

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM
UNDERGRADUATE TRANSFER POLICY**

June 9, 2011

This document is a revision of the UW System Undergraduate Transfer Policy, replacing the document last revised on May 7, 2004, and all other prior versions. These provisions establish procedures and guidelines for UW institutions to facilitate the overall transfer process for all students.

Other Relevant Documents:

Planning the Future (12-86)

Undergraduate Transfer Policy Memorandum (12-82)

ACIS 6.1 (4-01)

ACIS 6.2 (4-01)

UWS Transfer Working Group Final Report (6-95)

UWS General Education Transfer Working Group Final Report (9-97)

Statement of Principles on Student Transfer from WTCS to UWS (4-7-2000)

Board of Regents Resolution # 8107 (4-7-2000)

Board of Regents Resolution # 8759 (11-7-2003)

Board of Regents Resolution # 8775 (12-5-2003)

UW SYSTEM UNDERGRADUATE TRANSFER POLICY

Contents

I.	Introduction.....	2
II.	Admission of Transfer Students.....	2
III.	Transfer Credit Principles	4
IV.	Principles of Accommodation.....	5
A.	For All Transfer Students.....	5
B.	For Students Transferring Within the UW System.	6
C.	For Students Transferring with a UW Institution Associate Degree.	7
D.	For Students Transferring From the Wisconsin Technical College System.	8
V.	Credit for Prior Learning	9
VI.	Institutional Responsibilities Regarding Transfer Information	10
VII.	Glossary of Terms.....	11

I. Introduction

The University of Wisconsin System (UW System) welcomes transfer students from accredited colleges and universities both within and outside Wisconsin. The UW System Undergraduate Transfer Policy endorses a student-centered transfer process which fosters educational attainment, accommodates student mobility, and provides equitable treatment of transfer and continuing students. At the same time, this transfer policy recognizes legitimate differences among educational institutions, their missions and academic programs, and acknowledges institutional autonomy and program integrity. In order to maintain our commitment to transfer students, this policy should be reviewed periodically and updated as needed.

II. Admission of Transfer Students

Transfer students will be evaluated for admission through a comprehensive, individualized review process. This process allows institutions to admit students whose academic preparation, background and personal experience suggest that the student will succeed at the institution, benefit from that educational experience, and contribute to the educational environment. This review process is similar to the practice for the admission of freshmen to UW institutions. (See Regent Policy 7-3, *University of Wisconsin System Freshman Admissions Policy* <http://www.uwsa.edu/bor/policies/rpd/rpd7-3.htm>).

- A. Transfer applicants must demonstrate that they are prepared to do satisfactory academic work at the institution to which they are applying, and that, as members of the campus community, they will benefit from and enrich the educational environment and enhance the quality of the institution. Each applicant's file will be given a comprehensive review. Academic information considered will include the student's post-secondary academic records, and may also include high school records, standardized test scores, and/or other relevant academic information.
- B. While academic factors are the most important consideration, other factors may also be considered. These factors include, but are not limited to, student experiences, work experience, leadership qualities, motivation, community service, special talents, status as a non-traditional or returning adult, status as a veteran of the U.S. military, whether the applicant is socio-economically disadvantaged, and whether the applicant is a member of an historically underrepresented racial or ethnic group.
- C. Transfer students who do not qualify under the provisions above may appeal through the appropriate institutional appeal procedures. Institutions should publish appeal procedures in the catalog or another official institution publication.
- D. Admission requirements into schools/colleges, academic programs or majors may exceed those for admission to the institution. Such requirements for entry shall apply equally to continuing and transfer students.
- E. Admission requirements for non-resident transfer students will be the same as those for other transfer students except that an institution may adopt special requirements for international student applicants. (Note: For purposes of this policy, Minnesota students eligible for reciprocity are considered as residents.)
- F. Regent enrollment planning policy establishes limits on non-resident enrollment (Regent Policy 7-3, University Of Wisconsin System Freshman Admissions Policy). Each UW institution may limit the admission of non-residents to ensure that the total non-resident undergraduate enrollment does not exceed the Regent limit.
 - 1. If the number of qualified non-resident transfer students exceeds the ability of the institution to accommodate them, or if the institution needs to ensure that priority is granted to students transferring from UW institutions as specified in II.F. below, the institution shall determine the criteria for selection from among qualified applicants.
- G. For enrollment management purposes, the number of transfer students admitted may be controlled. In such cases, institutional policy will determine the criteria by which limitations of access shall be applied, but preference for admission of transfer students shall be given to students transferring from the UW Colleges, and from other UW institutions where the student's desired major or program is not offered, subject to the limits of an institution's enrollment target.

