International Transfer Credit Policy

The Ohio State University – University Policies policies.osu.edu

Applies to: Units, Board of Trustees, and current and prospective affiliated entities.

Responsible Office               Office of Academic Affairs

POLICY

Issued: MM/DD/YYYY (TBD)

The Ohio State University has established an international transfer credit policy that is guided by the research and best practices of professional international transfer credit associations, the higher education community within the United States, and our own university. The policy is designed to facilitate the transfer of students and credits from foreign institutions of higher education to Ohio State, assure maximum utilization of prior learning, and encourage students to advance as far through the educational system as they can in pursuit of their goals.

Purpose of the Policy

To facilitate fair and consistent transfer credit evaluations of international course work.

Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acceptability</td>
<td>Course work acknowledged by the university as having met standards for evaluation and award of transfer credit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accreditation</td>
<td>The educational quality of an institution assessed by specific governing bodies and associations indicating that an institution has met certain minimum standards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approved Foreign Institution</td>
<td>An institution of higher education outside of the United States that is recognized by a country’s Ministry of Education or other authorizing body for higher education. This recognition, as well as an assessment of the country’s educational system, institution type and educational quality of the course work, will determine approval for transfer credit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comparability</td>
<td>How a course from another institution compares in content, expectations, and credit hours to the Ohio State curriculum.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>The specific academic material covered in a course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>Course work taken at an institution located in the United States.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>Course work taken at an institution located outside of the United States.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institution of Higher Education</td>
<td>An institution authorized and recognized by a quality assurance body or Ministry of Education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-collegiate</td>
<td>Course work that is taken in a setting outside of a college/university campus (e.g. seminars, workshops, training programs).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Originating Institution</td>
<td>An institution (i.e. college, university, agency, organization) at which course work has been taken and/or academic credit earned, and from which is received a report of that course work on official documentation (e.g. transcript).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semester Hour Equivalency</td>
<td>The number of semester hours of credit assigned to a course on the basis of content and amount of time required for completion. Because University transfer credit hour values are based on the credit value assigned by the originating institution, an institutional analysis is used to determine a proper and consistent conversion of credit to Ohio State semester hours.</td>
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PROCEDURE

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I. Introduction

Global partnerships have afforded students the ability to seek educational opportunities at institutions of higher education worldwide, including The Ohio State University. The university has created an official policy to address the unique challenges of international transfer credit evaluation. Understanding the variables involved in
the international transfer credit evaluation process is imperative to ensuring that students are awarded credit consistently and equitably.

Implementation of the policy detailed here will strike a mutually-beneficial balance between policy and administrative load. It will provide comparable treatment for all students, and ensure that students will not be required to repeat course work completed at an approved foreign institution.

A. Evaluation Methodology

The Ohio State University will review admissions requirements, grades, length of program, program type, and credential qualifications and requirements. A comparative analysis between equivalent length of study at the originating institution and OSU will involve assessing one year’s worth of higher education study at the foreign institution to one year’s worth of study at The Ohio State University.

After the university determines that the credit from the Foreign Institution is eligible for evaluation and meets standards for satisfactory academic performance as defined in Section IV, the university will apply criteria relative to the level and content of the course to determine acceptability for transfer credit.

B. Professionally Recognized Resources and Recommendations

The university employs, adapts, and recognizes the research and recommendations of professional associations to establish best practices in international transfer credit evaluation. Associations commonly used, but not limited to, include the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, American Council on Education, Council for Higher Education Accreditation, and NAFSA: Association for International Educators. The Ohio State University also shares and models best practices of international transfer credit evaluation with peer higher education institutions in the United States.

II. Determining Recognition

For domestic transfer credit evaluation, the accreditation held by the originating institution determines the eligibility of a course for evaluation and the award of university credit. While some foreign institutions hold regional U.S. accreditation, many do not. Those holding regional U.S. accreditation are not governed by this International Transfer Credit Policy but by The Ohio State University’s Transfer Credit Policy.

For Foreign Institutions, The Ohio State University looks to quality assurance bodies and Ministries of Education as a baseline for accepting and awarding transfer credit. Quality assurance bodies and Ministries of Education have been authorized to operate by their respective governments as either agencies of the government or as private entities (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2017). The accrediting bodies generally maintain directories of recognized institutions and sometimes maintain lists of fraudulent institutions. For the purpose of this international transfer credit policy, we refer to these agencies as accrediting bodies, and institutions authorized by such agencies as being properly recognized Institutions of Higher Education (IHE).

