Guidelines for Choosing Non UW–Madison Courses

Transferable Courses
Credit is awarded for college-level course work completed at institutions accredited by a regional or national accrediting organization recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) (foreign institutions must be recognized by the Ministry of Education in that country).

Courses must be similar in nature, level, and content to a course in our undergraduate curriculum and applicable to one of our academic programs. Continuing education courses, graduate-level courses, and courses that are remedial, technical, vocational, or doctrinal in nature are not transferable.

Number of Credits
If the school operates on semester hours, these credits will transfer as is. If the school operates on quarter hours, we multiply the hours by two-thirds to convert them to semester hours. Any other credit system will be converted to semester hours.

Determining an Equivalency
To determine how the course will transfer, compare the other school’s course description(s) to UW–Madison’s course description(s) and prerequisites and ask yourself these questions:

1. Breadth: What is the breadth of the course?
2. Level: What is the level of the course? Is it at the introductory or advanced level?
3. Prerequisites: Must you have attained a certain class standing (e.g., junior level) or completed certain courses before you can enroll in the course?
4. Sequence: Is the course part of a year-long sequence? If it is part of a sequence, it may cover only part of the comparable UW–Madison course, especially if it is offered at a quarter-system school. Avoid these courses at quarter schools.
5. Direct Equivalent: Does the course cover the content of a UW–Madison course? Is it offered at the same level with similar prerequisites? If it does, then it will likely transfer as a direct equivalent.
6. Elective Credits: Is the course unlike any UW–Madison course, but similar in the type of content and level? If it is, it will likely transfer as elective credits in the appropriate department with a designated breadth and level (e.g., history electives with social studies breadth at the intermediate level).

Fulfilling a Requirement
UW–Madison degree requirements are specific to this institution and our academic programs. While many transfer courses will satisfy general degree requirements, you should not expect to satisfy more specific degree requirements, especially in the areas below:

1. Math: Fulfilling GER Quantitative Reasoning Part A with a transfer course is often difficult. It is also difficult to find direct equivalents to UW–Madison calculus courses (211, 221, 222). We recommend you avoid trying to fulfill either of these requirements with a transfer course. If you feel you must take a math course, compare the content of the transfer course with that of the UW–Madison course online at www.math.wisc.edu/~maribeff/courses. To receive a direct UW–Madison equivalency, the transfer course must cover all the topics listed for the UW–Madison course. Otherwise, you will receive math electives that will not likely satisfy a particular math requirement.

2. Science: Receiving a direct equivalent for a UW–Madison science course can also be difficult. You are more likely to receive elective credits in a particular subject breadth area. It is not difficult to fulfill the physical or biological science breadth requirement as long as the transfer course covers content similar to UW–Madison’s physical or biological science courses. Avoid a course offered as part of a sequence at a quarter system school; it will not be the equivalent of one of our semester courses.

3. Foreign Language: Make sure the transfer course is worth at least 4 semester credits and is part of a sequence of courses.

4. Liberal Arts (e.g., history, anthropology, psychology): If it is a college-level course, it will transfer as either elective credits or a direct equivalent.

5. General Education Requirements (GER): Do not expect to fulfill your GER off-campus. The requirements are specific to UW–Madison and are difficult to complete at another institution, especially the Comm B requirement.

6. English: International students who must take English 118 to satisfy GER Comm Part A may not substitute other communications/English courses. Very few schools offer a course equivalent to our 118.

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