The Pathways to Excellence (PTE) program is a partnership between the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW) and Rowan-Cabarrus Community College (RCCC). It is a pathway for guaranteed admission to UNCW for students completing an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science with a cumulative GPA of at least a 2.5 (on a 4.0 scale) in transferable, college-level coursework from RCCC. Guaranteed admission to the University does not constitute admission to a professional school or specific program. Students entering the pathway will indicate their plans by submitting their letter of intent to the UNCW Office of Admissions.

UNCW will provide a Transfer Student Success Coordinator to meet with students at RCCC at intervals throughout each semester at the community college, working in collaboration with community college advising staff to help students create a path of transfer and beyond.

UNCW will host RCCC students annually in an open house event. UNCW will provide an application event each spring on the RCCC campus, providing application fee waivers to students applying to transfer.

Students entering under the PTE program who have earned a transferable Associate's degree will meet the requirements of the North Carolina Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA). They will receive a waiver of University Studies Foundations & Approaches and Perspective requirements with the exception of PE, foreign language, and three credits from either Living in Our Diverse Nation or Living in a Global Society.