



## Gateway Courses for Fall 2011 Transfer Students

Gateway courses are heavily enrolled courses that have low pass rates. They were defined in the present study as the subset of the 100 most enrolled courses at Kapi'olani Community College (KapCC) with pass rates below 70%. Typically they are defined for an institution using all students. The present study investigated the gateway courses in the first academic year for a cohort of transfer students. This allowed an examination of the courses that thwarted student progress and slowed the accumulation of credits in their first academic year at KapCC.

### Methodology

A cohort of 1,065 transfer students registered and home-based at KapCC in the fall 2011 term was identified as of the census freeze date (24 September 2011.) Special early admit students (concurrently enrolled high school students) were excluded. The 100 top enrolled courses in the 2011-2012 academic year (fall, spring, summer) were identified, and 36 courses of the 100 had mean pass rates below 70%. These were the gateway courses.

### Results

The gateway courses are shown in the table below. The number of students enrolled in each course and the mean pass rates also are shown.

Gateway Courses for Fall 2011 Transfer Students		
Course	# Students	Pass Rate
ACC 132	19	52.63%
ACC 201	62	67.74%
ART 101	51	56.86%
BIOL 101	53	67.92%
BIOL 130	58	58.62%
BIOL 130L	46	63.04%
CHEM 100	60	60.00%
CHEM 162	26	46.15%
CULN 111	26	69.23%
DNCE 131	14	57.14%
ECON 120	36	58.33%
ENG 22	69	66.67%
ENG 100	217	65.90%
GEOG 101	28	46.43%
HAW 101	26	65.38%
HIST 151	133	63.16%
HIST 152	57	57.89%
HLTH 110	18	66.67%
ICS 100	41	53.66%
ICS 101	57	66.67%
JPNS 101	42	64.29%
JPNS 102	20	60.00%

As shown in the table, progress in many specific majors may be delayed. For example, several of the gateway courses are needed for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) majors. Courses in biology, chemistry, information and computer sciences, and math were gateway courses. Introductory courses in subjects such as accounting, culinary arts, economics, and marketing also were gateway courses. All of these courses could have acted as barriers that kept students out of those majors.

Many of the gateway courses were needed for general degree requirements. Courses in art, English, history, math, philosophy, and sociology were needed to fulfill degree requirements for AA or AS degrees. Students may have had difficulty accumulating the necessary courses to earn degrees.

Developmental courses in English and math were among the gateway courses. Even though all of the transfer students had previous academic experience, many still were not at college-level and had repeated difficulty reaching college-level in English or math.

### Conclusions

The primary institution from which students transfer to KapCC is UH-Mānoa (see Research Brief

LAW 111	15	66.67%
MATH 24	77	68.83%
MATH 25	95	57.89%
MATH 100	43	67.44%
MATH 140	19	68.42%
MATH 205	18	55.56%
MKT 120	11	54.55%
MUS 170	18	66.67%
PACS 108	15	46.67%
PCM 23	43	53.49%
PHIL 100	13	53.85%
PHIL 110	22	63.64%
SOC 100	35	62.86%
SPAN 102	12	58.33%

2012-06.) If the gateway courses for transfer students include developmental and introductory level courses at KapCC, it is likely that the students were having similar challenges at their previous institutions. These challenges may have been a major reason why some of the students transferred from a 4-yr college to a community college. Repeated enrollment and lack of success in English and math courses may increase students' perception of academic failure and lead to attrition. A significant number of transfer students may have risk factors for academic failure. Rather than being "tested" and starting at KapCC with a history of academic success, many of the transfer students have the same gateway courses as new, first-time students (see Research Brief 2013-05.) They may have an academic history of frustration and unsuccessful course

taking that puts many of them at higher risk than new, first-time students. The previous academic history of transfer students should be examined, and appropriate interventions should be used for at-risk students.

**Contact Person:**

Jeff Arbuckle  
 Senior Institutional Analyst  
 808-734-9764  
[jefferya@hawaii.edu](mailto:jefferya@hawaii.edu)