

What Counts as Credit? Exploring Transfer, Exam and Prior Learning Credits



Introductions



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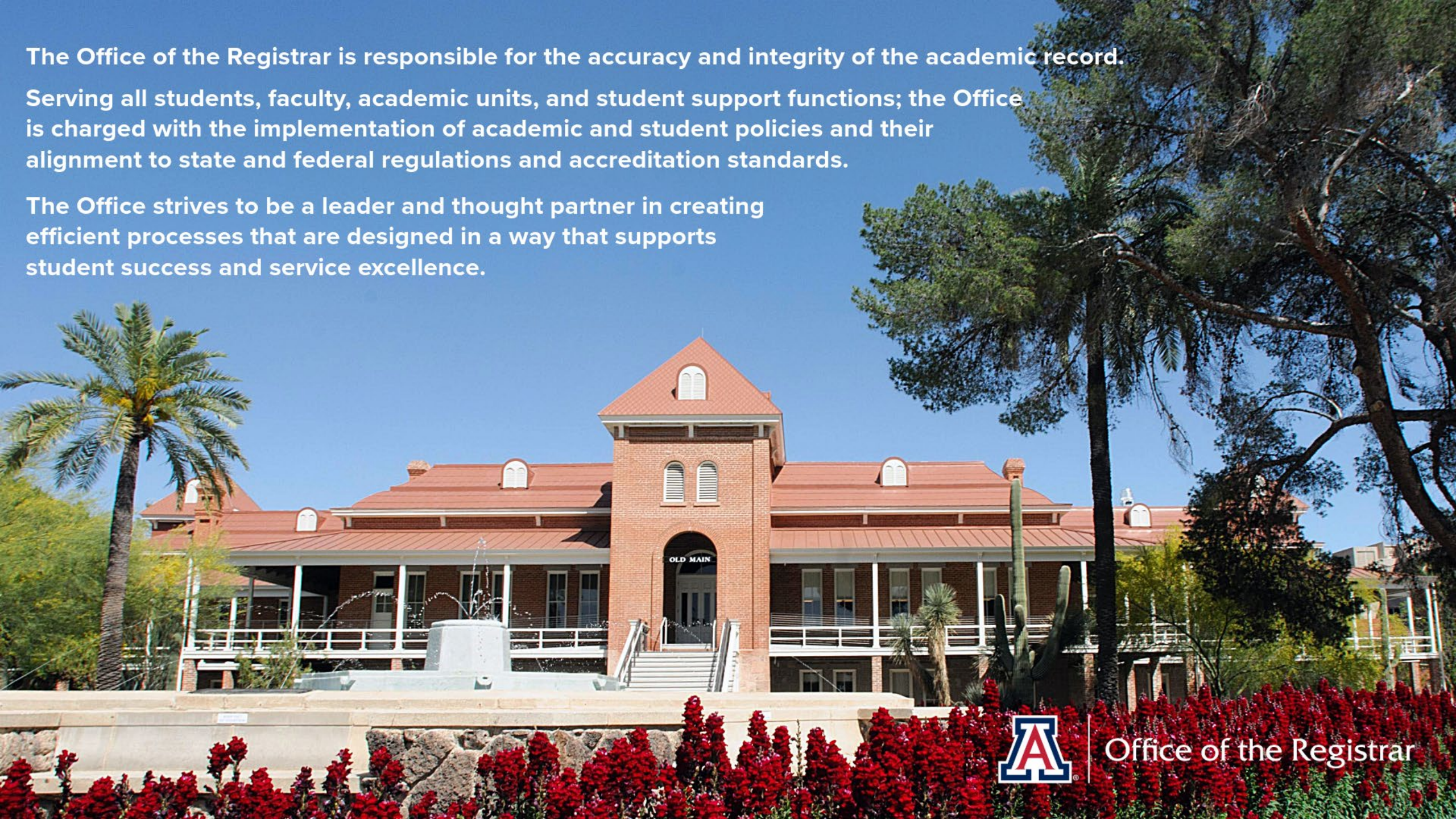
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Transfer Credit Evaluation



The Office of the Registrar is responsible for the accuracy and integrity of the academic record.

Serving all students, faculty, academic units, and student support functions; the Office is charged with the implementation of academic and student policies and their alignment to state and federal regulations and accreditation standards.

The Office strives to be a leader and thought partner in creating efficient processes that are designed in a way that supports student success and service excellence.



