



Guidance Regarding Illinois Articulation Initiative Courses with Online Labs and Speeches For Spring 2020 through Fall 2021 – COVID-19 (REVISED JAN '21)

Issued by:

Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI)
Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE)
Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)

On March 16, 2020, the IAI, IBHE, and ICCB issued an email communication with the following guidance for Spring 2020 courses. This guidance was modified on April 9, 2020 by extending the timeframe to include coursework taken during the Summer 2020 term and extended again through the end of the Spring 2021 semester. **Due to the ongoing circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and in recognition of institutional planning efforts for Summer 2021 and Fall 2021 semesters, the IAI, IBHE and ICCB are extending this guidance through the end of the Fall 2021 semester to ensure institutions have the greatest flexibility in considering all options for instruction.**

The Coronavirus has created an unprecedented situation which has forced all Illinois public and private colleges and universities to shift to alternative methods of teaching, primarily via 100% online courses, for all or a portion of the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester. It has come to our attention that there is concern by IAI participating institutions that online science labs as well as the online version of the oral communications courses (e.g., Speech, Public Speaking, etc.) will not comply with the IAI General Education Core Curriculum (GECC) Communications, GECC Life Sciences, and GECC Physical Sciences panels' expected course outcomes as reflected in their course descriptors and course approval criteria thus creating a situation in which these courses may be deemed not transferable.

The Illinois Articulation Initiative's Policies and Procedures Manual does not currently include any language regarding emergency caveats, particularly as it may be applicable to the current health pandemic. Therefore, it is the position of the IBHE, ICCB, and IAI that students' courses which are completed under these crisis-driven alternative course delivery methods shall be deemed transferable and earn credit as they were originally intended during the Spring 2020 semester. This policy demonstrates the State's commitment of supporting institutional efforts to reasonably modify learning[.]

The continuation of an unknown timeline for COVID-19 has led many of our institutions to plan and prepare for a variety of scenarios now and into the future. **Therefore, all aspects of the Spring 2020 IAI policy will apply through the end of the 2021 calendar year.**

Additional Guidance for Summer 2021 and Fall 2021 Online Courses:

Institutions that have found success with their pandemic-related approaches to lab and speech alternatives may continue this practice through the Spring 2021 terms as well. Online labs for both major and non-major courses are acceptable offerings.

Institutions may also choose to be more selective in determining which lab science course offerings can effectively be adapted to an online learning environment. For example, organic chemistry may not lend itself well to an online format, but general chemistry might be taught successfully with the use of simulations, online labs, or at-home science kits (i.e., Lab-in-a-Box). Institutions using kits shall make students aware of the cost for these materials as early as possible during and after registration.

Institutions should also refer to their discipline-associated professional organizations for further guidance and recommendations regarding non-face to face labs. For example, the [American Chemical Society issued the following statement](#) in March 2020:

The use of virtual labs will be allowed for institutions that have chosen to move all instruction online as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and will not affect the approval status of a program. Once institutions revert back to face-to-face instructions, all laboratory experiences must be performed face-to-face as well.

Note:

IAI and the Boards will continue to monitor conditions related to COVID-19 and adjust these policies and recommendations as needed going forward.