



DegreeLink
Tri-C2CSU



**Between
Cuyahoga Community College
And
Cleveland State University**

THIS AGREEMENT (the “Agreement”) is entered into as of this 16th day of October 2019 (“the “Effective Date”) by and between **Cuyahoga Community College District** (“Tri-C”), with an address at 700 Carnegie Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 441152878 and **Cleveland State University** (“CSU”), with an address at 2121 Euclid Avenue Cleveland, Ohio 44115. Tri-C and CSU are institutions of higher education established pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code.

BACKGROUND

While there is a growing recognition of the importance of post-secondary education in Cleveland, the region continues to lag behind the United States average in terms of baccalaureate attainment. Efforts such as the Higher Education Compact have fostered more robust collaborations among colleges and universities, community organizations, and foundations to address the educational needs of the region. Yet in terms of sheer scale and capacity, the two institutions with the greatest potential to increase the proportion of college graduates in the region are Tri-C and CSU.

Hundreds of students transfer between Tri-C and CSU every year. The longstanding partnership between Tri-C and CSU includes dual admission, articulation agreements in a large number of specific degrees, and cross-registration as well as programmatic and administrative collaborations such as a joint academic counselor breakfast and data-sharing agreements through the Cleveland Connects initiative.

This agreement seeks to provide a structured pathway to a four-year degree for new students who would benefit from starting their educational journey at Tri-C and to enhance, align, and redesign those existing relationships so that students can move seamlessly from one institution to the other to complete associate and baccalaureate degrees. This initiative is designed to improve access to education, remove barriers for students, improve student success and completion, and benefit our joint graduates and the region’s economy.

Our shared commitment is creating an experience in which students feel that they are part of both institutions.

ACCORDINGLY, in consideration of the foregoing, of the other promises and mutual covenants contained in this Agreement, and of other good and valuable

consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, the parties agree as follows:

A. Admission Requirements and Processes

Students begin in Degree Link by completing an associate degree at Tri-C, while purposefully planning to transfer to CSU for bachelor degree completion. Degree Link requires that students apply and be admitted to Tri-C, and complete a Degree Link Program Agreement. Students who have completed the Degree Link Program Agreement are admitted to Degree Link once program eligibility is verified by Tri-C.

1. Only Tri-C students that have declared their program of study as Associate of Arts or Associate of Science are eligible to participate in Degree Link prior to completing 30 college level credits. Any student who previously completed an applied degree (AAB or AAS) is not eligible. If the applied degree is earned from a non-regionally accredited institution they may be eligible.
2. Students are eligible to begin concurrent enrollment at CSU after completing 12 college level credits including college level English and Math with a 2.0 GPA.
3. Tri-C students who have previously attended CSU are eligible to participate in Degree Link.
4. Tri-C students who have been accepted into the program will have catalog rights at CSU from the term they sign the Degree Link Program Agreement and their attendance at CSU will be governed by CSU's policies.
5. When a student signs the Degree Link Program Agreement they agree to the release of student record information between Tri-C and CSU.
6. Tri-C students, who have earned credits in Fall 2005 or after, will receive transfer credit for all college level courses in which a "D" or better has been earned. Acceptance of credits does not guarantee that transfer courses automatically meet course and/or program requirements for graduation. Students must review individual course and program requirements with their CSU academic advisor to determine whether transfer courses will count toward graduation. Only courses earned at the baccalaureate degree granting university (CSU) will be used to calculate the cumulative GPA for said university.
7. The parties will comply with all applicable laws and regulations in performing their obligations hereunder. When taking actions (or failing to act) in any way relating to this Agreement, each party agrees that it will not unlawfully discriminate against any person on the basis of race, sex, religion, disability, age, national origin, or ancestry, genetic information, military

status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, veteran status, or color.

8. Current College Credit Plus students are not eligible.
9. Students already participating in Tri-C/CSU Dual Admission are not eligible.
10. To help ensure a seamless transfer, transfer and academic advisors from CSU will work with Tri-C Transfer Centers and Counseling Centers to conduct appointments on each of Tri-C's campuses with Degree Link students and candidates. All Degree Link students will be advised so as to be able to complete their associate degree prior to transfer while simultaneously completing CSU degree requirements.
11. When applicable, and in the student's best interest, Tri-C will accept CSU courses to fulfill the students' Associate of Arts or Associate of Science Degree requirements.
12. Cuyahoga county residents who do not meet CSU admission requirements will be notified by CSU and referred to the Degree Link Program and enrollment at Tri-C. CSU will also provide contact and other information for these students to Tri-C, for the purpose of Degree Link recruitment.

