

**UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE
REQUEST FOR INPUT**

PRESENTED BY: Roy Dobson, chair
Academic programs committee

DATE OF MEETING: January 22, 2015

SUBJECT: Transfer Credit and Articulation Policy

COUNCIL ACTION: For input only

DISCUSSION SUMMARY:

The purpose of the policy is to establish key transfer credit and transfer articulation principles, define common terminology, outline roles and responsibilities, clarify authorities, and determine common procedures and guidelines for students, administration and faculty to accompany the policy and facilitate its implementation. With the new policy and procedures in place, the work of evaluating and assigning transfer credit centrally and within departments will become more consistent and streamlined. Similarly, articulating the university's policy on transfer credit and articulation will aid potential transfer students in understanding their options and requirements with respect to receiving academic credit for coursework completed elsewhere.

The policy recognizes the global increase in cross-jurisdictional and inter-institutional student mobility and greater competition for postsecondary students and meets the expectations of governments, students, postsecondary partners, and other stakeholders to recognize prior learning, minimize repetitive learning, decrease time to complete credentials, and eliminate unnecessary costs. Efficiencies can be gained through effective, consistent and transparent transfer credit and credit transfer systems, allowing increased access to postsecondary education and the ability for learners at all stages of their lives and careers to move easily into, between, and out of postsecondary education.

Scope of Proposed Policy

This policy applies to all for-credit undergraduate and graduate courses completed at recognized postsecondary institutions considered for transfer credit toward U of S degree credit courses. Also within the scope of the policy is university-level coursework completed through standardized enhanced secondary systems, such as the International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, and A-levels in British-based education systems.

This policy excludes non-formal and informal learning, which is assessed through the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition process. The Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition (PLAR): Challenge for Credit Policy, approved by Academic Programs Committee of Council (April 2002), presents principles and a draft administrative process for the consideration of credit of knowledge and skills obtained through non-formal and informal learning. This document is flagged for review and revision or deletion immediately following approval of the Transfer Credit and Articulation policy.

The policy also covers the development and approval of transfer credit and articulation agreements with other postsecondary institutions, which will make it much easier for colleges and schools to undertake new academic partnerships. The procedures will be aligned with the Standard Operating Procedures for Signing International Agreements (under development by the International Office), and will align with the university's Signing Authority Policy.

The policy includes an appendix of student mobility terminology (Appendix A) that brings the university's nomenclature in alignment with national terminology. Approval of the policy signifies approval of the terminology in Appendix A, which will then be incorporated within the university's Nomenclature Report.

Consultation to date

The policy has been developed with extensive consultation as follows:

- Academic programs committee (Dec 2013, Exec April 2014, Nov 2014, Dec 2014)
- Associate deans academic (Dec 2011, Dec 2013, April 2014)
- The Advising Council group of academic advisors (May 2013)
- College of Graduate Studies and Research (April, Aug 2014, Nov 2014, Dec 2014)
- Direct and non-direct entry college coordinators and advisors (April & Aug 2014)
- International activities committee of Council (Dec 2014)
- Ministry of Advanced Education, Government of Saskatchewan (2013-14 ongoing)
- Policy oversight committee (Oct 2010, Sept 2014, Nov 2014)
- Postsecondary partners (U of R, Saskatchewan Polytechnic) (2013-14 ongoing)
- SESD Admissions and Transfer Credit Office (domestic and international) (April & Aug 2014)

Policy-related Procedures

Related procedures are under development in consultation with colleges and departments and will be completed by June, 2015. The procedures largely clarify existing practices and activity already underway. The procedures will be collated in a single procedures document appended to the policy and updated as required.

Awareness of the Policy

Stakeholders have been involved in the creation of the policy, and will continue to be consulted throughout the approval stages of the policy and development of related procedures. Policy implementation meetings, led by the project team, will be held with colleges and administrative offices once the policy is approved.

Provincial stakeholders such as Advanced Education, the University of Regina, and Saskatchewan Polytechnic are aware of the development of this policy, which is aligned with provincial/national principles and terminology.

