

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

UNC Charlotte Academic Policy and Procedure: Undergraduate Transfer Credit and Credit for Prior Learning

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy establishes rules and procedures for how UNC Charlotte will evaluate, award, and document academic credit for transfer coursework (courses taken at other colleges or universities) and prior learning (knowledge or skills gained outside of the classroom through regionally accredited institutions, military service, professional training, certifications, or other verified experiential learning opportunities).

II. POLICY AND PROCEDURE STATEMENT

The policy outlines clear criteria for when and how the University will accept credit, ensuring that the credits meet established University standards, are equivalent to University courses, and match the student's degree plan. For credit for prior learning, the policy defines acceptable ways for that learning to be assessed, such as portfolios, standardized exams (such as CLEP or DSST), or specialized challenge exams to test subject matter knowledge.

This policy is intended to make the transfer and prior learning credit process more efficient, helping students move between academic institutions more easily, get credit for material they already know, and finish their degrees faster. It also aligns with University goals for access while maintaining rigorous academic standards for all learners.

Types of Transfer and Prior Learning Credits

Standardized Exams

Students who have completed standardized tests should send their test scores to the Office of Admissions, which will evaluate the results and determine if they qualify for credit. Prospective students seeking more information about credit policies and procedures should visit <https://admissions.charlotte.edu/resources/credit-for-prior-learning/> to review score requirements and other details.

Certification/Licensure

Students can earn academic course credit for professional certifications and licenses. Certifications, licenses, and related coursework completed with a non-collegiate training organization may be granted credit if they are recognized by the American Council on Education (ACE); see ACE's National Guide. Approved credits may be applied toward general education, major, or elective requirements, after the University reviews them to ensure the credits fit the student's degree program.

Industry or Corporate Experience, Including Professional Development

In addition to recognizing credit recommendations for prior learning from the American Council on Education (ACE), UNC Charlotte has an internal review process for evaluating and awarding credit for professional or other external training programs not recognized by ACE. These programs may include corporate, or industry-sponsored training that demonstrates college-level learning outcomes. Academic credit for professional development completed with a non-ACE provider will undergo a review by the College, department, or program awarding credit and there may be time limits depending on the discipline.

Credit by Examination (also known as a challenge exam)

A currently enrolled UNC Charlotte student may earn credit for a university course, without completing the regular coursework, by passing a department-approved challenge examination. Not all courses are eligible for credit by examination; the availability of a challenge exam is determined by the academic department that offers the course. If the challenge exam is approved, the student must pay the required fee and bring the payment receipt to the exam. Credit earned by examination will appear on the transcript as hours earned, but no grade points will be assigned. The hours attempted will equal the hours earned. No partial credit is awarded. If the student fails the exam, no grade points or hours

attempted will be recorded. Students cannot receive credit by examination for any course they have already received a passing or failing grade at UNC Charlotte.

Portfolio

A portfolio is a compilation of documents compiled by the student and submitted to a faculty evaluator to demonstrate college-level learning the student has already earned through prior work or life experience. Portfolio requirements and acceptance vary by discipline and the course for which a student wants credit. To receive credit, students must demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes of the course for which they are requesting credit. Required documentation for a portfolio may include training certificates from completed professional development or workplace programs, letters of recommendation verifying prior work or life experience, and work samples documenting prior learning. The portfolio is approved by the College, department, or academic program.

Military Education and Training

UNC Charlotte grants credit for military training equivalent to courses in a student's major, minor, or general education requirements. The Office of the Registrar makes the initial equivalency determination; the relevant academic department can then review and make final adjustments, if needed. Students are required to provide documentation, such as a Joint Services Transcript. Contact the Office of the Registrar for details.

Transfer Credit from Other Institutions

Official domestic transcripts are evaluated in the Office of the Registrar, while official international transcripts are evaluated in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. After that initial evaluation, the relevant department chairperson or program director makes the final decision on any credit applicability to the student's major or program requirements. The general rules governing transfer credit are:

1. Only courses taken at a college or university accredited by an accepted accrediting body will be considered for transfer credit.
2. Courses for which credit is accepted must be appropriate for approved University programs and curricula in which the student is enrolled.
3. No credit below C level will be accepted; grade points and averages do not transfer.
4. Transfer credit is awarded only upon receipt of an official transcript from the institution where the credit was earned.
5. Equivalent credit is determined based on the American Association of Collegiate Registrars & Admissions Officers (AACRAO) recommendation and UNC System

Regulation 400.1.5.3 [R] IV.C.1, that 70% of the content considered for equivalency should match UNC Charlotte course requirements.