Office of the Registrar

Agenda

Purpose of Today's Webinar

Today's session will provide an overview of the many ways undergraduate students can earn academic credit beyond taking University of Arizona courses. We will explore how transfer credit from domestic and international institutions, general education pathways, exam-based credit, and credit by prior learning experiences apply to a student's academic progress.

We will explain how transfer credit is evaluated, including the importance of accreditation, and highlight additional credit opportunities such as exams, military service, and other approved assessment methods.





Why Transfer Credit Matters

National Context

- As of last year, there are **37.6 million** non-enrolled working adults with some college credits but no degree.
- Federal initiatives continue to emphasize student mobility, credit applicability, and credential attainment.

Institutional Commitment

- The University of Arizona's North Star of Success for Every Student includes the **Academic Success Goal** to be the **number one transfer-friendly educational institution**.
- Strengthening transfer pathways helps reduce student debt and increase degree completion.
- **Reverse Transfer** allows students who opt in to have eligible coursework from a university sent back to their former community college—via processes coordinated through the National Student Clearinghouse—so they may be awarded an AA degree retroactively.



How Students Earn Credit

Overview

Types of credit	How credits are earned	Grade Point Average (GPA) Impact
Transfer Credit	College-level courses from other accredited institutions, evaluated for transferability and applicability.	Does not receive grade and does not count towards GPA.
Credit by Exam	Earned through AP, IB, CLEP, and other standardized or departmental exams.	Departmental exam results that are designed as Grade and Credit counts towards GPA.
Dual/Concurrent Enrollment	College courses completed while in high school that meet university standards.	Courses offered by the U of A are included in GPA.
Military Credit	Awarded based on JST or ACE recommendations, depending on institutional policies.	Does not receive grade and does not count towards GPA.
Credit for Prior Learning	Credit for demonstrated skills or competencies (varies by institution).	Does not receive grade and does not count towards GPA.
Institutional Coursework	Credits earned directly through coursework taken at the university.	Courses offered by the U of A are included GPA.





Understanding Transfer Credit

Transfer Credit and Equivalencies

What is Transfer Credit?

Transfer Credit is coursework from post-secondary institutions that is evaluated to determine the following:

- **Is it transferable** as academic credit
- **What kind of credit** should it receive:

University elective credit, department elective credit, or direct equivalency to a UA course.

- **Is it applicable** toward degree requirements

Not all courses transfer and not all transferred courses apply to a student's chosen major.

How are Equivalences Determined

AZTransfer Articulation

- A statewide system to improve transfer between the AZ community colleges and universities.
- **Resources:**
 - [AZ Course Equivalency Guide \(CEG\)](#)
 - [Discipline-specific Articulation Task Force \(ATF\)](#) meetings
 - Exam credit alignment between the institutions
 - [Common course list](#)
 - [Shared Unique System \(SUN numbers\)](#).

Department Evaluation

- Faculty review determines direct equivalency for courses/exams not already articulated.
- **Resources:**
 - [UA Transfer Credit Guide](#)
 - [Supplemental International Transfer Credit Guide](#)

Advisor Guidance

- Advisors help students understand and apply approved equivalencies toward their degree.
- **Resources:**
 - [Transfer Student Support Services](#)



Transferability of Credits – from another Institution

Transferability of Credits

- Refers to whether a course taken at one institution **can be accepted for credit** at another institution.

Institutional Accreditation

- **Regionally Accredited** or **Non-Regionally Accredited** (recognized by the [Council for Higher Education Accreditation](#) [CHEA])

Grade Earned

- Must be C or better

Limits on Course Types

- The course must be collegiate – not vocational, remedial, or personal development
- Graduate credit cannot be transferred as undergraduate credit
- Credit by Exam from other institutions is not transferable

Things we do not Transfer from another Institution

- Transfer Credit
- Credit by Exam
- Military Credit
- Credit for Prior Learning
- Non-Degree/Continuing Education Credit



Applicability of Credits – once a course is transferable

Direct Equivalency

- Transfer course is listed in the student's course history as a specific University of Arizona course; automatically satisfies the same program requirements as if it were taken here.

Student Initiated Process

- Students can use [Course Equivalency Request form](#) to submit course content information to request direct equivalencies.

Departmental Review

- Courses submitted for review are sent to the department for evaluation.

Degree Requirements & Limits

- No more than 3 PE activity credits and 3 Success Course credits may be applied to the degree
- Independent Study, Internship, and Practicum subject to approval; transferability and applicability may be limited by major
- Transfer coursework for General Education may be applied course by course, or as a block for the full curriculum.

