

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM  
UNDERGRADUATE TRANSFER POLICY

5-7-2004

This document is a revision of the UW System Undergraduate Transfer Policy replacing the document last revised on December 8, 2000 and all other prior versions. It incorporates numerous provisions called for by the Board of Regents in "Planning the Future" and the "Statement of Guiding Principles on Student Transfer from the Wisconsin Technical College System to the University of Wisconsin System" of April, 2000. It further incorporates the recommendations of the 1995 UW System Transfer Working Group and the 1997 UW System General Education Transfer Working Group. 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

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## INTRODUCTION

Mobility is a common human phenomenon. This is particularly true for students in higher education. For several reasons -- a change in major, a family move, the economic or familial necessity of attending college close to home -- students are frequently faced with the need to obtain their collegiate education from two or more institutions.

In response to such needs, the University of Wisconsin System (UW System) welcomes transfer students from other accredited colleges and universities and from other UW institutions. A conscientious effort has been made to create a student-oriented transfer process. The foremost goal is a policy that provides a strong focus toward serving students and strives to treat transfer and continuing students in the same way on program issues (e.g., degree requirements, program changes and registration).

The challenge in this UW System Undergraduate Transfer Policy is to reach an appropriate balance among varied and sometimes competing goals. These goals include: (a) facilitating student mobility; (b) recognizing the distinct mission of each UW institution and the faculty role in the development of the missions; (c) providing information to students on course equivalencies and program requirements throughout the System; and (d) balancing the System concerns with institutional autonomy and program integrity.

### I. PRINCIPLES OF ACCOMMODATION FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS

The UW System endorses the "Joint Statement on Transfer and Award of Academic Credit" developed in 1978 by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the American Council on Education/Commission on Educational Credit, and the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation which states in part that "transfer of credit is a concept that now involves transfer between dissimilar institutions and curricula and recognition of extra-institutional learning, as well as transfer between institutions and curricula of similar characteristics."

Further, the "Joint Statement" addresses distinctions in the purpose of credit acceptance as follows: "At some institutions there may be differences between the acceptance of credit for admission purposes and the applicability of credit for degree purposes. A receiving institution may accept previous work, place a credit value on it, and enter it on the transcript. However, that previous work, because of its nature and not its inherent quality, may be determined to have no applicability to a specific degree to be pursued by the student. Institutions have a responsibility to make this distinction and its implications clear to students before they decide to enroll. This should be a matter of full disclosure, with the best interests of the student in mind. Institutions also should make every reasonable effort to reduce the gap between credits accepted and credits applied toward an educational credential."

- A. UW institutions should accept in transfer as much credit as is pertinent to the student's new curriculum and the institution's graduation requirements. In accepting credits from accredited colleges and universities, maximum recognition of courses satisfactorily completed shall be given to transfer students in satisfying requirements at the receiving institution. The "Principles of Accommodation" shall be implemented by recognizing general education/liberal arts requirements in terms of broad academic areas (social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, etc.) as well as specific courses.

UW institutions may award transfer credit for courses for which they do not have a comparable department or curricular area or for which they may 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 would generally apply 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 under these principles of accommodation.

- B. 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 at the receiving UW institution. This principle should apply whether or not the receiving institution has a direct course equivalent that satisfies general education.
  2. A course designated ethnic studies at one UW institution should be applied toward the ethnic studies requirement at the receiving UW institution.
- C. UW institutions should apply academic policies and procedures to continuing and UW System transfer students in a similar manner. In applying this principle, the following examples may be helpful:
1. 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 and when doing so is beneficial to the students.
  2. In determining whether to award upper level credit for courses completed by UW System transfer students, institutions should apply the same practice used for their own freshmen and sophomores.
  3. 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 a UW institution.

4. UW institutions should apply to both UW System transfer students admitted to the institution (see Section II.E.) and continuing students the same criteria for admission to a major or program or for applying a course toward a degree.
  5. UW institutions should permit UW System transfer students admitted to the institution to register with similar priority as continuing students.
- D. If all other conditions for admission are met, credits shall be transferred to the new institution subject to the guidelines elsewhere in this policy and provided that the grades earned in courses at the previous institution are recognized as passing grades at the new institution. However, each institution will determine if, and how, credits will be applied toward a degree.

