



EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY

Acceptance and Award of Credit(s) for Undergraduate Transfer and Non-Credit Activities

Policy Name: Acceptance and Award of Credit(s) for Undergraduate Transfer and Non-Credit Activities

Policy Purpose

This policy specifies the conditions under which ETSU will accept undergraduate credit earned from another institution and/or convert non-credit activities into academic credit at the undergraduate level.

Applicability

This policy is applicable to all undergraduate coursework accepted for undergraduate credit or non-credit activities accepted for academic credit at the undergraduate level.

Responsible Official, Office, and Interpretation

The Office of Undergraduate Admissions is responsible for the review and revision of this policy. For questions about this policy, please contact the Office of the Provost and the Vice President for Student Life and Enrollment. The Provost, in conjunction with the Office of University Counsel has the final authority to interpret this policy.

Defined Terms

A defined term has a specific meaning within the context of this policy.

Approved Agency

A defined agency that accredits institutions of higher education, formerly known as “regional accreditors.” ETSU’s [Approved Agencies](#) policy lists all Approved Agencies for ETSU.

Approved Recommendation Service

An organization including the American Council on Education (ACE) Training and Examinations; ACE Military Credit; ACE Examinations; Assessment of Licensure, Certificate, or Apprenticeship Programs; Locally Assessed Training; National College Credit Recommendation Service that reviews experiences, knowledge, and learning not earned in a traditional university setting to determine equivalency to university credit(s).

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Bridge Program

A structured set of courses or previous academic experience, typically offered at a community college, designed to build on previous learning and prepare individuals for credits required at a higher level of practice. The community college courses are accepted as bridge credits only if the community college program is accredited and/or if the student has been awarded a license or is eligible for a license in the discipline. These programs promote a seamless academic progression to prepare individuals with a baccalaureate education (i.e., RN to BSN or LPN to BSN).

Military Experience

Training, experience, or education gained during service in the armed forces that applies to undergraduate credit.

Non-Traditional Credit Activities

Experience, training, and/or knowledge gained outside conventional academic settings that may be considered equivalent to traditional university credits. This includes, but is not limited to, credit by Standard Testing Examination, Approved Recommendation Services, Prior Learning Assessment, Military Experience, and Bridge Programs. These activities provide an alternative pathway for individuals to earn academic credit based on their demonstrated skills and knowledge, offering more flexibility and accessibility in higher education.

Prior Learning Assessment

Evaluation of skills and knowledge acquired through life and work outside of a structured higher education classroom that awards college credit to recognize competence in stated credit learning outcomes.

Remedial/Developmental Courses

Courses that do not provide university credits and that are designed to provide additional support to build foundational skills in subjects like reading, writing, or math. These courses are designed to prepare students for success in college-level academics.

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Standard Testing Examination

Evaluation of skills and knowledge through successful completion of examinations offered by, but not limited to, ACT, Advanced Placement, College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Credit challenge exams, Dantes – Subject Standardized Tests (DSST), Excelsior College Examinations, International Baccalaureate Exams, SAT Reasoning Test, Thomas Edison State College Examination Program (TECEP), Cambridge, and Tennessee Statewide Dual Credit.

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ETSU analyzes credit accepted for transfer and non-credit activities converted into academic credit in terms of level, content, quality, comparability, degree program relevance, and consistency with the ETSU mission. The approval process includes oversight by persons academically qualified to make the necessary judgments. The Provost, or their designee, has the final authority to determine whether to accept the transfer of undergraduate credit or non-credit activities.

1. Transfer or Award of Undergraduate Credit.

1.1. Credit from Institutions Accredited by an Approved Agency.

Credit earned at institutions of higher education accredited by an Approved Agency may be transferred as equivalent to ETSU undergraduate credits or as electives. Credit with no direct ETSU equivalent may transfer as either lower division or upper division general elective credit and may, as appropriate, be applied as elective credit toward the student's degree.

1.2. Credit from Institutions Not Accredited by an Approved Agency.

Credit earned from any institution not accredited by an approved agency requires the approval of the Provost or Provost's designee. For review of credit earned from institutions not accredited by an approved agency, the student completes the Request for Review of Credit.

1.3. Credits from Tennessee Community College Pathway.

ETSU accepts credits taken to fulfill a Tennessee Transfer Pathway (TTP) at a Tennessee community college. TTPs were established and approved by program faculty in collaborative meetings with community college representatives and other higher education institutions in Tennessee. Pathway agreements are reviewed regularly by institutions who are part of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), the Tennessee Board of Regents, and THEC staff.

