# Graduate Transfer Credit Policy

**Department Policy Number**

136

**Effective Date**

January 23, 2008

## Purpose

To outline the regulations that Athabasca University (AU) applies in the assessment of external graduate courses or programs for transfer credit to AU. In evaluating external graduate courses or programs, consideration is given to the recognition/accreditation of the issuing institution, the educational content, the rigor and comparability of the material, characteristics and level of the course work and the applicability of the work to the individual student's educational objectives.

## Definitions

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| **Eligible for transfer credit consideration** | Provisions regarding organizational/institutional recognition/accreditation are satisfied however it has not yet been determined if credit will be awarded. |
| **External courses or programs** | Courses or programs from another institution outside of Athabasca University (as opposed to outside the Centre or School). |
| **Graduate level** | To consider courses or programs at the graduate level, evidence of critical reflection, synthesis, analysis and integration must be demonstrated. |
| **Transfer credit** | Credit awarded for the successful completion of graduate level courses or programs completed at another recognized organization or institution. |

## Policy

As a credit coordinating body, AU articulates programs and courses from external organizations or institutions to facilitate the transfer of graduate level work for credit toward an AU graduate program. The regulations outlined in this policy help ensure a standardized approach to the evaluation of external courses or programs

**<u>Regulation</u>**

1.      ACCREDITATION/RECOGNITION

To be eligible for transfer credit consideration, the external institution or organization must satisfy one of the following conditions:

1.1     A Canadian institution that is a member of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC).

1.2     An institution from the United States of America that is a member of one of the following regional accrediting bodies:

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Higher Education

Northwest Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities Commission on Colleges and Universities

 North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, The Higher Learning Commission

New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education

New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Technical and Career Institutions

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges

Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities

1.3     Institutions outside of Canada or the USA must be approved by its home country's Ministry of Education (or equivalent), as determined by the AU Evaluations Unit or an approved credential evaluation service.

1.4     Courses or programs from non-recognized institutions that have been documented as transferable to another AUCC institution (only the course or program that transfers to the AUCC institution will be considered).

1.5     Courses and programs from professional associations, bodies, and non-collegiate organizations. Particularly collaborative partners that have been approved by the procedures outlined in the Non-collegiate Transfer Policy.

2.    PROGRAM/COURSE TRANSFER CREDIT EVALUATION

In the evaluation of a course or program, the following applies:

2.1    All credit granted to a student is done on a program-specific basis. If the course or program will not fit into the student's current program credential regulations, no credit is granted.

2.2    Transfer credit is not evaluated for students in the unclassified category.

2.3    AU will not grant credit to any course that is offered as zero credits at the home institution.

2.4    Under no circumstances will AU grant more credit than what is earned at the home institution (assuming credit principles are the same as AU).

2.5    Credit from a completed graduate credential cannot be transferred. Courses completed that were not used toward a graduate degree (extra to degree, ETD) may be transferred (students are responsible to demonstrate the ETD course work). Some graduate programs may accept completed post baccalaureate credentials (certificate, graduate diplomas) based on collaborative agreements or internal AU laddering arrangements.

2.6    No credit will be granted for courses completed at the baccalaureate level. Studies must be at the graduate level for credit to be granted.

2.7    Transferring credit from a previously completed credential is generally not permitted, only graduate level course work from incomplete credentials or unclassified studies are permitted. Some limited program transfer is permitted when articulations are formally arranged at the institutional level.

2.8    If graduate course work is used toward an undergraduate credential, it cannot then be used toward a graduate credential.

2.9    Courses or programs completed through Continuing Education (CE) may be considered for credit (varies by program) provided the CE department is within an institution that is a member of AUCC.

2.10    Depending on the program and the course, transfer credit may not be accepted if more than 5 or 10 years (varies by program) has elapsed since completion. Stale-dating will be noted in the program regulations and factors such as the student's continued involvement in the field may be considered.

2.11    The following information may be required to evaluate an external institution's course or program:

2.11.1    Program Information

Program name as it appears on the transcript

List of courses (names and codes) that comprise the program

Instructor qualifications

Years the program has been offered in its current configuration

Statement of program objectives

Number of weeks to complete the program

Other, non-course, requirements

2.11.2   Course Information (for each course in the program)

Statement of course learning objectives and detailed course outline

Instructor qualifications

Name(s) of textbook(s)

Evaluation method (type and weighting), including list of assignments

Pre- or co-requisites

Credit value

Total number of hours of:

Lectures/classroom instruction

Lab work (if applicable)

Field placement/work experience (if applicable)

It may be possible for Faculty to review a request for transfer credit without having a complete package of information. Generally, a full program and/or course outline will be required unless otherwise indicated.