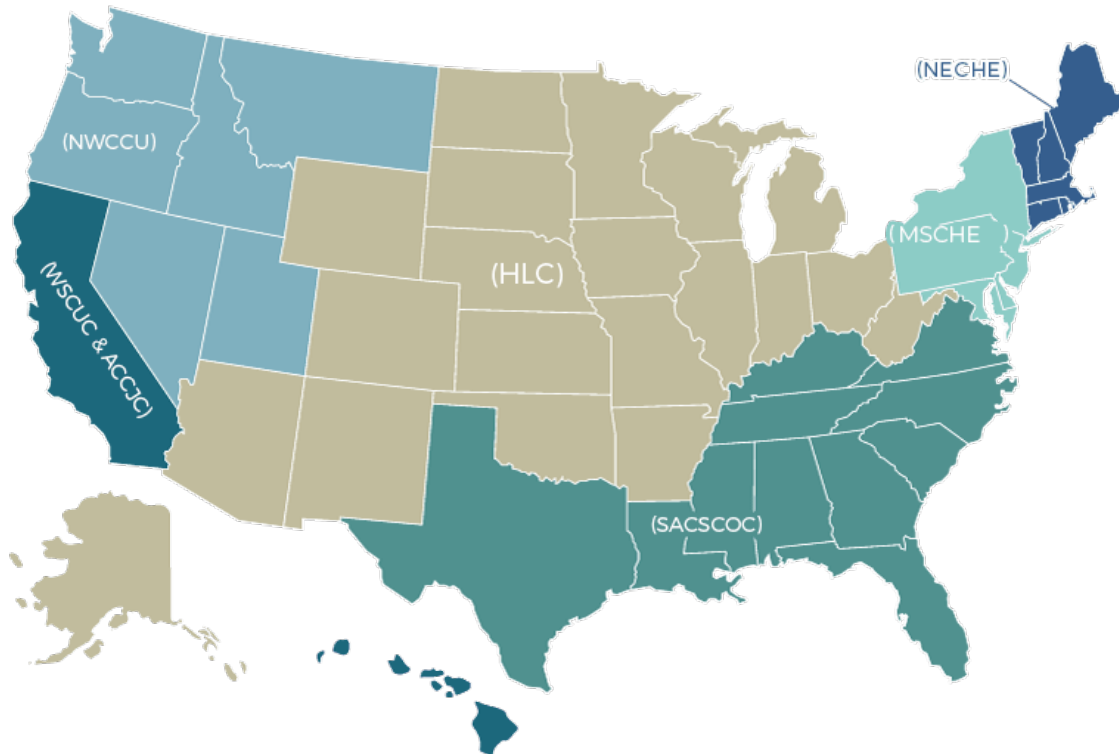
Applicability of Credits

- Refers to how accepted transfer credits **apply toward a specific degree program** at the receiving institution.



What is Accreditation?

The formerly known as Regional Accreditors



- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)
- Higher Learning Commission** (HLC)
- WASC Senior College and University Commission* (WSCUC) & Accrediting Commission For Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC)
- Southern Association of Colleges and School Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)
- Middle States Commission on Higher Education*** (MSCHE)
- New England Commission on Higher Education (NECHE)

What is Accreditation

- **Accreditation** is a formal review process in which an independent, recognized accrediting body evaluates a school, college, university, or specific academic program to ensure it meets established standards of quality.
 - It verifies that the institution provides **sound educational practices, qualified faculty, appropriate curriculum, and adequate student support services.**
 - It acts as a **quality assurance** mechanism for students, employers, and the public.

Why Accreditation Matters

- **Quality Assurance:** Confirms programs meet recognized academic standards.
- **Financial Aid Access:** Required for federal aid, grants, and many scholarships.
- **Credit Transfer:** Makes it easier for students to transfer credits between institutions.
- **Licensure Eligibility:** Needed for professional fields requiring certification (e.g., nursing, teaching).
- **Employer Trust:** Signals graduates received a reputable, credible education.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Requires regular review to maintain and improve quality.





