

10.8 The institution publishes policies for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit not originating from the institution. The institution ensures (a) the academic quality of any credit or coursework recorded on its transcript, (b) an approval process with oversight by persons academically qualified to make the necessary judgments, and (c) the credit awarded is comparable to a designated credit experience and is consistent with the institution’s mission. (*Evaluating and awarding academic credit*)

Rationale and Notes

The key to this standard lies in the institution’s obligation to “ensure” academic quality, and to “ensure” comparability, since by awarding credit for learning outside its own educational programs, an institution affirms that students have achieved the knowledge, skills, and experiences comparable to those attained by students who have completed the institution’s own courses. This standard applies to approval of transfer credit (including articulation agreements for transfer of credit), advanced placement, credit by examination, experiential learning, prior learning assessment, conversion of prior noncredit experiences into credit, or similar situations where credit is awarded for learning not originating from the institution itself. This standard *does not apply* to credit transcribed as the institution’s own credit that originated from a cooperative academic arrangement (as opposed to being transcribed as transfer of credit); for this circumstance, see Standard 10.9 (*Cooperative academic arrangements*).

Policies and procedures related to this standard should be approved through appropriate channels, and should be published so that the policies and procedures are available to those affected by the standard (e.g., faculty, current students, admissions staff, and prospective students).

Good practices supporting academic quality in these areas include: (1) linking transfer credit, including credits earned at a foreign/international institution, to clearly delineated outcomes of the institution’s own courses and programs; (2) delineating the basis for advanced placement credit awarded for achievements outside commonly accepted programs; (3) awarding credit for experiential learning, professional certifications, and conversion of noncredit activities to credit based on well-documented activities and experiences at the appropriate educational level and evaluated based on clearly developed outcomes for the institution’s own courses for which credit is awarded. A sound academic practice typically involves qualified faculty participation in the evaluation of credit.

Questions to Consider

- What are the institution’s policies for evaluating, awarding, and accepting transfer credit (including entering into articulation agreements for transfer of credit), advanced placement, experiential learning, prior learning assessment, credit by examination, conversion of prior noncredit experiences into credit, and the like?
- Are these policies published in ways that make them accessible to those affected by the policies?
- Are the policies and procedures consistent with the mission of the institution?

- Are the policies clearly written and consistent with commonly accepted practices?
- How are the policies developed and evaluated to ensure comparability to the institution's own courses and degree programs?
- What is the role of faculty in reviewing academic credit awarded?
- How does the institution ensure that accepted coursework and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level?
- How does the institution demonstrate responsibility for the academic quality of the following work or credit recorded on the institution's transcript?
 - Credit awarded under articulation or other agreements with institutions from which students frequently transfer credits.
 - Transfer of credit not under articulation agreement.
 - Advanced placement and other examination-based awards of credit.
 - Experiential learning and prior learning assessment.
 - Professional certificates or other noncredit educational experiences outside a collegiate course.
- How does the institution ensure that students receiving credit for such programs have achieved the same knowledge, skills, and experiences as those who have completed its own coursework?

Sample Documentation

- Policies and procedures for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit not originating from the institution.
- Evidence that policies are published and accessible.
- A description of how these policies are developed and updated.
- Examples of how the policies are implemented in practice.
- Forms, sign-off approval letters, and emails (not blank forms).
- Redacted transcripts showing how credits are posted.
- Narrative description of how decisions are made to accept or award credit from other institutions or organizations, including how the institution ensures that coursework and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and are comparable to the institution's own degree programs.
- Copies of articulation or transfer agreements with other institutions or organizations, including agreements between two-year and senior institutions that involve transferring credits for coursework leading to a degree.
- Documents or descriptions of contracts, study abroad and student exchange agreements, or other arrangements with institutions or organizations inside or outside the United States that involve transferring credits for coursework leading to a degree.

- Description of the process of awarding experiential credit and prior learning assessment credit, including how the institution ensures that course work and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and are comparable to the institution's own courses and degree programs.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

SACSCOC policies: [Credit Hours](#)
[Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs](#)
[Distance and Correspondence Education](#)
[Quality and Integrity of Undergraduate Degrees](#)

SACSCOC Position Statement:

[Transfer of Academic Credit](#)

This standard requires a policy or procedure; see Appendix A of this document for implications. See also:

SACSCOC Good Practices:

[Developing Policy and Procedures Documents](#)

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Standard 10.9 (*Cooperative academic arrangements*)

10.9 The institution ensures the quality and integrity of the work recorded when an institution transcripts courses or credits as its own when offered through a cooperative academic arrangement. The institution maintains formal agreements between the parties involved, and the institution regularly evaluates such agreements. (*Cooperative academic arrangements*)

Rationale and Notes

It is common for institutions of higher education to enter into cooperative academic arrangements (including consortial agreements or contractual agreements with other entities) to broaden the options for courses or programs offered at the institution. When institutions choose to treat such work in its transcripts as coursework offered by the institution itself, the institution has an obligation to its students and to SACSCOC to ensure the quality and integrity of that coursework that is similar to its obligations for its own courses.

While the institution is responsible for any credit placed on the transcript, including transfer of credit, the institution's obligation when transcribing credit as its own, even when it has not had