III. Transfer Credit Principles

The UW System endorses the *Joint Statement on the Transfer and Award of Credit* developed by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), the American Council on Education (ACE), and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). This document sets forth a number of basic assumptions regarding the transfer of credit between institutions, be they similar or dissimilar, as well as recommended best practices for developing institution-specific policies and procedures. The complete [Joint Statement on the Transfer and Award of Credit](#) is available on the ACE Web site.

Following the principles set forth in the *Joint Statement*, each UW institution should award transfer credit based on the combination of the quality, comparability, and applicability of the sending institution's academic program.

- A. Quality of the Academic Program. The legitimacy and quality of the sending institution can be evaluated in part by its accreditation status. Both institutional and programmatic accreditation should be considered when assessing the potential for transfer credit.
 1. Institutional Accreditation. Credit is generally awarded for college level coursework completed at institutions accredited by a regional or national accrediting organization recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Foreign institutions must be recognized by the Ministry of Education (or equivalent) in that country.
 2. Programmatic Accreditation. If the sending institution is accredited by a programmatic accrediting association recognized by CHEA, credit may be granted in the specialty of accreditation (e.g., art, music, etc.) if recommended by the appropriate academic department or equivalent.
 3. Not Accredited. Credit earned in institutions of higher education not accredited as outlined in A.1. or A.2. above, is generally not accepted for transfer. However, credit may be granted for post-secondary work from non-accredited institutions by examination and/or upon departmental evaluation of course syllabi and other program information.
- B. Comparability of the Academic Program. Credit is generally awarded when the sending institution's mission, type of education (occupational, liberal arts, professional), and level of degree (certificate, associate, baccalaureate, graduate) are comparable to that of the UW institution.
- C. Applicability of the Academic Program. Credit is generally awarded when the academic program, level of study, and course content are similar in nature and applicable to the academic program of the UW institution.

IV. Principles of Accommodation

This policy endorses a student-centered transfer process designed to foster educational attainment, meet the needs of transfer students, and provide equitable treatment of transfer and continuing students. To achieve these goals, UW institutions are encouraged to apply the principles of accommodation detailed here.

A. For All Transfer Students

The following principles of accommodation apply to all students transferring into a UW System institution:

1. Institutions should apply transfer credits to degree requirements where appropriate.
2. Institutions should recognize general education/liberal arts requirements in terms of broad academic areas (social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, etc.) as well as specific courses.
3. Institutions may award transfer credit for courses for which they do not have a comparable department or curricular area, or for which they do not have a direct course equivalent. Where appropriate, these credits should apply toward satisfying general education and other degree requirements. When applying a course toward general education/breadth requirements, the receiving institution generally applies it in the same category as similar courses at that institution. However, if the course fulfills a different category at the sending institution and the student requests that the original designation be applied, the request should be approved where appropriate.
4. In granting a direct equivalent to courses taken at other institutions, the attributes of the equivalent course should apply. However, in determining whether to award upper level credit for courses completed by transfer students, institutions may apply the same practice used for their own freshmen and sophomores.
5. UW institutions should apply academic policies and procedures to continuing and transfer students in a similar manner.
6. Students may generally transfer up to 72 degree credits earned at non-baccalaureate institutions. UW institutions may accept additional credits toward the degree where appropriate. This does not alter policies concerning credits to be earned in residence at an institution.
7. UW institutions should apply the same criteria for admission to a major or program, or for applying a course toward a degree, to both transfer students and continuing students.

