

Oregon Transfer Module (OTM) Questions and Answers for Implementation

**at Oregon Community Colleges, Oregon University System institutions, and
participating Oregon Independent Colleges and Universities**

Question 1: What is the Oregon Transfer Module (OTM)?

The OTM is something new in Oregon. It was created jointly by Oregon colleges and universities to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of students who transfer among these institutions. The OTM does not replace the need for effective advising, but it will facilitate transfer without loss of credit toward associate's and bachelor's degrees and without unnecessary duplication of courses.

The OTM is not a certificate or degree, but is documentation that students have met a subset of common General Education requirements. It includes both Foundational Skills (Communication and Mathematics) and Introduction to the Disciplines (Arts and Letters, Social Science, and Science), and students will complete the certificate by selecting from General Education courses that have been approved for the Associate of Arts/Oregon Transfer degree, the Associate of Science Oregon Transfer-Business degree, or for bachelor's degrees from OUS institutions.

The OTM is equivalent to the first year of a bachelor's degree, or approximately half of an associate's degree (45 credits). Its intent is to help students structure their first year of college in a way that is both academically sound and readily transferable within Oregon. Once a student completes the courses and applies for the OTM, it is documented on the student's transcript.

Question 2: How do students benefit from the OTM?

Taking courses that satisfy the OTM is a good first step for college students who are undecided about a major. The OTM is a milestone in itself and it can lead to an associate's or a bachelor's degree. For students taking courses at multiple post-secondary institutions, OTM completion can save on the cost of tuition by ensuring transferability of course work.

For the growing number of high school students who take college courses from a local college or university, choosing courses that count toward the OTM will give a head start on a college degree.

Question 3: Will this be a single set of courses for all Oregon colleges?

No. The intent is to preserve the uniqueness of each institution's General Education curriculum, while assuring students that their first year of General Education courses will transfer to another institution.

The OTM is the first step in developing an outcomes-based framework for articulation and transfer that is derived from a common understanding of the criteria for General Education curricula.

Question 4: Are students taking courses toward the OTM eligible for financial aid?

Yes, but only if they are enrolled in a degree or certificate program.

Question 5: Do students completing an OTM get counted as "completers" and, if so, how?

The OTM is a measure of completion that will be tracked as an OCCURS (Oregon Community College Unified Reporting System) data element for Oregon's community colleges and as a SCARF (Student Centralized Administrative Reporting File) data element for OUS institutions. The AA-OT CIP (Classification of Instructional Programs code) should be used to identify community college students who complete the OTM each term. Participating independent colleges will determine how they will report OTM completion.

Question 6: Is the OTM automatically given or do students have to apply?

To receive the OTM, students will need to apply for a transcript evaluation, as they already do for other completions.

Use of a degree auditing system, particularly one that is linked statewide, such as ATLAS (Articulation and Transfer Linked Audit System), will help both students and staff recognize when completion is imminent.

Question 7: Can institutions charge a processing fee as with degrees and certificates?

Yes. Institutions currently charge fees to cover the expense of transcript evaluation, and may do so for the OTM. This is an individual institutional decision.

Question 8: How do institutional residency requirements apply to the OTM?

Since the OTM is not a degree or certificate, there are no formal residency requirements, and the OTM is initiated by completion of the first General Education course that counts toward it. Since the credit minimum for such courses is 3, residency for OTM purposes can be established with as few as 3 credits.

IMPORTANT: This information does not apply to residency requirements for tuition purposes.

Question 9: Does OTM completion data need to be compiled for IPEDS reporting?

No. Since the OTM is not a major, the information does not need to be reported to IPEDS.

Question 10: Do all institutions have to offer students an OTM?

It is anticipated that all Oregon community colleges and OUS institutions will offer the OTM to their students; Oregon independent colleges and universities are invited to do so, as well. All receiving institutions must accept the OTM Foundational Skills and Introduction to Disciplines courses as they were counted by the sending institution. For example, a course in a field such as psychology, which might be considered a social science on one campus and a natural science on another, will count in the category designated by the institution offering the course.

Question 11: Will the OTM encourage early transfer? That is, will it increase the number of students who transfer before completing their associate's degrees?

Probably not. Many community college students already transfer without completing an associate's degree. Some of these students will now complete an OTM before transferring.

Question 12: What happens if a student completes a course with a grade below C-?

Courses passed with a grade below C- do not apply to the OTM, but may apply to the additional course requirements for an associate's or bachelor's degree.

Question 13: Will Pass/No Pass grades be accepted toward completion of the OTM?

Students should be advised to take all courses for the OTM for a letter grade. Many Oregon colleges and universities limit the number of courses that can be taken Pass/No Pass and most require letter grades in courses taken to fulfill General Education requirements.

Question 14: Will courses from out-of-state institutions count for the OTM?

Yes, General Education courses from all regionally-accredited institutions, which are accepted in transfer to apply toward bachelor's degrees, can also apply to the OTM.

Question 15: Can a student use Credit for prior learning to satisfy course requirements for the OTM?

Credit for prior learning, including Advanced Placement, CLEP, DANTES, and military credit, can apply to the OTM. If credits for prior learning experiences are transcribed as courses, they will count toward the OTM. CAUTION: For a student pursuing an associate's or bachelor's degree, only 25% of the credit for the degree can be in the form of nontraditional credit.

Question 16: Can 300- and 400-level courses be used to satisfy the OTM requirements?

Yes, as long as they could be used to satisfy the granting institution's general education requirements.

Question 17: When there is a discrepancy between institutions how will it be resolved?

It is anticipated that discussion between institutions will resolve most discrepancies. As with the AA-OT, the Joint Boards Articulation Commission will serve as a mediating body when necessary.

Question 18: What will this look like on the transcript?

It will be noted as "Oregon Transfer Module" in the "Comments" field of the transcript. The completion date must also be noted. The initials "OTM" should not be used, as students may transfer to another state and the abbreviation could be confusing.

Question 19: What is the process for adding and deleting courses from a college or universities course list?

A central web page with links to institutional course lists is being proposed for the OrACRAO (Oregon Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers) web site. Colleges/Universities are responsible for keeping their course lists up to date when their curricula change.