

1. Do you have an institutional policy regarding official transcripts with regard to admission offers and transfer credit evaluations?

Memorial University of Newfoundland: An official transcript is regarded as a transcript sent direct from the Institution attended to Memorial.

Douglas College: Yes, we require official transcripts however we will allow a student to bring them to us directly and we do not require them to come directly from the applicable school. HOWEVER: we will accept a faxed transcript (with an original to follow) if it is faxed directly from the issuer. This usually only happens when timelines are tight.

Mount Saint Vincent University: Currently, our policy is embedded in the Transfer Student Admissions policy, but we are in the process of drawing up a stand alone plan.

Dalhousie University: We require official transcripts for both admission and transfer credit evaluations.

Bishop's University: Official transcripts are necessary for both of these processes.

University College of the Fraser Valley: UCFV requires official transcripts for any post-secondary education used for admission or transfer credit purposes. Unofficial transcripts are submitted by students, but are not useful for anything.

Athabasca University: Yes. Official transcripts only.

Langara College: We do not have a policy in place (yet), but our academic calendar states that all transcripts submitted for admission/transfer credit purposes must be official.

Acadia University: Applicants for admission from another university must have an official transcript sent direct or provided to you in an envelope sealed by the institution for evaluation. Transfer credit normally will be given for individual courses which are applicable to the intended undergraduate degree program of study.

Brock University:

Yes. Transcripts must be official and arrive directly from the institution in an institutional envelope (or if an option, via EDI).

University of Waterloo: Yes, we require official final transcripts to be sent directly from the institution to the university.

University of Ontario Institute of Technology: all offers and transfer credits are based upon official final transcripts – all transcripts must be sent directly to UOIT in a sealed envelope

University of Saskatchewan: Students can send in unofficial transcripts so that a conditional admission decision can be made. They receive an acknowledgement letter or a letter of admission requesting the official post-secondary transcripts.

2. Do you accept unofficial transcripts? If so, for what purposes do you use them?

MUN: No

Douglas: No

MSVU: Only on preliminary basis. Final decisions are based on Official transcripts.

Dal: There have been a few cases in the past where admissions has accepted a student based on an unofficial transcript, but only under special circumstances. In these circumstances they would request that the student have an official transcript sent to us as soon as possible. In those cases we will assess the unofficial transcript for transfer credit but only enter them on the student's record as "pending receipt of final official transcript". We would change the credits to "transferred" once the official transcript arrives.

Bishop's: We never accept unofficial transcripts.

UCFV: No

AU: No. However at my previous institution we would occasionally begin an unofficial transcript assessment...

Langara: No

Acadia: For a preliminary review and advising, perhaps, until the official documents arrive. No offer of admission would be issued until the originals arrived.

Brock: No

Waterloo: We accept unofficial transcripts to consider for admission, but not transfer credit. They would be used for sending a conditional offer of admission. The condition would require an official final transcript be sent by a specified date.

UOIT: No, we do not accept unofficial transcripts

U of S: Unofficial post-secondary transcripts are used to perform preliminary evaluations that are not entered on the student information system but allow an admission decision to be made. Preliminary evaluations are often communicated to prospective students or new applicants via telephone, email, or in person. Offers of conditional admission and transfer scholarships are made with unofficial transcripts.

3. Do you enter transfer credit evaluations on your student information system based on unofficial transcripts or only official transcripts?

MUN: Only official

Douglas: Only with official

MSVU: Only official

Dal: As in previous question.

Bishop's: Only official

UCFV: Only official

AU: Official only

Langara: Only official

Acadia: Credits are added based on official transcripts.

Brock: Official only

Waterloo: Transfer credit is only coded in the system if it's from an official transcript. We will give the student a preliminary assessment of transfer credit in a letter or offer but it is conditional upon us receiving an official transcript.

UOIT: Only official

U of S: only official

4. What is your approximate turnaround time for transfer credit evaluations?

MUN: It depends on the number of courses being evaluated, approximately three weeks.

Douglas: Usually no more than six weeks (during peak).

MSVU: Depends on the time of year and if it's a University/College that we dealt with before or recognize; we enter approved credits into our student system for future reference. Normal turnaround time would be 5 business days.

Dal: The standard line is 4-6 weeks; however this can vary, depending on the time of year, how long it takes to get the course descriptions, how quickly the transfer credit assessors get back to us, etc. We have a table of all previously-approved transfer credits, and if all the courses are already on this table the assessment is usually pretty quick.

