

2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR  
RELEASED FEBRUARY 1, 2024

# TRANSITION MATH FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## JOLIET JUNIOR COLLEGE TRANSITION MATH PARTNERSHIP



JENNIFER DANIELSON  
JJC TRANSITION MATH LIAISON  
jdaniels@jjc.edu

## **Contents**

	<b><u>Page</u></b>
<b>I. Getting Started</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>II. Course Planning</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>III. Special Education and Accommodations</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>IV. Course Approval and Portability</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>V. Final exams</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>VI. End of Course</b>	<b>15</b>

## I. Getting Started

### What is transition math?

The Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act (PWR Act) includes Transitional Math (TM), which is built around courses, standalone or embedded, that increase college readiness for high school seniors. Their key feature is the guaranteed placement a student receives upon successful completion at all Illinois community colleges and accepting Illinois universities.

### How are these TM courses different than the courses currently at the high school, such as Algebra II, or community college, such as Intermediate Algebra?

These courses require students apply the mathematics in context of real-life authentic tasks. A major focus of these courses is incorporating problem-based learning. High schools must document where these learning tasks occur in the course in their portability documentation (see section IV for information on portability).

### When must the high school implement a transition math course?

By June 30, 2019, each high school will receive their “date” that they must implement at least one transition math pathway course. High schools will receive the dates for 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 school years. No one will be required to implement in the 2019-20 year.

### Does the high school have to implement a course? Can we opt out?

There is a procedure to opt-out but most high schools will not qualify. Your high school needs to demonstrate that it is not feasible/economical to offer this course to your students. At the time this document was released, the state is currently formalizing the opt-out procedures. Details regarding opting-out will be found at <http://www.iltransitionalmath.org/>.

### What pathways exist? What needs to be taught in each pathway?

There is a STEM pathway, a Quantitative Literacy/ Statistics pathway (QL/Stats), and a Technical Math pathway (Tech math). See the Competencies and Policies document at <http://www.iltransitionalmath.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/TM-comps-and-policies-Aug-2018-corrected-10-25-18.pdf> for details about each pathway and the process and content competencies.

### What questions should we consider when deciding to start a transition course?

1. What students are not being served? What does the data say? Check the Illinois Report Card for your remediation rate.
2. Which course(s) (STEM, QL/Stats, Tech) will you offer and when?  
The state will require at least one section for one pathway be offered. High schools can decide to offer multiple pathways or multiple sections of one pathway.
3. Will your course be stand-alone or embedded? One semester or one year?  
The state strongly recommends that the STEM pathway be offered over one year. If a school decides to offer a STEM pathway course, they will most likely conclude there will not be enough time in one semester for the instruction and assessment on the required competencies as well as incorporating problem-based learning.  
The other pathways (QL/Stat, Tech) are encouraged to be offered over one year but could also be completed in one semester.
4. Will your course be new or an adaptation of an existing course?
5. Will you develop your own curriculum, modify the state curriculum, or use one that exists?

### Our high school is interested in offering a transition math course in partnership with JJC next academic year.

#### How do we get started?

Contact the transition math liaison at Joliet Junior College.

Jennifer Danielson

[jdaniels@jjc.edu](mailto:jdaniels@jjc.edu)

Adjunct Professor, Mathematics Department, Joliet Junior College

(815) 280-2810

You will be supplied with a copy of the current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Let JJC know what pathway(s) you want to offer and when you plan to offer (school year, semester). Then see Section IV: Course Approval and 2024-2025 Academic Year | JJC transitional math partnership FAQ

Portability for the additional documents your school will need to create (the documents include items such as the MOU, a syllabus, and a competency spreadsheet).

### **What is a MOU?**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is developed in joint partnership between the community college and all the high schools in that district. The MOU is the agreement how the transition courses in that partnership will operate. All high schools and the community college are equal in MOU discussions. All high schools must abide by the same MOU; there are not different agreements for different high schools. Some of the grading items in the MOU are state-mandated, and other grading items are specific to our partnership.

The MOU in theory could be revised each year, but since it requires collaboration and agreement from all schools, it is a cumbersome process. Ideally the partnership would discuss and edit the MOU once and everyone reaches agreement/compromises on the requirements. Then each year if there are no major issues, our partnership would continue using the same MOU. The MOU is valid until the partnership decides to terminate it.

If the MOU will need to be edited/updated, JJC will draft the new MOU. Then the draft will be emailed for commenting. It was felt this email commenting process gives all stakeholders a chance to review and comment instead of requiring a summit visit or webinar where not all stakeholders would be able to attend. After a consensus is reached, a finalized MOU will be emailed for signatures.

The grading section of the MOU addresses the minimum expectations for the course. If an item is not mentioned in the MOU, then the high school has flexibility on that item to set it up however they wish. For instance, if the high school wants instructors to have a final exam after the first semester for a yearlong course, they have that option. The high school should specify those expectations in the pathway syllabus (discussed in Section IV: Course Approval and Portability) so all high school instructors teaching the course follow the same grading expectations. If a particular item is not included in the syllabus, then each high school instructor can choose how to handle that grading.

### **What students are eligible to take a transition math course?**

To take a transitional math course, a student must be a senior who has met the high school math graduation requirement. Transitional math courses are intended for students who are not projected ready for college-level math by the end of their senior year. The state agencies and statewide panel have defined multiple measures criteria for determining projected readiness, which must be utilized for placement into transitional math courses.

