

Transfer Credit Evaluation Policy for Graduate Credits

Transfer and Transient Credit

Students may receive limited credit for graduate courses taken at another institution, either as transfer or transient credit. With Graduate Council approval, post-baccalaureate professional programs may accept up to 65% of the credit hours for the professional degree. Courses must have been completed at a post-baccalaureate degree granting institution accredited by an institutional or specialized accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and meet the minimum grade required by the Mercer University program accepting the transfer credit.

The number of hours accepted as transfer and transient credit varies by program, but in no instance may it exceed 25 percent of the credit hours required for the graduate degree. Credit for transfer or transient courses may be awarded under the following conditions:

1. The courses were taken at a graduate degree granting institution accredited by an institutional or, for professional programs, specialized accrediting body recognized by the US. Department of Education.
2. The courses were graduate level courses, applicable to a graduate degree.
3. The courses were taken in residence and not by correspondence.
4. Grades of at least B were received in the courses.
5. The courses may not have been completed more than five years prior to enrolling in graduate studies at Mercer.
6. The courses have not been applied for credit to a degree previously earned. (Exception: Up to 9 hours earned as part of an Ed.S. degree in Educational Leadership may be considered for application towards the Ph.D. in Educational Leadership).

Individual colleges may have additional restrictions in regards to the acceptance of transfer credit, due to programmatic or professional criteria. Please refer to the college/program catalog section to identify these requirements.

If a student wishes to transfer credits earned at a foreign institution to his/her record at Mercer, the student must supply the Registrar's Office with an official copy (still sealed in the original envelope) of a credit evaluation from a reputable U.S. evaluation service (NACES or AACRAO); the evaluation should include all of the credits that the student wishes to transfer to Mercer. Once the Registrar's Office receives an official evaluation, the student's foreign credits will be reviewed to see if they are eligible for transfer to the student's Mercer degree. Please note that the registrar makes the final decision when accepting credits from a foreign institution.

Prior Learning Assessment

Mercer University recognizes that students may attain graduate-level competencies outside of the traditional academic environment. Decisions to consider, assess, and award academic credits for such prior learning are made by individual colleges and academic programs. Individual colleges and academic programs may completely opt out of the Prior Learning Assessment for Academic Credit. Academic credits earned for prior learning credit are considered transient credits and are subject to such limitations.

Where allowed, opportunities for earning Prior Learning graduate credits are categorized by:

- Credit by Credential – Official credentials earned through structured educational programs, including military and professional training. The earned credential is subject to review to determine any direct award of credit.
- Credit by Validation -- Validation is an option for students who attended extensive, informal training or a comprehensive series of workshops that equate to the learning outcomes of the program of study. Experiences in this category may be related to work experience or service-learning activities.

- Credit by Portfolio – A structured portfolio documenting their prior learning equivalent to specific courses requirements may be presented for review. The portfolio stresses learning outcomes rather than attendance or participation in events. It is prepared under the direction of the University’s professional staff and is evaluated by the faculty for an award of credit. An assessment fee may be assessed by the academic unit.
- Credit by Examination – Graduate and professional programs may provide opportunities to demonstrate prior learning through an institutionally provided or recognized examination. Credit by examination is typically limited to credit for or waiver of prerequisite or core courses.

Limitations on Prior Learning credits include:

- Prior Learning Assessment must be deemed graduate level by the academic program director and must meet or exceed "B" level work.
- Prior Learning credits can only be earned from a verifiable non-credit learning opportunity.
- Only matriculated students seeking a degree or pursuing a certificate are eligible for prior learning assessment consideration.
- Prior Learning credit must fit within the student’s degree requirements.
- Prior Learning completed over four (4) years ago for graduate certificates and six (6) years ago for master's or doctoral degrees may not apply to a student's current degree program unless otherwise approved by the program Dean of Graduate Studies.
- Prior Learning credit provided by Mercer University may or may not transfer to other institutions.
- Duplication of Prior Learning Assessment credit is not permitted.
- Prior Learning Assessment credits neither fulfill nor interrupt the continuous enrollment requirements.

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