



**Title:** Guidelines for Awarding Transfer and Non-traditional Learning Credit

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**Associated Policy:** 06.001 Evaluating, Awarding and Accepting Credit

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## **I. Guidelines Purpose**

As an institution of higher education, the University of North Texas (UNT) holds the responsibility for determining and upholding standards related to awarding credit hours for student learning consistent with national standards and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) principles of accreditation. Student prior learning may originate from a variety of sources. These guidelines accompany [UNT Policy 06.001 Evaluating, Awarding, and Accepting Credit](#) to detail processes in which the different types of transfer and non-traditional learning are evaluated, awarded credit and/or accepted by UNT.

## **II. Guiding Principles**

- A. Non-traditional learning credit awarded must maintain the integrity of UNT academic programs.
- B. Non-traditional learning credit awarded must maintain the quality of UNT academic programs.
- C. Non-traditional learning credit awarded must maintain the reputation of UNT and value of academic degrees awarded by UNT.
- D. Technical credit courses characterized as “not intended for transfer” may be accepted as academic transfer credit if the course has comparable course content, comparable learning outcomes, the course rises above the level of basic skills, constitutes more than a training experience, and includes an assessment of learning.
- E. Credit transferred as technical credit must be less than 25% of the semester credit hours required for an undergraduate degree, unless the undergraduate degree is an applied degree (BAAS, BAS, etc.)
- F. All general education courses offered at UNT and accepted in transfer are expected to meet the academic-level quality accreditation standards defined by the SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation including faculty qualifications, program content, general education requirements, and evaluating and awarding academic credit.

## **III. Guidelines for Awarding Credit**

### ***A. Transfer Credit from an Institution Accredited by an Organization Recognized by the U.S Department of Education or the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board***

- 1. UNT accepts earned academic credit, including core course credit, in transfer from institutions accredited by organizations that were formally considered regional accreditors 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), SACSCOC, WASC Senior College and University Commission (WASCUC) if the institution was accredited at time credit was earned. Course content is

reviewed for equivalency to UNT course content to determine applicability to general education requirements, degree requirements or elective credit.

2. UNT may accept academic credit, including general education credit, in transfer if earned from institutions accredited by accrediting bodies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) (not individual accredited programs) and eligible for Title IV participation after an internal review of the institution. Internal review will include the following actions:
  - a. initial review and evaluation of the institution conducted by the Enrollment and/or Provost Office representatives;
  - b. accreditors of a defined industry or discipline will also be reviewed by department or college curriculum committees;
    - i. The department or college curriculum committee with similar programs will evaluate the accredited institution to determine quality of potential transfer credit and equivalency of college-level credit to UNT standards. If UNT does not have similar programs, the institution will be reviewed for transfer of general education courses and possible elective or technical credit.
  - c. curriculum committee recommendation(s) to accept undergraduate or graduate credits in transfer from institutions accredited by other USDOE-recognized accrediting agencies will be approved through University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UUCC) and Graduate Council;
  - d. academic credit from accredited institutions may be accepted in transfer to UNT if the institution was accredited at the time the credit was earned. See credit from non-accredited institutions for other transfer credit options; and
  - e. institutional accreditation will be periodically reviewed for ongoing acceptance of course transfer credit.
  
3. Academic transfer credit from an institution accredited by a USDOE-recognized accrediting body approved through UNT guidelines may be awarded as an equivalent UNT course if the institution was accredited at the time the credit was earned and is determined equivalent through the following process:
  - a. in accordance with the Texas Education Code, UNT accepts in transfer those courses designated by another Texas public institution of higher education as fulfilling the state-mandated core curriculum;
  - b. UNT accepts in transfer all course credit earned from courses identified in the Texas Lower-division Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM);