8. Student course grades may be used as a factor to determine if, and how, transfer credit is applied, but the same principles should be applied to both transfer and continuing students.
9. If a student changes his/her academic major or program, all transfer credits may be reevaluated to determine if, and how, they apply to the new major or program.
10. All students will receive an evaluation of transfer credits. Institutions should make every effort to provide this evaluation prior to enrollment.
11. When a student transfers, the receiving institution will do its own evaluation of the transfer work based on official transcript(s) from each institution the student attended. The student is responsible for submitting official transcript(s) from each sending institution to the receiving institution for the transfer evaluation.
12. Transfer credits that have been awarded should be evaluated to determine which will apply to major requirements, general education/breadth requirements, competency requirements, or the graduation requirements of the specific program the student intends to pursue. Credits which are not applicable to the requirements of the specific program should be noted on an official campus document.
13. UW institutions should make every effort to provide admitted transfer students the opportunity to register with similar access to courses as continuing students.
14. Students should be informed in writing of the opportunity and procedures for appealing any course transfer determination.

B. For Students Transferring Within the UW System

The following additional principles of accommodation apply to students transferring within the UW System:

1. A course designated as fulfilling a general education/breadth requirement at one UW institution should transfer as general education/breadth at the receiving UW institution. This principle should apply whether or not the receiving institution has a direct course equivalent.
2. A course designated as fulfilling an ethnic studies requirement at one UW institution should apply toward the ethnic studies requirement at the receiving UW institution.
3. UW institutions should permit courses completed by UW System transfer students to transfer in accordance with the course equivalency in effect when the courses were taken.
4. UW institutions that permit continuing students to graduate using the catalog requirements in effect at the time of their matriculation should employ the same policy for UW System transfers using their date of matriculation at their first UW institution.

5. When a student transfers within the UW System, the record of all successfully completed undergraduate credit courses taken by the student at UW institutions previously attended should be reported on the transcript or another official campus document.
6. University level courses offered through UW-Extension will transfer on the same basis as equivalent courses taken at UW institutions.

C. For Students Transferring with a UW Institution Associate Degree

For purposes of facilitating transfer between UW institutions, Associate Degrees awarded by UW institutions should include the minimum general education/breadth requirements defined by the UW System Board of Regents (Regent Policy 4-4, Minimum Requirements for an Associate Degree).

In recognition of these common requirements, the following principles apply:

1. The UW baccalaureate-granting institutions shall consider transfer students holding such an Associate Degree to have satisfied the university-wide general education/breadth requirements of the receiving institution.
2. Colleges and schools may require transfer students to complete additional general education/breadth requirements beyond the university-wide total if also required of continuing students.
3. The following may not necessarily be satisfied by the Associate Degree:
 - a. Competency requirements or levels of proficiency (e.g., English composition, speech, foreign language, math, quantitative reasoning) established by the receiving institution for continuing students.
 - b. Upper division general education courses normally required of continuing junior and senior students.
 - c. General education courses that are prerequisites to a particular program or major and are required of continuing students (e.g., micro and macro economics for business majors).
 - d. Requirements mandated by external professional accrediting associations or program approving agencies (e.g., Department of Public Instruction, Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business).
4. Students who transfer with an Associate Degree awarded by a UW institution which includes an ethnic studies (cultural diversity) component will be considered to have satisfied the ethnic studies requirement at any other UW institution.

5. Transfer credits will be evaluated by the receiving institution on a course-by-course basis to determine if and whether credits will apply beyond the satisfaction of general education breadth requirements.

D. For Students Transferring From the Wisconsin Technical College System

Credit transfer between the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) and the UW System is based upon the following principles:

1. Students transferring from the WTCS accredited liberal arts/collegiate transfer programs, to UW baccalaureate-granting institutions may generally transfer up to 72 credits earned at non-baccalaureate institutions. UW institutions may accept additional credits toward the degree where appropriate. This does not alter policies concerning credits to be earned in residence at an institution.
2. In cases where WTCS liberal arts/collegiate transfer programs award associate of arts/associate of science degrees that specifically align with the associate degrees awarded by UW institutions, the UW baccalaureate-granting institutions shall consider students holding such a degree to have satisfied the university-wide general education/breadth requirements at the receiving institution.
3. Colleges and schools may require transfer students to complete additional general education/breadth requirements beyond the university-wide total if also required of continuing students.
4. The following may not necessarily be satisfied by the WTCS associate of arts/associate of science (liberal arts) degrees:
 - a. Competency requirements or levels of proficiency (e.g., English composition, speech, foreign language, math, quantitative reasoning) established by the receiving institution for continuing students.
 - b. Upper division general education courses normally required of continuing junior and senior students.
 - c. General education courses that are prerequisites integral to a particular program or major and are required of continuing students (e.g., micro and macro economics for business majors).
 - d. Requirements mandated by external professional accrediting associations or program approving agencies (e.g., Department of Public Instruction, Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business).
 - e. Ethnic studies/cultural diversity requirement