Bishop's: Approx. 2 weeks

UCFV: Varies. We state up to 6 weeks, longer if there are no articulations in place and we have to review course outlines. Normally can do them in less than a month from BC, although this past year we have had some serious backlogs.

AU: 4-6 weeks currently.

Langara: Our transfer credit request form stipulates that transfer credit may take 6 to 8 weeks. Typically it is completed faster than this. (Approx. 2 to 3 weeks).

Acadia: Once an offer is made, the student is normally notified of transfer credits within three weeks. If they are coming from an institution outside of Canada and need to supply course descriptions, it may take longer.

Brock: Upon completion of the application file, timing ranges depending on time of year - from three days to two weeks.

Waterloo: In most cases, it's two weeks.

UOIT: - Our approximate turnaround time is 8 weeks, often 10 – 12 weeks in June, July and August– we send all evaluations to faculty for review – often multiple faculties- this time frame also depends upon whether or not we have all necessary documentation in order to complete an assessment

U of S: At non-peak times, Canadian transfer credit evaluations are done within a few days of receipt of the official transcripts. At peak times, the evaluation takes 2 weeks.

5. What is the process for course reviews for transfer credit or appeals of transfer credit appeals at your institution? Does your system work well?

MUN: Courses are normally assessed based on the calendar course description. If the course is turned down based on this information we will ask the student to provide a detailed course outline and usually transfer credit is recommended based on this information.

Douglas: Our system works very well because of the BC Council on Admissions & Transfers and the excellent system in place here in BC. For transcripts from outside the province we ask for detailed course outlines and send them to the various departments/faculties to evaluate.

MSVU: Our Admissions Office does original review. Appeals go to the Registrar's Office for review. It's a new process for us and still too soon to determine if it's working well, although it seems to be.

Dal: We (the transfer credit team within the Registrar's Office) will forward all course descriptions and/or outlines to the appropriate academic department here at Dalhousie (for example, course descriptions for English classes go to the English Department). The designated faculty member reviews the content of the course and determines whether a transfer credit should be granted. If the student appeals, we usually suggest that they send in more information (ie if the original assessment was based on a course description we ask them to send in the full outline) and then send that back to the professor for review again. If this isn't an option we suggest that the student discuss the course content with the faculty member.

Bishop's: Writing appeal sent to the Director of Admissions who reviews it with the Dean of the student's program. Yes, it works well.

UCFV: N/A

AU: Please refer to our Undergraduate Transfer Credit Policy for appeals procedures: <http://www.athabascau.ca/policy/registry/ugtransfercredit.htm>
It seems to work quite well.

Langara: If a student challenges a transfer credit assessment, we will evaluate those on a case-by-case basis. We will involve the faculty evaluators if necessary.

Acadia: Appeals are made by the student, to the department. They must supply the department head with a complete course outline. If that doesn't work, they will set a meeting directly with the head. This seems to work fine, and doesn't happen often.

Brock: Admissions officers assess for transfer credit, but will often consult directly with departments for input. Appeals come back to the Admissions office and are reviewed. If cannot be resolved forwarded to department for final say. Yes, our process does work, however we find it is getting more and more difficult as the university grows to stay on top of rules/guidelines around transfer credit that specific departments may want.

Waterloo: Transfer credit is assessed by an Admissions Specialist or Faculty Admissions Representative depending on the program. We do have a deadline for when a transfer credit assessment can be appealed. The appeal is requested through the individuals mentioned above and then to an admission committee, if required.

UOIT: - currently, unless a student can provide more documentation (textbook, class notes, detailed course syllabus) we do not re-evaluate- transfer credits are evaluated at the time of admissions for all possible equivalencies to avoid re-assessments- this is a new process for our institution and so far, it has eliminated constant reviewing of the same information

U of S: Course reviews are initiated either by the student who is appealing for credit, or by the Admissions office, so that the appropriate college or department can examine the content of the sending course to determine specific or non-specific equivalence. In some

cases, a course review is necessary if there is no transfer credit precedent for a course, or if we need to determine specific subject area. The student provides the syllabus and the Admissions office coordinates the review and updates the student record. For more information visit: <http://explore.usask.ca/admission/transfer/reviews/>

6. What do you see are the pros and cons of block versus course-by-course transfer evaluations?

MUN: Block transfer generally works well for admission to professional programs whereby course-for-course for more general programs.

Douglas: We do not give block transfer, however some of our students transfer to other institutions with block credit.