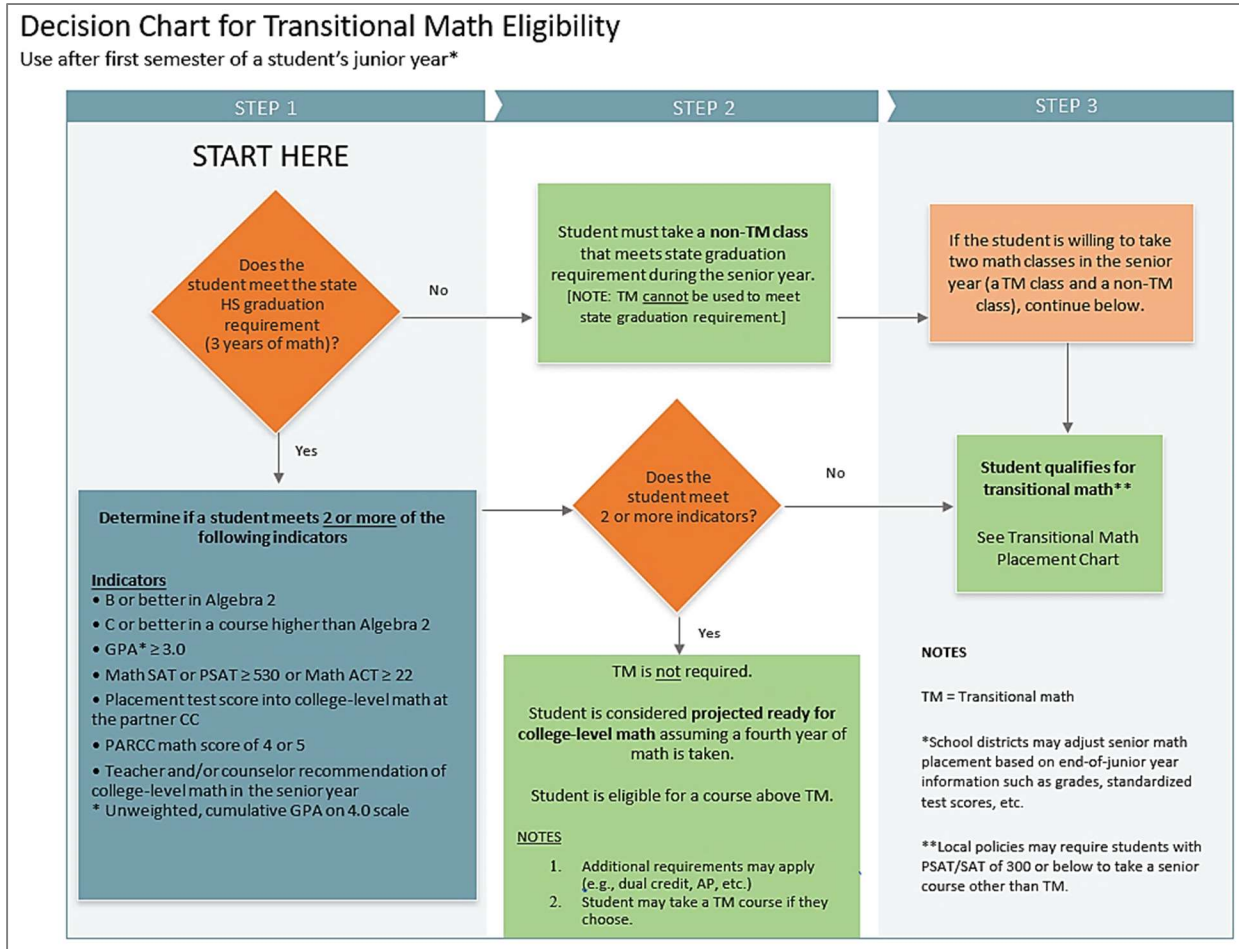
If the student meets at least two of the following indicators, the student is considered *college-ready*:

#### **Indicators**

- B or better in Algebra 2
- C or better in a course higher than Algebra 2
- $GPA^* \geq 3.0$
- Math SAT or PSAT  $\geq 530$  or Math ACT  $\geq 22$
- Placement test score into college-level math at the partner CC
- PARCC math score of 4 or 5
- Teacher and/or counselor recommendation of college-level math in the senior year

\* Unweighted, cumulative GPA on 4.0 scale

Students who have an SAT score of 300 or below should enroll in foundational math instruction and supports either in lieu of, or concurrently with, a transitional math course.



This advising decision chart can be found at <http://www.iltransitionalmath.org/implementation/advising/>. While a student projected ready for college-math should take an early college credit math course (e.g., advanced placement or dual credit) during his or her senior year, the student may enroll in a transitional math course if such enrollment is determined in consultation with a counselor to be in the student's best interest.

**Once it is decided a student should take a transition math course, what pathway should the student take?**

Each pathway requires the student has met the state high school graduation requirement in order to be eligible to take the transition math course their senior year.

The transition to STEM pathway course has the additional eligibility criteria of

- B or better in Algebra 1 or a higher math course
- Math GPA of 2.5 or higher
- Teacher verification of transitional college algebra prerequisite competencies

The STEM pathway course is very rigorous so the state has added additional criteria to assist with placement.

Students who have not decided a meta major should take the QL/Stats transition course.

The placement chart below can also be found at <http://www.iltransitionalmath.org/implementation/advising/>.

## Transitional Math Placement

Students who meet the eligibility criteria for transitional math should choose a pathway based on their career interests and meta major. Use the following information to guide students with that decision.

NOTE: Students should take **Transition to QL/Statistics** if they have not selected a meta major.

