



UTAH SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TAB C

April 16, 2021

Technical Education Course Alignment Project

The course alignment project began as a collaborative effort between a couple of technical colleges and expanded to include others who chose to participate. The vision was to start small and address the challenges as they occurred.

We reached out to the Commissioner's office to share the vision of the course alignment project and to ask for support. We wanted to be sure we were moving in the right direction. As we strategized, we felt it was important that the Commissioner's office house the master course list, as well as assign course prefixes and numbering.

The Vision

The vision of this project is to give students the opportunity to seamlessly transfer within the technical colleges without penalty of retaking courses or paying again for a competency already completed.

A secondary student who graduated from high school with some technical courses on their transcripts should be able to seamlessly transfer to another college and receive credit for the competencies achieved. As doors of opportunity open for technical education and more people are watching us, it makes sense that technical courses align where possible. This gives credibility to technical education and will allow for articulation conversations with degree granting institutions to take place more easily.

The Start

We began with health professions, practical nursing, medical assistant, surgical technologist, nursing assistant, and pharmacy technician. Health professions are ruled by outside accrediting bodies and/or state licensure, so it made sense that these programs were already closely aligned.

Two colleges met, we introduced the vision, gave the faculty the lead, and watched them work. Our role was to help keep the faculty out of the weeds, address any challenges, and support the effort. By the end of the first meeting, the faculty were collaborating, sharing best practices, and striving to meet the intent of the meeting.

The Process

As more colleges joined in the process, we discovered the need for guidelines. To keep moving forward, we agreed the focus should be on the course level. Programs are usually unique to the regional industry and

may contain a course or courses that another region does not require. The core courses will likely be the same. We set the parameters of course title, course length, and course outcomes. Again, we believe the Commissioner's office should manage course prefixes and numbering. To help facilitate future conversations of clock hour to credit, the courses should be in 30, 60, 90, 120 increments with the number of hours for lecture, lab and work-based learning identified. It was very important to the success of the course alignment project to have the faculty in the driver's seat. They are the subject matter experts; they are connected with industry, and they are aware of the student progress in each course.

The Outcomes

Since December of 2020, we have been meeting at least monthly. We now have all the technical colleges participating at some level. We have received positive feedback from the faculty, staff, and vice presidents. The institutions are sharing best practices and curriculum, and there is increased collaboration across technical education. The focus is on what is best for the students. We understand that students are not likely to transfer between technical colleges, but if they choose to, the pathway should be there. Anyone evaluating a student transcript should have confidence in the competencies a student received from technical education, just as they do with a degree-granting institution.

What's Next

We agreed it is best to complete the programs we started this spring before moving to additional programs. There are a lot of moving gears in this process, and we want to be sure we have all the guidelines before moving to additional programs.

By June of 2021, we expect to have written documentation identifying aligned courses for the following programs:

- Practical Nursing
- Medical Assistant
- Surgical Technologist
- Nursing Assistant
- Pharmacy Technician
- EMT
- Dental Assistant
- CDL
- Welding
- Culinary Arts
- Industrial Automation

With support and guidance from the Board and the Commissioner's office, we believe we can fulfill the vision of student opportunity, seamless pathways, and institutional continuity for the future of technical education.

Commissioner's Recommendation

This is an information item only; no action is required.

COURSE ALIGNMENT PROJECT

Technical Colleges

April 16, 2021



UTAH
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EDUCATION

The Vision

Student Opportunity

Seamless Pathways

Continuity

The Start

Two Colleges

Faculty and Directors

Health Professions

The Process

Start with the Course

Set the Parameters

Let the Faculty Drive

The Outcomes



Positive Feedback

Collaboration

Best Practices

What's Next

April 22, Ogden-Weber
Tech

May 13, Mountainland
Tech

Automotive, IT, Diesel

A close-up photograph of a dark blue graduation cap with a gold tassel. The cap is positioned on the left side of the frame, and the tassel hangs down. A large, semi-transparent blue rectangle covers the right two-thirds of the image, serving as a background for the text and logo.

Thank You