Other Types of Credit

External Exam and Other Credit

Credit by Exam (AP, IB, CLEP, CIE, DSST, German Abitur, French Baccalaureat, European Baccalaureate, Italian Maturita)

- Evaluated according to institutional policies
- Faculty-driven decisions on credit awards and equivalencies
- Complete exams early—avoid waiting until the final deadline
- **Credit for Prior Learning**: verifiable learning gained through experience—not for the experience itself, may be reviewed for credit.
- **Important Distinctions**
 - Credit for prior learning granted by another institution does not transfer to University of Arizona
 - Credit for prior learning granted at University of Arizona may not transfer to other institutions



Other Types of Credit

University of Arizona Exams

- **University of Arizona Options**
 - **Proficiency Exams:**
 - Exams offered at the department or college level that allow students to show ability for the purposes of meeting department requirements or to enroll in advanced level courses
 - Second Language Proficiency exams allow students to satisfy second language requirements in whole or in part without earning credit.
 - **Special Examinations for Credit or Grade:**
 - For Credit: Credit awarded based on demonstrated competency
 - For Credit and Grade: Credit and a letter grade recorded on the transcript
- **Important Distinctions**
 - Credit granted by exam from other institutions may not transfer to the University of Arizona
 - Credit from special exams for credit or grade granted at University of Arizona may not transfer to other institutions



Credit for U.S. Military Service & Training

Process for Evaluation & Application of Military Experience

- Students must submit their Joint Services Transcript (JST) to the university for evaluation per the **Credit for U.S Military Service & Training catalog policy**
- Evaluations follow **ACE (American Council on Education) credit recommendations** to determine transferability and level.
 - **Learn more about using Military Credits**
- Students using Veteran's Administration Education Benefits are required to submit the JST to the institution
 - **Learn more about Joint Service Transcripts**





Application of Credit to Degree Requirements

Limitations, Advising Considerations and Best Practices

Students and advisors should review the relevant catalog policies for each type of non-university credit and the limits for use toward the student's degree(s).

- Grades earned for transfer credit do not impact GPA, but they do count toward degree progress and requirements. This includes **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)** calculations.
- Students should be mindful of staying on-track to degree completion in alignment with the ABOR **Excess Units Surcharge** policy.
- Exceptions to place transfer credit on the ADVIP should be done as soon as the work is posted to ensure an accurate degree progress picture is always available to the student.
- Students are strongly encouraged to not wait until their final year to complete and transfer work back to the university.

Student Scenarios

Student completes a course at the university during Fall 2024:

RELI 160D4-201 (69207)	Intro to World Religions (Lecture)	3.00	Regular Grades A, B, C, D, E	B	✓
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Student completes a course at community college that is a direct equivalent to the UA offering:

External Term	External Subject / Catalog Nbr	Units Taken	Grade Input	Equivalent Subject / Catlg Nbr	Units Accepted	Grade Basis	Grade
2025 FALL	REL 100	3.00	TA	RELI 160D4	3.000	TRN	TA

Student only receives credit + grade for the UA attempt.

RELI 160D4	Intro to World Religions	Fall 2024	TA	3.00	←	
RELI 160D4	Intro to World Religions	Fall 2024	B	3.00	✓	ERAB - Error - A,B cannot be repeated

The screenshot shows the 'TRANSFER CREDIT GUIDE' interface. At the top, there are buttons for 'NEW SEARCH', 'EVALUATE MY CREDIT', and 'APPLY'. Below this is a navigation bar with links for 'ABOUT', 'DATA REPORTING', 'TRAINING', 'PUBLICATIONS', 'TASK FORCES', 'TOOLS', 'SUMMIT', and 'LOGIN'. A secondary navigation bar includes 'COURSE EQUIVALENCY', 'EXAM EQUIVALENCY', 'DUAL ENROLLMENT', 'AGEC', and 'MAJORS & DEGREES'. The Chandler-Gilbert Community College logo is visible, along with a search dropdown set to '2025-26' and a 'GO' button. Below the search results, it indicates '20 Matches Found'. A table shows a match between 'CGCC Course' (REL 100 (3) World Religions) and 'UA' (RELI 160D4; T1-TRAD, GE EP-Humanist--or-- RELI 160D4; GEDE, GE EP-Humanist).

The best practice here is to review posted direct equivalencies prior to the student enrolling in the course at an external institution



Student Scenarios

Credit by Exam

In this example, a student took the **AP Spanish Language Exam**. Their score of "4" resulted in credit for the 3 courses listed, and the automatic satisfaction of their **Beyond Second Semester Language degree requirement**.

3	Posted	i	AP	SPL	SPAN 201
					SPAN 202
					SPAN 251

▼ **Beyond Second Semester Language Course (R521/L30)**

Satisfied: Complete 1 course with a grade of C or better.

