

UNIFORM ARTICULATION AGREEMENT

BETWEEN

**SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS
RN TO BSN PROGRAMS**

AND

**SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION
LPN-RN DEGREE NURSING PROGRAMS**

Approved by the South Dakota Board of Regents on 06/22/2023

Approved by the South Dakota Board of Technical Education on 05/25/2023

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I. BACKGROUND

The Future of Nursing 2020-2030 Report: *Charting a Path to Achieve Health Equity* from the National Academy of Medicine emphasizes that strengthening the nursing workforce is one of the key methods to enhance health and healthcare equity (2021, <https://nam.edu/publications/the-future-of-nursing-2020-2030/>). This report builds upon the seminal 2010 Future of Nursing Report: *Leading Change, Advancing Health* which included the recommendations that the percentage of nurses who hold a baccalaureate degree or higher be increased to 80%. The report cited the importance of education in health policy, leadership, and systems thinking in Bachelor of Science (BSN) nursing programs as critical to the advancement of health within communities. Additionally, BSN-prepared nurses have skills that support research, and evidence-based practice, and are prepared to care for complex demands both within and outside a hospital setting (2011, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24983041/>).

To date, the 80% goal of a baccalaureate-prepared nursing workforce has not been achieved. Time, money, and work-life balance limit the opportunities for associate-degree-prepared registered nurses (RNs) to attain a BSN degree. Nonetheless, the goal of achieving a nursing workforce with an educational attainment of BSN or higher remains important, and continuing efforts to advance the number of nurses holding at least a BSN remains relevant (2021, Future of Nursing 2020-2030).

There have been a number of attempts to assist South Dakota nurses to advance their education, however, the outcomes have been less substantive than desired. The Future of Nursing Report (2011) recommended nurses should achieve higher levels of education through an improved education system that promotes seamless academic progression (Future of Nursing, 2011).

There are articulation agreements at the South Dakota Board of Regents (SDBOR) system level and between individual technical colleges, however, there is not a uniform, statewide agreement on the general education and nursing prerequisite courses required for RNs to complete the BSN degree within the state-funded institutions. This is a barrier for licensed nurses who plan to apply to more than one RN to BSN program since they cannot do so without taking additional, often duplicative courses. The development of a single list of required courses acceptable to both the SDBOR and South Dakota Board of Technical Education (SDBOTE), and their corresponding nursing programs, would smooth the educational pathway for nurses who have earned RN degrees in nursing in South Dakota and wish to complete BSN degrees within the SDBOR system.

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II. PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

This document presents a uniform, statewide academic progression agreement promoting educational advancement opportunities for RNs moving between South Dakota's public technical colleges and universities. This agreement applies to general education and nursing prerequisite courses that are acceptable to all state-funded RN to BSN programs. Students who follow the progression degree plan meet the entrance requirements at SDBOR baccalaureate nursing programs. Students may then apply to any of these programs without taking additional or duplicative courses. The institutions participating in this agreement include:

Board of Technical Education:

Lake Area Technical College (LATC)
Mitchell Technical College (MTC)
Southeast Technical College (STC)
Western Dakota Technical College (WDTC)

Board of Regents:

South Dakota State University (SDSU)
University of South Dakota (USD)

This agreement supports the stated goals of the SDBOTE and the SDBOR to create seamless opportunities for students across programs. This agreement advances these goals by reducing barriers that currently exist for associate degree-prepared RNs who wish to earn BSN degrees. This agreement creates a seamless and consistent transfer process for technical college nursing students. This coordinated approach should increase RN to BSN graduation and retention rates for RNs who enroll in state-funded BSN completion programs. Upon achieving their BSN degree, RNs may also continue their education by seeking master's and/or doctoral degrees.

This agreement also serves South Dakota's workforce needs as described in the 2010 Institute of Medicine report *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*. According to the Future of Nursing Action Coalition, increasing the proportion of nurses with a baccalaureate or higher degree to 80% by 2025 should:

- Improve health outcomes for South Dakotans through a higher-educated nursing workforce;
- Expand consumer access to primary care through an increased number of advanced practice nurses; and
- Increase the critical pipeline of faculty to prepare an adequate nursing workforce for the future.

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III. POLICIES

The RN to BSN Articulation Agreement, hereinafter referred to as either agreement or “RN to BSN AA,” is between the SDBOTE and the SDBOR. This agreement applies only to the participating institutions and programs outlined in Appendix A. The RN to BSN AA applies to all technical college nursing students who enter a nursing program after the effective date of this agreement and successfully complete a Diploma in Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) and an Associate in Applied Science (AAS) in Registered Nursing from an SDBOTE institution. The Nursing Coalition Transfer Committee (NCTC) oversees refinements and changes in the regulations. The RN to BSN AA takes precedence over bilateral articulation agreements established between constituent institutions of the SDBOR and the SDBOTE, including the individual technical colleges. Institutional agreements conflicting with the RN to BSN AA are not permitted.

