3.4.4 Acceptance of academic credit

3.4.4 The institution publishes policies that include criteria for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit for transfer, experiential learning, credit by examination, advanced placement, and professional certificates that is consistent with its mission and ensures that course work and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and comparable to the institution’s own degree programs. The institution assumes responsibility for the academic quality of any coursework or credit recorded on the institution’s transcript.

Judgment of Compliance

In Compliance

Narrative of Compliance

The University of Alabama (UA) takes very seriously the role of evaluating credit from external sources and ensures that the academic quality and learning outcomes of such external credit is comparable to that of UA academic programs. The University publishes the policies and guidelines related to the evaluation, acceptance, and awarding of credit at all levels, including undergraduate, graduate, and professional. The University also assumes responsibility for the academic quality of all coursework or credit appearing on the official UA transcript. These policies are published in the Undergraduate Catalog [1] and the Graduate Catalog, [2] [3] [4] as well as on the Undergraduate Admission [5] and the Office of the University Registrar [6] websites. Because transfer of credit policies vary for the degree programs offered at the UA School of Law, details are made available on the School of Law website. [7]

External Credit at the Undergraduate Level

The University accepts transfer credit at the undergraduate level from institutions accredited by one of the six regional accrediting agencies. Upon application for undergraduate admission, UA requires official transcripts from each institution where the student attempted college-level work. The University applies credits earned at regionally accredited institutions to the student’s record upon receipt of the transcripts. The Office of the University Registrar’s Transfer Credit Center evaluates the coursework for an existing UA equivalency. If a UA equivalency has not been established, the Transfer Credit Center researches and establishes an equivalency for 100- and 200-level coursework based on course content, credit hours, prerequisite requirements, applicability, and evaluator professional judgment after collaborating with the discipline owning the course. The Transfer Credit Center documents credit determinations in the UA Transfer Credit Evaluator Guide. [8] For 300- and 400-level coursework, a designated faculty and/or staff member in the undergraduate college where the discipline is housed evaluates and establishes a UA equivalency using the same criteria as above. Currently enrolled UA students who take courses at another institution may transfer the credit to UA provided:

- The transfer credit is earned from institutions accredited by one of the six regional accrediting bodies; and
- The transfer credit is not remedial/developmental, technical, or sectarian coursework.

Note: The transfer credit is awarded for all coursework contained on the incoming transcript regardless of the grade.
Transfer courses evaluated and equated to an existing UA course or group of courses are then added to the official Transfer Course Equivalence Tables. Courses are considered equivalent when the course description and learning outcomes align with a UA course. Transfer courses not found equivalent to specific UA courses may be awarded general course credit within an academic discipline (e.g., EN 197 or EN 397 represents an English course that does not have a specific UA equivalency and is posted as credit in English at the lower level or upper level respectively). Courses that cannot be equated to a specific UA course or to a specific UA discipline are posted as General Elective Credit (GEC 197 or GEC 397). No transfer credit is awarded for developmental, remedial, technical, sectarian, or other coursework evaluated as being below postsecondary level. Normally credit is not awarded for courses taken at non-regionally accredited institutions with one exception as noted in the Undergraduate Catalog. The policies and practices for determining transfer credit are included in the Academic Records and Policy section of the Undergraduate Catalog. The transfer credit process is depicted in the attached chart. Advisors and students may view how transfer courses are applied to each individual student’s degree by using the DegreeWorks Degree Audit System. The University also identifies transfer credit on the official transcript.

The policies and practices for determining transfer credit are included in the Academic Records and Policy section of the Undergraduate Catalog. The policies and practices for determining transfer credit are included in the Academic Records and Policy section of the Undergraduate Catalog. The transfer credit process is depicted in the attached chart. Advisors and students may view how transfer courses are applied to each individual student’s degree by using the DegreeWorks Degree Audit System. The University also identifies transfer credit on the official transcript.