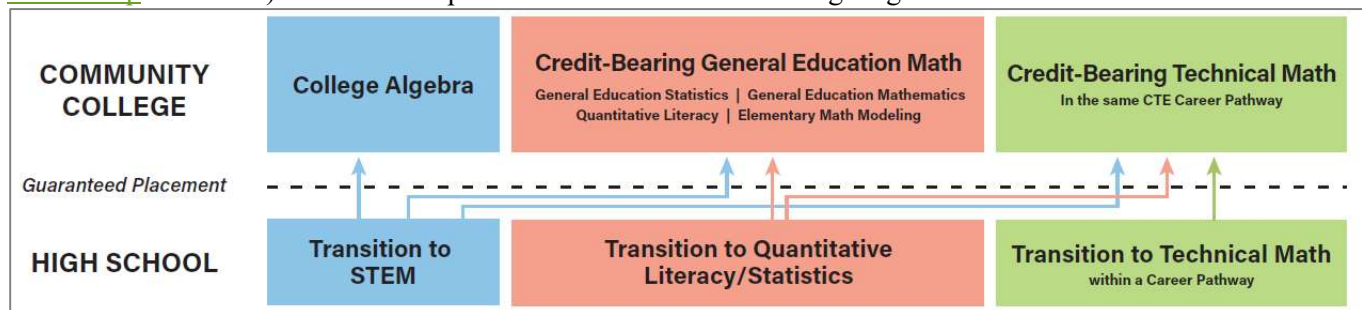
Transition to STEM/College Algebra	Transition to Quantitative Literacy/Statistics	Transition to Technical Math
<p><b>Audience</b> Student who will need College Algebra but is not ready to take it in the senior year.</p> <p><b>Common majors/programs</b> Many AS degrees, most STEM majors, some nursing majors, elementary education, business degrees requiring business calculus, university programs (BS or BA) that require College Algebra</p> <p><b>Additional eligibility criteria</b> Students who wish take Transition to STEM will need to meet one of the following prerequisites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B or better in Algebra 1 or a higher math course</li> <li>• Math GPA <math>\geq 2.5</math> (out of 4.0)</li> <li>• Teacher verification of transitional college algebra prerequisite competencies</li> </ul>	<p><b>Audience</b> Student who will need Liberal Arts Math (General Education Math) or Elementary Statistics but is not ready for dual credit, dual enrollment, or AP versions of those courses in the senior year.*</p> <p><b>Common major/programs</b> Most AA degrees such as history, <a href="#">art</a>, <a href="#">philosophy</a>, English</p> <p>*Transition to QL/Stats is a better option for students who need College Algebra but feel Transition to STEM is too difficult. Many colleges have options to reduce time to complete College Algebra.</p>	<p><b>Audience</b> Student who will need multiple levels of technical math but is only ready for the lowest version**.</p> <p><b>Common major/programs</b> Most AAS degrees such as welding, fire science, construction, culinary arts</p> <p>** If the CC only has one tech math course required that is the same as the transitional tech math course, it would be better to have dual credit tech math at the HS instead of transitional technical math.</p>

### Can we have non-seniors in the class?

Yes, but when the district submits SIS codes to ISBE they must use one code for the seniors and one code for the non-seniors in the class. Only the seniors are allowed to take advantage of the placement benefits of the transition course.

### Once the high school student successfully completes a pathway transition course (grade of C or better) and the high school is granted portability, what courses can the student take at the college level?

When a student successfully completes a transition course, the applicable portability code is placed on the student's transcript assuming the partnership has been approved for portability in that pathway (see more about portability in section IV). Given that code, any Illinois community college (and some universities; see [EdSystems University Partnership](#) for details) will use it for placement based on the following diagram:



It is up to the community college if they wish to honor a pathway course for more college-level math classes than what is state-mandated.



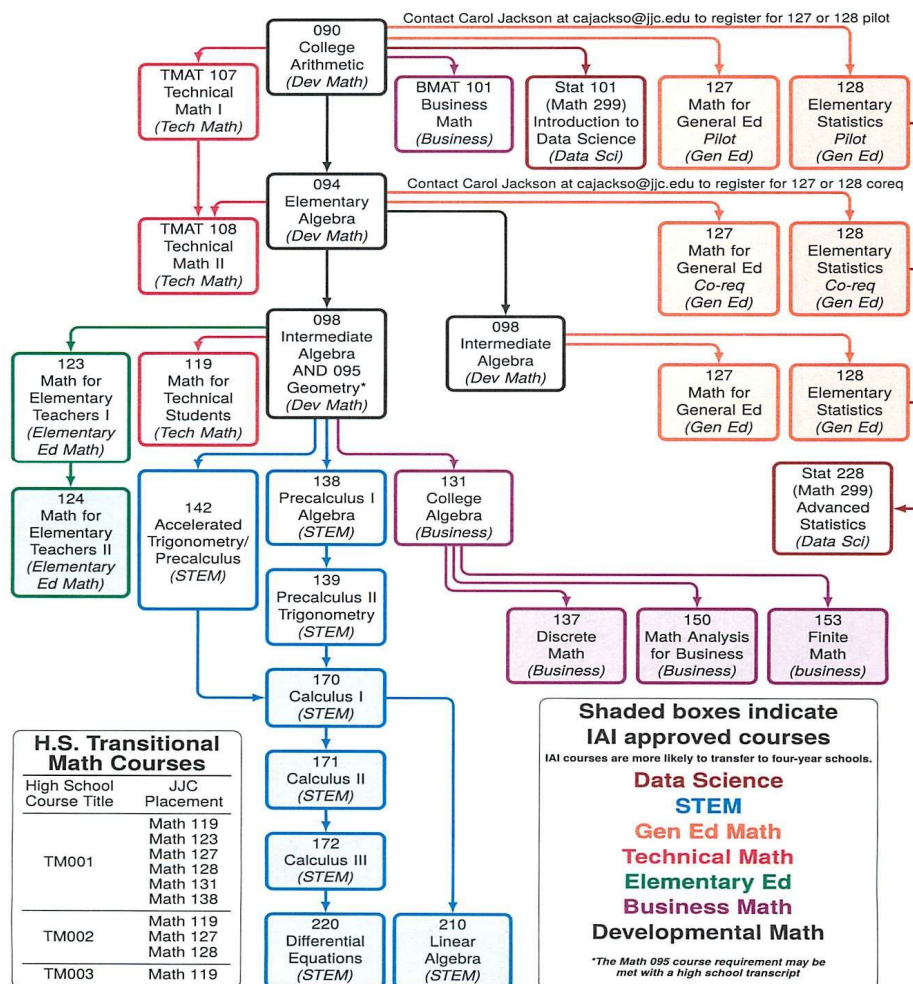
<i>For successful completion of the STEM pathway course, the student is eligible to enroll at JJC in:</i>	<i>For successful completion of the QL/Stat pathway course, the student is eligible to enroll at JJC in:</i>	<i>For successful completion of the Tech math pathway course, the student is eligible to enroll at JJC in:</i>
Math 119 Technical Math Math 123 Math for Elementary Teachers I * Math 127 General Education Math Math 128 Elementary Statistics Math 131 College Algebra Math 138 Pre-Calculus I	Math 119 Technical Math Math 127 General Education Math Math 128 Elementary Statistics	Math 119 Technical Math