5. UW institutions may grant transfer credit for general education (i.e., in communications, behavioral sciences, social sciences, mathematics, and natural science) offered within a WTCS applied associate degree program. In determining transferability of these courses, each UW institution will take into account the quality and comparability of the coursework and its applicability to degree requirements.
6. UW institutions may grant transfer credit on a course-by-course basis, for occupational and technical coursework leading to an applied associate degree from WTCS programs. In determining transferability of these courses, each UW institution will take into account the quality and comparability of the coursework and its applicability to degree requirements.
7. UW institutions should permit courses completed by WTCS transfer students to transfer in accordance with the course equivalency in effect when the courses were taken.
8. UW institutions should work with WTCS districts to identify areas where programs leading to an applied associate degree have direct relationships with baccalaureate degree programs. Where program relationships are found to exist, transfer articulation agreements, are encouraged. All such credit transfer and articulation agreements should conform to the "University of Wisconsin System Guidelines for Articulation Agreements between UW Institutions and WTCS Districts" (ACIS 6.2).
9. If an articulation agreement is in place, students in certain WTCS applied associate degree programs that subsequently enroll in a related UW baccalaureate degree program may be able to transfer related occupational and technical credits that may not transfer on a course-by-course basis. These credits may transfer to other programs at that institution or to other UW institutions only if a similar credit transfer or articulation agreement exists.

V. Credit for Prior Learning

- A. Each UW institution should provide transfer students the same opportunities as continuing students to demonstrate their competence through the use of internally and/or externally developed tests, portfolio assessment procedures and/or other competency based alternatives.
- B. Credit earned by examination should be clearly indicated on the student transcript. Students who are given credit on the basis of institutional examinations or assessments should be informed that in the event of transfer, they can expect the receiving institution to reevaluate if, and how, such credit will be applied to the degree. (See also Board of Regent Policies [#4-11 Advanced Placement](#), [#7-2 Recognition of International Baccalaureate Program](#), and [#4-17 Advanced-Standing Credit for Project Lead the Way Courses](#).)
 1. Each institution will retain the prerogative to establish proficiency score levels, courses for which credit by examination is deemed appropriate, limitations of credit allowed,

policies regarding testing fees, and other related policies that are consistent with the characteristics, ability and achievement of the particular student body at the institution.

2. UW institutions may grant credit for educational accomplishment attained in extra-institutional settings (e.g., military, work-place training, etc.) on the basis of recommendations from organizations such as ACE's Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials or the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) or through portfolio assessment. All credits awarded by the institution based on extra-institutional accomplishment must be clearly indicated on the student transcript.
- C. Upon transfer, credits granted for prior learning experiences at one institution should be evaluated for possible transfer at the receiving UW institution.

VI. Institutional Responsibilities Regarding Transfer Information

- A. The Transfer Information System (TIS) is a source for official UW System institutional undergraduate course and program information. Institutions will provide information and data necessary to keep TIS current and accurate.
- B. UW institutions should provide timely information to UW System about all new programs and curricular changes. The institution initiating curricular action should consider the effects of program development or modification on potential transfer students.
- C. UW institution transfer information should be explicitly stated on the institution's website and in other appropriate sources. Changes in admission and/or program requirements should be announced and well publicized prior to implementation.
- D. Copies of new and updated transfer articulation agreements should be sent to the UW System Office of Academic Affairs.
- E. The UW System Office of Academic Affairs will coordinate systemwide transfer policy and procedures. Questions about interpretation of transfer policy and procedures should be referred to that office.

VII. Glossary of Terms

Terms included in this glossary are defined for purposes of this policy and may not be consistent with definitions used in other settings.

Academic Program

A specifically designed curriculum leading to the attainment of a degree, area of specialization, or certificate.

Accreditation

A process of external quality review created and used by higher education to scrutinize colleges, universities and programs for quality assurance and quality improvement.