The Office of the University Registrar is responsible for recording the transfer work in the student information system. The Transfer Credit Center, within the Office of the University Registrar, facilitates the timely evaluation of courses not already in the University database and ensures that all transfer work is posted to the student’s official academic record. Information is collected about colleges and universities from which courses may be transferred from a variety of sources. A major source of information is the Transfer Evaluation System (TES) from College Source, Inc.

Credit by Examination

Credit by examination and credit for several types of out-of-class experiences are recognized by The University of Alabama. Credits can be earned through satisfactory completion of one of the standardized national exams including, but not limited to, the Advanced Placement (AP) program, the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, and the Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE). Note, UA does not grant credit for DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST).

Credit hours earned by examination and/or out-of-class experiences are not considered University of Alabama institutional coursework, and therefore, may not be applied towards fulfillment of:

- the minimum of 50 percent of the coursework required to earn a bachelor’s degree at The University of Alabama that must be earned at a bachelor’s degree granting institution (four-year college or university)
- the minimum of 25 percent of the coursework required for the degree that must be earned at The University of Alabama

Advanced Placement (AP)

The Advanced Placement (AP) program offers college-level curricula and examinations to high school students. The University of Alabama grants course credit to students who obtain high scores on the examinations.

College-Level Examination Program (CLEP)

CLEP scores must be available before the beginning of the semester in which the student wants them to be applied. A student may not have been enrolled in a comparable course for more than 30 days. In certain instances, a student may be permitted to take one or more of the examinations after an initial semester of enrollment in college. Applicability toward a degree is determined by the school or college in which the student is registered. The University recognizes CLEP examinations taken at any national CLEP test center. Examinations are administered on campus at Testing Services, 205 Student Services Center, (205) 348–6760.
All divisions of the University may grant credit for CLEP Subject Examinations in lieu of enrollment in an equivalent course, provided that such credit is applicable to the degree program in which the student is enrolled. Students may take CBT CLEP Subject Examinations at any time during their college careers, provided they have not been enrolled in the equivalent courses for more than 30 days. Credit may not be received for both the subject examination and its equivalent (either another examination or a course taken for credit). Approved CBT subject examinations and their UA course equivalents appear in the Undergraduate Catalog [17].

International Baccalaureate (IB)

The University recognizes International Baccalaureate credit with a grade of 5, 6, or 7 on the higher-level examinations (HL). Credit will be awarded on a course-by-course basis as approved by the department; some departments will award credit based on the subsidiary examination (SL). A list of approved courses and the required IB exam grade can be found in the Undergraduate Catalog. The University awards credit for higher level (HL) examinations only. [18] The maximum credit obtainable by examination through all programs is 45 semester hours.

Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE)

The Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) is identified as a graduation option and acceleration mechanism through which students can be awarded up to 45 hours of college credit. [19]

Study Abroad

All UA students doing research, internships or academic credit programs abroad will work through the Capstone International Academic Programs office. Each college will evaluate the course(s) (appropriate to the division) taken through study abroad. [20] International programs must equate to accredited college or university level work and not simply a travel experience.

The college that is responsible for the discipline will evaluate the course(s) taken overseas. When a transcript is received with work from a University of Alabama affiliated study abroad program on an international transcript, the classes will be posted as institutional coursework with pass/fail grades. When a transcript is received with study abroad work that appears on a domestic transcript from an accredited and affiliated U.S. institution, it will be treated as standard transfer credit. The grade received on the domestic institution’s transcript will be posted to the student’s transcript and calculated into the higher education grade point average.

UA course equivalencies will be based primarily on the content to be covered in the international course and the consistent, direct, pedagogical correlation (discipline, course content, course level and course credit) between the international course requirements and how they equate to UA coursework and credit hours. The University does not use the U.S. Department of Education National Council on the Evaluation of Foreign Academic Credential, formula of 2 ECTS credits = 1 US undergraduate semester credit hour.