B. Degree Link Administration

1. Degree Link students will be coded and tracked in the Student Information Systems at both Tri-C and CSU.
2. Degree Link students will receive a CSU Viking Identification Card that allows access to most facilities and services offered to regularly admitted students. Degree Link students are entitled to access to CSU Recreation Center, library, computer labs, athletic events and activities as specified by CSU regulations. Degree Link students will not be able to load money on the Viking ID Card.
3. Degree Link students are not eligible to participate in NCAA athletics at CSU until they transfer to CSU.
4. Degree Link students are not eligible to hold leadership positions in CSU organizations until they transfer to CSU.
5. To opt out of the Degree Link Program a student must notify the Tri-C or CSU Registrar in writing. Once a student opts out of program they are not eligible to rejoin. CSU and Tri-C will notify each other of students who opt out of the program.
6. Students may be dropped from the Degree Link program if they are not an active student at both schools

7. CSU and Tri-C will each assign a representative to serve as a liaison and assure continued communication between the institutions on matters related to this Program and student progression. Representatives will meet as needed and will formally review this Agreement on an annual basis.
8. Students have the opportunity to meet with both a Tri-C Transfer Specialist and Counselor and a CSU Advisor throughout their participation in Degree Link.
9. Data Exchange: The Parties intend to share data in a manner consistent with the provisions of Family Education Records Privacy Act of 1974 (“FERPA”), including 34 C.F.R. 99, and other relevant or applicable state or federal laws or regulations. Nothing in this Agreement may be construed to allow either party to maintain, use, disclose or share applicant or student information in a manner not permitted by state or federal laws or regulations. Provided that that student has provided written consent to CSU/Tri-C to share such information beyond the available directory information, the parties will provide information as follows:
 - a Degree Link student transcripts will be shared between Tri-C and CSU at the end of each semester, or on an as-needed basis for individual students, as part of this Program and the “Reverse Transfer” state initiative.
 - b Degree Link student record information will be shared between Tri-C and CSU on an as-needed basis in order to facilitate admission and enrollment functions at each school. Student record information includes but is not limited to:
 - Student name, birthday and last 4 digits SSN
 - Program and hours enrolled
 - Credits earned
 - Enrollment/progression in college-level Math and English
 - Degree earned
 - c Except as may be prohibited by law or CSU policy, CSU will send an annual report to Tri-C on the progress of Degree Link students after their transfer to CSU. Except as may be prohibited by law or Tri-C policy, Tri-C will send CSU an annual report on the progress of Tri-C Degree Link students.
10. Degree Link students will not be assessed a transcript request fee for transcripts issued for the administration of the Degree Link.
11. Marketing will be coordinated by University Marketing at CSU and Integrated Communications Department at Tri-C. All printed materials and web content will be mutually agreed upon prior to publication.

C. Student Conduct

1. Degree Link students will be subject to the policies and procedures of Tri-C when participating in Tri-C programs or when present at Tri-C facilities. Degree Link students will also be subject to the policies and procedures of CSU when participating in CSU programs or when present at CSU facilities.
2. Except as may be prohibited by law or by an applicable policy of a party to this agreement, CSU and Tri-C will each promptly notify the other of any financial, disciplinary, or academic actions that have been or are about to be taken against a Degree Link student. Tri-C or CSU may take any of these actions on its own, and the other party is not required to take similar action against a Degree Link student merely because such an action was taken by the other party. Except as set forth explicitly in this Agreement, neither party will have any authority to direct the actions of the other party relating to any Degree Link student.

D. Tuition, Coursework, Financial Aid and Scholarships

Subject to applicable law and any applicable policies of each institution, Degree Link students who wish to apply for financial aid can only do so at one institution at a time. Students should apply for financial aid via Tri-C’s Financial Aid Office until obtaining their associate degree. After obtaining their associate degree, Degree Link students will apply for financial aid via CSU’s Financial Aid Office for periods of part-time or full-time enrollment at CSU.