\* The student must also meet a geometry prerequisite satisfied by an average grade of C or better over two semesters of high school geometry with no failing grade OR by taking a JJC placement exam OR by taking Math 095 Geometry at JJC.

See below for the sequence of math courses at JJC with indicators for the eligible college-level courses for each pathway.

## JOLIET JUNIOR COLLEGE SEQUENCE OF MATH COURSES

*Find your pathway and starting point below.*



## II. Course Planning

### **Do we have to do the same curriculum as other high schools in this partnership?**

No. Each high school can design their own curriculum as long as it meets the objectives of the course. However, high schools may wish to design or collaborate on curriculum. If a high school is interested, they can contact the JJC transition math liaison for a list of other high schools that offer/plan to offer that pathway in order to collaborate with other schools. The JJC liaison and other JJC math faculty would be interested in attending and participating in these planning meetings as time permits.

### **What is the name of the course?**

Each high school can choose their own name for the course. The high school will document the chosen name on the MOU, syllabus, and competency checklist. Schools need to keep in mind they cannot choose names that are misleading to colleges reading the transcript. For instance, the name of a STEM pathway course should NOT be things like “College Algebra” or “Introduction to College Algebra.” Also, for those high schools who have worked with JJC in the past piloting a version of this course, the STEM pathway course should NOT be called “Math 098”. Some appropriate names for the STEM pathway include “Transition to College Algebra” or “Preparatory Algebra.”

### **What are the SIS code needed to report the course to the state?**

The SIS codes for the various pathways can be found at <http://www.iltransitionalmath.org/getting-started-kit/isbe-course-codes/>.

For the STEM pathway: 02055A001

For the QL/Stats pathway: 02201A001

For the Tech Math pathway: 02153A001

### **What resources are available for developing the curriculum?**

The Competencies and Policies document that discusses what must be covered in each pathway can be found at <http://www.iltransitionalmath.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/TM-comps-and-policies-Aug-2018-corrected-10-25-18.pdf>. The *process competencies* and *content competencies* must both be covered in these courses.

State workgroups have been finding and creating curriculum that align with the required course competencies. As resources are released, the state has been posting them at <http://www.iltransitionalmath.org/curriculum/>. They plan to provide items such as sample units of study, a list of websites, competency rubrics, and sample tasks. High schools can also meet with JJC math faculty or other high schools to collaborate on curriculum design.

Keep in mind when developing curriculum that transitional math courses should enable students to develop conceptual understanding and problem-solving competence while increasing college readiness in the path of their choice. The courses emphasize conceptual understanding and modeling rather than procedures and symbolic manipulation.

Curriculum should be based around real-life applications and relevant contexts. They should encourage students to think deeply about the concepts. The courses focus on developing mathematical maturity and college readiness through problem solving, problem and project-based learning, critical thinking, data analysis, and the writing and communication of mathematics. See below for resources for the problem-based tasks.

### **What textbooks/ materials can I use to teach the course?**

Each high school can use any course materials they wish. There are no mandated materials. Schools have the options of purchasing materials, using open courseware, using state resources and sample units, etc. See the following website for state resources: <http://www.iltransitionalmath.org/curriculum/>

### **What resources are available for incorporating problem-based tasks?**

These transition courses stress conceptual understanding and problem-solving competence. Instruction should be contextualized and emphasize authentic applications whenever possible, and instructional strategies integrating mathematics competencies with other academic and career competencies are encouraged for all students. Relevant



contexts that apply to the student's life, job, and future college classes should be used, particularly contexts from local business and industry.

Problem-based tasks must make up a minimum of 25% of the overall grade of the course. This percentage is mandated by the state. While the nature of these tasks may be best incorporated in a project, these tasks can also be incorporated on homework, quizzes, and/or tests.

The state is working on resources for each pathway. These resources can be found on the Illinois transition math curriculum website <http://www.iltransitionalmath.org/curriculum/>. Free problem-based tasks aligned to transition math pathways can be found at Illinois Open Education Resources (IOER) at [https://ioer.ilsharedlearning.org/Library/5591/PWR\\_Transitional\\_Math](https://ioer.ilsharedlearning.org/Library/5591/PWR_Transitional_Math). Additional curriculum resources can be found at <https://nrich.maths.org/> or <https://www.map.mathshell.org/>.