Capstone International Academic Programs requires that a student who will receive credit from an international institution have all of the primary and alternate courses he/she plans to take overseas evaluated by the appropriate academic division prior to studying abroad and documented on the Course Equivalency Form.

Some circumstances may prevent the course equivalencies from being determined prior to the student’s departure. In this case, the course(s) taken will be evaluated when the student returns from studying abroad. At the end of the study abroad program, the student must bring back all course documents, syllabi and textbooks from the courses taken overseas to aid in this process. Additionally, in the event that the courses that were approved prior to departure are not the courses actually taken abroad, the student must bring back all course documents, syllabi and textbooks in order to facilitate the equivalency process and receive credit for work abroad.
Military Service

A variety of educational opportunities available through formal military service, school training programs, and off-duty educational activities are recognized as sources of college credit. Academic divisions of the University may accept such credit for transfer, subject to any restrictions established by each division.

The United States Armed Forces Institute (USAFI), the Defense Activity for Nontraditional Education Support (DANTES), and other agencies report activities that may provide college credit. The Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services (American Council on Education) is an additional guide to determining whether a service-related activity may provide college credit.

Military Science elective credit is given for Basic Training documented on a Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) transcript, Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript (AART) or the Sailor/Marine American Council on Education Registry Transcript (SMART). Students who do not have any of the transcripts listed above should file copies of their service record (Form DD–214) with University Veteran’s Affairs representative in the Office of Student Financial Aid.

If deemed appropriate by the Dean of the student’s college of enrollment, further evaluation of the student’s military transcript may be completed. Upon evaluation and in consultation with ACE guidelines, a determination may be made to award additional credit. The course content covered in the military course must equal the material covered in the equivalent course at the University. The amount and level of credit awarded is determined by the appropriate University of Alabama office. Credit is not awarded for vocational-technical recommendations or Service Occupational Specialty Codes.

The Defense Language Institute (DLI) in Presidio of Monterey, CA is regionally accredited at the higher education level. Courses completed at this institution are evaluated in the same way as transfer credits from other colleges or universities.

Other Non-Traditional Sources

Credit from other non-traditional sources including, but not limited to, independent study, workshops, field experiences or internships will be considered for credit if documented on an official transcript from a regionally accredited institution.

Credit for Prior Learning

Students enrolled in the External Degree Program of New College in the College of Arts and Sciences may be eligible for a limited amount of credit for prior learning.

Foreign Language Credit

Students may receive credit or higher placement for prior foreign language experience. Detailed explanations are available from the Department of Modern Languages and Classics.

Beginning with academic year 2014–2015, UA will recognize and award credit for appropriate military education, training, and experience in accordance with Alabama Code Section 31–12A–3. Official military transcripts will be reviewed by the Office of the University Registrar Transfer Credit Center and/or the appropriate departmental faculty to determine appropriate academic credit for prior military training following the same guidelines as the transfer of traditional coursework and the American Council on Education’s Military Guide Database. UA equivalencies will be displayed on the official academic transcript and an effort will be made to ensure that students with military training/coursework are provided the maximum number of credits possible while maintaining that academic rigor and quality is equivalent to the university’s course offerings.
The State of Alabama has a Statewide Articulation Agreement for transfer of credit for public institutions of higher education. The purpose of the articulation agreement is to promote the successful transfer of associate degree credits to baccalaureate programs. The agreements specifically identify degree programs that are available in non-traditional formats in addition to those offered in traditional formats. The articulation process is governed by the Alabama Articulation and General Studies Committee (AGSC) and includes provisions for bi-annual review by the institutions.

