

Bemidji State University Policies

Policy Name: Undergraduate Transfer Credit Acceptance Policy	Effective Date: 7/1/2022
Policy Owner(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Director of Transfer Operations	Last Review: 2/1/2022
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Policy Statement

The following policy and procedure provides guidance for staff and students regarding the transferability and placement of transfer coursework and other documented and creditable knowledge toward a degree or program at Bemidji State University. This policy covers transfer credit evaluation, transfer application decision review and appeal, evaluating credit for prior learning, determining transfer course equivalency, transferring of completed degrees or other credentials, determining accreditation level of previously-attended institutions, handling of Minnesota Transfer Curriculum credits, and other associated policies and procedures.

Scope and Purpose of Policy

This policy applies to all undergraduate degree-seeking and certificate-seeking students (credit is not transferred for unclassified students). This policy also applies to students in PSEO (Post-Secondary Enrollment Option) status, although technically these are not degree-seeking students. The purpose of this policy is to outline how academic credit earned outside of Bemidji State University is applied to a degree or certificate program at BSU. BSU reserves the [Board Policy rights](#) to:

1. Ensure standards of quality for educational programs offered at BSU
2. Determine course equivalencies and admission, program, major, and graduation requirements in accordance with their missions
3. Consider the accreditation of the sending college or university and program in making course transfer decisions.

Definitions

Sending institution: In general, this describes the institution at which a student earns academic credit.

Receiving institution: In this case, Bemidji State University, but could also apply to credit transferred initially to another school before a student transfers finally to BSU.

Evaluation: The process of reviewing earned academic credit for application in an academic program at BSU. Evaluation can happen on many levels, but the initial evaluation is done to ensure transcribed courses are loaded into a student's academic program appropriately.

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Appeal: A documented request submitted by a student for review of transfer decisions regarding how courses or credits were or were not accepted for transfer to meet graduation, program/major requirements or electives.

1. Transfer Credit Evaluation

BSU will evaluate a student's official transcripts and other documents to determine the transferability and placement of transfer coursework and other documented and creditable knowledge.

In general, BSU follows and adapts the policy set by the [Minnesota State Board Policy 3.21 Undergraduate Course and Credit Transfer and the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum](#).

A. Document and Attendance Verification

Following admission, and upon receipt of submitted documentation in the form of official transcripts, scoresheets, and other supporting evidence, staff in the offices of Admissions, Transfer, Records and Registration (and others) will verify the authenticity of the documentation for use in evaluating credit. Documents not found to meet the level of "official" may be rejected in making transfer credit evaluation decisions.

If it is found that a student attended institutions not disclosed on the student's application for admission, transfer evaluation will pause until the additional documentation is submitted by the institution on behalf of the student. In these cases, a hold may be placed preventing a student from registering for courses or receiving financial aid. The hold may be lifted upon such time sufficient documentation is received by BSU. This action ensures:

1. That a transfer student has separated from previous institutions in good academic standing with no active suspensions for academic progress or conduct.
2. That a transfer student has separated from previous institutions in good financial standing with no unpaid or overdue balances resulting in withholding of an official transcript.
3. The transfer of successfully completed coursework toward the student's program at BSU.

Evaluation of official transcripts will include review of the accompanying key or legend when available, which helps inform our evaluation by providing information regarding course duration and credit value (typically in weeks or credit hours), institutional accreditation, grading scale/scheme/policy, course numbering system, GPA calculation, and symbol and notation definitions.

B. Determining Accreditation of Sending Institutions

BSU accepts credits transferred from sending institutions meeting the accreditation requirements of both the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the US Department of Education (USDE). The sending institution must be accredited by a recognized

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accreditor at the time a student attends by an agency that is recognized for providing high quality post-secondary instruction. A list of recognized accrediting agencies can be found here: <https://www.chea.org/chea-and-usde-recognized-accrediting-organizations>

Credits earned from an institution not accredited by an recognized agency may still be used toward a degree program at BSU, but additional supporting evidence is needed to make course transfer decisions. Students with credits from such institutions are encouraged to follow the Course Substitution/Transfer Equivalency process with the help of their major program advisor and department chairperson. Additional supporting documentation in the form of course syllabi and/or course learning outcomes are required to accompany substitution/equivalency requests, and review of such requests does not guarantee the transfer of credit.