A. Nursing Coalition Transfer Committee (NCTC)

The NCTC shall interpret and make changes to the RN to BSN AA. The NCTC is a ten (10) member co-chaired committee appointed by the executive leadership in the SDBOTE and SDBOR systems. The composition of the NCTC is outlined in Appendix B. The NCTC’s purpose is to evaluate consistent transfer outcomes as a result of this RN to BSN AA and address student appeals when they arise related to such transfer. Questions concerning the RN to BSN AA must be directed to the appropriate institution’s chief nurse administrator with an explanation of the institutional policy that may be in conflict with the RN to BSN AA. The chief nurse administrator shall forward such disputes to the NCTC for resolution. For further details, see Appendices B and C.

B. Transfer Credit Appeal

Participating institutions shall follow the same procedures for determining allowable transfer credit from an SDBOTE program to an SDBOR program. If an RN to BSN student believes a participating institution has not honored the terms of this agreement, and seeks to appeal, the student shall follow the RN to BSN Transfer Credit Appeal Process as outlined in Appendix D. Each participating institution in this agreement shall provide instructions for the appeal process on its website.

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IV. REGULATIONS

A. Transfer of Credits

The RN to BSN AA establishes the procedures governing the transfer of credits for students who graduate from a participating technical college LPN and RN program and apply to an RN to BSN program at a participating university. The RN to BSN AA does not address admission to a participating technical college program.

1. Eligibility

To be eligible for the transfer of credits under the RN to BSN AA, an applicant must:

- a. Enter a participating university nursing program on or after the effective date of this agreement; and
- b. Earn an LPN Diploma and an RN AAS from a participating technical college with a GPA of at least 2.0; and
- c. Earn a grade of “C” or better in all RN to BSN AA courses.

To use the RN to BSN AA effectively, students should follow the prescribed course list set out in the agreement (see Appendix E).

2. Procedures Governing Student Transfer

- a. The RN to BSN AA enables an RN who has graduated from a participating technical college nursing program to complete a common list of courses that meet the entrance requirements at all RN to BSN programs at the participating universities.
- b. A student who completes a nursing program at a participating technical college with a GPA of at least 2.0 and a grade of C or better in the RN to BSN AA courses listed in Appendix E and holds a current unrestricted license as a RN in SD, or holds a RN license with ‘multi-state privilege’ from a state that is part of the Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact, will have fulfilled a majority of the SDBOR institutions’ lower-division general education requirements as well as nursing program entry requirements. However, because nursing program admissions are competitive, no student is guaranteed admission to the program of her or his choice.
- c. A student who has completed the AAS degree or is enrolled in an AAS program, but has not yet passed the NCLEX-RN exam, may enroll in non-clinical NURS courses at the university level prior to receiving RN licensure.
- d. Upon admission to a participating university and completion of the AAS degree at a participating technical college, a student shall receive at least 78 semester hours of academic credit. Refer to Appendix E for details. A range of 30-42 credits will be completed at the SDBOR institution. See Appendix F for details.
- e. Additional credit for nursing course (NUR) content taken as a part of the AAS degree program is awarded by a university after an RN student has successfully completed a minimum of one and maximum of two university level nursing courses. For details, see Appendix E - Block 4.
- f. A student who earns less than a “C” grade in a course that is not a requirement of the five block degree plan shall still meet the provisions of the RN to BSN AA, provided the student meets all other requirements.

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- g. A student who completes the RN to BSN AA designated courses included in this degree plan shall receive credit for all courses completed with a grade of “C” or higher.

3. Certification of Transfer Component Courses and Nursing Program Completion

Certification of completion of the AAS degree in Nursing and transcript identification of the transferrable general education courses are the responsibility of the participating technical college at which the courses were completed. Students who have not met the terms of this agreement shall complete the receiving institution’s general education requirements and have their transcripts evaluated on a course-by-course basis. Any coursework that has been accepted at a participating technical college to have satisfied programmatic requirements for the RN track will satisfy the block requirements of the participating university.

B. Compliance Procedures

The NCTC is charged with ensuring compliance of institutional policies and practices regarding the RN to BSN AA. The NCTC committee shall meet at least once per semester and as needed if concerns arise. The NCTC will report its findings to the chief nursing administrators and chief academic officers of SDBOTE and SDBOR institutions.

C. Effective Date of Agreement

A student who begins an AAS program in registered nursing at a participating technical college in Fall 2024 or later shall be eligible for the transfer of credits under the RN to BSN AA.

