

**Council on Postsecondary Education
State of Rhode Island**

Policy Number

S-12

Policy Title

Joint Admissions Agreement

Policy History

Adopted: 08/19/03 (BG)

Amended: 01/22/07 (BG)

01/14/2026 (CPE)

Legal Citation

R.I.G.L. §16-32-2.1

R.I.G.L. §16-33-2.1

R.I.G.L. §16-33.1-2.1

R.I.G.L. §16-59-4

Joint Admissions Agreement:

The Community College of Rhode Island

Rhode Island College

The University of Rhode Island

Goals, Objectives and Principles

A primary goal of the Rhode Island Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) is to increase the baccalaureate attainment rate of Rhode Island's residents. The University of Rhode Island (URI), Rhode Island College (RIC) and the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) have agreed to support a joint admissions agreement (JAA) in order to achieve this overarching goal by meeting four supporting goals:

- to facilitate students' transition from an associate degree program to a bachelor's degree program. The JAA will have achieved this goal if the system can demonstrate a significant upward trend in transfer enrollment and persistence to graduation.
- to increase access to further education by underrepresented groups.
- to strengthen cooperation among the institutions in the effort to improve the postsecondary attainment of Rhode Islanders.
- to reduce the cost of higher education for students through an improved rate of transfer credit acceptance.

The data warehouse being established systemwide will allow the Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC) to track students as they move through the system of Rhode Island public higher education, thereby allowing measurement of the system's success in achieving the above objectives.

Nine principles serve as the underpinnings of the Joint Admissions Agreement:

1. Institutional and Program Admission

Once students are admitted to the JAA, they are considered students of CCRI and prospective students of the senior institution. Students within the program at CCRI will receive primary academic advising from that institution and from the selected senior institution as appropriate. JAA students at CCRI will have access to relevant recruiting and admissions events at the senior institution. The transition from the community college to the senior institution should be seamless and transparent. Students with a 2.4 (cumulative) grade point average will continue enrollment at RIC or URI, in keeping with systemwide board policy. The associate degree will serve as the first two years of a four-year program.

The senior college or university will determine admission and transfer of credits to a specific curriculum based upon the same established criteria implemented for the general student population. For example, specific programs of study may restrict enrollment of students due to limited capacity; that restriction will apply to both JAA and non-JAA populations. Transfer students who have met all conditions of the JAA will not have to take a higher number of credits for the baccalaureate degree than other students of the senior institution enrolled in the same program, nor will they be required to meet any other conditions uniquely applied to JAA students.

2. Acceptance of General Education

Students who take general education as part of an approved transfer program will have those credits accepted toward general education requirements of the participating colleges and universities. Students who have completed the general education requirements for an associate degree, but have not attained the degree, will be afforded the same acceptance of credits.

3. Interinstitutional Curriculum Coordination and Oversight of the JAA

OPC convenes the appointed officials from the three institutions for the purpose of coordinating curricula through the Interinstitutional Articulation/ Transfer Committee (IATC). The institutions must also notify OPC of potential curricular and/or organizational changes no later than July 1st annually, in keeping with the Regulations Governing Academic Changes in Rhode Island Institutions of Higher Education (amended 2024). Such information will be shared amongst the vice presidents for academic affairs and also amongst the presidents through their management letters.

4. New Programs

Institutions desiring to add degree program to the JAA will establish an articulation agreement through the Interinstitutional Articulation/Transfer Committee (IATC). OPC convenes the IATC, whose duties include continuous monitoring and improvement of the JAA. Creation of an articulation agreement does not remove the requirement for CCRI and RIC to comply with OPC Policy A-4; *Regulations Governing Academic Changes in Rhode Island Public Institutions of Higher Education*.

5. Students' Rights and Responsibilities

A statement of student rights and responsibilities is described in the JAA as well as in a student guide to the JAA (maintained by the IATC and distributed to students by the colleges). Students will have clear descriptions of the responsibilities of institutions participating in the system, the students' responsibilities in the system, and the

students' rights. Notable among these rights and responsibilities is the right to ongoing, regular advisement from the sending institutions (supported by admissions offices of the receiving institution). Students are responsible to seek such advice as well as to consult the publications of the senior institution and OPC and follow the transfer-track plan.