ACE (American Council on Education) College Credit Recommendation Service and similar education evaluation commissions are not a suitable replacement for a recognized accrediting agency. However, for the purposes of evaluating experiences earned in the US Military, ACE recommendations are considered sufficient support for making course transferability decisions, and in assessing a credit for prior learning portfolio. See the **Credit for Prior Learning** section later in this document.

C. Determining Technical/Vocational Courses

Certain college-level courses taken at technical or vocational colleges are designed for the explicit purpose of preparing a student for a specific career or job. These courses tend to be highly applied in nature, and typically do not include the rigor, theory, and multiple perspectives found in courses that are from a liberal arts or general education curriculum. As such, the utility of these courses in transfer toward a bachelor's degree may be limited to 16 credits.

In some cases, there is reasonable alignment between career-preparatory coursework and the common outcomes of a bachelor's degree program. In these cases, additional technical course credits may be applied (and are sometimes required) in the counting of total credits needed to earn a bachelor's degree. Some examples include:

- Applied Engineering Bachelor of Applied Science: 38 technical credits allowed.
- Applied Management Bachelor of Applied Science: 30 technical credits allowed.
- RN-BS Nursing Bachelor of Science: 34 technical credits allowed.

D. Determining Course Equivalencies

The determination of the equivalency between a transfer course and a BSU course is a function of the BSU faculty or other subject matter experts as outsourced by BSU faculty. BSU follows these standards when making transfer course equivalency decisions:

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1. Equivalency is based on the finding that a transfer course includes at least 75% of the content and learning objectives/outcomes when compared to a BSU equivalent.
2. Course outlines (within the Minnesota State system) and course syllabi (in other cases) are to be used to compare course content and learning objectives.
3. Courses that appear otherwise equivalent may be different in credit value, given the difference is not more than one credit.
4. Equivalency may not be based solely on the accreditation level of the sending institution.
5. Equivalency may not be based solely on the course number or level, course prerequisites, teaching department, or instructor credentials.
6. Evaluating faculty will refer to [Minnesota State Board Policy operating instruction 3.21.1.2](#) for guidance in making equivalency decisions.

E. Transfer Course Grades and Credit Conversion

BSU accepts transfer courses with grades of A, B, C, and D, including partial grades with “+” and “-” designations. Transfer course grades are not used to calculate BSU grade point average (GPA). Academic departments make the decision about whether a transfer course with a D grade may be used in the major, and have the option of rejecting a transfer course with a D grade from the major.

Transfer courses meeting degree requirements will be granted full earned credit, regardless of whether an equivalent or substituted BSU course has the same credit value. This may not result in an overall reduction in required credits or courses remaining in a major program or liberal education goal area.

Scenario A: Student transfers College Algebra for 3 credits into a major that requires that course. BSU’s College Algebra is 4 credits. The student will receive the course equivalency, and will be required to make up the missing credit elsewhere in the major, or request a 1-credit waiver in the major.

Scenario B: Student transfers Drawing Fundamentals for 3 credits into a major that requires that course. BSU’s Drawing Fundamentals is 2 credits. The student will receive the course equivalency at 2 credits and an additional credit in general or major electives as the case may be.

Because BSU uses a semester system, credits earned in a quarter system will be transferred using a conversion to semester credits using this formula: **Credits earned X 0.667**, which represents the common duration difference between an academic semester (~15 weeks) and an academic quarter (~10 weeks).

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F. Courses Appearing as Special Exam or Test-Out on Transcripts

In the event an official transcript indicates credits earned through special exam or “test-out” at the sending institution, and such credits appear as equivalent to a course offered at that school, BSU will transfer the credit the same as if the credit was earned via traditional course enrollment and attendance.