### **How do I grade the course?**

The assessment structure is outlined in the MOU and in the syllabus created by the high school. The grading section (1B) of the MOU addresses the minimum expectations for the course that all districts in the partnership must follow. If an item is not mentioned in the MOU, then the high school has flexibility to set it up however they wish. The high school wants all their instructors teaching the course to follow a certain grading expectation, then it needs to be specified in the pathway syllabus (syllabus is discussed in Section IV: Course Approval and Portability). If a particular item is not included in that syllabus, then each high school instructor can choose how to handle that area of grading. For instance, the MOU states that homework must count for 0% - 25% of the overall grade. The high school may decide based on the philosophy of that school that homework is worth 0% of the grade; they can specify that in the pathway syllabus. If it is not specified in the syllabus, then each instructor teaching the course can decide how much homework is worth.

### **We would like to cover other items in this course than the objectives mandated by the state. Can we do that?**

Some schools that will cover the pathway as a yearlong course may notice when they map their curriculum there is time to cover an additional unit. Some schools may opt to include a unit on geometry or trigonometry etc. If the high school decides to do this, they need to include relevant information in the pathway syllabus (evaluation, units of study, etc.). Then high school instructors teaching the course are aware of the additional units and this makes JJC aware of the additional components of the course at that high school. Additionally, the school should write competencies and key performance indicators for these additional units of study and include it on the competency spreadsheet after the required competencies for that pathway so instructors know what are the objectives for the additional unit.

That school should verify that percentages listed in the MOU and syllabus are met by the counting only the assessments/projects etc. that align to the state competencies and not to the inclusion of additional units. For example, the high school plans to give 5 tests worth 40% of the overall grade, but one of those tests is over an additional geometry unit. Therefore, if we only count the tests that align to the state competencies, the high school does not meet the minimum requirement that 40% of the grade comes from tests.

See V. Final Exams and VI. End of Course for additional information regarding evaluation and grading if extra content beyond the state-mandated competencies are taught in the course.

## **III. Special Education and Accommodations**

### **How does the high school teacher handle a student IEP?**

High schools must follow the accommodations listed in the student's IEP. Accommodation decisions should be made through the IEP process. Considering that this course material content is suited for high school students, schools must follow IDEA law as their guide in the decisions making process.

### **Are students required to register with the Disability Services office at Joliet Junior College?**

Students are not required to register with the Disability Services office at Joliet Junior College to take Transition Math at the high school. However, it is highly encouraged for students to register with the Disability Services office during the 2024-2025 Academic Year | JJC transitional math partnership FAQ

spring of their senior year. As students begin to transition out of high school and into JJC, the Disability Services office provides wrap around support for students onboarding with the college.

## IV. Course Approval and Portability

### What does it mean when we say the course is “portable”?

Each partnership needs to submit applicable documents for a pathway course to the state to be approved for portability for that pathway. Once the state has granted that pathway is portable for that partnership, then a local panel will review the applicable documents from a high school to grant portability for the course at that high school. If the high school course is approved for portability at local and state levels, then seniors who earn a C or better in that course can use it for placement at any Illinois community college and participating universities; see [University Engagement](#) for 4-year universities that accept TM and [Community College Engagement](#) for community college participation by feeder school (see Section I: Getting Started for details regarding what courses the student could place into).

The student can use that TM course for placement for up to 18 months after the end of the course.

For details about policies and procedures relating to portability, visit <http://www.iltransitionalmath.org/portability/> for a diagram of the portability process.

### What is the SPP? What is the LAP?

The SPP is the Statewide Portability Panel. This state panel will review a representative course from each partnership for each pathway that partnership is applying for portability. It also determines course approval criteria.

The LAP is the Local Advisory Panel. This local panel will collect syllabi and competency spreadsheets from all high schools in the partnership, approve partnership courses locally, choose a representative course for each pathway to send to the SPP, and communicate information from the SPP to school principals regarding changes to be made to the courses if needed.

For the 2024-2025 school year, the LAP for the JJC partnership consists of the following individuals:

Jennifer Danielson\*  
Adjunct Professor  
JJC transition math liaison  
Joliet Junior College  
jdaniels@jjc.edu

Dr. Sara Gallagher  
Dean, Arts and Sciences  
Joliet Junior College  
Melissa.gillis@jjc.edu

Tracey Adams  
Mathematics Department Chair  
Minooka Community High School  
Minooka School District #111  
tadams@mchs.net

Brian Holman  
Mathematics Teacher  
Seneca High School  
Seneca High School District #160  
bholman@senecahs.org

\*Question for the LAP can initially be directed to the transition math liaison Jennifer Danielson.

### **How will the high school district earn approval for portability of their course?**

First, the high school should obtain a copy of the MOU for the partnership (if the high school does not agree to the terms in the current MOU, the high school should contact the JJC transition math liaison to discuss concerns). There is one MOU for each district so it is possible as additional high schools in a district are ready to begin offering a transition math course that the MOU will need to be updated with those new schools and recirculated for signatures. Once the high school district circulates the MOU for necessary information and signatures, it should be returned to JJC for college signatures.

Then, the high school will create a transitional math syllabus and corresponding content competency spreadsheet for each of their transitional math pathways they wish to offer at that high school. The syllabus template and spreadsheet for each pathway can be found at <http://www.iltransitionalmath.org/portability-documents/>. The syllabus lists the instructor's name so there will be a separate syllabus for each course instructor. However, each instructor at a particular high school should have the same syllabus content since portability will be granted on a high school-by-high school basis.

