

## **Policies and Practices Related to the Acceptance of Transfer Credit for Undergraduate Courses**

When a transfer student is admitted to the University of Mississippi (UM), all transfer course work is evaluated and is recorded, without changes in grades, as part of the student's permanent academic record. Also, matriculating UM students may take courses from other institutions and transfer it back to UM. The evaluation of transfer courses involves a determination of whether the courses are equivalent to University of Mississippi courses, a process referred to as equivalency determination. When a transfer course is found to be equivalent, this is also noted in the student's academic record and the transfer course then satisfies pre-requisite requirements and degree requirements as an exact substitute for the University course (provided that other academic residency rules **do not apply**). Nothing in this policy affects the articulation agreement with the Mississippi Public Community Colleges.

This policy defines terms and processes used in the evaluation of transfer work and the determination of its applicability to a University degree.

### **Transferable and Equivalent Courses and the Process for Evaluation**

1. Non-Transferable Courses: The following types of courses are not transferable to the University of Mississippi.
  - courses from non-accredited universities<sup>1</sup>
  - technical/vocational courses<sup>2</sup>
  - developmental courses or other courses deemed to be below the post-secondary level
  - courses that promote a religious or political belief to the exclusion of others or courses that are determined by the appropriate academic department to have biased or inappropriate academic content
2. Academic Departments determine equivalencies for courses that the Department teaches. A Department may determine that a course from another

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<sup>1</sup> Accredited refers to a regionally (e.g., SACSCOC) accredited institution in the US higher education system or international institutions that are chartered by their national government or otherwise recognized to be similar in quality to accredited US institutions. Whereas courses from non-accredited institutions are generally considered not to be transferable, exceptions to this may be considered on a course (not on an individual student) basis. An exception must be recommended by the academic department that offers the course at this institution and must be approved by the relevant dean's office.

Courses from a regionally accredited institution that does not also have a professionally accredited program in a given discipline are transferable. However, a UM department that has a professionally accredited program may consider transfer courses from such a non-professionally accredited institution as not being equivalent to UM courses (i.e., the courses would transfer in a non-equivalent manner).

<sup>2</sup> Whereas technical/vocational courses are considered non-transferrable, exceptions may be recommended by an academic unit that teaches similar courses, with approval by the cognate dean.

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- is equivalent to a specific UM course (thus satisfying pre-requisites and degree requirements);
- is assigned generic credit within that academic department's area at a given level (e.g., Engl 2xx, indicating that the course is transferable, that it is not equivalent to a specific UM English course, but that the transfer course is recognized as college level credit within the UM area of English). Also see paragraph 7 for another use of the departmental generic prefix.
- should be assigned generic UM credit, as explained below.

Decisions made by an academic department about the equivalency of transfer courses may be appealed in writing by a student to the cognate dean. The decision of the dean will be final.

3. In cases where the external course is appropriate for the post-secondary level, but UM does not offer a similar course or course area (e.g., Agriculture courses), Academic Affairs and the Registrar will accept these as UM 1xx (UM 2xx, etc.) courses.
4. Courses accepted as transferable, whether as equivalent or generic credit, will be included in the overall gpa calculation for transfer work for an individual student. For a transfer applicant, all transferable courses presented will contribute to the transfer gpa, which must be 2.0 or above. That is, a transfer applicant may not exclude courses considered to be generic UM #xx from the calculated transfer gpa.
5. Developmental courses and other non-transferable courses that are included on a transfer student's transcript are recorded as UM 0xx credit. These courses are not counted toward the total transfer hours, nor are they included in the calculation of the transfer gpa.
6. The grade and credit hours for transferable courses will be converted, to the extent possible, to the UM standard of a 4.0 grading scale and will be assigned no more hours than the equivalent UM course. Grades from institutions using plus/minus grading scales will be converted to the letter grade without a plus or minus. If a transfer course carries more credit hours than an otherwise equivalent UM course, the equivalency will be assigned the UM number of hours, with the remaining one or more hours being transferred in as generic credit within that program of study (e.g., a four-hour external English course might transfer in as being equivalent to three hours of a specific UM English course plus one hour of Eng #xx). If the external course has fewer hours than a similar UM course, the general procedure will be not to assign this external course as being equivalent, but to transfer it in as generic credit in the academic area (e.g., Eng #xx).