6. Institutional Coordination

Each institution will identify a contact person to manage the articulation and transfer process internally and to facilitate external communication. Each institution will notify, through the IATC, OPC and the other institutions when the responsible official changes. OPC and the Rhode Island Longitudinal Data System will collect data from the IHE's to allow assessment of the performance of the system.

7. Automated System

The policies and associated procedures for the articulation system will be the core elements for a publicly accessible, computer-based information system linking URI, RIC and CCRI. OPC will be responsible for developing a system that maintains and publicizes information about the program. CCRI will maintain an automated system that allows for electronic transmission of transcripts to the receiving institutions.

8. Assessment

Every two years, the Interinstitutional Articulation/Transfer Committee (IATC) will complete an assessment of the system and its effectiveness. Included in the assessment will be feedback from JAA students to ensure the process is meeting their needs. The IATC assessment of the JAA program will inform future amendments to this agreement.

9. Exceptions

The Joint Admissions Agreement (JAA) provides a foundation for the seamless transition of students from the Community College. Institutions may grant exceptions to students when the standard Joint Admission guidelines do not apply or when a student's specific circumstances warrant a deviation from previously agreed upon curriculum plans. Exceptions to the JAA curriculum may be granted by CCRI in collaboration with the receiving institution. Exceptions must be approved by both institutions and should not significantly affect the seamless transition of a student from one institution to another. Students should be informed that exceptions may add additional time to their bachelor's degree completion. While each institution is responsible for establishing its exception policies, it must act consistently in reviewing exception requests, treating all students equitably and considering each request carefully.

Policy

Joint Admissions Agreement

The Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI), Rhode Island College (RIC) and the University of Rhode Island (URI), Rhode Island's three public institutions, have traditionally sought to provide access to higher education to qualified students. To expand this mutual commitment and to facilitate students' progression from the associate's degree to the completion of the baccalaureate degree, the institutions agree to establish the Joint Admissions Agreement (JAA) in keeping with the following terms:

I. Joint Admissions Process and Conditions

The JAA, which will be in effect as of the signing of this agreement, is available to CCRI students who, prior to earning 30 credits, matriculate into one of the transfer-track programs recognized by the JAA. Each transfer-track program specifies at least 30 credits that transfer to the receiving institution in fulfillment of requirements usually known as general education. If the receiving institution requires additional general education courses for transferring students, it will clearly communicate this requirement to JAA students enrolled in those plans. Since the requirements of specific degree programs vary among institutions and even within institutions, students must be guided in selecting courses within the broad areas of general education that support their ultimate educational goals.

To aid students and their advisors in making appropriate selections, OPC will provide information on JAA in general and transfer-track program plans on its website. The IATC will create the content for OPC display. This information will be considered the authoritative source on JAA information and the colleges will reference the site on their publications. The information on the OPC site will include the *Transfer Guide for Students* as well as information that was originally maintained on the *RI Transfers* website. Only programs specified on the OPC website and in the *Transfer Guide for Students* as JAA transfer programs with accompanying JAA transfer-track program plans are included in this agreement. Through mutual agreement of the sending and receiving institutions, additional program plans may be added to the JAA annually, following the spring meeting of institutions chairs convened by the Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC). Any such additions will be advertised widely at CCRI and will be cited as new transfer-track programs on the OPC website and in the transfer guide.

- A. Designated transfer staff at CCRI and admissions officers at the appropriate receiving institution will jointly provide a provisional offer of admission and a JAA acceptance agreement to incoming CCRI freshman who have completed the intent-to-enroll form and JAA acceptance agreement. Students are considered conditionally accepted to the appropriate senior institution upon the acceptance to the JAA program. This form also acts as a waiver for institutions to share student information specified in this agreement. Once graduating from CCRI and completing the intent to enroll form, students receive an offer of admission from the senior institution and an acceptance agreement. The offer of admission will be contingent upon the student's fulfillment of the provisions of paragraph B. This form will include contact information for the individual responsible for administering the JAA at the senior institution.