1.4. Remedial/Developmental Credit

ETSU does not accept credit earned in Remedial/Developmental Courses.

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2. Conversion of Non-Traditional Credit Activities.

Non-Traditional Credit Activities converted to academic credit must comply with the policies and guidelines of the THEC and comply with or be approved by the appropriate institutional and discipline accreditors.

Faculty in the appropriate discipline(s) review Non-Traditional Credit Activities for conversion that include, but are not limited to:

2.1. Credit by Standard Testing Examination.

Credit by examination includes ACT, Advanced Placement, College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Credit challenge exams, Dantes – Subject Standardized Tests (DSST), Excelsior College Examinations, International Baccalaureate Exams, SAT Reasoning Test, Thomas Edison State College Examination Program (TECEP), Cambridge, and Tennessee Statewide Dual Credit.

2.2. Credit by Approved Recommendation Services.

Credit by Approved Recommendation Services includes American Council on Education (ACE) Training and Examinations; ACE Military Credit; ACE Examinations; Assessment of Licensure, Certificate, or Apprenticeship Programs; Locally Assessed Training; National College Credit Recommendation Service.

2.3. Credit Challenge Exams.

Credit challenge exams may include a fee charged to the student making the request and require the student to be admitted or enrolled at the institution. The student making the request must have satisfactory academic standing. Credit challenge exams may not replace a course previously taken for credit and are reported on the transcript as a grade of “P” for pass (satisfactory performance) or “F” for fail (unsatisfactory performance).

2.4. Prior Learning Assessment (PLA).

ETSU may award Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) credit for learning that takes place outside the classroom. PLA credit from another institution may transfer if listed on ETSU’s transfer equivalency course list. Credit awarded for prior learning must be comparable to a designated credit experience (e.g., course or another requirement within the program curriculum, such as an internship). To ensure academic quality, program faculty establish written criteria to evaluate prior learning based on clearly developed learning outcomes for the ETSU courses for which credit is awarded.

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If faculty determine that an equivalence exists, the faculty may assign a proportionate amount of ETSU credit for the prior learning. PLA credit is awarded through the PLA-Portfolio (PLA-P) to determine if experiential learning meets specific course objectives. General education courses are excluded. Students can apply up to 30 PLA-P credits, which may count toward residency or internship requirements. The credit gained through prior learning will appear on the student's transcript but will not contribute to the student's grade point average. PLA credits may not transfer to other institutions, apply to new programs, or meet graduate admission requirements.

2.4.1. PLA Eligibility.

All students admitted to the university in an academic program, who are two or more semesters from graduation and currently in good academic standing are eligible to apply for undergraduate PLA credit if faculty in the program accept PLA credit.

2.4.2. PLA Portfolio

A student may be assessed fees as part of the PLA-Portfolio assessment.

2.5. Credit for Military Experience.

ETSU follows the American Council on Education (ACE) guidelines for awarding credit for military experience, education, and/or training obtained during Military Experience. ETSU references the Joint Services Transcript (JST), DD-214, and/or transcripts from the Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System (AARTS), and Coast Guard Institute (CGI) when awarding credit to students who are veterans or military service members.

Equivalencies for Military Experience were established as part of the Tennessee Higher Education Veteran Reconnect Grant which included hiring an advocate who worked with academic departments, chairs, and deans to establish and authorize the course equivalencies.

If Military Experience is not awarded credit or does not appear on the equivalencies, the student may advocate for themselves with the academic department for review by submitting a written appeal to the chair of the department where the course is offered.

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If Military Experience is equivalent to a credit offered by ETSU, the credit will be applied for the equivalent credit. Otherwise, appropriate credit will be granted for elective credit.

Military veterans and service members can request that excessive credits applied to transcripts, which may affect their financial aid eligibility, be removed from the transcript. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the Office of Financial Aid to determine the impact on financial aid eligibility.

2.6. Bridge Programs.

Specific programs allow credits that bridge the gap between a student's prior experience and an advanced degree. Approved Bridge Programs and criteria are published in the [undergraduate catalog](#). The student must use the Bridge Programs in their [undergraduate catalog of record](#). Bridge credits are not considered ETSU instruction credits. ETSU awards senior institution credits upon successful completion of identified program requirements. Requirements include proof of graduation from an accredited program and/or licensure or eligibility for licensure in a discipline.

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Procedures

1. Review of Undergraduate Credit.

The transcript analyst in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions reviews the student's transcript and compares it with the [transfer equivalency course listing](#), which includes only those credits that have previously been evaluated and deemed equivalent to ETSU credit in terms of quality and compatibility, in the student information system.

