

# Pennsylvania's Early Childhood Education (ECE) Career Pathway Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

## Pennsylvania's ECE Career Pathway

### **CP-1 Are there any plans to include education or other experience as part of the career pathways (for example, years of child care experience or credits in Psychology or Elementary Education?)**

Not at this time. The current Career Pathway system allows several degrees to be considered "related" because they may include some related competencies but do not include all competencies covered in an early childhood education (ECE) focused degree. Credits in these "related" degrees are awarded "half credit." Pennsylvania's ECE Career Pathway levels are evaluated on college courses, degrees, and certifications, and/or other OCDEL approved endorsements.

### **CP-2 I have an issue related to my personal Career Pathway placement. How do I get that resolved?**

Complete the [Career Pathway Placement Review Form](#) when looking to have a pathway placement re-evaluated. This can be filled out by an ECE Professional or by a representative from an Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) or Professional Development Organization (PDO) on behalf of an ECE Professional.

### **CP-3 Where can I find help when completing my Career Pathway on the PD Registry?**

New users to the PD Registry, ECE Professionals who already have an account in the Registry, and Program Directors can [visit this resource page on the Pennsylvania Key website](#).

### **CP-4 What information is required on my transcript for my Career Pathway to be processed?**

All college transcripts must have the following:

- Student name
- Institution Name
- Name of degree earned
- Credits received and grades earned
- Date and degree conferred (if applicable)

Foreign degrees must be assessed and evaluated by a member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) or the Association of International Credential Evaluation (AICE). For more information, [visit the ECE Career Pathway \(pakeys.org/career-pathway\) page on Pennsylvania Key website](#). Official transcripts are not required.

## Associate in Specialized Business (ASB)/ Associate in Specialized Technology (AST) Policy

### **ASB AST-1 Are you able to go over accredited institutions for the ASB/AST? Is there a list of institutions that are considered non-accredited?**

A link to search for an accredited institution can be found in [Announcement PDO 22 #01](#).

**ASB AST-2 If I have an ASB/AST degree earned at a non-regionally accredited institution, can I submit my information now to have my credits counted (prior to July 1, 2022 will they be counted)?**

Yes. [Announcement PDO 22 #01](#) explains that non-regionally accredited ASB/AST degrees and credits will be counted if they are issued prior to July 1, 2022.

**ASB AST-3 Will someone who is placed prior to July 1, 2022, with a non-regionally accredited degree keep that Career Pathway level during subsequent renewals after July 1, 2022?**

Yes.

**ASB AST-4 What do you mean by credits not being accepted after July? Is it for foreign or national degrees?**

[Review Announcement PDO 22 #01](#). Any degrees or credits from non-regionally accredited programs earned after July 1, 2022, will not be counted towards placement on the Career Pathway.

**ASB AST-5 What is the impact on students who are currently enrolled and not completing degrees until 2024? Would these degrees count as they were enrolled prior to July 2022? What if they are enrolled in an AA or AS in ECE where the institution is in the process of becoming accredited?**

[Review Announcement PDO 22 #01](#). Any degrees or credits from non-regionally accredited programs earned after July 1, 2022, will not be counted towards placement on the Career Pathway. After July 1, 2022, students should be encouraged to enroll in and attend a regionally credited school as the credits will not count for a Career Pathway placement until the college is listed as regionally accredited.

**ASB AST-6 Are students who held these degrees prior to July 2022 going to retain their Career Pathway placements?**

[Review Announcement PDO 22 #01](#). Any degrees or credits from non-regionally accredited programs earned before July 1, 2022, will still be counted towards placement on the Career Pathway.

**ASB AST-7 Were the colleges across the state informed of this change and the impact it will have on their enrollments? How many colleges / students will this impact?**

[Announcement PDO 22 #01](#) was released February 7, 2022. Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) were a target group of this communication. The announcement asks ELRCs, PDOs, and other groups to share the announcement. If there is a particular college that needs outreach, [contact Rebecca Lamar \(reblam@pakey.org\)](mailto:reblam@pakey.org).

**ASB AST-8 Would there be a pathway for students to enroll and attend a non-regionally accredited college as the college works through the accreditation process?**

For credits to count on Pennsylvania's Career Pathway after July 1, 2022, students should be encouraged to enroll in and attend a regionally credited school as the credits will not count for a Career Pathway placement until the college is listed as regionally accredited.

## Logistics

### **L-1 Why is the pathway only good for one (1) year? Why do I have to update every year even if I have an advanced degree and nothing has changed?**

To maintain an accurate workforce data set, each professional needs to review and renew their PD Registry profile information, on an annual basis, for accuracy and upload any new education documents. The profile includes personal and employment information, and the Career Pathway. If an individual has not completed any new courses or obtained a degree, they only need to renew their profile and do not need to upload any additional documents.