G. Developmental/Remedial Courses and Course Level

Courses determined to be developmental or remedial in nature, typically numbered under 1000 or 100 will not be transferred.

Course level is evaluated based on information supplied on the sending institution transcript, with courses numbered starting with 1 and 2 typically evaluated as lower-division, and those numbered starting with a 3 or 4 typically evaluated as upper-division. Courses will be transferred in this alignment, except when a transfer agreement approves upper-division credit for a lower-division transfer course in transfer.

Graduate-level courses are not transferred for the purposes of completing an undergraduate program.

H. Non-Domestic Credit and Degrees

Credit earned from non-domestic (United States) institutions may be transferrable to BSU. A student must provide a course-by-course transcript evaluation from a NACES-approved evaluation agency to initiate the process of determining credit transferability. Official transcripts from non-domestic institutions whose programs are delivered in English, and are academically similar in duration, credit value, level, and grading scheme may be sufficient for transfer without an external evaluation. Students are encouraged to check with the BSU Transfer Credit Evaluator before ordering a course-by-course evaluation from a NACES-approved agency.

A baccalaureate degree earned at a non-domestic institution may meet the university’s requirements for a bachelor’s degree, which impacts a student’s admission status and financial aid eligibility. BSU will follow the recommendation from the NACES-approved agency regarding equivalency to a typical US baccalaureate degree program.

I. The Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MNTC)

Bemidji State University follows [Minnesota State Board Policy 3.21](#) for the transfer of MNTC courses. A student who has completed the MNTC as determined by the institution(s) at which the credits were earned will have satisfied the BSU liberal education requirements. The

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completed MNTC must be certified by the sending institution and posted to the official transcript. Students who have not completed the MNTC will have all courses transferred into the liberal education goal areas as determined by the sending institution. Any goal areas completed at the sending institution will also be considered complete at BSU, regardless of differences among credit/course requirements for a specific goal area. The electronic MNTC audit will be reviewed by the transfer credit evaluator to help resolve any goal area designation questions.

J. Transfer of an Associate of Arts (AA) Degree

(Adapted from draft MinnState Board Policy) When an AA or bachelor's degree, earned from regionally accredited colleges and universities within the United States, is transferred to BSU, the entire MNTC will be considered complete, and the student will have satisfied the BSU liberal education requirements. Courses that meet program and/or accreditation requirements may still be required if not completed.

AA and bachelor's degrees from institutions with accreditation recognized by CHEA and USDE (See Section B of this policy) may also satisfy the BSU liberal education requirements, provided the AA or bachelor's degree program includes at least forty (40) semester credits of comparable liberal (general) education, and a minimum of 60 (AA) or 120 (BA/BAS/BS) semester credits overall.

K. Transfer of other Associate Degrees, Diplomas, and Certificates

Students transferring degrees of type AS (Associate of Science) and AAS (Associate of Applied Science), diplomas and certificates will have their courses evaluated on a course-by-course basis for inclusion in various BSU degree requirements.

L. Transfer Agreements and Transfer Pathways

Transfer agreements between BSU and other institutions may include special transfer rules that extend the policy outlined here for the purposes of building inter-agency relationships, simplifying the transfer student experience, and limiting total required credits between the programs in the agreement. Equivalencies and substitutions found in specific transfer agreements may or may not extend to students who are not following the transfer agreement, but who have earned a sub-set of credits in the sending program and transfer prior to program completion. The success of transfer agreements generally relies on the completion of all college program credits prior to transferring to BSU.

Transfer Pathways are agreements with strict rules about the transfer and equivalency of college courses toward aligned baccalaureate degrees. BSU follows the [Minnesota State Board](#)

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[Policy operating instruction 3.21.1.3](#) regarding the implementation of these agreements.

M. Placement of Transfer Courses into a Degree Program

The culmination of the above evaluation is the placement of transfer courses into specific requirement blocks of the student's chosen degree or certificate program, as provided on the student's degree audit report (DAR).

