

**REGENT POLICY DOCUMENT REVIEW:
RPD 4-X CORE GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**

REQUESTED ACTION

Adoption of Resolution X.

Resolution X. That, upon the recommendation of the President of the University of Wisconsin System, the Board of Regents approves the creation of a new Regent Policy Document, “Core General Education Requirements” to define Core General Education Requirements for the Universities of Wisconsin including how courses will transfer and apply to degree requirements for students who transfer between UW universities.

SUMMARY

Wisconsin Statute ([Wis. Stat. 36.31](#)) requires that the University of Wisconsin System (UW) Board of Regents shall establish policies where all credits for core general education requirement courses are transferable between universities within the system and satisfy core general education requirements.

The six broad curricular categories that will serve as the framework for the Universities of Wisconsin Core General Education Requirements, reflect the curricular categories defined by other states and university systems in similar general education policies, standardize the curricular categories already in place across UW universities, and align with the recent revisions by the Wisconsin Technical College System.

The proposed RPD 4-X addresses the challenge of the applicability of transfer credit to fulfill general education requirements and creates a consistent approach to that process adopted by all UW universities. For years, the transfer of course credit has occurred fairly easily across UW universities, but the proposed policy will increase transfer applicability in a more student-centered manner that has the potential to speed students’ path toward graduation and reduce the cost of their degree.

Presenter

- Dr. Johannes Britz, Senior Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, UW Administration

BACKGROUND

The Universities of Wisconsin are subject to statutory provisions that require the UW Board of Regents to establish policies related to the transfer of credits between UW universities. Section 36.11(3)(b), Wis. Stats., requires that the UW System Board of Regents establish policies related to the transfer of all credits for core general education requirement courses, and that the courses satisfy core general education requirements.

The proposed RPD 4-X defines the Core General Education Requirements for the UW and describes how the Core General Education Requirement courses will transfer and apply to degree requirements for students who transfer between UW universities. The Core General Education Requirements are defined as undergraduate courses in six broad categories totaling 10-12 courses and 30-36 credit hours that impart foundational knowledge and skills. To ensure the transfer of credit, RPD 4-X outlines five rules governing the transfer and applicability of Core General Education Requirement credit between UW universities for all matriculated degree-seeking undergraduate students.

A review of the general education requirements within state and university system policies found that the proposed RPD 4-X aligns with their goals and framework for general education approaches. The purpose of these state and university system policies is frequently to ensure both the transfer and applicability of general education course credits across institutions of higher education within the state or system. Specifically, these policies often serve to create pathways between two-year and four-year institutions within a state or system, such as the Oregon Transfer Compass¹, the Ohio Transfer 36², the SUNY (State University of New York) General Education Framework³, and the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum⁴. The required general education course credit hours typically range from 27-36, with 30 credit hours being the most common. Furthermore, the Higher Learning

¹ See the Oregon Transfer Compass here: <https://www.oregon.gov/highered/about/transfer/Documents/Transfer-Resources/Core-Transfer-Maps-One-pager.pdf>

² See the Ohio Transfer 36 information here: <https://transfercredit.ohio.gov/initiatives-upd/ohio-transfer-36>

³ See the SUNY General Education Framework here: <https://system.suny.edu/academic-affairs/acaproplan/general-education/suny-ge/>

⁴ See the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum here: <https://www.minnstate.edu/admissions/transfer/mntc.html>

Commission (HLC) expects higher education institutions to maintain a minimum requirement of 30 credit hours of general education for all undergraduate programs⁵.

Although the UWs have both existing Regent (RPD 7-1 “Transfer and Award of Credit for Extra-Institutional Learning” and RPD 4-16 “Criteria for Approval of Wisconsin Technical College System Liberal Art and Pre-Professional Transfer Programs”) and UW System Administrative (SYS 135: “UW System Undergraduate Transfer Policy” and SYS 110: “Criteria and Approval of Wisconsin Technical College Liberal Arts and Pre-professional Transfer Programs”) policies that address transfer of course credits across UW universities, these policies do not ensure consistent transfer of credit and application of credit toward general education requirements. Without a requirement that UW universities approach transfer within the system in a consistent manner, students currently experience disparate transfer credit experiences.

There is no Regent policy or UW System Administrative policy that defines the general education requirements for completion of a bachelor’s degree. Frequently UW universities use the general education breadth requirements outlined in UW System Administrative Policy 115 as a framework for the development of their general education curriculum. As such, the current general education credit hour requirements vary greatly across the UW universities in six to ten areas of study.

