

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

Academic and Student Affairs

AGENDA ITEM: 6 – B
DATE: October 4-5, 2023

SUBJECT

Revised BOR Policy 2:5 – Seamless Transfer of Credit and BOR Policy 2:5:4 – Credit for Prior Learning (First Reading)

CONTROLLING STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

[BOR Policy 2:5](#) – Seamless Transfer of Credit
[BOR Policy 2:5:4](#) – Prior Learning and Validated Transfer of Credit
[SDBOR Strategic Plan](#)

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

Dr. Minder, the Council of Presidents and Superintendents (COPS), and the Board of Regents discussed Credit for Prior Learning at the BOR August Retreat ([BOR Item 4-H](#)). An internal stakeholder group across the six (6) universities has been working to design an enhancement to BOR Policy 2:5:4.

As the BOR discussed during their August Retreat, the universities do provide current opportunities for prior learning, therefore, the goal of this revised policy framework is to provide additional opportunities for students, increase communications, and develop strategic tools and FAQs as it relates to prior learning.

Policy Enhancements

A draft of the BOR Policy revisions were presented to AAC at their September 7th AAC meeting for review, and an internal meeting was held on September 21st with a few AAC members to arrive at the revised draft policy as presented in Attachment I. Changes to these policies include:

BOR Policy 2:5 – Seamless Transfer of Credit

- Addition of the definition for Credit for Prior Learning.
- Referral to BOR Policy 2:29 for purposes related to required credits and eligible transfer credits.
- Removal of program-specific waiver language was replaced with general waiver language.

(Continued)

DRAFT MOTION 20231004_6-B:

I move to approve the first reading of the proposed revisions to BOR Policy 2:5 and BOR Policy 2:5:4, as presented.

BOR Policy 2:5:4 – Credit for Prior Learning

- Title change
- New purpose statement
- New definition section
- Policy statements
- Five (5) opportunities for accepted credit

IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATION

This is the first review of these policy revisions. The universities will continue to vet these drafts in October and November. The Board academic staff would like to thank the committees' efforts; the work with those stakeholders to further develop the Credit for Prior Learning guidelines, tools, and FAQs will continue.

The timeline associated with these policy revisions will be as follows:

- First Reading – October 2023 BOR Meeting
- Second and Final Reading – December 2023 BOR Meeting

Board academic staff support the proposed revisions of BOR Policies 2:5 and 2:5:4 as presented.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment I – Proposed Revisions to BOR Policy 2:5 – Seamless Transfer of Credit

Attachment II – Proposed Revisions to BOR Policy 2:5:4 – Credit for Prior Learning

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

Policy Manual

SUBJECT: Seamless Transfer of Credit

NUMBER: 2:5

A. PURPOSE

This policy outlines flexible pathways for students to transfer among institutions within and from outside the Regental system to enable their opportunities for success.

B. DEFINITIONS

- 1. Accredited Institution:** Holding accreditation from one of the following institutional accrediting bodies, unless otherwise specified: Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), Higher Learning Commission (HLC), Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC).
- 2. Articulation Agreement:** An agreement between two or among multiple institutions allowing for transfer of credit, either as course-by-course and/or as a block of credits.
- 3. Associate College:** Institution at which the highest degree awarded is an associates degree.
- 4. Block Credit:** A block of credits derived from a cluster of courses referenced in an articulation agreement between participating institutions.
- 5. Common Catalog:** The catalog of courses is a shared catalog by all Regental institutions allowing students to use coursework completed to fulfill their program degree requirements.
- 6. Common Course Numbering:** The system-shared numbering of equivalent courses among Regental institutions that facilitates the common course catalog.
- 7. Course Evaluation:** A review completed by the appropriate registrar or designated official to compare descriptions, content, and level of course completed from an accredited or non-accredited institution.
- 8. Credit for Prior Learning (CPL): College level knowledge or skills that have been attained outside of a traditional academic environment and that have not been previously evaluated for, or awarded, college credit.**
- 9. General Education:** Curriculum defined to develop learners' general knowledge, literacy, skills, and competencies which equip students for success with advanced curriculum, program and major completion, and career competencies.
- 10. In-State:** Any public or private college or university physically located in South Dakota.