Public community colleges participating in the Statewide Transfer and Articulation Reporting System (STARS) include:

- Alabama Southern Community College
- Bevill State Community College
- Bishop State Community College
- Calhoun Community College
- Central Alabama Community College
- Chattahoochee Valley Community College
- Drake State Technical College
- Enterprise State Community College
- Faulkner State Community College
- Gadsden State Community College
- Jefferson Davis Community College
- Jefferson State Community College
- Lawson State Community College
- Lurleen B. Wallace Community College
- Marion Military Institute
- Northeast Alabama Community College
- Northwest-Shoals Community College
- Shelton State Community College
- Snead State Community College
- Southern Union State Community College
- Wallace Community College Hanceville
- Wallace Community College Dothan
- Wallace Community College Selma

In addition to STARS, the following public community colleges have discipline-specific (in parentheses) articulation agreements with UA:

- Alabama Community College System (Human Environmental Sciences with Major in Early Childhood Education)
- Alabama Southern Community College (Nursing)
- Bevill State Community College
• Bishop State Community College (Nursing) [30]
• Calhoun Community College (New College and Consumer Sciences) [31]
• Faulkner State Community College (Restaurant and Hospitality Management) [32]
• Faulkner State Community College (Nursing) [33]
• Faulkner State Community College (Nutrition) [34]
• Gadsden State Community College (New College and Consumer Sciences) [35]
• Jefferson Davis Community College (Nursing) [36]
• Jefferson State Community College (Nursing) [37]
• Northeast Alabama Community College (New College and Consumer Sciences) [38]
• Shelton State Community College (Nursing) [39]
• Snead State Community College (New College and Consumer Sciences) [40]
• Southern Union Community College (Nursing) [41]
• Wallace State Community College (New College and Consumer Sciences) [42]

External Credit at the Graduate Level

The Graduate School policy on credit transfer is published in Section 4.11, Degree Requirements, of the 2013–2015 Graduate Catalog. [43] Courses of full graduate-level credit earned in a regionally accredited institution where a student was enrolled in the graduate school may be submitted for review for possible inclusion in a degree program. Evaluation of credit for transfer will not be made until after the student has enrolled in UA’s Graduate School. Acceptance of credit requires the approval of the student’s advisory committee and the dean of the Graduate School. Credit will not be accepted for transfer from any institution at which the student failed to achieve a “B” average on all graduate work attempted. Only courses in which a student earned a “B” grade or better may be transferred.

A student initiates in the Office of the Graduate School a Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit earned at another institution. [44] It is also the student’s responsibility to assure that the Graduate School receives an official transcript of the credit concerned well in advance of the final semester and typically before or at the time of advancement to candidacy.

Once the Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit and official transcript have been received, the Graduate School checks the following:

• The regional accreditation for the college/university.

• The level of the coursework requested for transfer (must be graduate level).

• The overall graduate GPA (must be a “B” average or higher).

• The grades for the individual courses (must be a “B” or higher).

• The type of courses requested (cannot transfer thesis/dissertation research hours, internship hours, professional development hours, etc.)

• The date which the courses were completed (must be within six years).
Once the request has been approved by the Graduate School, the request and a copy of the transcript are sent to the department for evaluation. Each department evaluates the request for transfer credit in accordance with the specific degree program requirements/plan of study for the individual student. Each department has the authority to recommend to the Graduate School to accept some, all, or none of the transfer credit requested by the student.

With the approval of the student’s department and the dean of the Graduate School, the greater of 12 hours or 25 percent of the required coursework for a graduate degree may be transferred from another institution into a master’s degree program. All credit toward the master’s degree, including transfer credit, must have been earned during the six years (18 fall, spring, and summer semesters) immediately preceding the date on which the degree is to be awarded.

With the approval of the student’s department and the dean of the Graduate School, doctoral students may transfer coursework equivalent to one-half of the coursework required toward the degree. All credit toward the doctoral degree must have been earned within six years prior to admission to the doctoral degree.