1.1. Equivalent Credit.

If there is an equivalent credit, the transcript analyst loads the transfer credit as indicated on the transfer equivalency course listing on the student's record.

1.2. No Equivalent Credit.

If there is no equivalent transfer credit in the transfer equivalency course listings, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions has been granted the authority by the university Provost to make decisions on transferability of credits at the 1000 and 2000 level.

1.2.1. Credit from an Institution Accredited by an Approved Agency.

If the transfer institution is accredited by an Approved Agency, the transcript analyst compares the course description in the catalog from the transfer institution to the course description(s) of potential ETSU courses in the ETSU catalog. If there is a comparable ETSU course description, the transcript analyst loads the transfer credit on the student's record. If there is not a comparable ETSU course description, the credit is determined not to be equivalent, the transcript analyst loads the credit as an elective on the student's record.

1.2.2. Credit from an Institution Not Accredited by an approved agency.

If the transfer institution is not accredited by an Approved Agency, the student completes the Request for Review of Credit and the procedure herein below is followed.

2. Student Request for Review of Credit:

The student should complete the Request for Review of Credit form if they question credit awarded by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, if the transfer institution is not

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accredited by an approved agency, or if the student requests a review of credit for Non-Traditional Credit Activities.

The student sends the form to their advisor who assists by forwarding the form to the appropriate program coordinator of their major or to the appropriate person if the course is a general education course.

Within ten (10) business days of receiving the request, the program coordinator or department chair, college dean or designee, and Provost or designee review the course description from the transfer institution to determine whether it is equivalent to a course offered at ETSU. The program coordinator or department chair, college dean or designee, and Provost or designee complete the Request for Review of Credit form, notating if there is an equivalent or no equivalent course.

If an equivalent course cannot be identified, the program coordinator may request that the student provide a copy of the syllabus from the institution where the credit was offered.

The student contacts their previous institution to request the syllabus and provides that to the program coordinator or department chair.

Within ten (10) business days of receiving the syllabus, the program coordinator or department chair reviews the syllabus to determine if the course is equivalent to a course offered at ETSU.

The program coordinator or department chair completes and sends the Request for Review of Credit form to the dean or dean's designee.

The dean, or dean's designee, completes and sends the Request for Review of Credit form to the Provost or Provost's designee.

The Provost, or Provost's designee, completes and sends the Request for Review of Credit form to the Associate Director of Undergraduate Admissions.

The Associate Director of Undergraduate Admissions informs the admissions coordinator or transcript analyst.

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The admissions coordinator or transcript analyst updates the student record and changes the course from elective to the approved equivalent course or leaves the course as an elective. If the course is deemed as equivalent to a course offered at ETSU, the admissions coordinator adds the course to the transfer equivalency course listing.

3. Review of Non-Traditional Credit Activities.

3.1. Credit by Standard Testing Examination.

A student who is admitted to ETSU who completes a Standard Testing Examination completes the Request for Review of Credit and asks the testing agency to send examination results to the ETSU Office of Undergraduate Admissions via e-mail (documents@etsu.edu) or postal mail at PO Box 70731, Johnson City, TN 37614-0731.

Within ten (10) business days of receiving the examination results, the Associate Director of Undergraduate Admissions reviews the examination results and compares them with acceptable scores published on the [Non-Traditional Credit](#) website and completes the Request for Review of Credit and informs the Associate Director of Undergraduate Admissions, who loads the credit as indicated on the Non-Traditional Credit website on the student's electronic record.

If ETSU receives a transcript with dual enrollment course(s), and standardized test score(s), credit will be awarded based on the most recent grade or score that meets transfer guidelines.

3.2. Credit by an Approved Recommendation Service.

An undergraduate degree-seeking student enrolled at ETSU who has training and/or education from an Approved Recommendation Service may request credit by completing the Request for Review of Credit and contacts the Office of the Provost (423-439-4811 or provost@etsu.edu). The Associate Provost for Curriculum works with program coordinators and faculty to determine if credit will be awarded through an Approved Recommendation Service.

Within ten (10) business days of receiving the Request for Review of Credit from an Approved Recommendation Service, the Associate Provost for Curriculum communicates with the program coordinator and faculty in the discipline.

Within ten (10) business days of receiving the Request for Review of Credit from the Associate Provost for Curriculum and faculty in the discipline review the credit and complete the Request for Review of Credit and informs the Associate Director of

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Undergraduate Admissions, who loads the credit from the Approved Recommendation Service on the student's electronic record.