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The Registrar's Office is responsible for recording the grades for transfer courses. When necessary, the Registrar's Office will convert hours of quarter-based credit to semester-based credit.

7. If a pair of courses is split (e.g., a lecture and lab component, as co-requisites) at UM but not at the external institution, both component courses must be present for equivalency. If only one of the components courses is present on the external transcript, it will be transferred in as a generic credit for that discipline.
8. The Registrar, Office of Information Technology, Academic Affairs Office, and the academic schools/college will work together to maintain an accurate and time-stamped database of transferable and equivalency courses from external institutions. Additions, deletions, and changes in courses, including their numbers, prefixes, content, and grading scale will occur at both at UM and external institutions. All transfer equivalency determinations for external courses are time-stamped in the database and are applied to individual students as the relevant equivalency at the time the student took the course.
9. A minimum cumulative gpa of 2.0 is required for all non-resident credit (including UM #xx transfer credit). No more than one half of the total credit hours required for a degree program may be transfer credit from a junior or community college.
10. Except as already described, the mode (including language of delivery, with one exception<sup>3</sup>) or location of delivery of a course or age of a course is not considered when assigning transferability and equivalency.
11. Non-traditional credits are not transferable. However, non-traditional credits may be awarded to students for credit-by-examination and military experience. If these non-traditional credits are included on a transfer student's transcript, the University will determine the amount of non-traditional credit to be awarded by the same criteria as if the student had sought such credit initially at this institution and without regard for the amount of credit awarded by the institution from which the student is transferring.
12. The University makes available on its web site the database of equivalent external courses.

### **Applicability of Transferred Courses**

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<sup>3</sup> If a non-native English-speaking student satisfies our English-language requirement for admission, he/she should be able to transfer in courses taken at an "accredited" international institution, even though the language of delivery is not English. Transferability and equivalency relates to course content, not delivery mode. Exceptions would be if English language itself is the subject area.

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The above definitions and guidelines apply to the determination of a database of transferable and equivalent courses from external institutions. If a transfer course is equivalent to a UM course, it is fully equivalent with regard to serving as a pre-requisite and satisfying a degree requirement.

If a course is given generic academic area transfer credit (e.g., Eng 3xx), the course should count at the indicated level as an elective course in that area and contributes to any requirement dealing with total hours in that area (e.g., to contribute to a requirement of 6 hours of upper division English).

If a course is assigned generic UM credit (e.g., UM 1xx), it applies to the total credit hour count, to the total hour count at the upper (or lower) division level, and to the non-resident gpa (and to the gpa calculated for honors). However, such a course will satisfy a degree requirement only if the program stipulates that generic UM #xx credit can satisfy elective credit requirements for that program.

### **Display of Transfer Credit**

Transfer credit will be displayed on a UM student's transcript in summary form. A more detailed listing of external courses and UM equivalencies (including courses transferred but not equivalent) is provided to academic advisors and students via a web presentation.

### **Entry of Transfer Information**

The Registrar's Office is responsible for entering transcript information for admitted transfer students. This will be done as timely as possible for presentation of transferable and equivalencies to both the students/applicants and advisors. A Transfer Equivalency Resource Site allows students, faculty, or the public to check the transferability/equivalency of external courses.

### **Role of Academic Departments**

The need for academic departments to make equivalency determinations, for courses from external institutions, will continue to occur. The basic premise is that departments that "own" a particular subject area are responsible for making equivalency determination in that area. It is important for these departments to make the equivalency determination in a timely manner, so that students and their advisors can have available appropriate information about the equivalency of their transfer courses in order to register.