Related Policies and Applicable Laws

- Section 36.11 (3)(b), Wis. Stats., “Admission of Applicants.”
- Section 36.31 (2m)(a)2, Wis. Stats., “Core general education courses.”
- Section 36.31 (2m)(d)
- [Regent Policy Document 4-16, “Criteria for Approval of Wisconsin Technical College System Liberal Art and Pre-Professional Transfer Programs”](#)
- [Regent Policy Document 7-1, “Transfer and Award of Credit for Extra-Institutional Learning”](#)

See also

- [UW System Administrative Policy 110, “Criteria and Approval of Wisconsin Technical College Liberal Arts and Pre-professional Transfer Programs”](#)
- [UW System Administrative Policy 115, “Associate Degree Standards”](#)
- [UW System Administrative Policy 135, “UW System Undergraduate Transfer Policy”](#)

ATTACHMENTS

- A) RPD 4-X, “Core General Education Requirements.” (Proposed)

⁵ See HLC Assumed Practices here: <https://www.hlcommission.org/accreditation/policies/assumed-practices//>

Core General Education Requirements

Scope

This policy defines Core General Education Requirements for the Universities of Wisconsin and describes how Core General Education Requirements transfer and apply to degree requirements for students who transfer between different UW universities. Universities of Wisconsin Core General Education Requirements apply to both associate's and bachelor's degree programs offered by UW universities, and apply to undergraduates enrolling for the first time in fall 2026 or after and students who enrolled in earlier terms who choose to follow these Core General Education Requirements.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the Core General Education Requirements for the Universities of Wisconsin and describe how Core General Education Requirement courses will transfer and apply to degree requirements for students who transfer between UW universities as outlined in Wisconsin Statutes (Wis. Stat. 36.11(3)(b)). This policy also charges the Universities of Wisconsin Administration with developing new policy and revising existing UW System Administrative policies to operationalize the transfer of Core General Education Requirements between UW universities as required in Wisconsin Statutes (Wis. Stat. 36.11(3)(b)).

Policy Statement

The UW System Board of Regents establishes that Core General Education Requirements as referred to in Wis. Stat. 36.11(3)(b), 36.31 (2m)(a)2, and 36.31(2m)(d) comprise undergraduate courses in six broad categories totaling 10-12 courses and 30-36 credit hours that impart foundational knowledge and skills. The following rules govern the transfer and applicability of Core General Education Requirement credit between UW universities for all matriculated degree-seeking undergraduate students:

1. A student who completes all their Core General Education Requirements at a sending UW university will also have completed their Core General Education Requirements at the receiving UW university.
2. A student who completes a Core General Education Requirement category at a sending UW university will also have completed that Core General Education Requirement category at the receiving UW university.

3. A student who transfers and will fulfill all Core General Education Requirement categories with less than the minimum required 10 courses (30 credit hours), can fulfill the course and credit hour requirements by selecting courses that fulfill any Core General Education Requirement category.
4. A student who is awarded credit(s) toward completion of a Core General Education Requirement category at a sending UW university will have the credit(s) apply towards completion of the same Core General Education Requirement category at the receiving UW university. However, when the completed Core General Education Requirement credits can apply to multiple categories, application of credits into a specific category, that is different from the sending UW university, is at the discretion of the receiving UW university in a manner that is in the best interest of the student.
5. A student who transfers with incomplete Core General Education Requirement categories will have to finish those Core General Education Requirement categories based on the receiving UW university category rules.

In accordance with Wis. Stat. 36.31(2m)(a)2, a UW university shall not establish any university-wide graduation requirement outside of those that satisfy the Core General Education Requirements.

Oversight, Roles, and Responsibilities

The Board delegates to UW System the authority to develop policies to further define and implement this policy. As such, the Universities of Wisconsin Division of Academic and Student Affairs shall establish and provide ongoing oversight of UW System Administrative policy and procedures related to the establishment of the Core General Education Requirements and ensuring their transferability between UW universities.

Each UW university is responsible for updating and maintaining systems involved in transfer credit evaluation and degree completion (e.g., student information system, degree audit system, transfer credit equivalency system). Each UW university is responsible for ensuring and demonstrating compliance with this policy and related system policies and for maintaining a list of courses that comprise Core General Education Requirements for their university.

The Universities of Wisconsin Division of Academic and Student Affairs will monitor compliance with this policy as well as associated system policies.

Related Regent Policy Documents and Applicable Laws

- Regent Policy Document 7-1 “Undergraduate Transfer Credit and Award of Credit for Extra-Institutional Learning”
- Section 36.11 (3)(b), Wis. Stats.
- Section 36.31 (2m)(a)2, Wis. Stats.
- Section 36.31 (2m)d, Wis. Stats.

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