If multiple instructors at a high school will be teaching a particular pathway during a school year, those instructors should collaborate on writing the syllabus and competency spreadsheet since the content is the same for all instructors (the only exception is each instructor will have their own syllabus by changing the contact info on the front page).

The high school should designate one individual to submit all instructors' syllabi and the competency spreadsheet for a particular pathway to Jennifer Danielson, JJC transition math liaison. Please submit the syllabi and the spreadsheet for a pathway at the same time. If a school is teaching multiple pathways, they can be submitted separately (e.g. they can submit the STEM pathway documents first and then the QL/Stat documents at a later time.)

To summarize, in order to apply for portability for a particular pathway, a high school will ultimately need to submit:

- A signed copy of the MOU (one MOU for the district, each high school that offers TM will have their information in the MOU. Many schools are returning this first so the high school individual that submits the syllabi and spreadsheet should verify with Jennifer Danielson that JJC has a signed MOU on file for that high school)
- A syllabus for each instructor that will be teaching the course (the front page contact info will vary by instructor; the remaining content is the same for all instructors at that high school teaching that pathway)\*
- Content competencies spreadsheet (same for all instructors at that high school)\*

\*The high school should designate one individual to submit all the high school instructors' syllabi and the competency spreadsheet for a pathway at the same time.

### **What are the deadlines for a high school to submit for course portability to the LAP?**

For fall submission, verify with the transition math liaison that a signed MOU is on file. Then the syllabus for each instructor teaching that pathway and competency spreadsheet for that pathway needs to be submitted by August 31.

For spring submission, verify with the transition math liaison that a signed MOU is on file. Then the syllabus for each instructor teaching that pathway and competency spreadsheet for that pathway needs to be submitted by January 31.

Remember each pathway (STEM, QL/Stat, Tech math) is applied for separately.

### **Do we need to apply for portability each year?**

No. Once it is granted by the state, a pathway's portability is good for five years. If a high school has been granted portability by the SPP and LAP, they will not need to re-apply for portability until the partnership's portability expires. The exception would be if the high school wanted to change something about their course (e.g. edit the grading policies). The community college transition math liaison is responsible for tracking portability expiration and will let high schools know when the need to re-apply for portability.

### **What does the syllabus contain?**

A course syllabus should be completed by each high school for each pathway offered. A template is provided on the transitional math website <http://www.iltransitionalmath.org/portability-documents/> with the following information.

#### **Course Information**

State the course name chosen by the high school that aligns with the ISBE SIS code naming. Additionally, state the course pathway, ISBE SIS code, portability code, and course duration.

#### **Contact Information**

State the teacher's name and email and the high school phone number. Include the names of the high school and partner community college.

#### **Course Description**

Include the course description from the ISBE course catalog.

#### **Evaluation**

Course evaluation methods must meet the agreed upon grading structure in the MOU.

- Include specific information on grading and assessment.

#### **Course Materials**

Course materials must support the competencies of a transitional math course.

- Include information on learning resources that are required and most frequently used such as textbooks, statewide resources, open educational resources (include links when feasible), etc.

#### **Course Units of Study**

Units of study describe the organization of all the competencies and key performance indicators for the pathway as well as the required emphasis on problem/project-based learning.

- Include a detailed topical outline for each unit of instruction

#### **Process Competencies**

Transitional courses are intended to help students develop conceptual understanding and problem-solving ability as well as college and career readiness. To that end, the courses include process competencies related to mathematical and student success. While these competencies are not assessed directly, they should be a part of instruction and assessed indirectly. See page 6 in the [Competencies and Policies Document](#) for more information.

- Provide evidence illustrating how this criterion is being met. Evidence should address how the process competencies as well as the standards for mathematical practice are included throughout the course. Include a narrative describing how this criterion is met in your own words.

#### **Problem/Project-based Learning**

Transitional math instruction provides students with the mathematical knowledge and skills to meet their individualized college and career goals and to be successful in college-level math courses, while aligning with the Illinois Learning Standards. These courses work to address the gaps in understanding by working on bigger problems, emphasizing problem-based learning and projects, communication, and integration of concepts, not just skill acquisition. Contexts used should be authentic whenever possible and apply to the student's college or career path.

- Provide evidence illustrating how this criterion is being met. Evidence should address how the process competencies as well as the standards for mathematical practice are included throughout the course. Include a narrative describing how this criterion is met in your own words. Also, include a sample problem or project.

### **What does the content competency spreadsheet contain?**

A content competencies spreadsheet should be completed by each high school for each pathway offered. A template is provided on the transitional math website <http://www.iltransitionalmath.org/portability-documents/>.

Every content competency and key performance indicator for a pathway should be addressed in the course.

- Provide a completed content competencies spreadsheet illustrating where each competency and key performance indicator is met in the course.

### **After the district completes the portability documents, what happens then?**

The LAP will collect course and curricular documentation (transitional math syllabi and content competencies spreadsheets) from all high schools in the partnership that are seeking portability. The LAP will then review the courses according to the Statewide Portability Panel's course approval criteria. The LAP approves/rejects the course locally. After this point, the next steps will depend if the partnership already has been granted portability for that pathway by the SPP.

*If the partnership needs to apply for portability from the SPP:*

When the partnership is applying/ renewing state approval for a particular pathway, the LAP will review the documents submitted by the high schools and prepare for submission to the SPP. (deadlines for the LAP to submit a course to the SPP are March 1 for Spring portability panel consideration and October 1 for Fall panel consideration).

For each pathway seeking portability, the LAP will select a representative course syllabus, the competency checklist that corresponds to that syllabus, and the MOU to submit to the SPP. The LAP will also inform the state which high schools are seeking portability for that pathway from their partnership.

