Articulated vs. Transferable

It seems like a simple question, one that should get a simple yes or no answer.

Is my course transferable?

And if that is the right question to ask, the answer is simple. Too many times, though, it is not the right question. The right question might be,

Is my course articulated?

There is an important difference between those two terms, transferable and articulated, but they often get used as if they are interchangeable. Let us take a look at both.

The following information is based on transferability and articulation in terms of transferring from a community college to a UC or CSU campus.

Transferable Courses

A transferable course is a course taken at a community college that can be used for unit credit at a university. The fact that a course is transferable does not necessarily mean it applies toward a major or other academic goal. It simply means the university will give a certain number of units as credit for completing the course. The units could count toward the total needed to transfer or graduate; they could be units needed for general education or a major; they could apply toward some other academic goal.

To use ASSIST to see if a community college course is transferable for unit credit:

1. Go to www.assist.org.
2. Choose the community college on the first screen.
3. On the second screen, click one of these links:
   CSU Transferable Courses
   UC Transferable Courses
4. You can then choose a department, or all departments.

Articulated Courses

All articulated courses are transferable, but most transferable courses are not articulated.

An articulated course is a course taken at one college or university that can be used to satisfy specific subject matter requirements, such as lower-division major preparation or general education requirements at another college or university.

Source: ASSIST Transfer Channel, 3rd Edition - September 2005, the Official Newsletter of ASSIST (Revised 9/25/07–jp)

Articulated Courses - *continued...*

Sequences of courses can also be articulated, and sometimes it may take more than one community college course to take the place of a single university course, or sometimes a single college course can be used in place of more than one university course.

You cannot tell if courses are articulated by looking at course numbers, titles, or even descriptions in the catalogs. The only way you can tell if and how a course is articulated is by looking at an articulation agreement.

Articulation agreements are formal agreements between two campuses. Articulation agreements in ASSIST are developed and entered into the ASSIST database by the receiving campus (the university campus in our examples). Each university campus is responsible for all of the details of its own articulation.

To use ASSIST to see if a course is articulated:

1. Go to www.assist.org.
2. Choose either the college or the university campus on the first screen.
3. On the second screen, choose the other institution.
4. On the next screen, you can choose a major, a department, or General Education, depending on how the university formats its articulation.

Not all university campuses provide articulation with every college or for all of their majors or departments. Many university campuses concentrate on their primary feeder colleges and their most popular transfer majors. This does not mean that students cannot transfer. It means that such students should talk directly to an admissions advisor and a departmental advisor at the university.

Each university campus will have different articulation with different colleges, even when they are colleges in the same district. For example, Foothill College and DeAnza College have different articulation agreements, even though they're sister colleges. You also cannot assume that a community college course will be accepted the same way at different campuses of the same university system. UCLA, for example, does not automatically use a course the same way that UCSD does.

Lastly, articulation is not necessarily reciprocal. This is especially important for students to know when transferring from one university campus to another. If San Francisco State accepts a course from CSU East Bay in place of one of their own, CSU East Bay does not automatically use the course from San Francisco State in the same way.

Source: ASSIST Transfer Channel, 3rd Edition - September 2005, the Official Newsletter of ASSIST (Revised 9/25/07–jp)