MSVU: Block is so much easier for staff and students alike. Faster for staff as there are no determinations to be made. For the student, they know ahead of time what is transferable and can make educated course selections earlier.

Dal: To my knowledge, there are a few block transfer evaluations including BSc(Nursing) students who have completed their LPN at NSCC. The Bachelor of Social Work also offers block transfer credits for students who have completed an undergraduate degree (but these assessments are not handled by the Registrar's Office). These seem to work well, but I would be interested how block transfers are handled at other schools. The vast majority of our transfer credit evaluations are done on a course-by-course evaluation and this seems to work quite well.

Bishop's: Block is quicker and course-by-course is more accurate.

UCFV: Block credit often results in a lot of unassigned credit. That can be OK for the odd program, such as the BGS, but often does not meet many specific requirements. We also have block credit for certain disciplines e.g. ECE diploma to CYC degree - if the credit is granted as a block, the dept. can use it to satisfy program requirements, but students often have prerequisite problems in these cases. However, assigning block credit for a completed credential is a nifty way of getting students a lot of credit, without reviewing the individual courses.

AU: Block transfer usually works out better for the student in getting the maximum amount of credit. Definitely easy to administer for our office, however, for specific courses that the student might have, the computer would not recognize pre-requisites, etc. Less confusion for the student.

Langara: Block transfer saves time, but we do not have many block agreements. The vast majority of our transfer credit is course-by-course.

Acadia: Course-by-course evaluations are very time consuming. Block transfers, or articulation agreements are already set and easy to administer.

Brock: Block is much easier to administer. Block ensures a more standard assessment (i.e. we don't run into the situation where two students with the exact same credentials receive different assessments. However, any agreement that includes block transfer credit must include language that specifically details the minimum average required in each course in addition to the overall average. Otherwise there is the potential for block transfer students to enter unprepared. Block requires that departments that develop the agreements update them on a regular basis to ensure the block transfer is still appropriate. This is not always the case, as we see many college transcripts that no longer include all of the courses that were once part of the agreement. Course by course transfer evaluation is more work and not always consistent when two students have the same criteria. Often it is because of significant grade differences, but the perception by students is that we are not consistent in our assessments. I think however we get a better picture of the calibre of the student, and we are able to place them in more programs.

Waterloo: Ontario Community Colleges we will look at block transfer credit evaluations. Universities or College/Universities we will look at course by course. Both are good for different reasons. Individual courses look directly at a particular course and its content so it may be easier to assess. Block helps with community college because it captures the breadth of a couple or few courses.

UOIT: - block transfers would be much faster and easier to assess - we assess course by course and it takes a significant amount of time – particularly if a file needs to be assessed by more than one faculty (Engineering and Science for example)

U of S: Articulation agreements are a great recruitment tool and can be easier for admissions staff to assess. Course-by-course credit can be more easily transferred between programs and colleges.

7. Does your institution have articulation agreements? If so, how many?

MUN: Yes, with most Canadian Universities, some international and some Colleges.

Douglas: Too many to count.

MSVU: Yes, 5-10

Dal: We have about a dozen or so, offered through various schools and departments (eg Commerce, Law, etc).

Bishop's: Yes, too many to count.

UCFV: We participate in BC transfer guide so have numerous agreements. We also make lots of precedent-setting decisions for non-BC Transfer system institutions, and also some private schools and other institutions. These are mainly decisions made when students request the credit (as opposed to an agreement reached in consultation with the institution

itself). We have a whole database (a couple of hundred records) of decisions for granting credit for certain programs from non-recognized institutions.

AU: Yes. Hundreds, most as a member of ACAT

Langara: hundreds of articulation agreements through the BCCAT.

Acadia: Yes, we have several at the moment and are working on a few more.

Brock: Currently 33, but more are being planned.

Waterloo: Only a couple of articulation agreements.

UOIT: - we do not have any articulation agreements with any other institutions- each student file is assessed individually for equivalencies to our courses

U of S: Yes, we have a few articulation agreements with Canadian institutions and are pursuing more agreements nationally and internationally.

8. What is the 'culture' (attitudes, values, feelings) regarding transfer credit at your institution?

MUN: I think the culture here is very good and there is generally a great deal of cooperation and support for the students and confidence in the process. With the increase in transfers from all areas, the demands upon all units are growing and I'm sure that's an issue for many institutions.

Douglas: We try very hard to accommodate students with their transfer requests.