A. Institutions of Higher Education

The following considerations will be given to IHE and non-collegiate sources:

1. Consistent with established educational practice, the university will evaluate and award credit for all successfully completed college course work, as defined in Section IV below, at post-secondary institutions with the proper aforementioned recognition status. Recognition by such body as an IHE is required by the university to serve as the basis to award transfer credit from the institution.

2. Course work offered at collegiate institutions that do not hold the proper recognition status as outlined in Section II is not eligible for evaluation and the award of university transfer credit, which is consistent with the University’s policy for unaccredited domestic institutions.

3. Programs within collegiate institutions can offer classes, certifications, programs and non-credit bearing courses to students that are not approved and recognized as official course work of the university. Only course work that is transcribed on the institution’s official transcript, issued by the institution’s Registrar’s office, or similar authorizing designee, will be eligible for transfer credit as outlined in this policy.
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4. Basic and general college level course work (e.g. non-remedial, non-technical) successfully completed at post-secondary institutions holding the proper recognition status as outlined in Section II is also eligible for evaluation. University transfer credit will be awarded based on the content, level, course value, length of study, and applicability of the course to university offerings.

B. Non-collegiate Sources
Courses offered at non-collegiate institutions are not eligible for evaluation and the award of university transfer credit.

1. Foreign Language and Linguistics Institutes
Course work completed at a Foreign Language Institute that is not a recognized Institution of Higher Education is not eligible for transfer under the scope of this policy.

2. Third-Party Providers
Private businesses offering course work and specialized programs (including study abroad) are referred to as third-party providers and may indicate that credit is transferable to and amongst institutions. Such entities are not recognized Institutions of Higher Education, and credit is not transferable under the scope of this policy.

III. Award of Credit
The explanation of awarding undergraduate course work is detailed in points A through C below. For information regarding graduate-level credit, see Section VI. Graduate Level Transfer Credit.

A. Determining Undergraduate Level of Course Work

1. Course level is a descriptor that is often used in the United States, but may not have an equivalent in foreign education systems. In cases where there is uncertainty of the comparability to the U.S. course level, understanding the country’s educational ladder is imperative. Review of course descriptions and syllabi can also help draw comparisons to appropriate academic level. The tenets of this policy shall govern the process of course evaluation and the award of international transfer credit for undergraduate course work.

2. Non-collegiate Level: Courses (e.g. English and Mathematics) that are clearly intended to be a review of secondary school material are often designated remedial/developmental and are not awarded university transfer credit. Included in this category are selected orientation and study skills courses, speed reading, and note taking courses. In a similar manner, English as a Second Language (ESL) courses are not eligible for evaluation or the award of university transfer credit.

B. Evaluating Content
The university shall evaluate and award transfer credit for undergraduate course work as defined by guidelines of the academic departments (e.g. English, Mathematics, History, Art). Transfer courses may be evaluated as direct equivalents or generalized credit as outlined in section IV, 1-3 of the Transfer Credit Policy: [http://registrar.osu.edu/transfer_credit/transferCreditPolicy.pdf](http://registrar.osu.edu/transfer_credit/transferCreditPolicy.pdf).

C. Determination of Semester Hour Equivalent Value Assigned
Academic calendars vary greatly amongst countries, as well as institutions within countries. Course values may be documented in hours, units, quarters and semesters, and definitions of such values vary between countries and institutions. Because University transfer credit hour values are based on the credit value assigned by the originating institution, an institutional analysis is used to determine a proper and consistent conversion of credit to Ohio State semester hours.

1. Semester Academic Calendar
If the institutional analysis determines the international educational system is similar to the United States’ system, as well as Ohio State’s semester hour definition of awarding credit, a one-to-one ratio is used to award credit.

Sometimes international schools may list courses as semester hours on the transcript, and after an institutional analysis, it is determined that the semester hour designation does not hold the same weight as a U.S. semester hour. In those cases, a ratio (C.2) is used to award equivalent credit.

