



Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097

THE TRANSFER OR TRANSCRIPTING OF ACADEMIC CREDIT

- Policy Statement -

In the *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, Comprehensive Standard 3.6.3 states:

A majority of credits toward a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree is earned through the institution awarding the degree. In the case of graduate and post-baccalaureate professional degree programs offered through joint, cooperative, or consortia arrangements, the student earns a majority of credits from the participating institutions.

At the undergraduate level, Comprehensive Standard 3.5.2 of the *Principles of Accreditation* states:

At least 25 percent of the credit hours required for the degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. In the case of undergraduate degree programs offered through joint, cooperative, or consortia arrangements, the student earns 25 percent of the credits required for the degree through instruction offered by the participating institutions.

When an institution participates in a cooperative arrangement involving the acceptance or transcribing of more than 75 percent of the coursework at the undergraduate level or a majority at the graduate level from Commission accredited institutions, it must follow the policies described in this document. It also must obtain agreement from the other institutions or organizations in a consortium to provide accreditation information to the Commission at times when the institution is being evaluated. This alternative approach is limited to the involvement of institutions accredited by the Commission on Colleges.

There are several kinds of cooperative arrangements related to accepting credit. For the Commission's purpose in this document, these are referred to "consortia." For additional Commission documents on international relationships and contractual relationships, see Commission policy "Joint Curricular Ventures Involving the Award of Credit by Member Institutions."

An institution that awards a degree through a consortial arrangement

1. reports the initiation of the arrangement to the Commission in accord with the Commission's substantive change procedures.
2. controls all aspects of its degree programs and is responsible for the quality of all of the work included in each degree. Courses transferred in or transcribed from consortia institutions should be examined by the accepting institution to ensure that they meet the requirements of the accepting institution and the requirements of the *Principles of Accreditation* (see Comprehensive Standard 3.4.4 and Comprehensive Standard 3.4.7).

3. assesses and monitors effectively courses and components completed through instruction by other institutions. This assessment and monitoring should be done by academically-qualified persons.
4. records on the academic transcript the name of the institution from which a course is taken. If an accepting institution desires to transcript as its own a course taken through another institution within the consortium, it must be able to demonstrate that the instruction was accomplished under the control of the accepting institution. The institution's approach might include the joint appointment of instructors. The accepting institution, if it does transcript consortia work as its own, must provide evidence that it approves the academic qualifications of each instructor in advance and that it regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each instructor teaching courses that it transcribes as its own.
5. discloses fully the nature of the consortium on the transcript of the institution awarding the credential.
6. reflects accurately in its catalog the courses being offered through the consortium if they are available to its own students as part of a degree program.
7. ensures that qualified and competent faculty at each institution participating in a degree program agree on the content and teaching methodologies of courses and degree programs and the qualifications of the faculty members who teach in the programs. Qualifications of teaching faculty should comply with the faculty competence requirements of the *Principles of Accreditation*. These agreements should be reviewed periodically.
8. ensures that the educational outcomes of a major or concentration offered as part of a consortia arrangement are comparable to the same major or concentration offered by the accepting institution outside of the consortial arrangement. For example, if an institution awards its own BA in Economics on campus and also through a distance education consortium, the outcomes should be comparable.
9. ensures that, within the consortium, there is appropriate faculty accountability to the institutions accepting the credit. This might be accomplished by dual faculty appointments or other approaches that include evaluation by the accepting institution.

Adopted: Commission on Colleges, June 2003
Edited for the Principles of Accreditation: December 2003
Updated in accord with revised Principles of Accreditation: December 2006