- B. To be guaranteed admission to RIC or URI under the JAA, a CCRI student must: (1) enroll under the JAA prior to earning 30 credits by completing an intent-to-enroll form and a JAA acceptance agreement as described above, (2) select an associate degree program included in this agreement [as defined above in Section I] and earn an associate degree in the prescribed curriculum within five years from officially enrolling in the JAA, (3) have a cumulative grade point average of 2.40 or higher, and (4) meet any specified requirements applicable to all students for specific degree programs at RIC or URI (see also Section II.A.).
- C. Courses taken by students at CCRI will satisfy course requirements in accordance with plans provided on the institution websites and any transfer CMS. Transfer credit for any CCRI course not listed in the JAA Plans will be granted at the discretion of the appropriate academic dean (or designee) at the receiving senior institution.
- D. The RIC or URI catalog in effect when a student enrolls under the JAA will be specified on the acceptance agreement (see Section I.B. above) and will govern the terms of admission and the baccalaureate requirements for a degree from RIC or URI, as appropriate. If the program at the senior institution substantially changes during the five years following a student's matriculation at CCRI, the senior institution may not be able to deliver the program as originally expected. In these cases, the senior institution is responsible for advising JAA students in a timely manner regarding specific program changes that may affect their baccalaureate degree plans. The senior institution will do its utmost to find suitable substitution or other accommodations so as to not delay the student's progress. Should a senior institution discontinue a JAA program entirely or if changes to a program are so significant as to make it no longer compatible with JAA, then the senior institution will provide a teach out plan for a minimum of five years (or until such time as all students enrolled in the plan have graduated). If a transfer student fails to maintain continuous enrollment for one or more semesters at the senior institution, the requirements for a baccalaureate degree will be governed by the catalog in place in the year of re-entry.

The JAA clock may be stopped during the five-year period when the JAA students experience any of the circumstances below. The JAA Coordinator at the receiving institution will hold approval authority for such requests:

- (a). A college requirement to enroll in solely developmental courses.
 - (b). Absence due to military obligations.
 - (c). Absence due to medical reasons.
 - (d). Exceptional circumstances (if an advisor feels that a student has an exceptional reason that merits an exemption, the advisor should present it to the JAA Advising Coordinator, who will present it to the URI or RIC JAA Coordinator for approval).
- E. JAA students will be governed by the regulations, requirements and procedures of CCRI until such time as they are granted the associate degree. At such time as they matriculate at RIC or URI, they will be governed by the regulations, requirements, and procedures of the senior institution.
- F. The Disability and Accessibility Services office at CCRI may determine accommodations for JAA students. The receiving institutions will honor those accommodations. CCRI will notify the receiving institution about accommodations that may include but are not limited to increasing the JAA 5-year window and/or course

substitutions.

- G. A student cannot use the Joint Admissions Agreement to return to the senior institution where the student had previously matriculated. However, students who wish to return to Rhode Island College or the University of Rhode Island may apply through the regular admissions process.
- H. URI and RIC may offer tuition reduction incentive programs (merit-based Joint Admission Academic Achievement Award or JA-AAA) to JAA students who matriculate into their institutions..
- As of February 2025, URI and RIC offer the JA-AAA to JAA students. Rates are determined by academic performance at CCRI per the following scale:
 - CCRI GPA 3.0-3.24: 10% reduction
 - CCRI GPA 3.25-3.49: 20% reduction
 - CCRI GPA 3.5 or higher: 30% reduction
 - If URI or RIC wish to change the manner or rate in which they offer tuition incentives to JAA students they may only do so if they meet all of the following criteria:
 - Proposed changes must be presented to the IATC not later than 12 months before the proposed changes would take effect.
 - All changes must be publicized at CCRI, within the receiving institution, and on the JAA page of the OPC website. The receiving institution will provide materials to CCRI and OPC for such display.
 - Currently enrolled JAA students will not be affected by the change unless it is to the students' benefit. The institute enacting the change will apply the incentive program that is most advantageous to the student. If the new program benefits the student more than the old program, the student shall enjoy the benefits of the new program. If the new program provides reduced benefits to the student, then the student will be grandfathered with the old program.
- I. Out-of-state students are eligible to participate in the Joint Admissions Agreement (JAA). Application of tuition incentives to out-of-state students will be at the determination of the receiving institution. Any incentives for out-of-state students will be published and available to students. Changes to those incentives will be subject to the requirements of paragraph H above.