2. Calculating Ratios: Comparing One Year’s Worth of Work
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In the United States, the semester hour credit is the most common type of credit with 15 credits equaling the average number of credits carried in one U.S. semester thus 30 credits per academic year and 120 credits per U.S. four year undergraduate program. When determining comparability of educational institutions (with the exceptions of C.3, C.4, C.5), the standard practice is to compare one year’s worth of work from the international institution to 30 semester hours. If discrepancies exist between systems, a ratio is used to adjust the hours to equate the transfer work accordingly.

3. European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) Units
   In an effort to standardize higher education to draw comparisons of study attainment and performance across the European Union and other collaborating countries, many institutions use the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) Units to award credit on transcripts. ECTS conversions are as follows:
   a. Continental Europe: 2 ECTS units = 1 U.S. semester hour
      Example: A 6 ECTS unit course converts to 3 U.S. Semester Hours.
   b. United Kingdom: 4 ECTS units = 1 U.S. semester hour
      Example: A 6 ECTS unit course converts to 1.5 U.S. Semester Hours.

4. China: All courses from Chinese institutions are applied a .667 ratio.
   a. Example: A 4 credit course at a Chinese institution converts to 2.67 semester hours.

5. Some international institutions may not list any type of course credit on the transcript, only course titles and grades. To establish a baseline for awarding credit, the Institution determines the target number of semester credits per year of a student’s program and divides that by the total number of courses taken to create a credit comparison.
   a. Example: A student has successfully completed 20 courses over two years of study. OSU equates 2 years of undergraduate study to approximately 60 credits.
      60 semester hours/20 courses taken = 3. The 20 individual courses would be awarded 3 semester hours each.

IV. Determining Satisfactory Academic Performance
   A. Grades
      In order to be eligible for transfer credit, a course must carry a grade equivalent to C- or higher on a 4.0 scale. As educational systems differ amongst countries, grade equivalencies may also vary. The university uses professionally recognized resources to convert grades to the U.S. equivalent.
   B. Completion Outcome, Completed Course Performance and Passing Performance
      Refer to Section V of the Transfer Credit Policy
      http://registrar.osu.edu/transfer_credit/transferCreditPolicy.pdf

V. Additional Ways Students May Obtain Credit
   The university recognizes that students have additional opportunities for learning prior to entering institutions of higher education. Some of these opportunities may be eligible for consideration in the evaluation process based on certain criteria and on the circumstances by which the student obtained the education.
   A. Advanced Standing: Credit may be awarded for British-pattern Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level subject exam certificates and similar nationalized credentials through the OSU Testing Center. Such credit is not covered under this policy. For more information, see the Testing Center webpage:
      http://registrar.osu.edu/testing/index.asp
   B. Abitur: Transfer credit may be awarded for the Abitur examination. Credit will be calculated in semester hours. Official documentation of exam scores must be submitted to Undergraduate Admissions for evaluation of credit. For information on sending transcripts, see: http://registrar.osu.edu/transfer_credit/index.asp
   C. International Baccalaureate Credit: IB credit is awarded through the OSU Testing Center and is not covered under this policy. Please visit the International Baccalaureate website for information on how to transfer an IB diploma: http://www.ibo.org.

VI. Graduate Level Transfer Credit
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A. Graduate credit earned at another university may be transferred to this university. The Graduate School places no limit on the graduate credit hours that may be transferred. However, residence and minimum degree requirements determine the number of graduate credit hours that may be counted toward a graduate degree at this university. The following conditions must be satisfied in order to transfer graduate credit:
   1. that the graduate credit was earned as a graduate student at an accredited university
   2. that the student earned at least a grade of “B” or satisfactory in each course for which credit is to be transferred
   3. that the Graduate Studies Committee approves the transfer

B. Credits should be transferred at the time the student is admitted but no later than the end of the second semester of enrollment in the Graduate School. Transfer credits count in the student’s total earned hours but do not count in the student’s graduate cumulative point-hour ratio. The credit hours and the mark “K” appear on the student’s official permanent record.

C. For any transfer credit to count toward a master’s degree, the courses transferred must have been taken within the time limit established by the Graduate Studies Committee. A master’s degree student must complete 80 percent of the program at Ohio State.