External Credit at the Professional Level

UA’s School of Law will accept no more than 30 hours of credit from another law school. Students must earn a B or higher in all coursework that is transferred. This policy is published in the Law School Student Handbook [45] and on the UA website. [46] Transfer work is not considered when calculating the student’s grade point average and will show on the UA transcript with a grade of “pass.” [47]

Ongoing Review of Transfer of Credit Policies

At the undergraduate level proposals to modify existing policies are considered by the Council of Assistant and Associate Deans, which is chaired by the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. These proposals may originate at any level. If the Council of Assistant and Associate Deans discussion results in a vote to approve, the Vice Provost presents the recommended proposal to the Provost who presents it to the Council of Deans. If the Council of Deans votes to approve, the final approval is made by the Provost. If the Provost approves, the revised policy is placed in the online Undergraduate Catalog and the University website’s A-Z index, so that it is widely available.

At the graduate level proposals to modify existing policies are considered by the Graduate Council’s Committee on Program and Degree Requirements, Research and New Programs. The Committee works with the proposer(s) to modify the proposal and, when approved, presents the proposal to the Graduate Council. If Graduate Council discussion results in a vote to approve, the Graduate Dean presents the recommended proposal to the Provost for final approval. If the Provost approves, the revised policy is placed in the online and hard-copy Graduate Catalog and the Graduate School website’s A-Z index, so that it is widely available. The Graduate School also notifies students, departments and faculty of the change.

Supporting Documents

1. Undergraduate Catalog: Transfer Credit Policy Statement (PDF)
   Full Document (PDF)

2. Graduate Catalog: Master’s Transfer Credit Policy (PDF)
   Full Document (PDF)

3. Graduate Catalog: EdS Transfer Credit Policy (PDF)
   Full Document (PDF)

4. Graduate Catalog: Doctorate Transfer Credit Policy (PDF)
   Full Document (PDF)
5. Undergraduate Admission Website: Transfer Students (PDF)
6. Registrar Website: Transfer Credit (PDF)
7. School of Law Website: Transfer Policies (PDF)
8. Transfer Credit Center Evaluator Guide (PDF)
9. Transfer Course Equivalence Tables (PDF)
10. Undergraduate Catalog: Transfer Credit Policy – Accreditation (PDF)
    Full Document (PDF)
11. UA Transfer Credit Process (PDF)
12. Degree Works Example (PDF)
13. Transcript with Transfer Credits (PDF)
14. Transfer Evaluation System (TES) (PDF)
15. Credit by Examination (PDF)
16. Advanced Placement (PDF)
17. College Level Examination Program (PDF)
18. International Baccalaureate (PDF)
19. Advanced International Certificate of Education (PDF)
20. Study Abroad (PDF)
21. Credit for Military Service (PDF)
22. Alabama Code Section 31–12A–3 (PDF)
25. What is the AGSC? (PDF)
26. STARS Participating Institutions (PDF)
27. Agreement between ACCS and UA (PDF)
28. Agreement between ASCC and UA (PDF)
29. Agreement between BevillSCC and UA (PDF)
30. Agreement between Bishop SCC and UA (PDF)
31. Agreement between Calhoun CC and UA (PDF)
32. Agreement between Faulkner SCC and UA (PDF)
33. Agreement between Faulkner SCC and UA Nursing (PDF)
34. Agreement between Faulkner SCC and UA Nutrition (PDF)
35. Agreement between Gadsden SCC and UA (PDF)
36. Agreement between JDCC and UA (PDF)
37. Agreement between JSCC and UA (PDF)
38. Agreement between NACC and UA (PDF)
39. Agreement between Shelton SCC and UA (PDF)
40. Agreement between Snead SCC and UA (PDF)
41. Agreement between Southern Union SCC and UA (PDF)
42. Agreement between Wallace SCC and UA (PDF)
43. 2013–15 Graduate Catalog, Section 4.11 (PDF)
    Full Document (PDF)
44. UA Graduate School Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit (PDF)
45. Law School Transferred Credit (PDF)
    Full Document (PDF)
46. Transferred Credit School of Law Website (PDF)
47. Transcript from School of Law (PDF)