II. Students' Rights and Responsibilities

- A. Students successfully completing the requirements of the JAA will be guaranteed admission to RIC or URI, as appropriate. JAA students will have the same rights and responsibilities regarding access to specific programs, majors, and services as continuing students at the senior institution. Senior institutions publish requirements (which pertain equally to continuing and transfer students) relating to grades that must be earned or prerequisite courses required for entry into specific majors. In addition to using these publications, students are responsible for seeking regular, ongoing advisement from the sending and receiving institutions.
- B. JAA students, after having earned an associate degree at CCRI in one of the transfer tracks agreed to by the sending and receiving institutions, are guaranteed that a minimum of 30 credits will transfer to fulfill general education requirements at the

receiving institution. Additional credits, in combination with the 30 general education credits, will total at least 60 transfer credits applicable to degree requirements at the senior institution in a specified program. To guarantee transfer of at least 60 credits, JAA students remain enrolled in a specified transfer-track program and must seek regular, ongoing advisement from the sending and receiving institutions. JAA students who choose to change their majors after arrival to the receiving institution should seek advisement to determine if they will be required to take additional courses and to understand the effect on their JAA status.

- C. Each semester, URI and RIC will notify JAA students of deadlines by which students must indicate their plans to enroll at the senior institution in order to maintain eligibility for pre-registration and other enrollment guarantees. Students who pay an enrollment deposit at the senior institution by the specified date will be given the same registration priority as continuing students.
- D. Receiving institutions will make available to JAA-enrolled students at CCRI as many institutional facilities as is feasible. Receiving institutions will provide a list, for display on the OPC website and through CCRI, of all institutional facilities available for student use as well as any facilities that may be available under an additional student fee structure.

III. Information Sharing and Exchange

The institutions agree to share certain information about students enrolled in the JAA. Data will be prepared in the aggregate, whenever possible, and in instances when individual information is shared, the data will be treated as confidential. The purpose of this exchange is to monitor the progress of students pursuing a degree under the JAA, to educate students about the range of academic choices at RIC or URI, to provide students with information conducive to academic success at the senior institution, and to evaluate the success of the program. To that end, enrollment in JAA will require each student to sign a release authorizing CCRI and RIC or URI, as appropriate, to share the following individual student data:

- A. Each semester CCRI will provide representatives of RIC or URI, as appropriate, with information regarding students who during that semester returned the signed JAA acceptance agreement. The information will include current name, address, date of birth, identification number, telephone number, e-mail address, choice of degree program and academic record.
- B. The senior institution will provide CCRI and the IATC with reports every two years regarding former JAA students who enroll at RIC or URI. The reports will include credit hours accepted and lost in movement to the senior institution, student retention rates and graduation rates as well as grade point averages earned and financial aid received by these students. Feedback from RIC and URI will be used to improve the JAA.
- C. If Rhode Island students are denied admission to RIC or URI as first-year students for academic reasons, the respective admissions offices will inform the students about the JAA as an alternative enrollment option to entering RIC and URI. Lists of these potential JAA students will be provided to CCRI.

IV. Advisement and Communication with Students

The institutions recognize that the JAA must emphasize collaborative communication., including joint academic advisement for JAA students. Designated transfer staff at CCRI and admissions officers at the appropriate senior institution will jointly advise students and collaborate between institutions to provide accurate information between students. JAA students must actively seek advisement.

