



Transfer and applicability, put simply, refers to the way course credits move from a sending institution and apply to degree requirements at a receiving institution. In the context of the Dana Center Mathematics Pathways (DCMP), applicability denotes a *student-centered* process to ensure that academic pathways (such as mathematics) are properly aligned with students' academic and career interests and that credits consistently apply to their chosen programs of study.

Currently, most state- and system-level policy supports the transferability of credits but does not account for the applicability of those credits to a student's program of study. Even when students are able to transfer credits, those credits might not count toward their desired majors, which can lead to wasted time, increased costs for both students and the state, and students dropping out of college altogether.

Beginning in late 2016, the DCMP—building on its extensive work and experience in Texas—facilitated the formation of Transfer and Applicability Working Groups in four of the six states involved in its **Mathematics Pathways to Completion (MPC)** project. Working groups in Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Washington have begun developing strategies to address the misalignment of mathematics pathways and the misapplication of mathematics credits. Through the MPC project, the Dana Center has provided in-depth technical assistance, guidance, and recommendations for next steps. The ultimate approach for how to best address transfer and applicability issues, however, is up to the individual states.

Below are some examples of state activities and progress to date:

- **Arkansas**, in an effort to address applicability issues, is using the redesign of the Arkansas Course Transfer System (ACTS) to create a common language around transfer and to foster partnerships between four-year institutions and their two-year transfer partners.
- **Missouri** is taking a regional approach, with two- and four-year institutions agreeing to discuss and correct alignment and applicability issues between the sectors. The recent creation of the state's "**Core 42**" curriculum is another policy lever that can help address the applicability issue, and also allows students to transfer a block of general education credits to any public college or university in the state.
- **Oklahoma** is developing a data framework that can generate student transfer reports. Among other characteristics, these reports will be able to identify whether mathematics credits are accepted by the receiving institution and applied to a student's degree program upon transfer.
- **Washington** is developing its own data framework to investigate whether mathematics is a barrier to student persistence and degree completion, and whether the math that students are taking at the two-year level aligns with their academic and career interests at the four-year level.

As the work of the **DCMP** expands to other states and face new challenges and opportunities, transfer and applicability will remain central to efforts to fully implement mathematics pathways at scale. Establishing math pathways that are both transferable between institutions and applicable across disciplines will enhance student persistence and boost completion rates throughout the nation, improving social mobility for students and increasing workforce productivity for entire states.