ILLINOIS ARTICULATION INITIATIVE

To Facilitate Interinstitutional Transfer

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To: All IAI GECC and Major Panel Members
From: Malinda Aiello (IAI), Justin Bradley (IBHE), and Brian Messner (ICCB)
CC: Krista Jackson, IAI Steering Panel
Re: New iTransfer website, Course Review process reminders, and Leadership Team Policy Statements

Welcome to the Fall 2026 IAI Course Review Season! The Leadership Team would like to thank you all for your continued service to Illinois students and institutions. The strength of IAI remains its faculty-driven course review process. Every approval recommendation, discussion, and vote contributes to a nationally recognized statewide transfer system that helps students move successfully between institutions while ensuring they are appropriately prepared for the next step in their academic journey.

For over 26 years, IAI continues to be successful because it relies upon the expertise, professionalism, and good judgment of Illinois faculty as well as all other panel members and institutional course submitters. The Leadership Team sincerely appreciates your commitment to this work and looks forward to another productive review season!

FALL '26 UPDATES & REMINDERS:

NEW iTransfer.org Website

IAI staff are excited to announce that a completely redesigned iTransfer website was launched over the summer. The overarching goals of this extensive project were to increase the focus on student information, streamline and reduce redundant information, and give the site a fresh, modern look. While we believe you will find the site to be easy to use, feel free to email itransfer@itransfer.org if you need assistance finding anything.

Course Review Reminders:

As the fall panel season begins, the Leadership Team would like to take this opportunity to send some important reminders about the course review process. Over the past several years, the team has worked closely with all GECC and Major panels to clarify a fundamental principle of the IAI review process: **Our focus is on the content students need to be set up for future success.**

The IAI review process is at its strongest when panel members remain focused on a central question: "Does this course content provide students with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and preparation necessary to be comparable to other approved courses carrying the same IAI code?"

Our collective responsibility is to ensure that when a student transfers an IAI-approved course, the receiving institution can have confidence that the student has been exposed to substantially comparable content and is prepared to succeed in subsequent coursework.

Weekly Topical Outlines

In recent review seasons, courses have been returned solely because panel members sought additional detail within weekly topical outlines without providing specific feedback regarding missing topics or content. While weekly outlines remain an important component of course review, their purpose is limited and specific.

- As indicated in the 2025 Guidance Memo re. Course Review and Weekly Topical Outlines, panels should use the weekly outline to determine whether all required topics within the descriptor are being adequately covered and whether the sequencing and context of instruction appear appropriate. The outline is not intended to serve as a comprehensive instructional plan, nor should it be used to prescribe how a faculty member structures their course.

Keeping with our practice the past few seasons, detailed weekly topical outlines must continue to include topical information beyond chapter numbers and titles. Assignments and readings do not need to be embedded within the outline itself when they are clearly documented elsewhere in the syllabus or supporting materials.

When reviewing a weekly outline, panel members are encouraged to ask: “Does this material demonstrate that the required content in the descriptor is being taught?” rather than: “Would I teach or organize this course in the same manner?” The first question falls within the scope of IAI review; the second reflects institutional and faculty discretion.

Guiding Principles for Course Review

As you review courses this season, please keep the following principles in mind:

1. Panels review courses for comparability and transferability, not for identical content or instructional approaches.
2. Panels are responsible for determining whether descriptor requirements have been met, not for evaluating institutional policies or governance decisions.
3. IAI does not prescribe how a syllabus must be organized or formatted, provided all required information is present and sufficient for review.
    - Several institutions are now using syllabus template programs which limit what an instructor may add or expand upon. Due to this limitation, the submission of supporting documents in addition to the representative instructor syllabus may be necessary in order to provide all required information for the panel’s course review process.
4. Course review should take a holistic approach, considering the syllabus and all supporting materials submitted by the institution.
5. Weekly topical outlines are intended to demonstrate coverage of required content and context, not every activity, reading, or instructional decision made throughout the semester.
6. Panel approval criteria should be used to support consistency in decisions while also maintaining appropriate flexibility and professional judgment.
    - A course may be approved, even if all items listed on the panel’s course approval criteria have not been included, if it is apparent that all required topics are being adequately covered within the course.
7. Panel members should focus on whether students completing the course will be prepared for future coursework associated with the IAI descriptor and major.

