not declaring a program makes some credits irrelevant.
5. **Repeat Courses** - Students retake courses for better grades or due to outdated knowledge

GT Pathways Resources and Links

Colorado Transfer GT Pathways Webpage:

<https://cdhe.colorado.gov/ColoradoTransfer/CurriculumGuide>

GT Pathways Webpage for Faculty and Administrators:

<https://cdhe.colorado.gov/transfer-agreements>

CCHE Statewide Transfer and GT Pathways Policy:

<https://cdhe.colorado.gov/policies-and-procedures>

C.R.S. 23-1-108.5 on GT Pathways:

<https://advance.lexis.com/api/document/collection/statutes-legislation/id/6C2Y-G8B3-S2CY-J4HV-00008-00?cite=C.R.S.%2023-1-108.5&context=1000516>

Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreements (STAAs)



COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreement *in*

Public Health



Chart Your Career Course

There is more than one path to a fulfilling career, and the road to a bachelor's degree can start at a community college. Colorado's public colleges and universities have created a seamless transfer process that makes it easy and stress-free for you to design an education journey that will meet your needs. Select a 60-credit Associate of Arts (AA) or Associate of Science (AS) degree with Designation (DwD) program that aligns with your interests, with the guarantee that it will put you on the fast track to graduation if you choose to pursue a bachelor's degree.

STAA Overview

- **Definition:** Negotiated pathways allowing students to earn an associate degree (with designation) and **transfer to a four-year institution with junior status.**
- **Goal:** Complete a bachelor's degree in the same discipline in **no more than 60 additional credits** (or up to 66 for select programs).
- **Foundation:** Built on a Degree with Designation (DwD) – a **60-credit AA or AS degree including GT Pathways curriculum.**
 - Currently AGS and AAS degrees are not included in STAAs
 - GE Council is researching proposals to develop STAAs for applied science degrees.
- **Scope:** Applies to Colorado's public two-year and four-year institutions.

STAA History

- Initiated in 2010 through HB10-1208, and now codified within:
 - C.R.S. 23-1-108
 - CCHE Policy Section I, Part L Statewide Transfer and GT Pathways Policy
- Agreements have been made for 40 degree programs with one (Environmental Horticulture) currently sunsetted as of January 2026.

STAAs Increase Student Success

- **Impact Since 2011:**
 - **Over 5,000 Degrees with Designation awarded** statewide.
 - **1/3 of all AA/AS degrees** in 2017–18 were DwDs.
- **Student Success:**
 - **Higher transfer rates:** 59% vs. 50% without DwD.
 - **Higher bachelor's completion:** 42% vs. 29% within 3 years.
 - **Fewer credits to graduate:** 132 vs. 136.
- **Current Status:**
 - **38 STAAs in place**, most since 2015.

STAA Protocols

Purpose

- To create consistent transfer pathways for bachelor's degrees across Colorado institutions.

Key Drivers for New Agreements

- Number of institutions offering the degree
- Student demand
- Curriculum flexibility
- Workforce needs

Faculty-to-Faculty Conferences

- Fall (Oct): Identify 5–7 disciplines for possible agreements
- Spring (Apr): Continue discussions or add new disciplines
- GE Council reps facilitate discussions

Maintaining Agreements

- STAAs generally undergo intensive review every five years, or earlier as needed
- GE Council reps facilitate discussions

Four Phase STAA Development Process



Phase 1: Curriculum Worksheet Creation

Draft from F2F conference notes → Verified by discipline group
Circulated to all institutions for input; Issues resolved → Move to Phase 2



Phase 2: Initial Institution Review

Campus-level review (faculty, advisors, registrars, etc.)
Consensus → Move to Phase 3



Phase 3: Final Draft Agreement Reviews

GE Council review → Final institutional review
Revisions if needed → Return to Phase 2



Phase 4: Signatures & CCHE Approval

Presidents/CAOs sign
CCHE approves → Agreement posted on DHE website

STAA Student Guarantees and Limitations

Guarantees

Junior standing upon transfer.

Completion of lower-division general education requirements.

Same graduation requirements as native students.

Guaranteed admission with 2.5 GPA to all Colorado public four-year institutions (except Mines) for AA/AS graduates.

Prior Learning Assessment credits accepted for GT Pathways.

Limitations

Must earn C- or higher in all courses.

Admission to institution ≠ admission to specific program (some have controlled entry).

Changing majors may affect credit transfer.

Credits older than 10 years evaluated individually.

Transfer Degrees by Category

Agriculture & Natural Resources

- Agriculture Business
- Agricultural Education
- Animal Science
- Equine Science
- Soil & Crop Sciences
- Environmental Horticulture – Landscape Business (sunsetted)
- Horticulture Business Management
- Fermentation Sciences

Social & Behavioral Sciences

- Anthropology
- Sociology
- Psychology (AA/BA and AS/BS)
- Criminal Justice
- Political Science
- Public Health

Arts, Humanities & Languages

- Art History
- Studio Art
- Dance
- Theatre
- Music
- English
- French
- Spanish
- Philosophy

Business & Communication

- Business
- Communication
- Journalism
- Economics

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Mathematics
- Computer Science
- Engineering
- Geology
- Geography

Education

- Early Childhood Teacher Education
- Elementary Teacher Education

Health & Nursing

- Nursing
- Public Health

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)

Awarding credit for prior learning and experience

Statewide Evaluation Benefits

- General Education Council facilitation expands credit for prior learning opportunities statewide.
- Prioritized alignment of credentials for GT Pathways and STAAs
- Institutional awareness of emerging opportunities
- Supports workforce needs and student mobility

Streamlined Review Process

Step 1. Credential submitted by students, providers, employers, faculty to CDHE, CCCS, or IHE

Step 2. Minimum criteria check for alignment and quality indicators.

Step 3. Evaluation by CCCS and/or IHEs through GE Council

Outcome 1. For GT Pathways credit – CDHE updates crosswalk

Outcome 2. For STAA applicability – CDHE updates agreement

Outcome 3. For local equivalency – Institutions update individually

Contact Info

CDHE Academic Affairs Team

Academic.Affairs@dhe.state.co.us

Thank You!

GT Pathways & STAA Overview

January 2026



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