- A. The receiving institutions will provide information on their programs to students participating in the JAA to assist them in choosing courses that satisfy the course requirements of RIC or URI, as appropriate. At CCRI, students will have access to advising center staff conversant in the programs at the receiving institutions and to department/college advisors designated to counsel transfer students.
- B. The institutions will include information regarding the JAA in official undergraduate catalogs and admissions publications.
- C. The institutions will cooperate with the RI Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) to develop JAA recruitment publications. The primary purpose of these materials will be to raise students' aspirations and awareness of an alternative route to a baccalaureate degree. As the majority of JAA students begin their studies at CCRI, that institution will take the lead on this action with support from RIC and UR.
- D. Information regarding the JAA will be included on the institutions' admissions web sites, and on the Web sites of other relevant organizations such as the RI Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC). The sites will include frequently asked questions (FAQs) and an e-mail address dedicated to responding to other questions regarding the JAA.
- E. The institutions will provide JAA students with information regarding the inter-institutional exchange program. In addition to providing the opportunity to complete up to seven credits of coursework, participation in the exchange program will familiarize JAA students with advising services at the senior institution.

V. Coordination of Curricula

The institutions are committed to coordinating continually their respective curricula, developing opportunities for faculty collaboration, and discussing curricular changes. The institutions will engage in the following activities:

- A. Institutions will appoint an individual responsible for transmitting timely information about significant proposed and adopted changes in curricula. Each institution will promptly notify the other institutions, OPC, and the Interinstitutional Articulation/Transfer Committee in writing when its contact person has changed.
- B. Faculty at the institutions will collaborate on the development of curricula and course syllabi to ensure that students will be prepared for their courses of study at RIC or URI.
- C. The institutions will provide feedback to one another regarding specific areas where curricula appear to be misaligned.
- D. New degree programs under development wishing to be included in the JAA will establish an articulation agreement as part of the OPC program approval process or

through coordination within the IATC.

- E. 2+2 Programs, by their nature, are usually good fits for the JAA. There are some 2+2 programs, however, which may be incompatible with the program. The IATC will review all new 2+2 programs to decide on inclusion within the JAA. Within the IATC, deliberation on such inclusion will lean toward the positive, expecting the objecting institution to explain why a program should not fall under the JAA.
- F. When a curriculum change is required in a JAA plan the responsible institution will notify the other institutions via the IATC at least one year in advance of the effect of the change.

VI. Implementation and Oversight

Implementation and oversight of this agreement will be provided by the Interinstitutional Articulation/Transfer Committee (IATC). Council policy S-6 *Policy for Articulation and Transfer Between Public Institutions of Higher Education in Rhode Island* establishes the IATC and lists among its responsibilities the continuous evaluation and review of institutional programs, policies, and procedures, and interinstitutional relationships affecting transfer of students as well as recommending to the Council (via the Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee) changes to transfer policy.

Within the framework of the JAA, the IATC's work will include the following responsibilities:

- A. Fostering a spirit of collaboration.
- B. Monitoring, evaluating, and updating the JAA.
- C. Reviewing guidelines for and addressing concerns with such issues as:
 - Advising and enrollment processes (including pre-registration);
 - Exchange of information among institutions; and
 - Evaluation and assessment of the program.
- D. Coordinating and overseeing the implementation of Section V (*Coordination of Curricula*) of this agreement.
- E. Coordinating an annual report to CPE's Academic and Student Affairs Committee regarding the status of the JAA.
- F. Coordinating publicizing the JAA with the signatory institutions.
- G. Enhancing the upward educational mobility of students by increasing the level of transfer credit acceptance.

VII. Terms of Agreement

This agreement becomes effective upon signing.

*This agreement is signed by:**

<u>Rosemary Costigan</u> <i>Rosemary Costigan</i> <i>President</i> <i>Community College of Rhode Island</i>	<u>11/12/25</u> <i>date</i>
<u>Jack R. Warner</u> <i>Jack R. Warner</i> <i>President</i> <i>Rhode Island College</i>	<u>11/19/25</u> <i>date</i>
<u>Marc B. Parlange</u> <i>Marc B. Parlange</i> <i>President</i> <i>University of Rhode Island</i>	<u>07/17/25</u> <i>date</i>

Note: The Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC) wishes to acknowledge that the best practices of Maryland, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, New Jersey, New York, and Oregon were used in developing the JAA and its companion documents and to express appreciation to those states for sharing their materials.

*The fully executed version of this agreement is on file at OPC.