- c. UNT accepts AGGM credits in transfer into specific academic programs as mandated by the Texas Field of Study Curriculum;
  - d. UNT Course equivalency of an academic transfer course is determined and documented by qualified faculty in the department offering the UNT course based on course description and alignment of student learning outcomes with the UNT course and assessment of learning;
  - e. the application of a transfer courses to general education and elective requirements follows the curriculum approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee or Graduate Council;
  - f. the application of transfer courses to a major, minor or certificate is determined by qualified faculty of that program;
  - g. a transfer course determined to be equivalent to a UNT course will be added to the UNT transfer equivalency inventory and automatically transcribed by the registrar for the duration that the equivalency is valid through the curriculum review process;
  - h. course equivalency will be consistently applied at UNT; and
  - i. course equivalencies and institutional accreditation will be periodically reviewed for ongoing alignment with UNT courses and transfer of course credit.
4. Technical credit from USDOE-recognized accredited institutions may be accepted in transfer to UNT as technical credit toward applied degrees (BAAS or BAS) if the institution was accredited at the time the credit was earned.
- a. Applicability and Limitations
    - i. Technical credit may meet lower-division requirements of applied bachelor's degrees without an evaluation of course outcomes by qualified faculty for degree requirements approved to accept technical credit through the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.
5. Technical credit from USDOE-recognized accredited institutions may be accepted in transfer to UNT as academic credit toward an academic degree if the institution was accredited at the time the credit was earned. The technical course can apply to academic programs if the technical course was evaluated by qualified faculty in the discipline as equivalent to a UNT course or the program is approved to accept technical credit to meet degree requirements (see prior learning credit procedures).
- a. Technical credit evaluation must be documented using an evaluation of learning form to:
    - i. Verify evidence of instructional quality and course rises above the level of basic skills and constitute more than a training experience.

- ii. Verify evidence the content is college-level.
  - iii. Review course description and course student learning outcomes to determine:
    - 1. if the course content is at the lower-division or upper-division level,
    - 2. if course content is technical or academic college credit,
    - 3. if the course content is equivalent to a general elective, elective in a specified discipline, or align with a course in the UNT course inventory.
  - iv. Verify that learning outcomes were assessed resulting in a course grade or successful completion.
  - v. Determine number of credit hours to award consistent with UNT's credit hour equivalency rubric.
  - vi. Gain appropriate curriculum committee and UUCC or Graduate Council approval for non-traditional learning for institutional credit.
- b. Applicability and limitations of technical credit applied to academic degrees.
- i. Course equivalency of technical credit is determined and documented using the Evaluation of Non-traditional Learning form by the department offering the UNT course. Equivalency is based on the course description and alignment of student learning outcomes with the UNT course.
  - ii. The application of technical course credit, including elective credit, to a major, minor or certificate is determined by qualified faculty of that program, as confirmed through the curriculum approval process.
  - iii. A technical course determined to be equivalent to a UNT course will be added to the UNT transfer equivalency inventory and automatically transcribed by the registrar for the duration that the equivalency is valid through a periodic review.
  - iv. Course equivalencies will be consistently applied to degrees at UNT.
  - v. Course equivalencies and institutional accreditation will be periodically reviewed for ongoing alignment with UNT courses and transfer of course credit.
  - vi. Technical credit applied to academic bachelor's degrees or graduate degrees must be less than 25% of the total semester credit hours required of the degree (maximum of 29 SCH of a 120 SCH degree), unless the degree is an applied degree (BAAS, BAS, etc.).
6. Technical credit may only be applied to the general education core curriculum if evaluated as being equivalent to the general education course by qualified faculty and approved through the curriculum process.

7. Prior learning credit awarded by a USDOE-recognized accredited institution must be evaluated using UNT's guidelines for awarding transfer and non-traditional learning credit before granting UNT credit.

***B. Transfer credit from an institution that is not accredited or accredited by an organization that is not recognized by the U.S. Department of Education***

1. Initial review and evaluation of the institution conducted by the Registrar and/or Provost Office representatives for quality of potential transfer credit, equivalency of college-level credit to UNT standards and assessment of learning attainment.
2. If accredited by an organization not recognized by USDOE, department, or college curriculum committees with subject matter expertise will review accreditors of a defined industry or discipline.
  - a. The department or college curriculum committee with similar programs will evaluate the accredited institution to determine quality of potential transfer credit and equivalency of college-level credit to UNT standards.
  - b. If the institution has industry-recognized accreditation, only credit in the industry-recognized discipline may be accepted in transfer after an evaluation by program faculty.
3. If not accredited, a recommendation to accept credits in transfer must be approved through UUCC and Graduate Council.
4. Coursework from a non-accredited institution approved through UUCC or Graduate Council will be considered in transfer after an evaluation by qualified faculty in the department offering similar course content.
  - a. If UNT does not have similar programs or faculty expertise in the industry-specific content, transfer hours may only apply as academic elective credit or technical credit.
  - b. Faculty evaluation of coursework must use the Evaluation of Non-traditional Learning form to
    - i. Verify evidence of instructional quality and course rises above the level of basic skills and constitute more than a training experience.
    - ii. Verify evidence that teaching faculty have expertise in course content.
    - iii. Verify evidence that the content is college-level (may consider ACE or DANTES credit equivalency)
    - iv. Verify that learning outcomes were assessed resulting in a course grade (letter grade or pass/no pass)