11. **Out-of-State:** A college or university not physically located in South Dakota.
12. **Prior Learning Assessments (PLA):** A process to evaluate learner competencies acquired by a student through formal and non-formal learning experiences that occurred outside of the college classroom. (e.g., External Exam [CLEP, AP, IB, etc.], American Council on Education [ACE], Council on Adult and Experiential Learning [CAEL], etc.).
13. **Program-to-Program Transfer:** Process whereby an entire curriculum or program of study is accepted between colleges and universities.
14. **Receiving Institution:** The Regental University to which the student is transferring.
15. **Regental Internal Transfer:** Process where an undergraduate course is used to meet a plan of study requirement at any Regental universities or when graduate credit is used on a converted or actual credit basis to meet undergraduate degree requirements for a Regental accelerated program (refer to BOR Policy 2:8.).
16. **Regental University:** Defined as one of the six (6) public universities: Black Hills State University, Dakota State University, Northern State University, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, South Dakota State University, and the University of South Dakota.
17. **Reverse Transfer:** Transfer credit exchange between a receiving institution to the sending institution to retroactively complete the academic credentials for a degree.
18. **SD Technical College:** Colleges affiliated with the South Dakota Board of Technical Education: Lake Area Technical College, Mitchell Technical College, Southeast Technical College, and Western Dakota Technical College.
19. **Sending Institution:** The institution from which a student is transferring.
20. **Transfer Student:** A designation given to a degree-seeking student who transfers credit from a sending institution to a receiving institution.
21. **WICHE (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education):** A higher educational compact for which the Board of Regents is a member.
22. **WICHE Interstate Passport:** A program that enables seamless block transfer of lower-division general education credits to fulfill general education requirements at a participating member institution in the WICHE compact.

C. POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Governance:

- 1.1. Board of Regents Policy 1:0, 1:1 and SDCL § 13-49 through § 13-53 provides the authority to govern academic programming.
- 1.2. The Regental university must gain approval for any articulation agreement from the Board of Regents.
- 1.3. The Board of Regents governs the common course numbering and the common course catalog in their enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.

- 1.4. All courses are subject to all Board of Regents policies and any conditions for validation that are prescribed by the receiving institution.
- 1.5. The Regental system general education requirements shall be managed by the Academic Affairs Council with consultation from the System General Education Committee.

2. **Quality:**

- 2.1. The goal of transfer credit decisions, regardless of whether the credits were completed at an accredited institution, is to ensure that all degree-seeking students have met the same (or appropriately similar) curricular requirements upon graduation.
- 2.2. When evaluating transfer requests, reviewers should consider whether the accreditation of a sending institution is from a recognized accrediting organization.

3. **Applicability:**

- 3.1. Regental institutions shall award credit when the academic program, level of study, and course content are similar in nature and applicable to the academic program of the receiving institution.
- 3.2. Grading schemes inconsistent with the Regental system grading scheme will be converted to the Regental equivalent.
- 3.3. Credit is only applied once per course per degree on a semester credit system; any course taken multiple times will be treated according to the Regental system repeat policy.

4. **Student-Centered:**

Credit prior coursework is evaluated for transfer based on the following policies. The policies are established to meet specific student needs.

- BOR Policy 2:5:1 Internal (within the Regental system) Transfer
- BOR Policy 2:5:2 External (Non-Regental) Accredited Institution Transfer
- BOR Policy 2:5:3 External (Non-Regental) Non-Accredited and International Transfer
- BOR Policy 2:5:4 ~~Prior Learning and Validated Transfer Credit~~ Credit for Prior Learning

D. INSTITUTIONAL CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

Minimum institutional credit requirements to earn an academic credential (certificate or degree) are identified in BOR Policy 2:29. All other credits beyond the required threshold as provided in BOR Policy 2:29 are eligible to be satisfied through transfer credit.

E. PROGRAM SPECIFIC TRANSFER OF CREDIT WAIVERS

There may be a need to request waivers for programming and student needs. ~~due to an articulation agreement or individual student transfer needs due to graduation requirements.~~

Student ~~graduation~~ institutional credit requirements shall be covered by BOR Policy 2:29. Should the need arise, the Chief Academic Officer at the Regental institution may request a waiver of the transfer credit limitations imposed by BOR Policy 2:29 through the BOR System Academic Affairs designated staff member.

- ~~1. No waivers are needed for students that transfer under BOR Policy 2:5.1 (Internal Regental Transfer) unless BOR Policy 2:29 requires additional waivers for graduation requirements. If the credits apply to the program, all shall be approved.~~
- ~~2. If a non-Regental student transfer accounts for more than allowed in BOR Policy 2:29, the academic vice president may request approval through the System Academic Affairs designated staff member.~~
- ~~2. Total transfer credit completed at an associate college shall not exceed one-half of the hours required for completion of the baccalaureate degree at the receiving institution. Waivers can be requested for the program and must be approved by the system vice president for academic affairs.~~
- ~~3. The System Vice President for Academic Affairs may approve program specific agreement waivers of up to seventy five (75) total transfer credit hours at the receiving institution.~~
- ~~4. Formal Board of Regents approval (for program agreements) is required for a transfer of credit for:

 - ~~1.1. Baccalaureate program specific waivers of seventy six (76) total transfer credit hours up to a maximum of ninety (90) total transfer credit hours at the receiving institution.~~
 - ~~1.2. Graduate accelerated program specific waivers of thirteen (13) total transfer credit hours up to a maximum of twenty five (25) total transfer credit hours at the receiving institution.~~~~

F. APPEAL PROCESS

1. Transfer students who do not qualify for transfer of credit may appeal through the appropriate institutional appeal procedures. Institutions shall publish appeal procedures in the catalog or another official institution publication.
2. The appeal procedures will be posted in the AAC Guidelines for transparency of the receiving institution process.

FORMS / APPENDICES:

None

SOURCE:

SDCL 13-49.1; BOR April 1989; BOR April 1992; BOR June 1997; BOR March 1998; BOR August 1999, BOR March 2001; BOR May 2001; BOR January 2002; BOR March 2002; BOR June 2002; BOR August 2002; BOR December 2002; BOR May 2003; BOR August 2003; BOR December 2003; BOR October 2004; BOR June 2005; BOR August 2005; BOR March 2008; BOR March-April 2010; BOR October 2010; BOR October 2011; BOR December 2011; BOR June 2015; BOR December 2016; BOR June 2018; BOR April 2019; April 2020 (Clerical); June 2020 (Clerical); BOR December 2021; BOR August 2022; August 2022 (Clerical); December 2022 (Clerical); [BOR December 2023](#).

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

Policy Manual

SUBJECT: ~~Prior Learning and Validated Transfer of Credit~~ Credit for Prior Learning

NUMBER: 2:5:4

A. PURPOSE

~~The Board of Regents governing the six public universities has established a policy on the transfer of credits related to prior learning or other validated credits.~~

The Board of Regents supports credit for prior learning by encouraging institutions to employ effective and efficient practices rooted in nationally recognized best practice standards to maximize awarding degree-relevant, college-level coursework to students. Recognizing the assets and capabilities of students through acceptance of credit for prior learning promotes access for South Dakotans. Therefore, institutions shall apply toward admission eligibility, course prerequisites, and/or degree requirements, academic credit earned outside of a traditional higher education setting.

B. DEFINITIONS

1. **ACE:** The American Council on Education (ACE) is a non-profit member organization that serves as a coordinating body for higher education regarding key issues.
2. **JST:** The Joint Services Transcript (JST) is a synchronized transcript of professional United States military education, training and occupation experiences achieved by service members and veterans.
3. **Industry and Professional Training and Certification:** Training that aligns with professional position requirements, and credentials recognized by industry related to specific knowledge and/or skillsets.
4. **Institutional Challenge Exam:** A subject-matter exam created by faculty at an institution with appropriate expertise in the subject/discipline.
5. **Portfolio:** The process of reviewing a compilation of artifacts, narratives and demonstrations and comparing them against the competencies of a course(s) for the purpose of awarding college-level credit.
6. **Published Guides:** Nationally recognized guides that utilize established methods and processes to evaluate a variety of learning opportunities outside a traditional education classroom (experience, training, examinations, etc.) and translate them into credit recommendations.
7. **Standardized Exam:** A nationally recognized exam that tests subject-matter knowledge. Standardized exams can be stand-alone exams, or an exam connected to a learning experience.

C. POLICY STATEMENTS AND STANDARDS

1. Credit for prior learning shall be awarded for college-level learning which entails knowledge, skills, and competencies that students have obtained because of their prior learning experiences.
2. Credit for prior learning shall be reviewed for students who have been admitted to one of the six Regental institutions and have a declared major.
3. Credits earned through Credit for Prior Learning must apply to the student's declared program (major, degree, certificate) at the institution where the student is admitted.
4. Credit for prior learning shall not be awarded for a course that is already on the student's academic record by any of the six Regental institutions.
5. Credits earned through Credit for Prior Learning will be transcribed as transfer credits, with a grade of "CR".
6. Credit earned and awarded through Credit for Prior Learning will not have any quality points awarded and will not be calculated in the grade point average or completion rate.
7. Credits earned through Credit for Prior Learning are transcribed in the current semester for which they were approved and awarded (not the term they worked, experienced, or participated in the activity).
8. Credits earned will not be counted in the student's semester enrollment calculation, nor are they eligible for financial aid.
9. Regental institutions shall abide by the established minimum scores for standardized exams, as documented in published guides.
10. Regental institutions shall utilize the established minimum credit recommendations documented in published guides.
11. Regental institutions shall ensure graduate-level institutional policies allow for acceptance of credits earned through Credit for Prior Learning as part of existing transfer credit policies.
12. Credits earned through Credit for Prior Learning are considered transfer credits. Undergraduate credit requirements for graduation are identified in BOR Policy 2:29 and BOR Policy 2:5; no additional or separate limitation beyond the limit identified in that policy, is placed on credits earned through Credit for Prior Learning.