Institutional Accreditation

The review and certification of an institution by a regional or national accrediting body.

Programmatic Accreditation

The review of a specific program (e.g., art, music), profession (e.g., engineering, nursing), or freestanding school (e.g., law, medicine) by a professional organization that accredits programs in a particular field.

Applied Associate Degree

A degree awarded by WTCS and other technical institutions upon completion of a program that combines general education and occupational/technical courses and requirements, designed to lead directly to employment in a specific field.

Articulation Agreement

An agreement that is generally between WTCS and UW institutions allowing for transfer of credit, either as course-by-course and/or as a block of credits. These agreements are usually program to program and designed to grant advanced standing in a specific major.

Attribute

A designation assigned to courses offered at an institution. An attribute may designate a course as meeting a requirement, such as breadth, general education, or ethnic studies, may denote the level at which the course is offered, or may in some other way describe the characteristics of a course.

Baccalaureate institution

A four-year, bachelor degree granting institution.

College/School/Graduation Requirements (see Requirements)

Competency/Proficiency Requirements (see Requirements)

Continuing Student

A student who maintains continuous enrollment at the same institution, while working towards program/degree completion (as distinct from a transfer student.).

Course-by-course

The evaluation of transfer courses one-by-one rather than as part of a block of credits.

Credit by Examination

A testing process for awarding college credit based on prior educational experiences (e.g. CLEP, AP, IB, etc.).

Credit for Prior Learning

Credit awarded for college-level knowledge and skills acquired through extra-institutional settings.

Credits

Semester hour units (distinct from quarter or trimester).

Cultural Diversity Requirements (see Requirements)

Degree Requirements (see Requirements)

Ethnic Studies Requirement (see Requirements)

General Education/Breadth Requirements (see Requirements)

Institutional Accreditation (see Accreditation)

Liberal Arts/Collegiate Transfer

A term defining the WTCS programs that offer an associate of arts or associate of science degree and/or prepare the student for transfer to a baccalaureate program (previously referred to as a WTCS College Parallel program).

Major

A field of specialization in undergraduate studies, with specific course requirements, which may be fulfilled by transfer coursework.

Non-Baccalaureate Institution

Two year, associate degree or certificate granting institutions.

Non-Resident Student

A student who does not meet the requirements for paying in-state tuition rates as defined by state statute.

Occupational/Technical Coursework

Courses associated with a program offered at a technical college or institution where the program has a specific focus on job related topics.

Official Campus Document

Summaries, transcripts, degree audits, or other documents displaying transfer credit, either as an electronic or hard copy version.

Programmatic Accreditation (see Accreditation)

Receiving Institution

The institution to which the student is transferring.

Resident Student

A student who meets the requirements for paying in-state tuition rates as defined by state statute.

Requirements

General Education/Breadth

A category of requirements within a degree program that seeks to instill in students a "breadth" or range of knowledge in several disciplines (e.g. humanities, natural sciences, social sciences).

NOTE: The term "general education" can be used in a wide variety of ways and UW institutions do not use the term identically. It may be used very broadly to encompass several kinds of requirements, or narrowly to include only very specific requirements.

College/School/Graduation

A set of requirements that may be university-wide and/or determined by a college/school or program for completion of a degree by students enrolled in that college/school.

Competency/Proficiency

A category of requirements, within a program, that seeks to establish a minimum level of student proficiency in certain disciplines (e.g., English composition, speech, foreign language, math, quantitative reasoning).

Cultural Diversity

Similar in nature to Ethnic Studies requirement, but may also include coursework covering other international or national immigrant groups.

Degree

The combination of requirements necessary to be awarded a degree.

Ethnic Studies

UW System graduation or general education requirement for coursework centered on African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian-American, or American Indian populations in the U.S.

University-wide

Requirement(s) that must be completed by all undergraduate degree students enrolled at the institution.

Sending Institution

The institution to which the student is transferring.

Transfer Credit

Credit earned at one institution accepted in transfer at another institution.

Transfer Student

A designation given to a degree-seeking student who transfers credit from another institution of higher education, other than credits earned solely during summer session or while enrolled in high school.

University-wide Requirements (see Requirements)

UW Institution Associate Degree

An associate of arts and science degree awarded by UW institutions which meets the minimum requirements approved by the UW Board of Regents.