FEEDBACK:

Comments and feedback on the draft policy and appendix may be directed to Alison Pickrell, director of enrolment and student affairs at Alison.pickrell@usask.ca.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Transfer Credit and Articulation Policy
2. Appendix A: Student Mobility Terminology
3. Outline of Transfer Credit and Articulation Procedures

University of Saskatchewan Policy Template

DRAFT Articulation and Transfer Credit Policy

Category: TBD
Number: TBD
Responsibility: Director of Enrolment and Student Affairs
Approval: University Council
Date: TBD

Purpose:

The University of Saskatchewan (U of S) recognizes that globally there has been an increase in cross-jurisdictional and inter-institutional student mobility and greater competition for postsecondary students. There is an expectation from governments, institutions, students, employers, and other stakeholders to recognize prior learning and establish pathways that build upon past learning experiences, in order to minimize repetitive learning, decrease time to completion, and eliminate unnecessary costs.

The university supports *The Pan-Canadian Protocol on the Transferability of University Credits* (CMEC, 1995), the *Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada* (CMEC, 2002), and the *Recognizing Prior Learning Provincial Policy Framework* (2009). As such, the University is committed to creating policy and procedures that support the mobility of students in their learning. The university recognizes the efficiencies that can be gained through effective and transparent transfer credit and credit transfer systems, facilitating increased access to postsecondary education and the ability for learners at all stages of their lives and careers to move easily into, between, and out of postsecondary education.

The purpose of this policy is to establish key articulation and transfer credit principles for the U of S, define terminology, outline roles and responsibilities, clarify authority, and determine common procedures and guidelines for students, administrators and faculty.

Principles:

When considering a course for transfer credit, institutions are faced with a number of decision points. The University of Saskatchewan has adopted the following best-practice principles to ensure that courses are assessed fairly and consistently.

Equivalence: A course submitted for transfer credit will not likely be identical to the corresponding course at the U of S. When an assessment for specific credit is being considered, the degree to which the course or courses match in relevance, level, content and/or learning outcomes will be considered with the goal of reasonably ensuring that students will have the necessary knowledge to be successful in more advanced courses.

Lifelong Learning: The U of S supports, recognizes, and promotes the value of educational experiences students have had at other post-secondary institutions, and will seek to grant credit for these experiences wherever possible through approved formal articulation agreements and/or course-by-course transfer credit. The U of S will develop meaningful learning pathways for transfer students that facilitate lifelong learning.

Parity of Esteem: Faculty should consider courses from other recognized institutions as they would like to have their own courses considered. Provisos and restrictions, such as specific grade requirements, should not be placed on transfer courses from recognized postsecondary institutions unless those same restrictions apply at the U of S, or there are clear and defensible reasons to do so.

Pedagogy: How a course is delivered is normally immaterial to its articulation. There is recognition that learning can happen in a wide variety of arrangements and conditions. However, there may be some occasions where it is appropriate to consider how a course is taught as it may be integral to content mastery and/or learning outcomes.

Quality: Transfer credit is granted only for formal coursework completed at recognized postsecondary institutions. A recognized postsecondary institution is a public or private institution that has been given authority to grant degrees, diplomas, and other credentials by a public or private Act of the provincial/territorial legislature or through a government quality assurance mechanism of accrediting agency.

Timeliness – Students, faculty and staff all play a role in the timely evaluation of transfer credit. Transfer credit will be assessed and communicated in a timely, consistent and clear manner to facilitate effective academic program planning and course registration.

Transparency: The U of S is committed to providing students, faculty, staff and departments with current and reliable information about transfer credit equivalencies, agreements, policies and procedures. Any individual who assigns or denies transfer credit on the assessment of a course should be prepared to explain the factors that led to the decision.

Definitions:

Transfer credit terminology is outlined in Appendix A. Definitions align, whenever possible, with national terminology and are part of the University Nomenclature Report.