NEW: Statements & Policies by the IAI Leadership Team

As higher education continues to evolve, panels are increasingly encountering questions that extend beyond content review. These may include course delivery methods, attendance policies, grading practices, assessment design, academic integrity procedures, artificial intelligence policies, online instruction, student authentication procedures, proctoring requirements, and other matters that institutions routinely address through faculty governance, accreditation processes, and institutional academic policies. While these topics are often important and worthy of discussion, they generally fall outside the scope of IAI.

While IAI is fundamentally a faculty-driven process, the IAI Leadership Team, comprised of the IAI Director and IBHE and ICCB Panel Managers, are charged with serving as the state guardrails in order to prevent overstep by panels.

Leadership Statement re. Institutional Responsibilities and Academic Integrity

The Leadership Team recognizes the challenges institutions are actively facing due to technological advances since COVID. These developments raise important questions for colleges and universities and will undoubtedly continue to shape teaching, learning, and assessment practices. However, IAI has historically focused, and will continue to do so, on course content, learning outcomes, and comparability rather than specific instructional practices or institutional policies.

While there has been broad agreement that academic integrity is an overarching and important concern, the conclusion reached has been that matters such as course delivery modality, proctoring requirements, assessment design, verification of student work, and academic integrity policies remain institutional responsibilities rather than areas governed through IAI approval criteria.
As a result, topics such as:

- Academic integrity procedures
- Artificial intelligence policies
- Student authentication methods
- Online versus face-to-face delivery, except for non-simulated hands-on labs
- Exam proctoring practices
- Attendance requirements

remain institutional responsibilities, rather than determined by IAI GECC and Major panels.
IAI panels may evaluate whether assignments, laboratories, projects, writing experiences, or other course components satisfy the expectations of the descriptor. However, panels should not require institutions to adopt specific practices for implementing, monitoring, or enforcing those activities unless such requirements are integral to the student grasping and mastering the required course concepts.

This important distinction helps preserve the IAI faculty-driven course review process while respecting the authority of institutions, departments, accrediting bodies, and local governance structures.

Leadership Statement re. AI

One practical challenge the panels have identified is that IAI approval is based primarily on review of course materials and syllabi. While a panel could require a syllabus statement regarding AI usage or proctoring, IAI has no mechanism to monitor or verify ongoing implementation of those practices once approval is granted.

Many institutions are adapting their courses and assessment practices in response to AI, including greater use of in-class assignments, scaffolded projects, oral presentations, project-based assessments, and other approaches designed to better demonstrate student learning. Those conversations are important and will likely continue to evolve.

Leadership Policy Decision re. Panels' Requirements for Proctoring
While the team appreciates all panels' efforts to maintain rigor and integrity in coursework, we have received multiple communications of concern regarding mandating a minimum percentage of proctored work in a course as this extends beyond the intended scope of an IAI panel's review. Just as with AI, previous discussions regarding proctored examinations reached a similar conclusion, namely that requiring a statement on a syllabus is different from having a reliable means of evaluating or enforcing the practice statewide.

Per HLC Criterion 2.E, institutions are responsible for adhering "to policies and procedures that ensure the responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge." This responsibility includes establishing and enforcing academic integrity through institutional policies and practices. As such, responsibility for determining how academic integrity is ensured within a course rests with the institution, rather than through a prescribed percentage of a specific assessment type.

Additionally, IAI panels do not traditionally evaluate institutional indicators such as grade distributions, assessment effectiveness, or academic integrity processes. For that reason, requiring a fixed percentage of proctored work appears to move beyond transfer alignment and into the regulation of institutional assessment practices, which are ordinarily governed through institutional policy, accreditation expectations, and faculty oversight.

Finally, this latest requirement listed within some panels' Course Approval Criteria documents may unintentionally constrain effective pedagogical approaches. In courses emphasizing project-based or collaborative learning, student achievement may appropriately be demonstrated through extended projects, presentations, modeling activities, portfolios, or other authentic assessments. It is unclear whether such work would qualify as "proctored" under the proposed standard, creating ambiguity in both interpretation and implementation while potentially discouraging innovative and discipline-appropriate assessment practices.

Therefore, the IAI Leadership Team has determined that ultimately, this matter is best left to the individual institution, as it concerns institutional integrity and assessment methodology rather than the IAI-reviewed content or rigor of the coursework itself. Subsequently, all references to the requirement for proctored exams and assignments have been removed from all Course Approval Criteria documents and will be in effect for the Fall '26 panel season course review process.