6. Every effort is made to minimize equating to elective credit, but this may be necessary when content does not match at 70% or there is no equivalent course at UNC Charlotte.
7. The University accepts a maximum of 64 credit hours from two-year institutions for undergraduate students. Remedial courses will not transfer.

Students who hold a baccalaureate degree from a college or university accredited by an accepted accrediting body will not be required to satisfy the UNC Charlotte General Education Requirements when pursuing a second degree. Students will have their credit from their first degree evaluated to determine how it applies towards their second degree.

Transient Study

1. Courses taken by UNC Charlotte undergraduate degree students at another college or university accredited by an accepted accrediting body may be transferred to the University subject to the following regulations:
2. The University is not obligated to accept any credit from another institution unless the student has obtained the prior approval of the dean of the college in which he/she is enrolled. A Permit for Transient Study petition should be completed and filed with the UNC Charlotte Office of the Registrar prior to enrollment at another institution.
3. No credit will be accepted for courses below C level for undergraduate students.
4. Upon completion of the course(s), the student must request that the other institution send an official transcript to the UNC Charlotte Office of the Registrar.

Transfer grades do not affect the students' UNC Charlotte GPA.

Transfer Credit Processes, Procedures and Exemptions

Transfer Credit Evaluation and Timelines

UNC Charlotte will review transfer credits and notify students of the results – including what did or did not transfer and how to appeal – in alignment with the evaluation timelines established by UNC System Regulation 400.1.5.3[R].

- For most students transfer credit evaluations will be completed within 15 business days of admission and receiving all required official transcripts.
- For students who have international transfer credit or attended more than four prior institutions, the evaluation period will not exceed 30 business days following admission and receipt of all required official transcripts.

- All final transfer credit evaluations (reflecting coursework from all official transcripts received by UNC Charlotte) will be completed no later than 24 hours prior to the registration deadline of the students' first term.
- UNC Charlotte will provide timely notification to transfer students of their transcript evaluation for those students who apply and are admitted within 15 business days of the registration deadline of their first term, with the understanding that it may not be possible to complete the full evaluation by the registration deadline.

Transfer Credit Adjustment Appeals

Students who wish to appeal the results of their transfer credit evaluation should first submit a transfer credit adjustment petition in consultation with their academic advisor at: <https://academicpetition.charlotte.edu/>. If the petition is denied, students transferring from a North Carolina community college may then submit an appeal through the UNC System's Transfer Student and Credit Appeal Portal at <https://transferappeal.northcarolina.edu>, as long as the course or waiver in question is covered under the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA) – the statewide agreement that governs the transfer of credits between North Carolina community colleges and UNC System universities.

Transfer Guides

Transfer Guides help North Carolina community college students plan for transfer to UNC Charlotte by outlining community college courses that are aligned with specific University majors. Published annually by the UNC System Office, these guides support associate degree completion, transfer admission, and timely bachelor's degree progress and completion. Students are protected under the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA), the statewide agreement that governs the transfer of credits between North Carolina community colleges and UNC System universities. That protection applies to the Transfer Guide in effect when they first enrolled at the community college, provided they earn the associate degree and transfer to UNC Charlotte within four years of their initial community college enrollment. The University Transfer Center reviews and updates Transfer Guides annually, between January 15 and May 15, in order for new versions to go into effect for the fall semester of that same calendar year; it is also responsible for submitting revised Transfer Guides to the UNC System Office.

Every effort is made to ensure that University curriculum changes that take place during the four-year enrollment timeline outlined in the CAA do not disadvantage or negatively impact the transfer and applicability of credits toward degree completion upon enrollment; departments must work with students who are negatively affected by any curriculum

changes to mitigate any of these effects. If students have questions about how a course from a Transfer Guide is being applied, they should consult their academic advisor. Students may also submit a transfer credit adjustment petition (see Transfer Credit Appeals above).

Exemptions to General Education Requirements

First-Year Writing Requirements

Students will be deemed to have fulfilled the First-Year writing requirement (WRDS 1103 or WRDS 1104) if either of the following apply: a) they were exempted from first-year writing (without credit) at another college or university; or b) they are transferring 64 or more credit hours from U.S. institution(s) of higher education. (Some exceptions may apply for students with transferred credit hours from institutions where English is not the language of instruction.)