Scope of this Policy:

This policy applies to all for-credit undergraduate and graduate courses completed at recognized postsecondary institutions that are being considered for transfer credit toward U of S degree credit courses. Also within the scope of the policy is university-level coursework completed through standardized enhanced secondary systems. This policy excludes non-formal and informal learning, which is assessed through the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition process. See PLAR: Challenge for Credit Policy (APC, 2002).

Policy:

1.0 Transfer Credit

- 1.1** The U of S will grant transfer credit for successfully completed postsecondary-level courses from recognized institutions in accordance with the principles outlined in this policy document.
- 1.2** Undergraduate credit may be granted for standardized enhanced secondary level programming that is deemed to be postsecondary coursework.
- 1.3** Official proof of successful completion of the coursework is required.
- 1.4** Transfer Credit will not be unreasonably denied. Transfer credit assessment will involve determining the degree to which the course(s) matches in relevance, content and/or learning outcomes, and will reasonably ensure that students have the necessary knowledge to be successful in more advanced courses.

- 1.5 The U of S recognizes the fundamental principles of the Pan-Canadian Quality Assurance Framework for the Assessment of International Academic Credentials (CMEC, 2012), and will apply these principles in the assessment of educational documents from outside of Canada.
- 1.6 The content of multiple courses from another institution may be combined to meet the learning outcomes of a U of S course or course(s).
- 1.7 The authority for determining transfer credit lies with the academic department responsible for the course content area. The academic department may delegate authority to assess transfer credit to the College Deans' Office, College Admissions Office, and Central Admissions and Transfer Credit Office.
- 1.8 Whenever possible, transfer credit will be awarded for a specific U of S course. Where specific U of S credit is not possible, unspecified college, subject-area or elective credit may be granted.
- 1.9 Transfer credit may be granted for subject areas not offered at the U of S.
- 1.10 The College Dean's Office (or designate) has authority to grant unspecified college, subject-area or general elective credit.
- 1.11 Colleges have authority to determine how transfer credit is applied to program/degree requirements, and they may establish limits on the amount of transfer credit allowed within a degree program. Transfer credit shall not exceed 50% of total credits required for completion of a U of S credential.
- 1.12 Provisos and restrictions will not be placed on courses being considered for transfer, unless those same restrictions apply to U of S courses, or there are clear and defensible reasons to do so.
- 1.13 Transfer credit decisions will be made and communicated to students in a timely manner.
- 1.14 Transfer credit awarded will appear on the student's official U of S transcript.
- 1.15 Students who chose to repeat courses for which they have been granted transfer credit, are subject to the course repeat regulations within their college of enrolment.
- 1.16 Transfer credit decisions may be appealed.

2.0 Transfer Credit Agreements

- 2.1 Transfer Articulation Agreements are formal agreements which ultimately result in the awarding of transfer credit. They are considered legal contracts that outline the nature of the credit transfer and the roles and responsibilities of each organization for maintaining the terms agreed upon within the agreement.
- 2.2 Colleges have the authority to negotiate and develop transfer credit articulation agreements with recognized postsecondary institutions. Agreements may be initiated by the College or by the sending institution.
- 2.3 The U of S will only sign transfer articulation agreements with recognized/accredited institutions. If the College is seeking an exception to this policy, permission must be obtained from the Vice Provost, Teaching and Learning.
- 2.4 Transfer Articulation Agreements must follow due diligence procedures, including being vetted by the Admissions & Transfer Credit Office (for undergraduate), the College of Graduate Studies & Research (for graduate), and the College Dean's Office(s) prior to final signature, to ensure alignment with policy principles and practices. A due diligence form must be completed and adherence to the University's signing policy is required.
- 2.5 Signed Transfer Articulation Agreements must be sent to the Admissions & Transfer Credit Office for central filing and inclusion in transfer credit database.

Responsibilities (Undergraduate Transfer Credit):

Academic Departments or Units

1. It is the responsibility of the academic department or unit to review course(s) from sending institutions to determine equivalency to U of S course(s) within the department.
2. Academic departments or units are responsible for responding to requests for evaluation in a timely manner.

