



EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY

**Graduate School Policy for Reduction and/or
Substitution of Credits for Subsequent Graduate
Degree**

Policy Name: Graduate School Policy for Reduction and/or Substitution of Credits for Subsequent Graduate Degree

Policy Purpose

This policy specifies how credit from a previously earned graduate degree or certificate from ETSU, another US regionally accredited institution, or an approved foreign institution may be applied to a subsequent graduate degree.

Applicability

This policy applies to faculty, staff, and students.

Responsible Official, Office, and Interpretation

The Graduate School, College of Graduate and Continuing Studies is responsible for the review and revision of this policy. For questions about this policy, please contact the Graduate School, College of Graduate and Continuing Studies. The Provost, in consultation with the Office of University Counsel, has the final authority to interpret this policy.

Defined Terms

N/A.

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Policy

A student who holds a previously earned graduate degree or certificate may qualify for a reduction in the number of credits required for a subsequent graduate degree. The program coordinator and the Graduate School may consider the reduction of credits as outlined in this policy.

1. Credits Accepted.

A student may petition for a reduction and/or substitution of credits in a subsequent degree. The student must submit the required form and supporting documentation, including translations of foreign documents, according to the procedure described below. Credits used from a culminating experience (e.g., thesis or dissertation credit, Readings and Research or similar culminating experience courses) cannot be used to reduce the program of study. A grade of “B-” or lower will not be accepted. Credits with a “Pass (P)/Fail (F)” or “Satisfactory (S)/Unsatisfactory (U)” will not be accepted.

1.1. Review of Credits.

The program coordinator determines reduction and/or substitution of credit on a case-by-case basis and evaluates against the course learning outcomes of the requested course reduction based upon the documentation provided by the student. Blocks of courses may be considered together to provide a reduction of credit. A student must have earned a grade of “B” (or equivalent) or higher in the requested credits. The Dean of the Graduate School (or designee) makes the final determination as to the acceptance of the credit, and the Graduate School notifies the student.

1.2. Matriculation Limit.

Credits from the prior degree or certificate do not need to fall within the matriculation time limit.

However, timeliness of content knowledge is imperative to graduate education; therefore, courses that fall outside of a timeframe that the program deems appropriate will not be accepted. The matriculation limit for the subsequent degree will begin with the first course(s) taken in the subsequent program.

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1.3. Maximum Credit Reduction.

1.3.1. Degree Programs.

The program of study reduction cannot exceed one-third of the total credits required for the new master's or doctorate degree.

1.3.2. Certificates.

Credit from an earned degree may reduce a certificate program by 50%, but at least six credits of coursework must be completed at ETSU in the certificate program.

1.4. Impact on GPA.

Accepted credits from a previously earned degree reduce the total credits required but are not applied to the program study; therefore, the grades from the accepted credits will not be calculated in the GPA for the subsequent degree.

2. Program Specific Requirements.

Previously earned credits related to a comprehensive exam, culminating experience, internship, or other program specific requirement may not be accepted for the subsequent degree.

3. Articulation Agreements.

Some ETSU certificate programs have articulation agreements with ETSU graduate degree programs. Articulation agreements, which are approved by Graduate Council as part of the curriculum process, specify the number of credits that may be substituted and/or may reduce the program of study of the degree program and are not subject to this policy.

4. Financial Aid.

Domestic students' financial aid eligibility or award may be impacted by the reduction in courses. Students are required to contact the financial aid office to determine impact of a reduction in courses.

5. VISA Requirements.

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In the event a reduction of credit is granted, international students must enroll in enough credits each semester to meet the terms of their visa.

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Procedures

1. Reduction Request Procedures.

The applicant completes a Second Graduate Program form and submits it to the graduate program coordinator for the program of interest to determine if a reduction and/or substitution of credits is possible based on the application materials. (Coordinators have access to the application materials in the electronic application system.)

2. Review of Reduction Request.

2.1. Program Coordinator Review.

Program coordinator reviews Second Graduate Program form. If the program coordinator requires additional documentation (e.g., syllabus, course descriptions, etc.), a request is sent to the applicant for additional materials. If the documents are not in English, a certified translation is provided by student.

Program coordinator reviews the form and documentation. If a reduction is permitted, the coordinator completes that section of the form listing which course(s) in the program of study will be reduced and which course(s) in the prior degree is(are) being substituted to meet the learning objectives.

If a course substitution is allowed, the coordinator completes the substitution section of the form indicating the course(s) to be substituted, the new ETSU course(s), and the course(s) from the prior degree that is(are) being used to meet the learning objectives. [Note: Current practice uses a separate form for substitutions, but the soon to be released update of the Second Graduate Program form will include a substitution section to eliminate the need for a second form.]

If neither a reduction nor substitution will be permitted, the coordinator completes the form indicating that determination.

2.2. Dean Approval.

The completed form is transmitted to the Graduate School for final review and approval by the Dean or the Dean's designee. If the applicant accepts the offer of

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admission and enrolls, the student's program of study is updated to include the approved reductions and/or substitutions.

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Applicable Forms and Websites

N/A

Authority and Revisions

Authority: Focus Act, TCA 49-8-101 et. al.

Previous Policy: N/A

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.