Transfer courses will generally land in one of four areas in a degree program:

1. Liberal education goal areas
2. Major or minor requirement blocks
3. General electives
4. Technical electives

In some cases, a course may be used in more than one area (e.g. a course is used in both a liberal education goal area and as a major requirement). In other cases, a course may be determined to meet a requirement in one area, but not another, without direct approval from the major department faculty, chairperson, and/or dean of the department's college. It is the student's responsibility to review their transfer degree audit report and initiate the request to include transferred coursework in the major requirement block(s). Each academic department may limit the age of transferred coursework in the major. Students are encouraged to check with their major department chairperson for guidance.

There is no limit to the number of credits a student may transfer to BSU. To earn a degree or other credential from BSU, all minimum requirements must be met, as described in the [BSU undergraduate catalog](#).

N. Updated Transcripts and Reverse Transfer

It is the responsibility of the student to inform BSU regarding coursework completed elsewhere while a student is enrolled at BSU, even if the coursework is done at another Minnesota State institution. This includes completion of coursework that is in-progress at the time a student is admitted. Students planning to transfer BSU coursework to a college for the purpose of earning an Associate's degree shall inform BSU when the posting of such degree is complete. Students must then complete the necessary steps to ensure an official transcript with the posted degree is delivered or made available to the BSU Records office.

If updated transcripts indicate a significant drop in academic performance at the sending institution, and before a student is actively enrolled at BSU, academic action may be necessary depending on the severity of the situation (e.g. suspension or unpaid balance at the sending institution).

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2. Other Transferrable Credit

ACE (American Council on Education) Recommended

BSU generally follows ACE recommendations for transferring credit earned through non-traditional courses, trainings, exams, and other learning experiences. Departmental/faculty review of such recommendations for inclusion in the major area of study may be required.

Military Courses

Courses taken and occupational experience earned in the US Military and described on an official Joint Services Transcript (JST) will be transferred using the same process as other transcribed coursework, with support from the ACE Military Guide.

Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), College Level Exam Program (CLEP), DSST/DANTES

BSU maintains a database of course equivalencies for passing scores on AP, IB, CLEP, and DSST/DANTES exams. These equivalencies are approved by academic departments and are updated on a regular basis.

Minnesota World Language Proficiency and Bilingual Seals

BSU follows the [Minnesota Department of Education policy](#), which awards credit to students whose high school transcript indicates completion of the MN World Language Proficiency Certificate, the Bilingual Gold Seal, and the Bilingual Platinum Seal.

Credit for Prior Learning

Bemidji State University follows [Minnesota State Board Policy 3.35](#) for evaluating credit for prior learning requests.

3. Transfer Student Rights and Decision Appeals

Transfer students have access to this policy in several locations on the BSU web site, including the section specific to transfer resources.

Transfer students have access to their transfer degree audit report via eServices upon completion of the evaluation process.

While BSU takes care to perform a fair and equitable credit evaluation, it is the right of the student to request a review of the evaluation, and to appeal the decisions made during the evaluation.

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Appeal First Stage

To appeal a transfer decision made at the initial evaluation stage, a student must submit a request to review a specific equivalency pairing (or pairings) via the Course Substitution/Transfer Equivalency form, or via the eServices Transfer Review/Appeal tool. This request should be accompanied by additional supporting documentation in the form of detailed course descriptions or syllabi when available. This form should first be submitted to the BSU Records office. The Records office will determine the best faculty reviewer, based on expertise in the discipline or subject of the course(s) in question. The faculty reviewer may in turn request review assistance from colleagues and will decide before sending the form back to Records for recording. The student will receive notice from the Records office regarding the outcome of the review, including the rationale for the decision.

Appeal Second Stage

If a student is unsatisfied with the decision, they may appeal to the dean of the appropriate college. This secondary appeal should include the results from the first stage, and the rationale for further appeal. The dean will review the case and provide a decision, in writing, explaining the rationale for their decision.

Appeal Third Stage

If a student is unsatisfied with the dean's decision, they have the right to appeal to the senior vice chancellor of academic and student affairs of Minnesota State, using the process outlined on [this website](#).