A student who entered or completed an AAS program in registered nursing at a participating technical college prior to Fall 2024 is subject to the conditions in place at the individual institutions at the time of their original enrollment (as long as the student has been continually enrolled) or degree completion.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPATING PROGRAMS

SDBOTE LPN & RN Programs

Lake Area Technical College (LATC)
Mitchell Technical College (MTC)
Southeast Technical College (STC)
Western Dakota Technical College (WDTC)

SDBOR RN to BSN Programs

South Dakota State University (SDSU)
University of South Dakota (USD)

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APPENDIX B: NURSING COALITION TRANSFER COMMITTEE (NCTC) MEMBERSHIP

NCTC members shall serve three-year, staggered terms. Some initial appointments may be for 1 or 2 years to allow for staggering of terms with the ability to serve consecutive terms thereafter.

NCTC shall have co-chairs, one from the SDBOTE membership and one from the SDBOR membership. Co-chairs shall be elected by the membership and shall serve staggered terms.

SDBOTE Members:

- Five representatives including:
 - One representative from the SDBOTE system office, or designee, appointed by the SDBOTE executive director.
 - One representative from each participating technical college, appointed by the technical college president.

SDBOR Members:

- Five representatives including:
 - One representative from the SDBOR system office, or designee, appointed by the SDBOR executive director.
 - Two representatives from each participating university, appointed by the university president.

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APPENDIX C: NURSING COALITION TRANSFER COMMITTEE (NCTC) PROCEDURES

Articulation between the SDBOTE and SDBOR is a dynamic process. To ensure the relevancy of the RN to BSN AA, occasional modifications to this agreement may be necessary. These modifications may include the addition, deletion, and/or revision of courses on the transfer list. The NCTC shall receive requests for modification only upon the recommendation of a chief nursing administrator at a participating technical college or university. Additions, deletions, and modifications may be subject to faculty review under the direction of the NCTC. Because the modification process involves faculty and administrative review, this process may require up to 12 months for final action. Decisions made by the NCTC must be consistent with all pertinent accreditation standards. Approval of a requested action requires a majority of the present NCTC members voting in favor of the action.

Addition of Courses to the Transfer List

Additions to the RN to BSN AA transfer list may be recommended by a participating institution through the following process:

1. The chief nursing administrator at a participating technical college or university shall submit a written request for the addition of a specific course as a general education, a pre-major, or elective to the chief academic officer (CAO) of their college or university. That CAO submits a written request for inclusion on the transfer list to the SDBOR CAO. That individual will consult with the CAO of the SDBOTE.
2. The CAO of either system may submit the request for action to the NCTC a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the next NCTC meeting.
3. The NCTC reviews the request. The NCTC will record its action and rationale and provide its recommendation to the SDBOTE and SDBOR CAOs.
4. The SDBOTE and SDBOR CAOs shall route the request through the curriculum review and approval process specified in SDBOTE and SDBOR policy.
5. The SDBOTE Office and/or the SDBOR System Office will distribute notification of action to all the participating colleges or universities.

Deletion of a Course from the Transfer List

The chief nursing administrator at a participating technical college or university may request a course be removed from the RN to BSN AA transfer list by following similar procedures as outlined in items 1-5 in the *Addition of Courses to the Transfer List*.

Change in the Designation of a Course

The chief nurse administrator at a participating technical college or university may request a change in the pretitle, content, or learning outcomes of a course included in the RN to BSN AA block transfer, as articulated in Appendix E, by sending the request and rationale to the CAOs of the two systems. Either of the system CAOs may submit the request to the NCTC for action.

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APPENDIX D: RN TO BSN ARTICULATION AGREEMENT TRANSFER CREDIT APPEAL PROCEDURE

If a student from a participating technical college believes the terms of the RN to BSN AA have not been honored by a SDBOR institution to which the student has been admitted, the student may invoke the appeal process as outlined by the SDBOR policy 2.5 www.sdbor.edu/policy/documents/2-5.pdf

Steps in Filing an Appeal

Step #1:

- **By the last day of classes of the first semester for which admission is offered**, the student shall submit an RN to BSN Transfer Credit Appeal Form along with any supporting documentation to the campus designee at the SDBOR campus to which the student has been admitted. Students first enrolling at the SDBOR institution in a summer session shall submit their appeal by the end of the subsequent fall semester.
- The student shall specify on the appeal form the specific RN to BSN AA the reason for the appeal, including course(s) involved in the appeal and the solution the student is seeking.
- The campus designee shall review the appeal and respond in writing (email or letter) to the student within 15 business days.

Step #2:

- If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the campus designee, the student may appeal on the same form to the Chief Academic Officer (Provost) of the specific SDBOR University within 15 days of written notice of the director's decision.
- The Provost shall review the appeal and respond in writing (email or letter) to the student within 15 business days of receiving the student's appeal.