The SPP will respond to each partnership following the spring or fall panel meeting with a confirmation of approval or comments with changes that should be made to gain portability. Decisions granted are *approved*, *conditional approval*, *not enough information*, or *returned*. If the SPP approves the pathway for that partnership, then all high schools in that partnership will gain portability, not just the school(s) for which the representative syllabus and competency checklist were chosen.

*If the partnership already has gained portability approval for that pathway from the SPP:*

Once a pathway has gained portability approval, it must be renewed every five years. In between renewal years, the LAP is responsible for granting portability to high schools according to the Statewide Portability Panel's course approval criteria. High schools whose courses meet the criteria will be notified by the LAP. Then the LAP will submit a portability modification form so the state can update their database.

### **What if the course is not approved for portability by the SPP or LAP?**

If the pathway is not approved by the LAP for a particular high school, the LAP will draft and send recommendations to that high school's principal explaining why the course did not meet the approval criteria. After the course is amended, it can be resubmitted for approval. It is possible that approval may not be granted until the following semester/ academic year. Therefore, any students graduating at the end of that semester would not earn a portability code.

If the course is not approved by the SPP, then the LAP will inform the high schools of the needed changes. After changes are made, the LAP will collect the new documentation and re-apply for portability. It is possible that approval may not be granted until the following semester/ academic year.

In the meantime, if a particular pathway is not approved for portability by the SPP, then the course will not be accepted for placement at any Illinois community college. However, it may be able to be used for placement specifically at Joliet Junior College. We will discuss this further with our partnering high schools if this situation occurs.

NOTE: Not applying for portability is not an option. If the course is not approved for portability, then it is not considered a transition math course and will not meet the state requirement for implementation.

### **How will Illinois community colleges know a high school student has taken a portable TM course?**

After the student receives a grade of C or better, the high school will place the applicable portability code on the student's transcript. The high school also will include the end date of the course and the course grade. The student then presents that transcript to the community college.

Note this process requires hand-reading of transcripts at the community college. Remind the student to be patient if a community college does not initially identify that appropriate placement measure; the student may need to remind those responsible for transcript/placement evaluation to look for the portability code. At JJC, students can direct questions about math placement to the Math Placement Specialist Carol Jackson. She can be reached at [cajackso@jjc.edu](mailto:cajackso@jjc.edu) or (815) 280-2415.

### **What are the portability codes for the various pathways?**

TM001 (STEM pathway)

TM002 (QL/Stat pathway)

TM003 (Tech pathway)

High schools can only put these codes on a transcript if the course was approved at the state/local level for portability AND the student earned a C or better both semesters in the course.

## **V. Final exams**

### **Does the transition math course require a final exam?**

Yes. Final exams are a common practice at the community college level and high school students should begin preparing for that expectation. The final exam for TM pathway course at the end of the course must be cumulative since most college final exams are cumulative.

If the course is yearlong, the high school can decide to give a final at the end of the first semester. If they want all instructors to give a first semester final, it should be specified in the pathway syllabus. The final exam at the end of the second semester must be cumulative and not only cover the content from second semester.

### **Is there a common final I must use?**

Currently there is a common final exam for the STEM pathway. That final exam has 50 multiple-choice questions. It is expected to be completed in two hours (120 minutes). It is also broken into two parts if a school must give the exam over two days. Students should use a scientific calculator on the exam (graphing calculators are not permitted).

That final exam will be provided to high school teachers no later than one month prior to the end of the course. Let the liaison know if you need the STEM final exam or need the version already broken into two parts.

There is a final exam review guide for the STEM final which has 86 questions. It is designed to help both students and teachers prepare for the final exam. Schools can contact the JJC transition math liaison for a copy of the STEM pathway final review guide.

If any other pathways will eventually have a common final exam, it will be designed in partnership. Additionally, the pathway instructors will be notified to give the common final exam. In the meantime, the high schools should create a cumulative final exam for the course.

### **What does the instructor need to do after giving the final exam?**

The final exam (electronic or paper copies) should be secured at the high school.

The final needs to be graded and account for the percentage outlined in the MOU of 15% - 20% (or to the percentage in the course syllabus if the high school set a more specific percentage). If the course was yearlong and the high school gave a final exam at the end of the first semester and a cumulative final at the end of the second semester, both grades combined need to adhere to the percentage stated in the MOU/syllabus. The final exam should not be curved or questions omitted. This is particularly important when there is a common final exam; it is the responsibility of the instructor to adjust pacing to ensure all the course objectives are covered prior to administering the final exam to students.



If the pathway had a common final exam, the scantrons for the final exam must be sent to JJC transition math liaison for analysis within one week of the conclusion of the course. If the high school uses software to administer the final, the data needed for analysis may be provided via spreadsheet instead of sending the scantron forms; contact the JJC liaison to discuss options. If a high school needs scantron forms, contact the JJC liaison to discuss options.

**What if our school is covering additional units of study? How should we handle the final exam?**

If there is not a common final for that pathway, then the high school can write the final exam with those additional objectives. However, it is the feeling of this partnership that those additional objectives should not hinder nor boost the student's chance or earning a C in the course (see VI. End of Course for details on grading). Therefore, it is recommended that if the high school is writing the final, it aligns only to the competencies mandated by the state. If additional topics/units are covered, those topics could be assessed on a separate exam. The other option is to write final exam questions so the question covers more than one competency (for instance, for QL-A3. *Students can create, solve, and reason with equations and inequalities in the context of authentic modeling and problem solving situations*, students may be expected to explain why when solving a trigonometric equation that the values generated from a certain quadrant may not be valid for the problem context).

