

MONTANA BOARD OF REGENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Policy and Procedures Manual

SUBJECT: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Policy 301.5 – Transfer of Credits; MUS and Community Colleges

Adopted: February 3, 1976; Revised: June 24, 2013; Revised: November 19, 2021

Board policy:

A. All college level courses from institutions of higher education accredited by one of the following accrediting agencies will be received and applied by all campuses of the Montana university system (MUS), and by the community colleges, towards the free elective requirements of the associate and baccalaureate degrees.

- Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC)
- Higher Learning Commission (HLC)
- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSCHE)
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NECHE)
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)
- WASC Senior College and University Commission

College level courses shall be defined as those courses that are applicable toward an associate of arts, associate of science or baccalaureate degree at their respective institution. The receiving institution will determine in advance of a student's enrollment which courses within an associate of applied science degree program will be credited toward a given associates or baccalaureate degree. In all cases, such courses shall not include remedial or developmental courses.

B. In relation to the major, minor, general education, distribution requirements, and free electives of the associate and baccalaureate degrees, all campuses of the MUS, and the community colleges, are authorized to determine the applicability of credits earned at institutions of higher education accredited by one of the listed accrediting agencies.

C. In administering the policy in paragraphs A and B an institution shall include the credits earned by a student from an institution which is a candidate for accreditation by one of the listed accrediting agencies after the student has successfully completed 20 semester credits with a 2.0 cumulative grade point average at the receiving institution.

D. Campuses of the MUS, and the community colleges, may give credit for education received from non-collegiate institutions on the basis of recommendations published by the American Council on Education and the National Program on Non-collegiate Sponsored Instruction from the board of regents of the State of NY (NYSED).

E. Campuses of the MUS and community colleges, shall provide military and veteran students with a means of evaluation of prior learning, shall develop policies to ensure appropriate granting of credit for military training and courses based on American Council of Education recommendations. Campuses of the MUS shall submit policies to the Commissioner of Higher Education for approval. The community colleges shall submit policies to the Commissioner of Higher Education for review.

Campuses of the MUS, and the community colleges shall also provide accessible and timely information to prospective and admitted military and veteran students regarding opportunities for credit for prior learning.

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F. Institutions may make exceptions to give credit if the criteria described above are not met. However, the following principles should be followed:

1. The chief academic officer, registrar, and admissions officer should review each case to ensure that there is evidence of academic quality in the sending institution, both in the faculty and in the curriculum.
2. Institutions may determine policies relating to the acceptance of college credit from other countries.

G. Campuses of the MUS, and the community colleges shall establish an internal appeals process to review decisions concerning the transfer of credits. Because of the significant differences in size and organizational structure within the MUS, the processes will not be absolutely identical. The appeals procedures will have the following common features, however:

1. Decisions concerning the applicability of courses in a student's major, minor, option or certificate will be reviewed, using the academic structure and hierarchy in place on each campus. The review will begin with the appropriate academic administrator who is closest to the program where the credential is offered, and will end with the chief academic officer. On most campuses, that means that the review may begin with a department chair, could include a dean, and would end with a provost or vice president for academic affairs.
2. Decisions concerning the applicability of courses in the institution's general education program will be reviewed by a faculty committee. That committee can be one that already exists on the campus; or it can be a committee created to satisfy the expectations of this policy. Any decision of the committee can be appealed to the chief academic officer of the campus, who will make the final review and decision for the institution.
3. Decisions concerning the applicability of courses as free elective credits at the institution will follow the procedure outlined in subsection 2 above.

The campuses are required to notify students of their appeal rights, under this policy, when a decision has been made about the applicability of their transfer credit coursework and that written decision is given to students. Board policy 301.5.1, system of controls, sets out most of those notice times.

If a student exercises the appeal rights set out in this policy, the review and a final decision must be completed by the class pre-registration date for the following academic term. The student must initiate the appeal process, in a timely manner, in order to give the institution time to complete its review before the deadline described in the preceding sentence.

History:

The Montana University System Transfer of Credit Policy as promulgated by the Commissioner of Higher Education, February 3, 1976; Item 27-009-R0680, June 23, 1980, as revised April 13, 1981, May 21, 1982, June 20, 1986, March 17, 1989, January 29, 1998, September 17, 1998, November 18, 1999 (Item 104-103-R0999), March 23, 2001 (Item 110-102-R0101), and March 3, 2003 (Item 117-104-R1102). Revised May 20, 2005 (Item 127-112-R0505), establishment of appeals procedure. Revised May 24, 2013, Item 159-106-R0513. Revised November 19, 2021, Item 197-114-R1121.