Foundations of American Democracy

Students will be deemed to have fulfilled the Foundations of American Democracy requirement if either of the following apply: a) they have satisfied this requirement at another UNC system institution; or b) they receive applicable transfer credit; or c) they have 60 or more transferred credit hours from U.S. institution(s) of higher education. (Some exceptions may apply for students with transferred credit hours from institutions where English is not the language of instruction.)

General Education Requirements

Some students are waived from General Education requirements if they are admitted to the University in Fall 2003 or thereafter. These include:

- Students who receive an Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Science (AS), Associate of Fine Arts (AFA), or Associate of Engineering (AE) degree from North Carolina Community Colleges.
- Students who graduate from a North Carolina Community College with an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) and enroll at UNC Charlotte in an approved AAS degree completion program that includes a general education exemption.
- UNC System transfer students who have completed General Education requirements at another UNC institution.

Transfer Students from out-of-state and private institutions of higher education who receive an associate degree from that institution will have the degree evaluated for the same General Education exemption on a case-by-case basis by the Office of the Registrar. The criteria used in the evaluation will be the amount of college-level coursework in English, math, natural science, social science, and humanities that is included in the degree's curriculum. Subjects that are highly technical or do not match the UNC Charlotte General Education core may not be approved for an exemption from lower-division General Education requirements; however, individual courses will be accepted toward the UNC Charlotte requirements.

III. DEFINITIONS

- **Accepted Accrediting Body** – The following are accepted accrediting bodies: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), Higher Learning Commission (HLC), Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), and WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC).
- **Advanced Placement (AP)** – Standardized courses administered by The College Board offered in high school, the completion of which may result in credit for some of the courses normally required for an undergraduate degree. Awarding credit based on AP is granted to a student based on prior study or experience (indicated by the student's performance on the AP examination).
- **Bachelor's degree or baccalaureate** – The degree of Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Science (B.S.), typically requiring a minimum of 120 hours of specified course work. A bachelor's degree is comprised of General Education courses, a major program(s), elective courses, and, in some cases, a minor program(s), and, in general, is completed in four years.
- **Cambridge International Examinations** – Standardized courses administered by Cambridge Assessment International offered in high school, the completion of which may result in credit for some of the courses normally required for an undergraduate degree. Awarding credit based on Advanced (A-Level) or Advanced Subsidiary (AS-Level) examinations is granted to a student based on prior study or experience (indicated by the student's performance on the A- or AS-level examinations).
- **Certification** – An industry-recognized credential or designation that is obtained once the student has successfully passed a certification exam. Certification differs from licensure in that certification is a validation of specific industry-valued competencies and not a legal requirement for practicing a profession.
- **Challenge exam** – A departmental or institutional exam used to determine if a student's subject matter proficiency is equal to or greater than the corresponding

proficiency the student would have achieved had they completed the corresponding course.

- **College-level learning** – Knowledge, skills, and competencies equivalent to those expected of a student who successfully completes the corresponding institutional course.
- **Credit for prior learning (CPL)** – Curriculum credit awarded for college-level learning obtained through prior learning experiences other than curriculum coursework.
- **Credit/semester hours** – A credit/semester hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement. UNC Charlotte adheres to the Carnegie unit, which is a nationally recognized equivalency that consists of not less than:
 - 750 minutes of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of 1500 minutes of out-of-class student work for one semester hour of credit. Each credit hour corresponds to 50 minutes per week of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of 100 minutes of out of class work per week for a 15 week semester, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time, whether instruction is delivered face to face, or in a hybrid or distance mode and regardless of the type of academic work leading to the award of credit hours, such as lecture, seminar, internship, practica, studio, to name a few. Regardless of the length of term, the standard of 750 minutes of contact minutes and 1500 minutes of out-of-class work for each credit hour remains the same.
 - 1500 minutes of direct faculty instruction for one semester hour of credit for a lab course.
- **Degree** – Diploma or title awarded to a student who completed a prescribed course of study.
- **General Education Requirements** – These courses provide undergraduate students, regardless of their majors, with the foundations of a liberal education. For details, see the General Education Program section of the Undergraduate Catalog.
- **Industry or corporate experience** – Evaluation of non-collegiate instructional programs, such as, but not limited to, those for apprenticeships and other workplace trainings that demonstrate competency.
- **International Baccalaureate (IB)** – Standardized courses offered in high school, the completion of which may result in credit for some of the courses normally required for an undergraduate degree. Awarding credit based on IB is granted to a student based on prior study or experience (indicated by the student's performance on IB examinations).
- **Military education and training** – Learning gained through military training and experience including, but not be limited to, recruit training, military occupational specialty (MOS) training and education, Defense Language Institute foreign language coursework and exams, Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) coursework, College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), and the DANTES Standardized Subject Test (DSST).