College Office:

1. It is the responsibility of the College to assist with facilitating the timely transfer credit reviews.
2. The College will foster a culture of transfer with its academic departments and ensure consistency of transfer practice within the College.
3. The College will determine how transfer credit that is awarded fits into a student's degree program.
4. The College will negotiate transfer credit agreements, and ensure appropriate due diligence and signing of new and revised agreements

SESD Admissions & Transfer Credit Office:

1. The Office will facilitate the review of courses from sending institutions by academic departments.
2. The Office will assess undergraduate transfer credit based on precedent and agreements, and ensure
3. The Office will maintain a list of transfer credit precedents.
4. The Office will maintain copies of all Transfer Articulation Agreements
5. The Office will be responsible for providing and maintaining information for students about transfer credit procedures, course equivalencies and transfer articulation agreements
6. The Office will participate in the vetting process for Transfer Articulation Agreements

Responsibilities (Graduate Transfer Credit):

Academic Units

1. The academic unit will review course(s) from sending institutions to determine recommended equivalency to U or S course(s) within the unit.
2. Academic units are responsible for responding to requests for transfer credit evaluation in a timely manner.

College of Graduate Studies and Research Office:

1. The College will facilitate the review of courses from sending institutions by academic units.
2. The College will negotiate transfer credit agreements, and ensure appropriate due diligence and signing of new and revised agreements.
3. The College will review and approve recommendations for graduate transfer credit based on precedent and agreements (e.g. SUGA, WDA, CUGTA).
4. The College will maintain a list of transfer credit precedents.
5. The College will maintain copies of all Transfer Articulation Agreements

SESD Admissions & Transfer Credit Office:

1. The Office will apply transfer credit to graduate student record when approved by both the Academic Unit and College of Graduate Studies.

Procedures and Appendices:

1. Appendix A: Student Mobility Terminology
2. Transfer Credit & Articulation Procedures Document

Contact:

Contact Person: Director of Enrolment and Student Affairs,

Phone: 306-966-6820

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Appendix A: University of Saskatchewan **Student Mobility Terminology**

As a principle, the University of Saskatchewan will align, where possible, with national student mobility terminology to ensure a common language for discussion and activity related to transfer credit and transfer credit agreements. The primary source for definitions will be the Canadian Information Centre for International Credential (CICIC) English Terminology Guide for Academic Credential Assessment in Canada, and the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions & Transfer (PCCAT)/Association of Registrar's of the Universities & Colleges of Canada (ARUCC) Transfer Credit Nomenclature project. This document incorporates and replaces the Student Mobility Terminology document approved by the academic programs committee of Council on May 23, 2012.

Transfer Credit Terminology

Articulation

Articulation is a process by which institutions assess learning acquired elsewhere in order that credit toward their own credential may be provided. Articulation is based on faculty decisions and established institutional principles, policies and procedures. It acknowledges the missions of different types of institutions and the quality and integrity of their programs. Transfer credit is the result of the articulation process.

Block Transfer

The process of granting of credit for a group of completed courses from one institution to another without requiring course-by-course assessments. The most common example would be granting a block of 30 to 60 transfer credits for a completed postsecondary diploma at a recognized institution. Block transfer credit assessments establish and recognize that diploma graduates possess the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to succeed in upper year courses at the receiving institution.

Course-by-Course Transfer

The process of granting credit for a course (or courses) from one institution to another by completing a comparison of course content and learning outcomes for each individual course. Credit may be awarded for a specific U of S course (or courses), non-specific credit for a subject area, or an elective at the junior-level, senior-level, or unspecified-level.

Laddering

Seamless movement of a student between certificate, diploma and degree studies with no or limited loss of coursework. Typically a student would complete two years in a diploma program and then move into a degree program, completing their studies in an additional two years.

Learning Outcomes

Represent the knowledge, skills, competencies, and abilities that a student has attained and is able to demonstrate as a result of successfully completing a particular set of educational experiences.

Learning Pathways

Different routes that individuals choose to progress into, within, and out of the postsecondary education system. Learning pathways are used to describe the recognized mobility options available to different learners.

Mobility

The ability for students to move freely from one jurisdiction to another and to gain entry into an academic institution, trade or profession without undue obstacles or hindrances.

