



## Colorado Department of Higher Education

### Questions and Answers about Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreements

**Q: What are Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreements?**

A: Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreements (STAAs) are negotiated pathways for students to earn an associate degree, followed by a bachelor's degree, in a given discipline or program area. STAAs enable students to graduate from a two-year college with an Associate Degree with Designation, enroll with junior status at a four-year institution, and complete a bachelor's degree in the same programmatic area in no more than 60 additional credits (with exceptions for selected degrees that require up to 66 additional credits).

**Q: What's the difference between a Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreement and a Degree with Designation?**

A: All STAAs are built upon a Degree with Designation (DwD). DwDs are 60-credit Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degrees that include the 31-credit GT Pathways curriculum, plus a collection of required and elective courses that provide students with a solid foundation for further study in a given discipline or program area. DwDs exist *\*only\** in association with an STAA. Similarly, STAAs exist *\*only\** in association with a DwD.

**Q: What's involved in creating a Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreement?**

A: STAAs—and their component DwDs—are created by faculty from two-year and four-year public institutions across Colorado. Faculty work together to identify the content knowledge and competencies that best prepare a student for advanced study in the major at a four-year institution, and then identify the collection of courses that are most desirable for a student to take while completing an associate degree. Once consensus is reached among faculty, the agreement is presented for review and approval by the community college board (or boards), and to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. Once signatures are obtained by institutional CEOs and CAOs, the agreements are available to be used by students.

**Q: Are private institutions involved in STAAs?**

A: Private institutions are free to enter into articulation and transfer agreements with other private institutions or with individual public institutions in Colorado. But, state statute defines statewide transfer agreements as between two-year and four-year state institutions in Colorado.

**Q: We already have transfer agreements in place with different partner institutions. Will we need to end those agreements if we join an STAA?**

A: No – STAAs are not designed to replace other transfer agreements. For some academic programs and for some institutional partnerships, an individually negotiated agreement might work better for students than a statewide agreement. It is possible for an institution to participate in a statewide agreement for a particular program area, while maintaining agreements with individual partner institutions.



**Q: How often are STAAs used, and how do we know that they make a difference?**

A: Since they were launched in 2011, over 5,000 Degrees with Designation have been awarded across Colorado. Last year (2017-18) one-third of all AA and AS degrees awarded by public institutions in Colorado were DwDs. And, data demonstrate clearly the efficacy of STAAs in structuring academic pathways and facilitating transfer and bachelor's degree completion:

- AA/AS earners with a DwD are more likely to transfer into four-year degree programs than are AA/AS earners without a DwD (59% vs. 50%)
- AA/AS earners with a DwD are more likely to earn a bachelor's degree within three years of AA/AS completion (42% vs. 29%)
- AA/AS earners with a DwD who go on to receive a bachelor's degree earn fewer total credits than AA/AS earners without a DwD (132 vs. 136).

**Q: We already have 34 STAAs in place, why create more?**

A: STAAs provide structure that facilitates student transfer, bachelor's degree completion, and reduced time to degree. They also provide transfer guarantees that are not available to individuals who complete an associate degree without designation. Given this, CDHE wants to expand the pool of STAAs that are available to students by launching up to 5 new agreements for Fall 2020. Most STAAs have been in place since 2015; two were added in 2016, but none since. Certain disciplines are notably absent from the list of existing STAAs, given student enrollment trends and workforce developments, including computer science and engineering.