2.12   Credit for individual student assessments will be evaluated from source documents (i.e. official transcripts sent directly from the issuing institution) only. AU will not transfer credit that appears as transferred credit from another institution.

2.13   All AU graduate programs require a minimum grade for the course to be used toward an AU credential and no credit will be granted if the course does not satisfy minimum program grade requirements.

2.14   If credit principles appear to represent values similar to AU, no further assessment will be done. A minimum of 39 hours of instruction is generally required for a three-credit equivalent.

2.15   Courses offered in the USA quarter system will be converted to credits as follows: To earn three AU credits, students must have completed four quarter hour credits. It may not be possible to grant credits if the student has not completed more than one course in a single subject area. One quarter-credit also equals 0.667 semester credits.

2.16   Courses offered in the unit system will be converted to credits by multiplying by two (primarily at the University of Victoria).

2.17   Course instructors must have the appropriate qualifications. Generally, a doctoral degree in the appropriate discipline is required.

2.18   Students who present transcripts from outside of Canada or the USA must have their transcripts evaluated by the International Qualification Assessment Service (IQAS) or other approved credential evaluation service. The original transcript (photocopy is not acceptable) must also be provided to AU. Approved credential evaluation services must be members of the Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada and a list is available at: http://www.canalliance.org/index.en.stm

2.19   Courses offered through recognized institutions (including institutions with a religious affiliation) may be granted credit if the course work is not based on doctrine.

3.   TRANSFER CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS

After the evaluation, the following regulations surround the granting of AU transfer credit:

3.1   Assigned credit is granted when the transfer course matches an AU equivalent at a minimum of 60% content and is noted as a specific AU course equivalent (MAIS 650 for example). Unassigned credit is granted in cases where the course to be transferred is less than a 60% AU course content match, or in cases where AU does not offer an equivalent course. Unassigned credit may be at the discipline level (e.g., MAIS 6XX) or at the area level, (e.g. ENGL 6XX) and stipulates the year level.

3.2   The respective AU Graduate Centre for School approves and decides upon the granting credit toward an AU graduate credential.

3.3   Credit is awarded on a course-by-course basis.

3.4   Transfer credit evaluation generally reflects the subject area designated at the home institution. Some broad categories are available for use in cases where AU does not have an equivalent or for broader scope areas such as applied studies.

3.5　The discipline to which credit is awarded, may not necessarily be a discipline offered by AU.

3.6　Minimum value of transferred credit is three. AU will not grant one or two credit values for transfer credit.

3.7　A student's transfer credit evaluation will be considered permanent as long as the student remains in the same credential, and the student maintains an active status. Where updates in evaluation produce an assessment that is to the student's benefit, the student's evaluation or a request for a change in program or calendar year.

3.8　Credit may be denied if any of the principles contained within this policy are not met. Students must be supplied with the rationale for a denial.

## Procedure

1.　Once admitted, students in credential programs may, upon request, have their previous course work evaluated upon submission of official transcripts, by paying the associated fee and by providing course outlines/syllabus if required. Evaluation fees vary by program.

2.　The respective Graduate Centre or School will review the transcripts and outlines (if required) and determine whether or not credit is to be awarded.

3.　Students will receive written notification of their evaluation outlining the transfer credit decisions.

4.　A student may appeal a transfer credit evaluation decision by following the directions outlined in the Student Academic Appeals Committee Policy.

## Approved by

Athabasca University Academic Council, January 23, 2008, Motion No. 207-4

## Amended Date/Motion No.

## Related References, Policies, and Procedures

General Guiding Principles for Good Practice in the Assessment of Foreign Credentials
Provincial Assessment Committee, Canada, April 1998
Joint Statement on the Transfer and Award of Credit

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and admissions Officers, USA, 2001 American Council on Education, USA, 2001 Council for Higher Education Accreditation, USA, 2001
Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada
Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC), October 2002
Student Academic Appeals Committee Policy (79)

**Applicable Legislation/Regulation**

Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC), Canada, February 1995

**Responsible Position/Department**

Associate Registrar, Admissions & Evaluation Services, Office of the Registrar

**Keywords**

Graduate transfer credit, graduate credit transfer, graduate course transfer, graduate credit granted