

Washington Transfer Entity Primer



Updated March 2026

Overview

This primer provides an overview of Washington's primary transfer education entities, their roles and responsibilities, and how their work intersects to support transfer education in Washington.

Transfer in Washington

In Washington, both K-12 and higher education are locally controlled. Washington's nationally recognized transfer work is led by colleges and universities. The role of institutions in transfer education is to drive support and innovation from the ground up, strengthening and building transfer pathways and developing and implementing policies that are relevant to students and supported by staff and faculty. In this role, institutions of higher education are responsible for the major decisions about transfer education and the vertical and horizontal communication and implementation within institutions, across institutions within a sector, and across sectors at the state level.

Institutions of higher education, together with sector agencies and organizations, collaborate and make decisions about transfer education through multi-sector councils and commissions at the sector and state level.

Washington transfer entities¹

Washington colleges and universities

- ◆ Community and technical colleges
- ◆ Public baccalaureate institutions
- ◆ Private, non-profit baccalaureate institutions

Sector entities

- ◆ State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC)
- ◆ Council of Presidents (COP)
- ◆ Independent Colleges of Washington (ICW)

Transfer education sector councils and commissions

- ◆ State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
 - ◆ Instruction Commission (IC)
 - ◆ Articulation and Transfer Council (ATC)
- ◆ Council of Presidents
 - ◆ Interinstitutional Committee of Academic Officers (ICAO)
 - ◆ Interinstitutional Committee of Undergraduate Studies (ICUS)
- ◆ Independent Colleges of Washington
 - ◆ Private Registrars of Washington

Multi-sector transfer commissions and councils

- ◆ Intercollege Relations Commission (ICRC)
- ◆ Joint Transfer Council (JTC)

Transfer-related entities

- ◆ Washington Council for High School-College Relations (WCHSCR)
- ◆ NW STEP

State agency

- ◆ Washington Student Achievement Council

1. Additional information can be found in Appendix A and in the [ICRC Handbook](#).

Roles, responsibilities, and engagement

Institutions of higher education from the three sectors in Washington—community and technical colleges, public baccalaureate institutions, and ICW member institutions—are the primary actors in the collaborative development and implementation of transfer education at the state level. Institutions and institutional collaboration within a sector are responsible for the major decisions about transfer education in Washington. Institutions engage in transfer education bilaterally through articulation agreements and student mobility between institutions, and engage collaboratively through both sector and multi-sector entities. Institutions are responsible for communicating current and emerging issues, policies, and processes related to transfer education, both vertically (between 2- and 4-year institutions) and horizontally (between a sector and/or the state). Key to this work is the participation of Washington colleges and universities in sector- and state-level agencies and organizations, which engage with institutions across sectors to build relationships, develop policy and processes, and support the transparency and efficiency of Washington's statewide transfer degrees.²

Each sector of higher education is represented by either a sector agency or organization (e.g., COP, ICW, and SBCTC). Through the sector agency or organization, representatives from institutions of higher education drive collective action and engagement focused on transfer education from the committee and council decision-making structures for each sector (e.g., IC, ATC, ICAO, ICUS, PROW). The work and engagement at the sector level is responsible for informing and responding to recommendations and implementing the policy and work of JTC and ICRC.

Institutions designate college and university representatives to serve on the respective multi-sector entities within each organization's membership structure (e.g., JTC, ICRC, WCHSCR). JTC and the ICRC are independent of each other but critical partners for the success of transfer at the state level.

JTC is responsible, through the sector-level organizations and agencies, for developing policies and processes around state-level transfer policy and transfer pathways to be reviewed and implemented by institutions. Representatives from sectors and transfer-related entities (e.g., COP, ICRC, ICW, SBCTC) participate in JTC. In its development of recommendations, JTC may be advised by discipline-specific faculty groups whose role is to engage as participants in statewide transfer degree work groups and identify potential revisions to existing degrees or new transfer degrees for development.