If there is a common final exam, then it is recommended the high school give the common final after the competencies required by the transition math pathway are covered. Then the teacher can calculate the grade until that point. Then the course can cover any additional units and the instructor can test the students on a separate exam and calculate an updated grade.

## VI. End of Course

**What should a student do who is not receiving a C or better in the course near the end of the course? Should that student withdraw?**

If the student is not doing well in the course, then it is important that student be allowed to fail. Successfully passing this course grants student college course placement; that is a very desirable outcome and needs to only be given to students who have earned it! Neither the community college nor the high school want a student placing into classes which they are not prepared to take. If the student is struggling in this transition course, the student will most likely be unsuccessful in that college course. It will be very difficult to convince the student to go back and retake a developmental course in order to better prepare them for the skills needed in that college level course.

A student in a transition math course is not enrolled in any course at JJC, so s/he does not need to drop anything at the community college.

If the student does not receive a C or better both semesters in the course, the impact to the student is s/he no longer is eligible for the placement benefit of the course. The student then is subject to the placement measures of the community college. It is up to the high school if they feel it is beneficial to transfer that student into a different high school class for the remainder of the school year.

**What if a student needs an extended leave of absence at the end of the course?**

The high school can decide how to handle the student completing the course requirements, whether to issue a grade for work completed or to provide time after the semester is over to complete the course. The instructor should not let that student delay the return of the final exam scantrons or the data analysis file within one week of the end of the course to the JJC math liaison. If the student will be given extra time, then once the student with the absence has completed the course, the instructor should then send the scantron for that student and an amended data analysis file to the liaison.

**Once the course is concluded, what does the instructor need to do?**

If there is a common final exam, the instructor needs to send the scantrons to the JJC transition math liaison for analysis. If the high school administers the final electronically and has software that compiles the data, then the school could use reports generated from the program. Contact the JJC math liaison to discuss options.

The instructor needs to complete a data analysis file for JJC that provides information such as student name, final exam grade, overall course grade, etc. If the instructor needs a copy of this file, contact the JJC math liaison.

The instructor needs to notify the high school records department which students in the TM course received a C or better both semesters in the course. The high school then needs to place the correct portability code along with the course grade and the date the course concluded on the student's transcript. The student will be able to use that portability code for 18 months.

**If the high school decided to cover additional content in the course, how should the grade be calculated?**

The state requires that the student earn a grade of C or better in the transition math course in order to obtain placement credit. The state has specified the competencies the student must master in order to obtain that credit. Therefore, our partnership feels that if the high school wants to cover additional topics, then two grades should be computed. The first grade should be calculated after the student completes the objectives for the transition math course. This will include any assessments/projects related to the transition course competencies and the final exam for those competencies. The second grade will include assessments related to those additional objectives. The rationale for asking the instructor to calculate two grades is the coverage of the additional objectives should not impact the student's grade negatively so that if the student was earning a C but the additional unit brought the student's grade down then that student no longer qualifies for the placement credit (The same argument could be made of the additional objectives boosting a student's grade).

The additional content (for example, a geometry or trigonometry unit) and its impact on the grade should be detailed in the syllabus. That school should verify that percentages listed in the MOU are met by the assessments/projects that align to the state competencies and not to the inclusion of additional units. Also, the competencies and performance indicators for that additional content should be included in the competency spreadsheet. This way the community college knows locally what is occurring in that high school.

Once the state-mandated objectives are completed and the final exam is given for those objectives, if the student earns a C or better in the course, then the student would earn the portability code on their transcript along with reporting the grade earned on those mandated objectives. Note at this point the teacher can complete the end of course data worksheet for the JJC transition math liaison.

If the course then covers an additional unit, the teacher would have the option of calculating an updated grade with any additional quizzes/ tests and producing a new grade for the course. That new grade in theory could appear next to the course for that semester. The teacher should be ready to justify why there are two grades for the course, one next to the portability code in the Notes section of the transcript and one next to the course description for that semester.

**Once the course is concluded, what does the student need to do?**

If the student earned a grade of C or better in the transition course, then once the student has obtained a copy of the high school transcript, s/he can bring it to any Illinois community college or participating universities to use the course for placement and enroll in a college-level math class for the applicable pathway.

If the student encounters difficulty with placement at the community college, the student should stress that s/he took a transition math course. This course is a newer initiative in the state so the student may encounter a person who is not familiar with the details of this course and how it impacts placement. The state is asking each community college designate a transition math liaison who could help assist the student with placement questions. Hopefully the student can reach the liaison for that community college who can provide further assistance.

If the student encounters math placement issues at JJC, the student should contact the JJC math placement specialist:  
Carol Jackson  
cajackso@jjc.edu  
815.280.2415

Transition Math FAQ  
Joliet Junior College

If the student encounters issues at a university, it is important to note that universities are not required to take a successfully completed transition math course for placement. Participating universities can be found at [Illinois University Participation in Transitional Math – Education Systems Center at NIU \(edsystemsniu.org\)/](https://edsystemsniu.org/) .

**Can a student enroll in a JJC college-level math course prior to the end of the course?**

If a student wants to enroll in JJC coursework that requires the TM course to meet the math placement measure and is currently completing the course, that student can contact the math placement specialist, Carol Jackson, at (815) 280-2415, or [cjackso@jjc.edu](mailto:cjackso@jjc.edu) for assistance.

For other community colleges or universities, the student would need to speak with a counselor/advisor to discuss options. The student should stress that s/he is currently taking a transition math course. Remember, this course is a newer initiative in the state so it is possible the student may encounter a person who is not familiar with the details of this course and how it impacts placement. Also, without a transcript the student does not have a way to prove they are currently taking that course so the school may request the student register once s/he has a transcript with the applicable code.