MSVU: We welcome them as we understand that many students are paying their own way through university and have a set time line in place toward graduation.

Dal: Over the last few years we've been placing a greater emphasis on transfer credits, with the creation of a few new positions (including mine). There is still some difficulty in receiving timely assessments from the departments, though.

Bishop's: Positive overall.

UCFV: We have a very flexible approach and grant credit for a wide range of college programs, including vocational. We grant credit institutionally, not based on the student's program, but the credit does not always apply the same way to all programs. We have defined what institutions we recognize, and for recognized institutions, we grant as much credit as we can. For non-recognized institutions or programs, departments can recommend credit to our Academic Standards committee, and again, we have been quite open to these requests as long as the dept. head is confident about them.

AU: I would say that transfer credit is seen as a huge role in our institution, our "bread and butter", again, being a member of ACAT plays a large role in this I think.

Langara: Transfer credit is becoming a much more important aspect of our services, as we are now offering more degree programs. Students require much more transfer credit than they have in the past, so it is demanding more of our time. As it is a service that students need to formally request, we treat it as we would any of our other services...it must be timely, accurate, and is vital to the student's academic record.

Acadia: This usually depends on the Department. Some are more strict than others when it comes to giving credit. Some faculties feel that courses have to be identical to the ones taught here.

Brock: N/A

Waterloo: Transfer credit is supported. However, we do have a residency requirement that means they have to do so many courses at UW in order to obtain a UW degree.

Here's our website with more info -

<http://findoutmore.uwaterloo.ca/admissions/transfer.php>

UOIT: - university transfer students are usually very satisfied with their transfer credit assessments- college transfer students are rarely satisfied as they feel they are entitled to way more transfer credits than they receive - the students who feel the process is taking too long, are the ones who have not submitted the necessary documentation in order to complete an assessment (ie syllabus, official final transcript)- overall – if a student has provided all the necessary information, they are usually happy with their result.

U of S: We continue to develop and cultivate a strong philosophy of transfer credit recognition that promotes the development of articulation agreements, and quick and fair assessment of transfer credits.

9. Are there any best practices in transfer credit you would like to share?

MUN: All transfer credit evaluations are coordinated through the Office of the Registrar. We have a centralized precedent file in place to record approved credits and an effective process for referring new courses to academic units for evaluation. Participation in the development and maintenance of the Newfoundland and Labrador Transfer Credit Guide which is a very useful service and reference tool.

Douglas: not at this time

MSVU: Setting the transfer equivalents on the system has been a true time saver for us. We add to it whenever we get a new request (after approval of course).

Dal: I would be very curious to hear some of the other responses. I'm open to changing our processes if it means quicker evaluations.

Bishop's: Not at this time.

UCFV: a) I think it is important to have policy or guidelines (as we do) to define how institutions are recognized, as well as standard practices for granting credit, and authorities of the registrar's office vs academic departments. b) Maintain a database of decisions made for each institution; especially those that are from a course outline review by the department, so that students are treated consistently. This saves duplicating work, too.

AU: For best practices, you may refer to our policy at:
<http://www.athabasca.ca/policy/registry/ugtransfercredit.htm>

Langara: Collaboration between the Registrar's Office and any faculty who evaluate transfer credit equivalences is essential. Without a formalized process in place for transfer credit evaluations that must be sent out to faculty, the process can become quite cumbersome. The Registrar's Office staff and the faculty really need to view transfer credit as a team effort that requires cooperation and communication, to ensure that the students are receiving a high level of service.

Acadia: We keep track of all credits given on our system. This is extremely helpful for repeated schools and courses. Also, requesting course information by email rather than mail is more efficient and effective. I receive faster responses from faculty when I send an email.

Brock: N/A

Waterloo: For some programs where we are competing for students, we complete a preliminary transfer credit assessment that is included in their offer of admission. For other programs, we do not complete the assessment unless they've confirmed to our institution.

UOIT: - Consistency is key - we are currently working on updating our policy in order to ensure consistency among all faculties- our biggest challenges are converting foreign institution grades and verifying institution accreditation - as all of our decisions are made at faculty - we keep any and all documentation to back up all decisions- we inform all of our team members (including faculty) of policies, procedures and updates to ensure that each person involved with the transfer credit process is up to date - we keep a tracking database of the status of each file for easy reference

U of S: We will soon begin to build our transfer equivalents in the Banner articulation module. We have national transfer equivalents posted at
<http://explore.usask.ca/admission/transfer/equivalents/>