1. Once students sign the Degree Link Program Agreement, they lock in their CSU tuition rate, under the CSU Guarantee program. In order to maintain this benefit:
 - a. Students must participate in at least one semester of concurrent enrollment.
 - b. Students must complete their associate’s degree at Tri-C before transfer to CSU.
 - c. Fall Tri-C graduates must enroll by the proceeding spring semester and spring and summer graduates must enroll by the proceeding fall semester.
2. The timeframe for the locked in tuition rate will be determined by the number of credit hours transferred into CSU when students transfer to CSU as outlined below:

<u>Hours</u>	<u>CSU Guarantee Years</u>
37-66	3
67-96	2
97+	1

3. Degree Link students can take up to three courses at CSU for free while attending Tri-C through concurrent enrollment. This amounts to one course per semester at CSU for up to three semesters and must align with students associate degree plan and their intended major at CSU. In order to maintain the eligibility for the CSU Guarantee and scholarship consideration/priority,

students must enroll in at least one CSU course while participating in Degree Link.

4. Degree Link students who want their concurrent enrollment coursework to be considered as part of their Cost of Attendance for Financial Aid must submit a Tri-C Student Financial Aid & Scholarship Consortium Agreement and adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Consortium Agreement.
 - a. CSU and Tri-C will each assign a financial aid representative to process the Consortium Agreements.
 - b. Designated CSU financial aid representative will verify Cost of Attendance and return the Consortium Agreement to the designated Tri-C financial aid representative for processing.
 - c. As host institution, CSU agrees to inform Cuyahoga Community College of any changes in the student's enrollment status and to withhold the processing of any federal, state or institutional financial aid during the enrolled transient term.
5. Scholarship information for all students transferring in to CSU can be found here: <http://www.csuohio.edu/financial-aid/scholarships-for-new-transfer-students>. Degree Link students will receive priority consideration for transfer scholarships when eligible.
6. Degree Link students, are eligible for CSU transfer student scholarships if their first semester of enrollment at CSU is fall (or summer and if they are enrolled full-time during that semester). They will remain eligible if they were admitted for an earlier semester but did not enroll. Students that enrolled part-time in an earlier semester are not eligible.
 - a. If a student is admitted for a prior semester and enrolls after scholarships are awarded on April 1, they will be retroactively awarded scholarships.
7. Degree Link students will be given priority consideration for the Cleveland Transfer Connection Endowed Scholarship awarded by the Tri-C Foundation. Students are eligible for this scholarship after completion of their Tri-C degree and after their first semester of enrollment at CSU.

E. Term and Termination

1. This Agreement will run from the Effective Date until the end of the last day of the Spring 2023 academic term of Tri-C or of CSU (whichever comes last), at which time this Agreement will automatically expire unless extended in a writing signed by both parties prior to termination.
2. Either party may terminate this Agreement in the event of a material breach by the other party, effective upon the date that is 90 days after the notice that includes a description of the breach; *provided* in either case that the breaching party shall be allowed until said effective date to cure said breach, and if the breach is so cured the termination notice will be of no effect.

3. Upon expiration or termination of this Agreement for any reason, Degree Link students previously accepted by or admitted to CSU shall continue to receive the benefits contemplated by this Agreement.

F. Miscellaneous.

1. Severability. If any Section or provision of this Agreement be held illegal, unenforceable or in conflict with any law by a court of competent jurisdiction, such Section or provision of this Agreement shall be deemed severed from this Agreement and the validity of the remainder of this Agreement shall not be affected thereby.
2. Notices. All notices or other written communications relating to termination, expiration, or legal matters required or permitted under this Agreement shall be given in writing by courier or reputable overnight delivery services, or by certified mail, return receipt requested to either party at its address first set forth above with, in the case of Tri-C, an additional copy addressed to “General Counsel.”

For Cuyahoga Community College:
Lindsay S. English, Ph.D.
Vice President, Learning and
Engagement
700 Carnegie Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44115

For Cleveland State University:
Jianping Zhu, PhD.
Provost and Senior Vice President for
Academic Affairs
2121 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, OH 441 15

With a copy to:
Office of General Counsel
Cuyahoga Community College
700 Carnegie Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44115

With a copy to:
Office of General Counsel
Cleveland State University
2121 Euclid Avenue, AC 327
Cleveland, OH 44115

3. Waivers and Amendments. The waiver by either party of any provision of this Agreement on any occasion and upon any particular circumstance shall not operate as a waiver of such provision of this Agreement on any other occasion or upon any other circumstance. This Agreement may be modified or amended only via a writing signed by both parties.
4. Survival. Sections E (3) and this Section F shall survive expiration or termination of this Agreement for any reason.
5. Complete Agreement; Integration. This Agreement contains the complete understanding of the parties with respect to the subject matter hereof and supersedes all other agreements, understandings, communications and

promises of any kind, whether oral or written, between the parties with respect to such subject matter.

6. Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in multiple counterparts, all of which shall be originals and which together shall constitute a single agreement.
7. No Third Party Beneficiaries. This Agreement does not and is not intended to confer any rights or remedies upon any party other than Tri-C and CSU.
8. Facsimile Signatures. For the purpose of interpreting this Agreement, facsimile signatures shall be considered equivalent to original signatures.
9. Neutral Interpretation. This contract has been prepared for signature only after each party has had sufficient opportunities to negotiate changes. Each party has been represented by its own lawyer, has had sufficient opportunities to consult with that lawyer, and has done so. The parties agree that this contract should be understood and interpreted as a document fully negotiated and accepted by the parties, and should not be construed against the drafting party.
10. Compliance with Laws. The parties will comply with all applicable laws and regulations in performing their obligations hereunder. When taking actions (or failing to act) in any way relating to this Agreement, each party agrees that it will not unlawfully discriminate against any person on the basis of race, sex, religion, disability, age, national origin, or ancestry, genetic information, military status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, veteran status, pregnancy, or color.
11. Marketing. All promotion and advertising of the Articulation of the Agreement must conform to the statement approved by the College Marketing & Communications Department, (see Attachment C).
12. This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of Ohio applicable to contracts made and to be enforced wholly within Ohio.
13. Jurisdiction; Venue. The Parties to this Agreement each specifically consents to jurisdiction in Ohio in connection with any dispute between the Parties arising out of this Agreement or pertaining to the subject matter hereof. Venue for any dispute between the Parties arising out of this Agreement or pertaining to the subject matter hereof will be in an Ohio court of competent jurisdiction.
14. Independent Contractors. The Parties are independent contractors, and no agency, partnership, franchise, joint venture, or employment relationship is intended or created by this Agreement. Neither Party shall make any commitment, or give the impression that it has authority to make any commitment, on behalf of the other Party.

INTENDING TO BE LEGALLY BOUND, by signing below, each party acknowledges its agreement with the terms and conditions of this Agreement and each signatory represents and warrants that he/she is authorized to sign on behalf of and to bind his/her party to all of the terms and conditions of this Agreement as of the Effective Date.

**CUYAHOGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DISTRICT:**

**CLEVELAND STATE
UNIVERSITY:**

By: _____
Lindsay S. English, Ph.D.
Vice President, Learning and
Engagement

By: _____
Jianping Zhu, PhD.
Provost and Senior Vice President
for Academic Affairs

Date _____

Date _____

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DegreeLink
Tri-C2CSU



ATTACHMENT A

**To The
Degree Link Agreement Dated October 16, 2019
By and Between
Cuyahoga Community College District
And
Cleveland State University**

Articulation Criteria and Benefits

1. *The articulation criteria (“Articulation Criteria”) are:*
 - a. Tri-C students are eligible for participation in Degree Link under this Agreement if they:
 - i. Are an enrolled student (full-time or part-time);
 - ii. Have signed the Degree Link Program Agreement;
 - iii. Declare Associate of Arts or Associate of Science as their program of study;
 - iv. Plan to enroll at CSU ;
 - v. Have not earned a college degree, which includes applied associate degrees at a regionally accredited institution; and
 - vi. Maintain a combined overall 2.0 GPA at all attended institutions
 - b. Degree Link students participate in concurrent enrollment at CSU while completing associate degree requirements at Tri-C. Cross Registration is the process through which Tri-C students may take one course per semester for up to three semesters at CSU at no cost while attending Tri-C.
 - i. Degree Link students may participate in concurrent enrollment provided the following criteria are met:
 1. Completion of a minimum of 12 college level credits with a 2.0 or higher GPA;
 2. Successful completion of at least one college level English course
 3. Successful completion of at least one college level math course;
 4. Students must register for at least 3 credits at Tri-C during the concurrent enrollment semester;
 5. Have a full academic plan in DegreeWorks;
 6. Have met with both a Tri-C Transfer Specialist and a CSU transfer advisor; and