If a student should subsequently transfer to another academic program or another UW institution, all credits will again be evaluated to determine if, and how, they will be applied toward a degree. 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.

- E. 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 placed on the transcript.

The credits 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 in which the student is enrolled. Credits which are not applicable to the requirements of the specific program should be noted on an official institution document.

- F. Students seeking transfer of credit after attending one or more accredited institutions of higher education, who are found to be admissible, and who completed the admission process, shall be given an evaluation of credits prior to enrollment. Degree requirements for full-time and part-time transfer students from UW institutions shall be determined by the same institutional policy used to determine degree requirements for continuing students. Students should be informed in writing of the opportunity and procedures for appealing any course transfer determination.
- G. The Transfer Information System (TIS) is a UW System source for official institutional undergraduate course and program information. Institutions will provide information and data necessary to establish TIS and keep it current and accurate.
- H. Schools, colleges, and departments should provide timely information to other UW institutions 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.

- I. Transfer policies of specific colleges or schools shall be explicitly stated in catalogs and bulletins. Students applying for transfer should be made aware of the UW System transfer policy at the outset through appropriate brochures, pamphlets or bulletins. Changes in admission and/or program requirements should be announced and well publicized prior to implementation via brochures, pamphlets, bulletins, catalogs and TIS.
- J. The UW System Office of Academic Affairs will coordinate transfer policy and procedures within the UW System. Questions about interpretation of transfer policy and procedures should be referred to that office.

## II. MINIMUM GENERAL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS

- A. Normally students with an overall 'C' (2.00 grade point average on a 4.00 scale) average at their previous institution(s) shall be admissible. In fulfilling the institutional mission, it may be necessary for a school, college or department to set standards for entry to their programs which exceed the institution's minimum transfer GPA requirements. Such standards for entry shall apply equally to transfer and continuing students.
- B. Institutions may admit students with less than an overall 'C' average at their previous institution(s) if they would originally have been admissible as a freshman and/or if they would be eligible to continue had they achieved their existing academic record at the new institution.
- C. 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. 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. E. below, the institution shall determine the criteria for selection from among qualified applicants. (Note: For purposes of this policy, Minnesota students eligible for reciprocity are considered as residents.)
- D. 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.
- E. During periods of enrollment management, 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 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 OF 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.

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.

The UW baccalaureate-granting institutions also shall consider transfer students holding such an Associate Degree to have satisfied the college or school general education breadth requirements of the receiving institution. Colleges and schools may require transfer students to complete additional general education credits beyond the university-wide total if required of continuing students.

The following may not necessarily be satisfied by the Associate Degree:

- A. competency requirements or levels of proficiency in English composition, speech, foreign language and math 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, American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business, National League for Nursing)

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.

Transfer credits will be evaluated by the receiving institution on a course-by-course basis for purposes other than determining satisfaction of general education breadth requirements.

### IV. RECOGNITION OF INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMS

The UW System bases its general policy on the acceptance of credit from another institution on that institution's mission, quality of programs, its accreditation status and its recognition by the American Council on Education (ACE).

A. Institutional Accreditation

Credit earned in institutions of higher education that are accredited is transferable if applicable to the student's degree program at the new institution. If the institution offers both liberal arts collegiate transfer and occupational courses, the full transfer applies only to the liberal arts collegiate transfer courses.

B. Programmatic Accreditation

For schools accredited by a programmatic accrediting association, credit may be granted in the specialty of accreditation (art, music, etc.) if recommended by the appropriate academic department or equivalent.

C. Not Accredited

Credit earned in institutions of higher education that are not accredited is not acceptable for transfer except as outlined below. Students who have taken courses at non-accredited schools may seek credit by examination in courses where continuing students have the right to earn credit by examination. Credit earned in an institution which is a "Recognized Candidate" for accreditation is transferable if applicable to the student's degree program at the new institution.

D. International Students

Credit may be granted for postsecondary work if the institution is listed in the "International Handbook of Universities" or in the "Commonwealth Universities Yearbook". Credit may be granted for postsecondary work from institutions not listed in these publications upon departmental evaluation of program syllabi.

E. Credit by Examination

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. These options will allow any student the opportunity to gain credit by demonstrating competency.

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.

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.