D. PRIOR LEARNING TRANSFER OF CREDIT

As with the assessment of classroom learning, the objective of prior learning assessment is to identify student competency related to a specific set of learning outcomes. This policy applies to transfer students and currently enrolled students ~~who earned and have evidence of the credit outlined in their transcript.~~

The Regental universities should provide transfer students with the same opportunities as continuing students to demonstrate their competence using internally and/or externally standardized processes.

1. General Requirements

~~Credit earned through validation methods other than nationally recognized examinations is limited to a maximum of thirty (30) hours of credit for baccalaureate degrees and fifteen (15) hours of credit for associate degrees.~~

~~1.1. There are five (5) accepted practices approved by the Board of Regents on credit for prior learning.~~

~~**1.1.1 Industry/Professional Certification or Training:** Includes, but is not limited to any non-collegiate training programs that result in industry certification, professional licensure, skill development, apprenticeship completion, and other work-based learning programs, etc.~~

~~**1.1.2 Joint Services Transcript:** Includes, but is not limited to rank, occupation, military education, training, military occupation, etc. as documented on the JST.~~

~~**1.1.3 Portfolio:** Conducted through a designated third party, unless it is for graduate-level course credit, or a subject/discipline that the third party does not offer.~~

~~**1.1.4 Published Guides:** Includes but is not limited to the ACE National Guide to College Credit for Workplace Training, the ACE Military Guide, and the National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS).~~

~~**1.1.5 Credit by Examination:** Includes standardized exams and institutional challenge exams.~~

- ~~• AP – Advanced Placement (CollegeBoard)~~
- ~~• CLEP – College Level Examination Program (CollegeBoard)~~
- ~~• DLPT – Defense Language Proficiency Test (Defense Language Institute)~~
- ~~• DSST – DANTES Subject Standardized Test (Prometric)~~
- ~~• GED – General Education Development Test (GED Testing Service)~~
- ~~• Institutional Challenge Exam – Institutionally-developed exam (Regental Institution or Non-Regental Institution)~~
- ~~• IB – International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (International Baccalaureate)~~
- ~~• UExcel – Excelsior University~~

~~**1.1.2** The Discipline Councils will provide consultation to the Academic Affairs Council and system academic affairs staff as it relates to competencies, course equivalencies, and other requirements.~~

~~**1.2.1.3** Fees will be assessed for awarded credit through the fee schedule.~~

E. APPLICATION OF POLICY

To facilitate Regental institutions being responsive to the rapidly evolving nature of Credit for Prior Learning, guidance to Regental institutions about the application of policy requirements shall be done through Academic Affairs Guidelines. The standards and procedures shall be accepted by all institutions and operationalized for the Information System.

1.3 Credit by Exam

~~1.3.1 Credit for college level courses granted through nationally recognized examinations such as CLEP, AP, DSST, etc., may be evaluated and accepted for transfer if equivalent to Regental courses and the scores are consistent with Regental policies.~~

~~1.3.2 Such credits are only valid if transcribed by a sending institution within five years of the student taking the examination.~~

~~1.3.3 Regental institutions shall honor credits from nationally recognized examinations transcribed to meet degree requirements at a non-Regental institution.~~

~~1.3.3.1 If credit received through validation is applied as elective credit, it may only be applied at the 100 or 200 level.~~

~~1.3.3.2 Credit received through validation may apply to System General Education Requirements.~~

~~1.3.4 After the course evaluation is completed, the approved equivalent receiving institution courses and credit hours are recorded with a grade of EX on the transcript, but the grade earned at the sending institution is not recorded or calculated into the grade point average.~~

1.4 Military Credit

~~1.4.1 Credits earned through military training validated using prior knowledge assessment is limited to an additional thirty (30) hours of credit for baccalaureate degrees and an additional fifteen (15) hours of credit for associate degrees.~~

~~1.4.2 University discretion is permitted in acceptance of validated military credit for graduate programs, limited to a maximum of twelve (12) credit hours.~~

~~1.4.3 After the course evaluation is completed, the approved equivalent receiving institution courses and credit hours are recorded with a grade of CR on the transcript.~~

~~1.4.4 The earned is not recorded or calculated into the grade point average.~~

FORMS / APPENDICES:

None

SOURCE:

BOR August 2022; [BOR December 2023](#).

DRAFT