- v. Review course description and course student learning outcomes to determine.
  - 1. If the course content is at the lower-division or upper-division level
  - 2. if course content is technical or academic college credit
  - 3. if the course content is equivalent to a general elective, elective in a specified discipline, or a course in the UNT course inventory.
- vi. Determine number of credit hours to award consistent with UNT's credit hour equivalency rubric.
- c. Applications and Limitations
  - i. Equivalent UNT course credit is determined and documented by the department offering the UNT course based on course description, alignment of student learning outcomes with the UNT course and assessment of student learning.
  - ii. Equivalent UNT course credit will be consistently applied at UNT.
  - iii. Courses evaluated as technical credit may be awarded and applied to a major, minor or certificate if recommended by qualified faculty of that program and confirmed through the curriculum approval process.
  - iv. Course equivalencies and institutional quality will be periodically reviewed for ongoing alignment with UNT courses and transfer of course credit.
  - v. Technical credit applied to academic bachelor's degrees or graduate degrees must be less than 25% of the total semester credit hours required of the degree, unless the degree is an applied degree (BAAS, BAS, etc.).

***C. Awarding of Credit for Non-credit Training, Workplace Training, Assessment or Self-guided Training***

1. Initial review and evaluation of the learning provider conducted by the Registrar and/or Provost Office representatives for quality of non-traditional learning, equivalency of college-level credit to UNT standards and assessment of learning attainment.
2. Learning provider will also be reviewed by department or college curriculum committees with subject matter expertise, if applicable.
  - a. The department or college curriculum committee with similar programs will evaluate the learning provider to determine quality of learning and equivalency of college-level credit to UNT standards.
3. Prior learning through alternative means such as non-credit training, workplace training, industry credential exams, assessment or self-guided training may be

considered for credit toward a UNT degree after an evaluation by qualified faculty in the department offering similar course content.

- a. If UNT does not have similar programs or faculty expertise in the learning content, the learning may only apply as academic elective credit or technical credit.
- b. An evaluation of the learning experience must be documented using an evaluation of non-traditional learning form to:
  - i. Verify evidence that the learning is college-level and rises above the level of basic skills (may consider ACE or DANTES credit equivalency).
  - ii. Determine that assessment methods measure the college-level learning at a level of rigor similar to UNT standards.
  - iii. Review learning experience and learning outcomes to determine
    1. if the learning is at the lower-division or upper-division level,
    2. if the learning is technical or academic college credit in nature,
    3. if the learning is equivalent to a general elective, an elective in a specified discipline, or a course in the UNT course inventory.
  - iv. Determine number of credit hours to award consistent with UNT's credit hour equivalency rubric.
  - v. Gain appropriate curriculum committee and UUCG or Graduate Council approval for non-traditional learning for institutional credit.
- c. Applicability and Limitations
  - i. To award UNT academic credit, attainment of prior learning through non-traditional means must be documented through an assessment such as a graded work, portfolio, industry credential exam, departmental exam, etc.
  - ii. To award UNT equivalent credit, qualified faculty in a similar discipline must review and recommend equivalent UNT course credit for non-traditional learning. Non-traditional learning must align to content of a UNT course, consistent with that course's learning outcomes and there is evidence of a student's attainment of learning outcome documented through an assessment (portfolio, industry credential, departmental exam, etc.)
  - iii. To award technical credit, qualified faculty in a similar discipline must review and recommend credit for non-traditional learning. The program with similar content or the program awarding credit for the non-traditional learning may approve the learning for technical credit.
  - iv. Equivalent UNT course credit awarded for non-traditional learning will be consistently applied at UNT.
  - v. Elective credit may be awarded for non-traditional learning and apply to a major, minor or certificate that allows for elective credit.

- vi. Application of technical credit to a major, minor or certificate must be determined by qualified faculty of that program, as confirmed through the curriculum approval process.
- vii. Technical credit applied to academic bachelor’s degrees or graduate degrees must be less than 25% of the total semester credit hours required of the degree, unless the degree is an applied degree (BAAS, BAS, etc.).
- viii. Non-traditional learning experiences and course equivalencies will be periodically reviewed for ongoing alignment with UNT courses and quality of non-traditional learning experiences.

**IV. Revision History**

Guidelines Contact:	Vice Provost Student Success
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Dept(s) Involved:	Vice Provost Student Success, Enrollment Partnerships, Registrar
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