² See entity relationship diagram, [page 8](#)

ICRC has an advisory role to JTC. ICRC is responsible for implementing transfer policy, informing policy proposals advanced by JTC, and advising JTC on current and emerging transfer issues. ICRC maintains statewide transfer degree agreements and is critical for the early identification of transfer issues.

The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) serves as the repository for statewide transfer degree agreements and has signature authority for statewide transfer degrees. WSAC maintains collaborative relationships with all transfer entities, as needed, to ensure accurate information is available via the WSAC transfer website. WSAC can also assist students experiencing issues with academic transfer via the student complaint portal if an issue remains unresolved between the student and their institution of higher education.

Organization or Agency	Responsibilities
Joint Transfer Council (JTC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Develop new or revise statewide transfer associate degrees. ◆ Recommend transfer policies to institutions of higher education through sector organizations and agencies. ◆ Convene work groups to address emerging transfer issues and develop or modify statewide transfer degrees. ◆ Approve proposed changes to transfer degrees after review by sector representatives (i.e., ICW, COP, SBCTC).
Intercollege Relations Commission (ICRC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Maintain statewide transfer agreement guidelines, provide a means of early identification of transfer issues, and maintain an information-sharing network for the institutions represented by the membership, working in collaboration with JTC. ◆ Document policy, practice, process, and technical guidance and framework for Washington statewide transfer degrees in the ICRC Handbook. ◆ Review transferable associate degrees (DTA, AS-T Track 1, AS-T Track 2, and MRPs) offered by Washington community and technical colleges for compliance with degree guidelines. Review the acceptance of transferable associate degrees between Washington community and technical colleges and baccalaureate institutions for compliance with the DTA, AS-T Track 1, AS-T Track 2, and MRPs. ◆ Study problems and provide recommendations to ICRC members regarding the interpretation of the DTA Guidelines.

Organization or Agency	Responsibilities						
Washington colleges and universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Determine the receipt of transfer credit and equivalencies, including credit by exam, dual credit, academic credit for prior learning, and extra-institutional learning credit. ◆ Develop degrees and curricula. ◆ Initiate proposals to develop, revise, or eliminate transfer degree programs. ◆ Review, approve, and adopt statewide transfer policies and transfer degree pathways. ◆ Develop inter-institutional transfer partnerships. 						
Sector entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Engage colleges and universities in the revision and development of statewide transfer degrees. ◆ Coordinate transfer data at the sector level. ◆ Serve as liaison for institutions at the state level. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>SBCTC</th> <th>COP</th> <th>ICW</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Washington's 34 community and technical colleges ◆ Instruction Commission ◆ Articulation and Transfer Council </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Washington's public universities ◆ Interinstitutional Committee of Academic Officers ◆ Interinstitutional Committee for Undergraduate Studies </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Washington's private, non-profit ICW member institutions </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	SBCTC	COP	ICW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Washington's 34 community and technical colleges ◆ Instruction Commission ◆ Articulation and Transfer Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Washington's public universities ◆ Interinstitutional Committee of Academic Officers ◆ Interinstitutional Committee for Undergraduate Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Washington's private, non-profit ICW member institutions
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Transfer-related entities e.g., WCHSCR, NW Step	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ WCHSCR provides an information-sharing network among members, coordinates transfer fairs and advisor workshops, and coordinates work related to transfer through its Intercollege Relations Commission. ◆ NW STEP provides opportunities to connect institutions to discuss emerging transfer issues and schedule community college transfer events. 						

Organization or Agency	Responsibilities
<p>Discipline-specific groups e.g., Washington Council for Engineering and Related Technical Education (WCERTE), Washington Computer Science Education (WACSE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Advisory engagement to transfer. ◆ Identify potential revisions to existing degrees or new transfer degrees for development.
<p>Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Serve as the repository for statewide transfer degree agreements. ◆ Assist students experiencing issues with academic transfer via the student complaint portal.