- Courses: 1 required, 3 taken, 0 needed

The following courses were used to satisfy this requirement:

Course	Description	Units	When	Grade	RptCd	RqDes	Status	Pair
SPAN 201	Third Semester Spanish	4.00	Fall 2024	T			✓	Pair
SPAN 202	Fourth Semester Spanish	4.00	Fall 2024	T			✓	Pair
SPAN 251	Intermediate Spanish	3.00	Fall 2024	T			✓	Pair

Substitute/Exclude

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Catalog

Home Programs Courses Policies Resources

Home Policies Courses & Credit Credit > Credit by Exam

Credit by Exam

SUBPAGES

Advanced Placement (AP) Program

Credit by Exam

Advanced Placement (AP) Program

Cambridge International Examination (CIE) Program

College-Level Examination Program (CLEP)

DSST Examination

The University of Arizona accepts Advanced Placement (AP) exam scores (College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), Cambridge International Examination (CIE) Program, DSST Examination Program, and International Baccalaureate (IB) Program exam scores) as a basis for awarding credit toward a degree. Students who complete AP classes, accelerated or honors classes in their high school may take AP exams prior to coming to the University. Exams are administered through the College Board at high schools each May.

AP credit is considered **Credit by Exam** at the UA. Credit is determined from the AP credit table that applies to the date when you took the exam. Credits you earn based on your exam performance may be counted toward your major or minor fields of study or General Education requirements. See the AP credit table below, and contact a University of Arizona **academic advisor** to confirm course credit towards specific programs.

For more information about the national AP program visit the **College Board Advanced Placement Program** site.

Spanish Language & Culture	5	SPAN 201, 202, 251 & 325; Satisfies second language requirement for all students	14 units
	4	SPAN 201, 202 & 251; Satisfies second language requirement for all students	11 units
	3	SPAN 201 & 202; Satisfies second language requirement for all students	8 units

Students/advisors should review the exam equivalency guide to see what a student's exam score could mean for their degree pathway.



Student Scenario

Non-Transferable Courses

- Occupational/vocational/technical
- Seminars/practicums/independent study/workshops
- Remedial
- Personal development
- Studio/design courses required to be taken at UA
- Special departmental requests

Transfer Credit Detail						
Equivalency Details			Evaluator Details			
*Group	Status	External Term	External Subject / Catalog Nbr	Units Taken	Grade Input	
16	Rejected	2019 FALL	FSC 135	3.00	TC	
15	Rejected	2019 SPR	FSC 136	4.00	TA	
14	Rejected	2019 SPR	FSC 138	4.00	TA	
13	Rejected	2019 FALL	FSC 180	8.00	TB	
12	Rejected	2019 SPR	FSC 233	4.00	TA	
11	Rejected	2019 SPR	FSC 236	3.00	TC	
10	Rejected	2020 SPR	FSC 238	3.00	TA	
9	Rejected	2019 FALL	FSC 239	4.00	TA	

aztransfer ABOUT DATA REPORTING TRAINING

COURSE EQUIVALENCY EXAM EQUIVALENCY

Coconino Community College

21 Match

Coconino Course

FSC 104 (3)
Principles of Emergency Services

FSC 110 (3)
Fire Behavior and Combustion

FSC 135 (3)
Fund. of Fire Prevention

Transfer Credit Summary

Source Information

*Credit Source Type: External

External Org ID: 18008513 Coconino Community College

Data Source: School



Student Scenario

Direct Equivalent v. Department Elective

- **Direct Equivalent** – Not exactly the same as the UA course but would satisfy the same program requirements.
- **Department Elective credit** – Not similar enough to a UA course to be directly equivalent but can be identified within a specific discipline. Doesn't have to be applied (prefix other than ELCR combined with 1 or 3 TR).
- **University Elective credit** – University-level coursework but doesn't align with a specific discipline (ELCR 1 or 3 TR).

2017 SPR	ENG 101	3.00	TC	ENGL 101	3.000	TRN	TC
2018 SPR	ENG 102	3.00	TA	ENGL 102	3.000	TRN	TA

2019 SUMR	CPS 100	3.00	TB	ELCR 1TR	3.000	TRN	TB
2018 FALL	EMS 131	8.00	TA	EMD 1TR	8.000	TRN	TA



Questions?



Spring 2026 Open Forums



**Scan for our Events
Calendar to register!**



April 28, 1-2 p.m.

Ask Us Anything

We invite you to bring your questions to the University Registrar and the Office of the Registrar leadership team. There will be a brief overview of the Office's functions, updates on upcoming initiatives, and an open Q&A session. If you have questions about processes managed by the Office of the Registrar or current projects, this is the forum for you to ask your questions. Gain clarity, provide feedback, and learn more about the Office of the Registrar's scope of work.





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