



Category: 2.0 Education	Responsible Owner: Academic Board	Effective Date: August 2024
Policy/Form Number: 2.19	Approval Body: Board of Governors	Policy/Form Name: Prior Learning Credit Policy and Procedure (PLAR) for Courses taken Outside of British Columbia

A. POLICY:

PURPOSE/COMMITMENT:

Columbia College recognizes that at the Secondary and Post-secondary levels, significant learning can take place in formal and informal settings. Prior Learning Recognition (PLAR) applies to courses and programs taken outside of British Columbia. Columbia College, first and foremost, seeks to establish formal transfer agreements with other post-secondary institutions. Existing and new transfer agreements will define this recognition, where possible, the details of which can be found in the Transfer Credit Policy.

For instances where formal transfer agreements do not apply, this policy outlines the process involved in determining the established pre-requisites for admissions and transfer into the various Columbia College High School programs and the College’s University Transfer (UT) Program. Specific equivalencies and transfers must remain flexible to ensure that the academic integrity of admissions to both the High School and University Transfer program are maintained and will be made available through Admissions for review.

SCOPE:

This policy covers courses offered by other institutions outside of British Columbia, where the institution or incoming student requests evaluation of a course’s equivalent for the purposes of admission or transfer to Columbia College.

WHEN TO USE THE POLICY:

To be used in the determination of course equivalence for the purposes of admission or transfer credits for students who have taken courses at the Secondary and Post-Secondary Level outside of British Columbia.

DEFINITIONS:

CURRICULUM: The courses, course work and other requirements imposed on a student, completion of which allows them to graduate from a specific educational program. Admission may be granted to a student prior to the completion of their Curriculum.

EDUCATION SYSTEMS: A system recognized internationally or locally designed for the completion of secondary education. These programs have significant variation from country to country, so not all types of systems can be considered here.

GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING: Academic standing and graduation percentages are not equivalent across educational systems. As such, Good Academic Standing is defined as, at minimum, passing all courses according to

their systems grade attainment requirements. This is a minimum requirement and does not guarantee admission. Higher grade achievements may be required from different educational systems. Grade requirements and equivalents will be kept on file with Admissions and will be provided upon request.

MATURE STUDENT: A student over the age of 23 on the first day of the student's first semester.

PREREQUISITE: A course determined that has been determined as being necessary for the successful completion of a higher level course, in this case usually for the purposes of admission into one of the College's High School programs or University Transfer program.

Research University: One of the five institutions in BC that is defined by the Ministry of Post-Secondary as a Research University, including Simon Fraser University, University of British Columbia –Vancouver, University of British Columbia, Okanagan, University of Northern British Columbia and University of Victoria.

TRANSFER CREDIT: The granting of credit by an institution for a course completed at another institution, including at the University level.

UNASSIGNED CREDIT: Credit is granted to a course considered a university-level course in quality and content, but where there is no corollary course offered at Columbia College. Unassigned credits can be assigned to specific academic departments where they exist at Columbia College, or can be defined as a general social science, humanity or science course, for the purposes of application to breadth credits in the student's academic program

Category:

2.0 Education

B. PROCEDURES:

The following procedures apply to recognizing previous learning for the purpose of admissions into Columbia College.

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

1. Columbia College recognizes major international education systems around the world.
 - a. Transfer is granted at a pass rate equivalent to the BC system.
2. Where students' complete courses outside of major, international programs, the College recognizes courses from schools that are certified by local authorities on a case by case basis.
3. Admissions will review curriculum for students arriving from new systems to determine equivalencies.
4. Once a transfer pathway has been established, Admissions will evaluate program equivalents on a regular basis to ensure maintenance of standards or to readjust requirements as needed.
5. To gain admission, students must be in Good Academic Standing.
6. The College will publish major international equivalencies for admissions each year in the College Calendar. Admission requirements for country specific programs will be maintained in the Admissions office and will be made available upon request.
7. Graduates from other provinces of Canada will receive the standard recognized course transfer equivalents.

UNIVERSITY TRANSFER PROGRAM

When Considering Credit for Admission

1. Columbia College recognizes major international education systems around the world.

- a. The British Columbia Transfer system houses many thousands of international transfer agreements recognized within the BC post-secondary system. This is the first and primary point of granting transfer at Columbia College.
2. Where students' complete courses outside of major, international programs, the College recognizes courses from schools that are certified by local authorities on a country by country and case by case basis.
 - a. For students applying from international high schools to the University Transfer or Associate Degree program, pre-requisites will be met by achieving a grade equivalent to that required from a Canadian institution, usually 60% of the program's equivalent.
3. Admissions will review curriculum for students arriving from new systems to determine equivalencies.
4. Once a transfer pathway has been established, Admissions will evaluate program equivalents on a regular basis to ensure maintenance of standards or to readjust requirements as needed.
5. To gain admission, students must be in good Academic Standing.
6. The College will publish major international equivalencies for admissions each year in the College Calendar. Admission requirements for country specific programs will be maintained in the Admissions office and will be made available upon request.
7. Columbia College requires all incoming students to complete a mathematics exam, of which there are two versions. The first version is designed for those students with a background in math from their High School programs. The second version is designed for those students who may have been exposed to math, but the level of which was achieved and retained by the student is unclear.

When Considering Transfer Credit and Prerequisites Equivalence

1. Where an existing post-secondary course has transfer to a major research university in British Columbia, the course will be granted equivalent transfer credit at Columbia College.
2. Where an existing course does not have an existing transfer agreement from a major university, Admissions will consider the standing of the sending institution, consulting with content experts where necessary including, when necessary, engaging experts at one of BC's Research Universities. Transfer, in these instances, will typically only be granted on the basis of unassigned credit.

ALL STUDENTS

1. Previous learning, whether in consideration of English or Mathematics, will be verified through testing at the start of the student's program at Columbia College.
2. Columbia College recognizes major English competency exams that are broadly accepted throughout BC's public post-secondary system. Students wishing to, may take a Columbia College administered exam, the Language Writing Assessment.

PRIOR LEARNING AND EXPERIENCE for MATURE STUDENTS

1. An application from a Mature Student will be considered by the Admissions Officer and the Principal (or designate), and if approved then some regular academic admissions requirements may be waived.
 - a. A student with a strong academic background may have the requirement of high school completion waived and be admitted to the University Transfer Program, though the student will still need to complete specified program prerequisites.

LINKS TO SUPPORTING FORMS, DOCUMENTS, WEBSITE:

[Academic Calendar](#)

REFERENCE TO EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT CLAUSES:

N/A

REFERENCE TO BYLAWS or ARTICLES:

N/A

RELATED ACTS AND REGULATIONS:

RELATED POLICIES:

N/A

APPROVALS:

Responsible Owner: Jeff Warren	Date:
Principal or Designate: Matt Wadsworth	Date:
IF APPLICABLE:	
Chair, Academic Board Jeff Warren	Date:
Chair, Marketing and Recruitment Committee:	Date:
Chair, Finance Committee:	

APPROVAL FOR ALL POLICIES

Chair, Board of Governors	Date:
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Revision Date(s): August 2029	Replaces Policy Number: 2.17 PLAR Policy 2023
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