3.3. Credit Challenge Exams.

An undergraduate degree-seeking student enrolled at ETSU may request credit by challenge exams by completing the Request for Review of Credit and contacting the Office of the Provost (423-439-4811 or provost@etsu.edu). The Associate Provost for Curriculum works with program coordinators and faculty to determine if credit will be awarded.

Within ten (10) business days of receiving the Request for Review of Credit for credit from a Credit Challenge Exam, the Associate Provost for Curriculum communicates with the program coordinator and faculty in the discipline.

Within ten (10) business days of receiving the Request for Review of Credit from the Associate Provost for Curriculum, faculty in the discipline review the results of the credit challenge exam and compare those to set expectations for passing. The program coordinator informs the Associate Provost for Curriculum and the Associate Director of Undergraduate Admissions whether credit by the challenge exam is accepted or denied. The Associate Director of Undergraduate Admissions loads the credit from the Approved Recommendation Service on the student's electronic record.

3.4. Prior Learning Assessment.

An undergraduate student admitted to the university in an academic program who is two or more semesters from graduation and in good academic standing may request credit for prior learning by completing the Request for Review of Credit and contacting their advisor. Their advisor, faculty in the discipline, and the student discuss their background and potential courses for which PLA-Portfolio (PLA-P) could apply. Once accepted to participate in PLA-P, the student submits the PLA-P application and contract, delineating the potential course(s) and agreement with all PLA-P policies. The student is assessed a non-refundable \$100 fee to start the process. The student is admitted to an online worksite that provides detailed directions about the requirements of the portfolio. The student completes the portfolio requirements and submits the PLA-P to the Associate Provost for Curriculum. The Associate Provost for Curriculum communicates with the individual responsible for reviewing PLA-P and the department faculty for assessment. These assessors determine if credit will be awarded after assessing the student PLA-P. Credit is not guaranteed. If credit is awarded, the student is assessed a fee of \$100 per credit (i.e.

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\$300 for a 3-credit course). Within ten (10) business days of receiving the Request for Review of Credit the individual responsible for reviewing PLA-P and the department faculty sign the form, indicating whether credit is awarded. The individual responsible for reviewing the PLA-P obtains the signature of the dean of the college where the credit is awarded and sends the Request for Review of Credit to the Associate Provost for Curriculum and the Associate Director of Undergraduate Admissions. The Associate Director of Undergraduate Admissions loads the credit from the PLA-P on the student's electronic record.

3.5. Joint Service Transcript Review.

A student with military experience, education, and/or training sends an official Joint Service Transcript (JST) to ETSU Office of Military and Veteran Services (MVS) at 423-439-6819 or email at va@etsu.edu.

Within ten (10) days of receiving the request to review the military experience, education, and/or training, the MVS reviews the JST and completes a Bucslip (contact Military and Veteran Services – va@etsu.edu for the Bucslip) with established course equivalencies. The MVS emails the Bucslip to the student. The student reviews the credit recommendation(s) with their academic advisor. The student and advisor return the signed Bucslip to MVS. MVS sends the signed Bucslip to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions.

Within ten (10) days of receiving the Bucslip from the MVS, the transcript analyst loads the credit to the student's electronic record.

3.6. Bridge Credit.

Students completing Respiratory Therapy, Radiological Science, Dental Hygiene, Allied Health Leadership, and Nursing programs provide program faculty with a copy of transcripts and professional licenses held.

The program coordinator and faculty review the transcript, professional licenses, and learning outcomes of program courses.

The program coordinator indicates in DegreeWorks any bridge credit awarded, making substitutions when applicable.

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Applicable Forms and Websites

[General Education Credit Review Form](#)

[Request for Review of Credit Form](#)

Bucslip (contact Military and Veteran Services – va@etsu.edu)

[Non-Traditional Credit](#)

[Approved Agency](#)

Authority and Revisions

Authority: TCA § 49-8-203, et seq. and SACSCOC 10.8 (Evaluating and awarding external academic credit): 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

Previous Policy: Transfer and/or Acceptance of Credit for Undergraduate Students

The ETSU Board of Trustees is charged with policy making pursuant to TCA § 49-8-203, et seq. On March 24, 2017, the Board delegated its authority to ETSU's President to establish certain policies and procedures for educational program and other operations of the University, including this policy. The delegation of authority and required process for revision to this policy can be found on the [Policy Development and Rule Making Policy webpage](#).

To suggest a revision to this policy, please contact the responsible official indicated in this policy. Before a substantive change to the policy section may take effect, the requested changes must be: (1) approved by the responsible office; (2) reviewed by the Office of University Counsel for legal sufficiency; (3) posted for public comment; (4) approved by either Academic Council or University Council; and (5) approved by ETSU's President.