7. Students must complete the Financial Aid Consortium Agreement in order for concurrent enrollment coursework to be considered towards Tri-C Financial Aid status.
- ii. Concurrent enrollment coursework must align with students' associate degree plan and their attended major at CSU.
 1. Courses are subject to availability and students must meet prerequisite requirements for selected courses.
 2. Course selection will be reviewed and approved by Tri-C and CSU.
- iii. Students will not be charged tuition for concurrent enrollment coursework by CSU or Tri-C.
- iv. Students shall be responsible for course fees, textbooks and other ancillary costs associated with concurrent enrollment coursework.
- v. Successful completion of each CSU course with a "D" or better grade will be eligible for transfer back to Tri-C. Credits earned at CSU will be treated as transient credits by Tri-C.

2. ***The articulation benefits ("Articulation Benefits") are:***

- a. Guaranteed admission to CSU when Degree Link requirements are met, but not to specific programs that require additional program/admission requirements.
- b. Degree Link students are considered students of each institution and are eligible to participate in and use academic services available to current students of each institution. Students should seek support for a course at the institution offering the course.
- c. Access to CSU transfer advisors and pre-enrollment services.
- d. Collaborative transfer planning with Tri-C Transfer Specialist and Counseling.
- e. CSU's Admission Application Fee will be waived for Degree Link students.
- f. Free transcript exchange between Tri-C and CSU each semester.
- g. Students can take up to three courses at CSU for free while attending Tri-C through concurrent enrollment (consortium agreement for financial aid required).
- h. Priority consideration for CSU transfer scholarships for those meeting academic qualifications.
- i. Degree Link students will be given priority consideration for the Cleveland Transfer Connection Endowed Scholarship awarded by the Tri-C Foundation. Students are eligible for this scholarship after completion of their Tri-C degree and after their first semester of enrollment at CSU.
- j. Degree Link students will have access to CSU facilities including the Recreation Center, Library, and Computer Labs. It will enable students to attend CSU athletic events and activities as specified by CSU regulations.
- k. Tuition will be locked for Degree Link students under the terms of the CSU Guarantee. Coverage under the CSU Guarantee will be based on the term that a student signs the Degree Link Program Agreement.
- l. Tri-C and CSU have developed program specific transfer pathways for students to use for reference and they can be found on the following websites: www.tri-c.edu/transfer, then select University partnerships, then select Cleveland State University or on CSU's website: <https://www.csuohio.edu/transfercenter/community-college-students>.

ATTACHMENT B

**To The
Degree Link Agreement Dated October 16, 2019
By and Between
Cuyahoga Community College District
And
Cleveland State University**

Marketing and Advertising Restrictions

Promotion of Partnership to
Domestic and International Students

In order for Cuyahoga Community College and Cleveland State University to reach out to partners and the community effectively, it is important to monitor the impression conveyed through all forms of communication such as advertising, publications and signage. The sum total of all impressions generated by these communications must be effective and meaningful to the audiences with which the College and CSU communicate.

Therefore, the parties agree that any use of the other's name, trade name, trademark, logo and tagline, or any other defining symbol or name associated with either entity during the term of this Agreement shall be for the sole purpose of promoting this Agreement. Express written permission or a limited license is required to use the other party's name, trade name, trademark, logo, tagline or any other defining symbol or name associated with the other entity. Neither party will use the other's name or symbols in a way that would cause confusion in the public mind as to the relationship between the parties. All written materials associated with this agreement must distinctly note the termination date of the Agreement, the degrees within the Agreement, and the average additional hours required to complete the degree. Any and all promotional materials, including, written, verbal, video graphic, electronic, or multimedia of any kind must be reviewed and approved by both parties prior to any use or distribution.

Marketing Contacts:

Cuyahoga Community College District:

Eric Wheeler
Director, Creative Services
Integrated Communications Department
Jerry Sue Thornton Center
Room 182, 2500 E. 22nd Street
Cleveland, OH 44115-2214
P: 216-987-3517
F: 216-987-4806

Cleveland State University:

Robert Spademan
Associate Vice President, Enrollment
Services and Marketing
Euclid Commons, Room 105
2398 Euclid Ave
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
P: 216-523-7284
F: 216-687-9289