D. For transferred graduate credit to count toward the 50 post-master’s graduate credit hours required for the doctoral degree, it must be in excess of the master’s degree requirements in a field in which the doctoral degree is awarded at the other university. It must be course work normally taken by doctoral students at the other institution. Note that a minimum of 24 graduate credit hours required for the PhD must be completed at this university.

E. On receipt and evaluation of a transcript listing courses completed, the Graduate Studies Committee chair initiates the request for transfer of graduate credit.

VII. Official Documentation

Official transcripts are to be sent directly to the Ohio State University from the sending institution. Information on sending official transcripts to OSU can be found on the University Registrar’s website: http://registrar.osu.edu/transfer_credit/index.asp.

A. Chinese institutions:
   OSU requires that transcripts from Chinese institutions be submitted with a verification report from the China Higher Education Student Information and Career Center (CHESICC) to be considered official. Any transcript that does not include a verification letter from CHESICC will not be evaluated.

B. Transcripts issued to student will not be accepted.

C. Documentation Exceptions:
   The University recognizes that in some circumstances, it is impossible for students to obtain duplicate copies of official transcripts. In these cases, eligibility for evaluation of credit will be determined on an individual basis. Please note that documents classified as official for admissions purposes may be unacceptable for transfer credit evaluation.

VIII. Appeals

This policy is used to address appeals regarding provisions of the international transfer credit policy, its application as a guide for the evaluation of prior learning experiences, and the award of university transfer credit.

Degree-granting colleges are charged with the authority and responsibility to determine the applicability of university transfer credit against specific degree requirements and appeals related to those issues are outside the scope of this policy. Therefore, separate policies and procedures are maintained by the degree-granting colleges to respond to appeals of applicability decisions.

A. Appeal Submitted by Student
   1. If a student wishes to challenge the international transfer credit policy, or the application of the policy to produce a university transfer credit award, then the appeal must be submitted in writing to the Associate Registrar who will determine either that the policy is being challenged or the application of the policy is at issue.
2. If the policy is at issue, the appropriate research will be conducted under the auspices of the University Registrar (in conjunction with the Associate Registrar) who will refer the appeal to the Council on Enrollment and Student Progress (CESP) or a subsequently designated faculty governing body. The CESP will review all available information and make a recommendation to the Office of Academic Affairs. That office will issue the final decision. If a transfer credit award is at issue, then the Associate Registrar will examine the appeal to determine whether or not the university transfer credit policy was appropriately applied to yield the initial evaluation. The appeal will be denied when it is determined that the policy was appropriately applied. An appropriate correction will be issued if the policy was misapplied. Appeals denied by the Associate Registrar may be appealed to the University Registrar who will issue a final decision.

B. Appeal Submitted by Institution
1. If an institution wishes to challenge the transfer credit policy, or the application of the policy to produce a university transfer credit award, then the appeal must be submitted in writing to the Associate Registrar who will determine either that the policy is being challenged or the application of the policy is at issue.
2. Institutional challenges to the policy shall follow the guidelines in VIII-A-2.
3. Challenges to the application of the policy toward a transfer credit award shall follow guidelines in VIII-A-3.

Responsibilities *(required; number responsibilities if more than one for any position or office)*

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<th>Position or Office</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
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Resources *(required for any resource referenced in the policy, optional for others; divide into subcategories if possible to help the user—forms, governance docs, additional guidance, etc.; list resources alphabetically within subcategories)*

Forms
- Form 1, URL
- Form 2, URL
- Form 3, URL

Governance Documents
- Guidelines, URL
- Policy, URL
- Standards, URL
- University Rule, URL

Additional Guidance
- FAQs, URL
- Sample Materials, URL
- Training, URL

Contacts *(required)*

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<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
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History (required)

Issued: MM/DD/YYYY
Revised: MM/DD/YYYY, Approved by University Senate, mm/dd/yyyy; Approved by BOT, mm/dd/yyyy, Resolution #xx-xx (if applicable)
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Review and Approval History and Process

Senior Management Council September 5, 2018 Approved to proceed with review & input
Advising Administrators September 19, 2018 In Progress
Academic Program Advisory Committee October 5, 2018 In Progress
Council on Academic Affairs October 10, 2018 In Progress
Transfer Credit Coordinators October 17, 2018 In Progress (3rd review)
Committee on Enrollment and Student Progress TBD TBD
University Review TBD TBD
Senior Management Council TBD TBD (final approval)