



Directive 2010-XXX
_____, 2010

Re: REVISION TO TRANSFER POLICY OF UPPER-DIVISION CREDIT AT FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS,
REGIONAL CAMPUSES, COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES

On March 31, 2008, pursuant to Sec. 4 of Sub. H.B. 2 of the 127th General Assembly as amended by Am. Sub. H.B. 119 for the 127th General Assembly, the chancellor delivered to the General Assembly and the governor a set of recommendations titled ***The Strategic Plan for Higher Education***.

In the Strategic Plan the Chancellor called for a guaranteed credit transfer system that provides all citizens with a clear pathway for gaining the skills and knowledge necessary for productive and satisfying performance in the knowledge economy. The key strategy to achieve this goal is to create a system where students will know in advance the courses and programs guaranteed to transfer and apply to their degree program. This includes the general education component and the pre-requisite and beginning major courses. The Strategic Plan builds upon already established statewide credit transfer guarantees called Ohio Transfer Module (OTM), Transfer Assurance Guide (TAGs), and Career-Technical Assurance Guide (CTAGs).

In 2003, pursuant to section 3333.16 of the Revised Code, the Ohio Board of Regents was put to a task on establishing policies and procedures applicable to all state institutions of higher education that ensure that students can begin higher education at any state institution of higher education and transfer coursework and degrees to any other state institution of higher education without unnecessary duplication or institutional barriers. When Transfer Assurance Guide (TAGs) were created through the implementation of the section 3333.16 of the Revised Code, the concept of student learning outcomes, rather than the course level, was emphasized and developed by faculty representatives from both two- and four-year public institutions. When two courses are considered equivalent in the TAG process, the course at the sending institution is awarded a course equivalent at the receiving institution, and the equivalent transfer course is to be treated the same as the course taken at the receiving institution by their native students. The initial implementation of TAGs was fall of 2005.

Even though TAGs have been in place for the last five years, the current Articulation and Transfer Policy has not reflected the true meaning of the TAGs and the course equivalency system. The current policy states that receiving institutions determine and apply the level and rigor of incoming transfer course to students' residency requirement by the level of course assigned at the sending institution.

In November 2009, the Articulation and Transfer Advisory Council met, and one of the council members brought to the Council's attention that the current policy on lower-division and upper-division designations was inconsistent with the spirit of the TAGs implementation and in violation of the section 3333.16 of the Revised Code. The Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents was asked by the Advisory Council to look into the current policy and make necessary revisions.

In March, 2010, a revised version of the lower-division and upper-division designation policy was presented to the Articulation and Transfer Oversight Committee, and the committee agreed upon the content and language of the revised policy; however, provided minor wording suggestions.

Once all the revisions were completed, it was shared with the members of the Articulation and Transfer Advisory Council electronically a few weeks before the May, 2010 meeting, see attachment A. The current steps the Articulation and Transfer Advisory Council follows in approving policy revision are that:

1. Any revisions must be presented at an Advisory Council meeting first, given sufficient time for the council members to share the information at their institutions.
2. An official vote must be conducted at a following council meeting.

Due to the urgency to be in compliance with section 3333.16 of the Revised Code, the Articulation and Advisory Council suspended and overruled the current decision process and approved the revised language without reservation during the meeting on May 18, 2010. The updated policy applies to all courses, including those that carry the statewide credit transfer guarantee and that will be reviewed for course equivalencies through articulation/bilateral agreements by individual institutions. The Articulation and Advisory Council recommends the Chancellor adopt the updated policy (Attachment A).

Staff Recommendation: Staff worked closely with the Articulation and Transfer Oversight Committee and the Articulation and Transfer Advisory Council in revising the policy and recommends the revised policy as presented in Attachment A, be adopted by the Chancellor to be used by all Ohio public universities.

III. Transfer Policy

D. Acceptance of Transfer Credit and Application of Transfer Credit

2. Application of Transfer Credit

d. Upper-Division Credit at Four-Year Institutions, Regional Campuses, Community and Technical Colleges

Many four-year institutions distinguish between lower and upper division courses and require a given number of courses that must be completed at the upper-division level. The intent is to guarantee that each graduate will have at least a minimum number of classes in areas of specialization after completion of prerequisite courses at the lower-division level.

Upper-division and lower-division credits will be awarded for transfer based upon the level of course to which they are equated at the receiving institution. A course completed at one public institution of higher education and transferred to another public institution shall be applied to the student's degree objective in the same manner as its equivalent course at the receiving institution. If a lower-division course at the sending institution is transferred as equivalent to an upper-division course at the receiving institution, it will be counted as upper-division credit. Likewise, an upper-division course taken at the sending institution that is transferred as equivalent to a lower-division course at the receiving institution will be counted as lower-division credit.

This policy will be implemented immediately and will be applied to students who are enrolled at a public institution of higher education in Ohio in the fall of 2010 and have not had their transfer credits evaluated for course equivalencies. Institutions may establish a petition process for the re-evaluation of their students' transfer credits evaluated after fall 2005.¹

¹Fall 2005 marks the initial implementation of the HB 95.

Attachment A showing changes (language to be deleted is stricken through and new text to be engrossed is underlined)

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Many four-year institutions distinguish between lower and upper division courses and require a given number of courses that must be ~~taken~~completed at the upper-division level. The intent is to guarantee that each ~~student~~graduate will have at least a minimum number of ~~classroom experiences~~classes in areas of specialization after completion of prerequisite courses at the lower-division level.

Upper-division ~~credit~~ credit and lower-division ~~credit~~ credits will be awarded for transfer ~~work~~ based upon the level of ~~the course to which they are equated~~ at the sending/receiving institution. A course completed at one public institution of higher education and transferred to another public institution shall be applied to the student's degree objective in the same manner as its equivalent course at the receiving institution. If a lower-division course at the sending institution is transferred as equivalent ~~in content~~ to an upper-division course at the receiving institution, it will be counted as ~~lower~~ upper-division credit. Likewise, an upper-division course taken at the sending institution ~~which that~~ is transferred as equivalent ~~in content~~ to a lower-division course at the receiving institution will be counted as ~~upper~~ lower-division credit.

~~Because of variance in curricular design and course numbering among two-year and four-year institutions the division of upper and lower courses is not always clear and absolute. Consequently there must be latitude for exceptions to the guidelines above. For example, a receiving university may determine that a community or technical college course is equivalent in nature and content to an upper division university course. In this instance the receiving institution could accept the course as upper division credit.~~

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