F. Non-collegiate Educational Experiences/Credit for Prior Learning

UW institutions may grant credit on the basis of recommendations made by the guides to non-collegiate educational experiences published by the American Council on Education's (ACE) Office on Educational Credit and Credentials, (e.g., the "Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services" and "A Guide to Educational Credits for Training Programs").

All non-collegiate education courses/credits accepted by the institution must be so designated on the student's transcript. Upon transfer, credits granted for non-collegiate educational experiences at one institution should be evaluated for possible transfer at the receiving UW institution.

V. TRANSFER OF CREDIT FROM NON-BACCALAUREATE INSTITUTIONS

A. Freshman/Sophomore Colleges and Universities

Students transferring from the UW Colleges and other similar freshman/sophomore institutions to UW baccalaureate granting institutions may generally transfer up to 72 semester credits earned at non-baccalaureate institutions. UW institutions may accept additional credits toward the degree where appropriate. This does not alter the regulations concerning credits to be earned in residence at an institution.

B. UW-Extension

University level courses completed through the Independent Study program of UW-Extension will transfer on the same basis as equivalent courses taken at UW institutions.

C. 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 three WTCS accredited liberal arts collegiate transfer programs at Madison, Milwaukee and Nicolet Area Technical Colleges to UW baccalaureate granting institutions may generally transfer up to 72 semester credits earned at non-baccalaureate institutions. UWS institutions may accept additional credits toward the degree where appropriate. This does not alter the regulations concerning credits to be earned in residence at an institution.
2. UWS baccalaureate institutions shall consider students who have completed an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree from any of the three liberal arts collegiate transfer programs and that is specifically aligned with the University of Wisconsin System Associate Degree to have satisfied the university-wide general education breadth requirements at the receiving institution. The UW baccalaureate-granting institutions also shall consider transfer students holding such an Associate

Degree to have satisfied the college or school general education breadth requirements of the receiving institution. Colleges and schools may require transfer students to complete additional general education credits beyond the university-wide total if required of continuing students. The following may not necessarily be satisfied by the WTCS Associate Degree:

- a. Competency requirements or levels of proficiency in English composition, speech, foreign language and mathematics 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, American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business, National League for Nursing)
- e. Ethnic studies/cultural diversity requirement

Transfer credits will be evaluated by the receiving institution on a course-by-course basis for purposes other than determining satisfaction of general education breadth requirements.

3. UWS institutions may accept in transfer and apply up to 30 credits of general education coursework within the areas of communications, behavioral sciences, social sciences, mathematics, and natural science from WTCS programs leading to an applied associate degree. In cases where UWS institutions find such coursework not acceptable for transfer, WTCS students should have the same opportunities as continuing students to earn credit by examination as per ACIS 6.0 IV.E.
4. UWS institutions may accept in transfer and apply on a course-by-course basis, occupational and technical coursework from WTCS programs leading to an applied associate degree.
5. UWS 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 "Guidelines for Developing Program-to-Program Articulation Agreements" (ACIS 6.2). Copies of original and updated agreements should be sent to the UW System Office of Academic Affairs.

Under these articulations, students in certain WTCS Applied Associate Degree programs who subsequently enroll in a related UWS 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.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS\*

### Applied Associate Degree

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

### Breadth Requirements

A category of general education 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).

### College/School Requirements

A set of requirements that is determined by a college/school for completion of a degree by students enrolled in that college/school.

### Competency Requirements

A category of requirements within a degree program that seeks to establish a minimum level of student proficiency in certain disciplines (e.g., English, math).

### Continuing Student

A student who enrolls as a new freshman and continues to attend the same institution (i.e., a student who does not transfer).

### General Education Requirements

A category of requirements within a degree program that normally consists of basic competencies and breadth of knowledge.

### Liberal Arts Collegiate Transfer

A term defining the WTCS program offered specifically for transfer at MATC-Madison, MATC- Milwaukee, and Nicolet Area Technical College. (Previously referred to as "College Parallel").

### Nonresident Student

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

### Resident Student

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

### Transfer Credit

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

Transfer Student

A designation given to students who transfer credit from another institution of higher education, other than credits earned during Summer Session or while enrolled in high school, and have not previously enrolled at the receiving institution.

University-wide Requirements

A set of requirements that must be completed by all undergraduate degree students enrolled at the institution.

UW Institution Associate Degree

A degree awarded by UW institutions which meets the minimum requirements approved by the UW Board of Regents.

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