### **L-2 Is the Pennsylvania Key going to get quicker about assessing Career Pathways?**

Career Pathway assessment will be completed within 60 days of completed submission.

### **L-3 Will the pathway review form be available to complete in the PD Registry instead having to be printed?**

There are no plans at this time, but this suggestion will be taken into consideration.

### **L-4 Am I able to submit transcripts even if I have not completed the degree?**

Yes. This counts as “some college”.

### **L-5 Do you need to submit a High School (HS) Diploma if you submit your college transcripts?**

No. You will need to submit your HS diploma or HS equivalency, if that is your highest level of completed education, or if you are in school currently pursuing your first degree.

## Ongoing PD – STARS

### **O-1 What about all the professional development (PD) that long term staff has taken in past years since the beginning of STARS. Will any of the PD ever be counted. It seems as if all of that is just being thrown out the window, even though that is what staff was asked/required to do.**

Career advancement through credit-bearing coursework and degree attainment is one component of a successful PD system. Another is a means to obtain on-going PD once a professional reaches their desired job role, so that the professional can remain up to date with changing research and best practice. Both DHS child care certification regulations and STARS performance standards require on-going PD.

Pennsylvania’s ECE Career Pathway levels are evaluated on college courses, degrees, and certifications, and/or other OCDEL approved endorsements for the goal of career advancement.

### **O-2 Are you going to address any new PD for this year? STARS and/or state requirements?**

Policy on new PD, STARS and/or state requirements were not addressed during this webinar except those specifically related to [Announcement PDO 22 #01](#). Policy announcements on any new or changing requirements are shared through the Early Education News, ECE Recap, or Special Announcements.

[Sign up for newsletters on the Pennsylvania Key website.](#)



## Miscellaneous

### **M-1 What if someone is in school currently, but have not completed their whole degree, should they still submit?**

An individual may submit an updated education document (i.e. transcript) at any time, however in cases where an individual has already been placed on the Career Pathway and new documentation is uploaded, the new items will not be reviewed until their current Career Pathway placement expires and the individual resubmits for annual review. The exception to this is cases where an individual submits a [Career Pathway Placement Review Form](#). This can be filled out by an ECE Professional or by a representative from an Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) or Professional Development Organization (PDO) on behalf of an ECE Professional.

### **M-2 Can you please repeat the site for those who were home schooled?**

Requesting transcripts for homeschooling or closed schools can be found on [the Pennsylvania Department of Education \(PDE\)'s website](#).

### **M-3 Can new staff apply for Career Pathway placement before completing their annual fire safety training?**

Yes.

### **M-4 Does an ECE employee ever have to worry that their degree would not be counted if the college/university was regionally accredited when they attended and graduated, but now the college/university is no longer accredited?**

No. If the degree or credit was earned prior to July 1, 2022, it will count towards Career Pathway placement.

### **M-5 For credits to be accepted, do they have to be ECE or is general education/ music education/ Special Education also accepted?**

Credits from an ECE degree or equivalent degree are fully counted. ECE equivalent degrees can be found via [NAEYC's Early Childhood Higher Education Directory \(degreefinder.naeyc.org\)](#). The Career Pathway system also allows coursework from several areas to be considered "related" because they may include some related competencies but do not include all competencies covered in an ECE focused course. Credits in these "related" courses are awarded "half credit."

### **M-6 Do these parameters/guidelines include Family Child Care Homes as well?**

Yes.

### **M-7 Are you going to add criteria for each level? Possibly having higher levels more accessible.**

Career Pathway levels are based on the professional competencies and are research-based to assure quality. The Professional Development Organizations have funding available to make degree attainment and Career Pathway advancement more accessible.

**M-8 I have staff with multiple degrees including a master's in science education and they are entry level. How can we review the criteria and discuss some changes?**

The Career Pathway system defines coursework and degrees as ECE equivalent, related or unrelated. Credits from an ECE degree or equivalent degree are fully counted. ECE equivalent degrees can be found via [NAEYC's Early Childhood Higher Education Directory \(degreefinder.naeyc.org\)](https://naeyc.org/early-childhood-higher-education-directory). The Career Pathway system also allows coursework from several areas to be considered "related" because they may include some related competencies but do not include all competencies covered in an ECE focused course. Credits in these "related" courses are awarded "half credit."

**M-9 Will ERAs be returning? I have several staff that committed to continuing their education and a few more with advanced degrees?**

At the time of release of this FAQ, OCDEL does not intend to restore ERA.