Step #3

- If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Provost, the student may appeal to the NCTC subcommittee, composed of the Co-chairs, a representative from the SDBOR Board Office, and a representative from the Technical Colleges. The student shall submit the appeal to the subcommittee within 15 days of the receipt of the Provost's decision. The appeal to the NCTC subcommittee must be sent to:
SDBOR-GA Nursing Coalition Transfer Committee RN to BSN AA Appeal
306 E. Capitol Avenue, Suite 200
Pierre, SD 57501
- If a consensus is reached by the subcommittee, the student shall be notified within 15 business days. If a consensus resolution is not reached, the subcommittee shall forward the appeal to the full NCTC within 10 business days. The NCTC shall review the appeal and notify the student of the final decision within 10 business days of receiving the appeal.

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RN TO BSN TRANSFER CREDIT APPEAL PROCEDURE

South Dakota Board of Regents and South Dakota Board of Technical Education

Section 1: Student Information

(*to be completed by the student submitting the form)

- The completed form and any supporting documentation must be submitted to the SDBOR institution’s Director of Admission by the last day of classes of the first semester for which admission is offered or by the end of the subsequent fall semester for students enrolling in the summer.
- Students must specify the nature of the appeal and cite the specific RN to BSN articulation agreement language that is in contention. Appeals that do not include this information cannot be considered.

Last Name: _____ First: _____ MI: _____

Address: _____
(Number and Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Telephone: _____ Email: _____
(Area code/Number)

Technical College from which AAS was earned: _____

SDBOR institution offering admission: _____ beginning (semester/yr.) _____

Section 2: Basis or the Appeal

State the concern(s), citing specific language in the RN to BSN articulation agreement that is applicable to the contention. Attach RN to BSN articulation agreement supporting documents.

Student Signature: _____ Date _____

UNIFORM ARTICULATION AGREEMENT: SDBOR & SDBOTE**APPENDIX E: BLOCK DEGREE PLAN WITH TRANSFER COURSE LIST****System General Education Requirement (SGR) Block: 18 Credits**

Consists of certain prerequisite nursing courses that are (or will be) taken as a part of a participating technical college AAS nursing program. The courses are:

Course Category	Transferable courses	Credits
SGR #1	ENGL 101	3
SGR #3	PSYC 101 and one of SOC 100, SOC 150 or SOC 250	6
SGR #5	MATH 103, MATH 114 or higher	3
SGR # 6	CHEM 106/L and either MICR 231/L or BIOL 231/L	6

Nursing Block: 60 Credits

Credit will be given for the following:

- Completion of Diploma in Licensed Practical Nursing and Associate of Applied Science in Registered Nursing at a participating technical college
- Competencies established in associates degree
- Nursing major coursework
- Clinical hours (288 hours) provided in all four (4) spheres of care (disease prevention/promotion of health and wellbeing, chronic disease care, regenerative and restorative care, and hospice/palliative/supportive care)

Total Credits Awarded from SGR Block and Nursing Block: 78 Credits**Notes:**

- Additional credit may be awarded for additional coursework.
- Cannot exceed 90 transfer credits (A minimum of 30 credits must be completed at SDSU or USD)
- Applies ONLY to students who complete BOTH their LPN and RN at a SDBOTE institution

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APPENDIX F: REMAINING REQUIREMENTS TO BE FULFILLED AT SDBOR INSTITUTION

Baccalaureate Block consists of remaining SGRs and RN to BSN coursework:

- Remaining SGR Requirements:
 - SGR #1: 3 credits
 - SGR #2: 3 credits
 - SGR #4: 6 credits

- RN to BSN Major Coursework:
 - 30 credit curricula

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APPENDIX G: SIGNATORIES

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

DocuSigned by:

Tim Rave

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Tim Rave
President

Date: 6/28/2023

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION

DocuSigned by:

Dana J. Dykhouse

51E208BD168411D...
Dana J. Dykhouse
President

Date: 7/28/2023

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

DocuSigned by:

Dr. Barry H. Dunn

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Dr. Barry H. Dunn
President

Date: 6/28/2023

LAKE AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE

DocuSigned by:

Tiffany Sanderson

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Tiffany Sanderson
President

Date: 6/27/2023

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA

DocuSigned by:

Shelia K. Gestring

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Shelia K. Gestring
President

Date: 6/28/2023

MITCHELL TECHNICAL COLLEGE

DocuSigned by:

Mark Wilson

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Mark Wilson
President

Date: 6/28/2023

SOUTHEAST TECHNICAL COLLEGE

DocuSigned by:

Robert Griggs

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Robert Griggs
President

Date: 6/27/2023

WESTERN DAKOTA TECHNICAL COLLEGE

DocuSigned by:

Dr. Ann Bolman

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Dr. Ann Bolman
President

Date: 6/27/2023