Recognized Post-Secondary Institution

A public or private institution that has been given authority to grant degrees, diplomas, and other formal credentials by a public or private Act of the provincial/territorial legislature or through a government-mandated quality assurance mechanism or accrediting agency.

Transfer Credit (Credit Transfer)

Courses taken by a student at one post-secondary institution (the sending institution) that are transferred to another postsecondary institution (the receiving institution). Transfer credit is sometimes also called credit transfer or advanced standing. The U of S accepts, for transfer of credit, courses from recognized institutions in Canada and internationally. The purpose of transfer credit is to give students fair and reasonable credit for academic work, which has been undertaken at another institution, and to reduce the likelihood of a student repeating academic work for which the student has already demonstrated competence.

Transfer Credit Agreement (Articulation Agreement)

An agreement between two institutions that authorizes studies undertaken at one institution to be credited toward studies undertaken at another institution. Transfer credit agreements can be bilateral (with each institution agreeing to recognize the other's courses) or one-way. Transfer credit can be established on a course-by-course or block transfer credit basis.

2+2, 1+3, and 3+1 Agreements

A type of block transfer credit agreement between the U of S and another academic institution which allows a student to complete 1, 2 or 3 years at the sending institution and the balance of coursework at the U of S. This type of agreement goes beyond a basic transfer credit agreement because it specifies that the completion of specific courses, or completion of a specific credential, will fulfill the requirements of a particular program at the U of S. Students would receive their final credential from the U of S.

Program Terminology

Joint Degree Program

A student pursues a degree at both the University of Saskatchewan and another post-secondary institution, with the student receiving only one degree at the end of the program either from the University of Saskatchewan or from the partner institution. The University of Saskatchewan parchment, if awarded, and transcript reflect the joint nature of the program. The degree can be at the undergraduate or graduate level.

Joint Student Program

A student pursues a graduate degree from another university, with a portion of their research and/or course work being completed at the U of S. The student receives only one degree and it is from the partner university. This is also sometimes referred to as a Sandwich Program.

Dual Degree Program

A student pursues a degree both at the University of Saskatchewan and another post-secondary institution, with the student receiving two degrees at the end of the program, one from the University of Saskatchewan and one from the partner institution. The University of Saskatchewan parchment and transcript reflect the dual nature of the program. The degree can be at the undergraduate or graduate level. The student must complete the degree requirements of both institutions.

Cotutelle Program

A French legal term for a PhD program offered jointly by two higher education institutions: one in France and one elsewhere. The degree is jointly awarded and recognized by both institutions. It can be for dual degree programs or joint degree programs. Students are jointly supervised by faculty at each institution and they attend the universities alternately.

References

Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC). English Terminology Guide for Academic Credential Assessment in Canada. <http://terminologies.cicic.ca/app/>

Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC) Working Group on Credit Transfer. In 2002, the CMEC Working Group on Credit Transfer was established to develop pan-Canadian strategies on credit transfer between colleges and universities among provinces and territories. Every year, each jurisdiction reports on progress in its credit transfer systems and articulation agreements within its post-secondary sectors. These reports are available on the CMEC website: www.cmec.ca/163/Programs-and-Initiatives/Postsecondary-Education/Credit-Transfer

Joint and Double Degree Programs in the Global Context

<http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Publications-and-Reports/IIE-Bookstore/Joint-Degree-Survey-Report-2011>

Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada. In 2002, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) approved a strategy to improve credit transfer systems and promote mobility for students across Canada. As part of the strategy, CMEC endorsed and released a Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada that sets out expectations for credit transfers to guide institutions, students, and governments.

Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT). The Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT) is a membership-based organization intended

to bring together stakeholder post-secondary institutions across Canada. PCCAT meets annually to bring together experts in the field of student mobility. Further information can be found on the PCCAT website: <http://www.uwindsor.ca/pccat/>

Pan-Canadian Protocol on the Transferability of University Credits. At their meeting from August 30 to September 1, 1994, provincial premiers endorsed the CMEC proposal to work with partners on an action plan to increase accessibility, equity, and mobility for postsecondary students, and agreed that CMEC should consider the feasibility of setting a target date for the recognition of postsecondary credits across Canada. In July 2009, the statement was updated and approved by ministers of post-secondary education in each Canadian jurisdiction. The statement lists six principles recognizing that credit transfer can occur between different types of post-secondary institutions, and that there is variation in credit transfer agreements between provinces and territories. Each Canadian jurisdiction has made progress in its credit transfer system. Those with the most well-developed transfer systems are the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT), and the Alberta Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT).

Western Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (WestCAT). WestCAT is a voluntary consortium whose purpose is to encourage and facilitate inter-provincial access, mobility, and transfer of credits for students moving among the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Its work is guided by the principles stated in the Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC) (2009) *Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada* and is compatible with the mandate and role of the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT). Membership includes government, council, and/or institutional representatives as determined by each province.

Australian Qualifications Framework - AQFC Project to develop a Common Terminology for Credit Transfer and Articulation

http://www.csu.edu.au/acad_sec/academicsenate/docs/CSU_Submission_to_MCEETYA_Project.pdf

Transfer Credit & Articulation Procedures

The following is an outline of the information that will be included in the transfer credit and articulation procedures document. This document will be utilized by faculty and staff in the administration and awarding of transfer credit for graduate and undergraduate students. The majority of these procedures are already in place, but have not been captured in a comprehensive way. These procedures are being developed and vetted in consultation with Student & Enrolment Services (SESD), the College of Graduate Studies and Research Office (CGSR), college offices, academic units and other interested stakeholders.

1. Undergraduate Transfer Credit

a. Undergraduate Transfer Credit Process

This section will provide an overview of the undergraduate transfer credit process.

b. SESD Admissions & Transfer Credit Office Procedures for Assessing Undergraduate Transfer Credit

This section will outline administrative procedures for SESD Admissions & Transfer Credit staff. The document will include guidelines for assessing transfer credit when delegated authority has been granted, preparing information for academic departments to assess transfer credit equivalence, data entry of transfer credit awarded, and maintaining/reviewing transfer credit precedent.

c. Guidelines for Academic Departments Assessing Undergraduate Transfer Credit Equivalence

This section will provide academic departments with guidelines for making informed undergraduate transfer credit equivalence decisions. The document will outline what information they will receive from the SESD Admissions & Transfer Credit office (such as an official transcript, information about the institution, grading system, credit system, course syllabus or description). These guidelines are being developed in consultation with College offices and academic departments to ensure they meet the needs of faculty.

d. Transfer Credit Appeal Process

This section will outline the undergraduate transfer credit appeal process, and provide a copy of the form.

2. Graduate Transfer Credit

a. Graduate Transfer Credit Process

This section will provide an overview of the graduate transfer credit process.

b. Procedures for College of Graduate Studies & Research Office for Assessing Transfer Credit

This section will outline administrative procedures for the College of Graduate Studies and Research staff. It will include guidelines for approval of academic unit transfer credit

recommendations, data entry of transfer credit awarded and maintaining/reviewing transfer credit precedent.

c. Guidelines for Academic Units Assessing Graduate Transfer Credit

This section will provide academic departments with guidelines for making informed undergraduate transfer credit equivalence decisions. These guidelines are being developed by the College of Graduate Studies & Research in consultation with academic units to ensure they meet the needs of faculty and staff.

d. Graduate Transfer Credit Appeal Process

This section will outline graduate transfer credit appeal process.

3. Guidelines for Determining Recognized/Accredited Institutions

The policy states that transfer credit will only be awarded for course work successfully completed at recognized/accredited institutions. This document will provide guidelines for administrative staff and faculty to assist with determining whether an institution is recognized or accredited. These guidelines will be utilized at both the graduate and undergraduate level.

4. Best Practice for Establishing Transfer Articulation Agreements

This document will provide best practice guidelines for establishing transfer articulation agreements at the graduate and undergraduate level, describe the due diligence process, and provide sample templates for use by colleges.