- **Licensure** – A legal status granted by a government entity that provides permission to practice a profession. Licensure restricts practice of the profession to individuals who have met specific qualifications in education, professional experience, and/or have successfully passed an examination.
- **Portfolio assessment** – The evaluation of a portfolio for life and work experiences by subject matter experts designated by the constituent institution in its local policy to determine whether a student is awarded credit for prior learning.
- **Registrar** – The official at the University who is responsible for maintaining student records. The Office of the Registrar plans and oversees registration, academic record maintenance, transcript preparation, graduation, a degree audit report system, and curricular records.
- **Standardized exams** – Any form of examination that requires all test takers to answer the same questions, or a selection of questions from a common bank of questions, following established protocol and that is scored in a standard or consistent manner.

IV. POLICY AND PROCEDURE CONTACT(S)

- **Authority for 2025 Revisions:** Board of Trustees
- **Authority:** **Faculty Council** [Faculty Academic Policy and Standards Committee]
- **Responsible Office:** **Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs**
- **Additional Contact(s):** **Office of the Registrar, Office of Undergraduate Admissions**

V. HISTORY

- **Revised:** February 23, 2012 [limit added to number of credits awarded for AP exams]
- **Revised:** Summer 2014 [required ENGL courses changed to UWRT prefix]
- **Revised:** April 11, 2017 [changes approved by Faculty Council to the General Education Program (see the **Approval Memo**) prompted additional Exemption to Gen Ed Requirements for CTC Course for Transfer Students]
- **Revised:** March 27, 2020 [added Cambridge Exams in compliance with **UNC System Policy 700.10.1**]
- **Revised:** June 18, 2018 [updated language from “an accredited institution” to “a college or university accredited by an accepted accrediting body”]
- **Revised:** December 14, 2020 [required UWRT courses changed to WRDS prefix]
- **Revised:** May 5, 2021 [removed list of subject matter examinations under CLEP]
- **Revised:** August 30, 2022 [removed University College from list of colleges that do not allow full-time students to take classes at another institution]

- **Revised:** December 19, 2022 [removed clause that College of Liberal Arts & Sciences does not allow full-time students to take classes at another institution, effective Spring 2023 term]
- **Revised:** October 4, 2023 [Updated transfer credit evaluation from Undergraduate Admissions to Office of the Registrar and updated to reflect the changes to the 2023 General Education Curriculum]
- **Revised:** January 30, 2025 [Updated Exemptions to General Education Requirements to include Foundations of American Democracy in accordance with [UNC Policy Manual 400.1.5](#)]
- **Revised:** October 30, 2025 [Updated transfer credit timelines, equivalency matching, and credit for prior learning in accordance with UNC Policy Regulation 400.1.5.3[R] and 700.10.1[R].]
- **Approved:** December 10, 2025 [2025 revisions approved by Board of Trustees per [UNC System Regulation 400.1.5.3\[R\], Regulation to Foster Undergraduate Transfer Student Success](#)]

VI. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND RESOURCES

- [Academic Petition](#)
- [Credit by Exam Form](#)
- [UNC Charlotte Academic Policy and Procedure: Reverse Transfer](#)
- [UNC System Regulation 400.1.5.3\[R\], Regulation to Foster Undergraduate Transfer Student Success](#)
- [UNC System Policy 700.10.1 Policy on Awarding Undergraduate Credit on the Basis of Advanced Course Examination Scores](#)
- [UNC System Policy 400.1.5 Policy on Fostering Undergraduate Student Success](#)
- [UNC System Transfer Student and Credit Appeal Portal](#)

VII. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **Where is this policy and procedure referenced?**
The policy and procedure is published on the Academic Policies & Procedures webpage of the [Provost website](#) and in the Degree Requirements & Academic Policies section of the [Undergraduate Catalog](#).
- **Which students are covered under this policy and procedure?**
This policy and procedure applies to all undergraduate students at UNC Charlotte.

- **If students attended a four-year institution prior to attending a two-year institution, are those credit hours also accepted?**

Yes. The University accepts a maximum of 64 credit hours from two-year institutions for undergraduate students, and an unlimited number of transferable credits from four-year institutions, regardless of when the student attended.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

ADDRESS

9201 University City Blvd
Charlotte, NC 28223

PHONE

704-687-8622

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