Transfer Student Considerations

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# Transfer Student Considerations

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TRANSFER STUDENTS

The Admissions Office identifies as a “transfer student” any student who has a minimum of 12 transferable credits and graduated from high school prior to the current year.

Where Do Our Transfer Students Come From?
Most of the students transferring to the U are coming from other schools within the state of Utah. Our largest group comes from Salt Lake Community College. We also get students transferring from a great variety of out-of-state institutions, and we have a rapidly increasing number of international students who are transferring credits from institutions outside of the country.

Some Common Characteristics and Attitudes of Transfer Students
- Many of our transfer students come into the U with quite a few transfer credits. Often these students feel that since they are “experienced” students they should not have to attend an Orientation. They may also feel that they don’t need to meet with an advisor.

- If students are coming from a smaller school they might not be prepared for the size and complexity of a large institution like the U. They often expect “one-stop-shopping” and may be frustrated with advisors who can’t answer all their questions. The sheer physical size of the U campus can also be very intimidating to some of these students.

- Transfer students from community colleges may not understand the differences in the educational culture of a place like the U versus the 2-year school they came from. At the U there is an expectation that students will be (or will become) autonomous learners who are responsible for their own education. Students are expected to learn to negotiate the system here and take the responsibility to access resources when needed. Community colleges often see their mission in a very different light. They commonly see their role as providing an intermediate step for students who are not quite ready for the autonomy of a big 4-year school. The community colleges often provide more intrusive advising and intervene with their students to require them to use resources and services. Students coming from one culture to other can experience difficulty in making the transition.

- Transfer students are more likely than “native” students to be nontraditional and may struggle to balance work and family responsibilities with school. These students can become frustrated with the lack of services and resources available at the U for part-time/evening students.

- Two-year transfers are also more likely to be first-generation college students.

ADVISING TRANSFER STUDENTS – How Students Receive Advising at the U of U
The Transfer Center, a unit within University College Advising, is charged with providing general advising and programming for transfer students at the U. Advising services are also provided at all the 2-year schools in the state. Transfer Center advisors make weekly visits to SLCC campuses to do advising and, we visit other 2-year schools in the state monthly or once a semester.

Transfer Center advising duties on the U campus include:
- Explaining the application and acceptance process
• Clarification of how transfer credits meet U General Education requirements
• Determining which transfer credits meet U Bachelors Degree requirements
• Assisting in choosing a U of U major, minor etc
• Explaining U policies and procedures
• Getting students connected with U resources
• Assisting students with any questions or concerns about their transition to the U

Transfer Center advising at the 2-year schools includes all of the above as well as providing students with assistance in selecting community college courses and programs to make the best use of their time there. Departmental advisors often join Transfer Center advisors on their visits to the 2-year schools.

Departmental advisors also play a key role in advising transfer students at the U. They are charged with determining which transfer credits can be used for departmental requirements, and with course selection and planning for that major.

All new transfer students are required to meet with an advisor to be cleared to register for their first semester. If a student has selected a major, then the departmental advisor should be the one to clear that student. Students who are unsure of their major will meet with Transfer Center advisors to be cleared to register.

THE TRANSFER APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process at the U has 3-steps:
1. Students must fill out an application. This is done online by going to http://admissions.utah.edu/
2. An application fee must be paid (currently $45.00). This can be paid in-person at the Admissions window or online.
3. Transcripts must be sent from all previous colleges or universities that the student has attended. These transcripts must come from the institutions themselves. Even if a student has had all their previous coursework sent to one institution, that institution can send only their own coursework to the U.

NOTE: Students do not have the options of not sending transcripts from previous institutions. The Admissions Office will check for prior attendance through the National Student Clearinghouse, an organization that tracks attendance at all US colleges and universities. Students who are found to have not sent all their transcripts will face serious consequences including possible reversal of their acceptance to the U.

Processing
Once all three of these things have arrived at the Admissions Office, processing of the application will begin. It usually takes 2 to 4 weeks for a student to be fully admitted. Students who wait until close to the application deadline might find that processing takes many more weeks - an excellent reason for them to apply early! It is advisable for transfer students to check the status of their application online at the Admissions web site. They can do this by clicking on the, "Track Your Admissions" link in the corner of the Admissions web page.
Deadlines
Transfer students are advised to begin the transfer process well in advance of the semester they want to begin at the U. We want these students to have good class selection when they sign up for their first semester, so we want them in the system and attending an Orientation session during early registration if at all possible. The following are ideal times for students to start the transfer process:

- Fall Semester – begin application in February or March
- Spring Semester – begin application in September
- Summer Semester – begin application in January

The actual application deadlines set out by the Admissions Office are much later than these dates. The current list of deadlines can be seen on the Admissions web site. Students can apply up until these deadlines but they may not have optimal class selection if they wait until the last moment to turn in their application. As a rule, the Admissions Office will accept late applications for several weeks after the actual deadline, but a late fee will be charged. A final application cut-off is set for each semester. Students must have all application materials to the Admissions Office by this deadline or their application will not be considered.

Send that Transcript – Twice!
Since students are encouraged to apply early, many of these students will still be finishing up their final semesters as they are filling out applications and sending their transcripts. It is not a problem for acceptance if students have courses in-progress on their transcripts when they apply. They will, however, need to send a final transcript once all their grades (and degrees) are posted. It is important to remind students that if they are in this situation, they will need to send their transcripts to the U, a second time.

Acceptance Criteria
If a student has 30 credit hours of transfer work (or close to it) and a 2.6 GPA, they will be accepted to the U. Students who have a posted Associates degree will be admitted with a 2.35 GPA. Students with less than 30 completed transfer credits can still be admitted, but they will need to submit high school records and ACT/SAT scores. They will be accepted if they meet the freshman admission requirements. Students who do not meet the admissions criteria may still be able to be accepted at the U. They should be encouraged to write the optional essay that is part of the admissions application form. In this essay, they can explain their situation. Another possible route to acceptance is to apply for sponsorship. The sponsorship program allows U departments or agencies to sponsor students who do not meet academic admission requirements with the understanding that these students will receive the support they need to be successful at the U. Students will be able to look on the Admissions tracking site and see when they have been accepted. A letter will also be sent informing them of their acceptance and the Orientation Office will send information about their programs.

TRANSFER STUDENT ORIENTATIONS
The Office of Orientation and New Student Programs coordinates orientation programming at the U. Attending an orientation session is required of all new students before they can register for their first semester. The Orientation Office provides separate programs for freshman and transfer
students and a few programs which combine the two populations. Transfer students are encouraged to attend sessions designed specifically for them.

Once a student has been accepted to the U, they will receive a mailing informing them of the requirement for them to attend an orientation. They are instructed to go online to the Orientation web site, www.sa.utah.edu/orientation/ or call the Orientation Office (581-7069) to sign up for the session of their choice. Because students will use their Student ID Number and Umail address to sign up for a session, they cannot register for an orientation until the Admissions Office has fully matriculated them. Since attending orientation is a requirement for registration, students should be encouraged to go to the earliest session possible so they can have the best chance of finding open classes.

Attendance at an orientation is mandatory for all new students even those from out of state. Students who feel they simply cannot travel to the U to attend an Orientation should contact the Orientation Office directly to discuss options for completing this requirement.

TRANSFER ARTICULATION (Transfer Credit)

Filling U Requirements with Transfer Credit

As mentioned before the most pressing question for most transfer students is “how will their credits transfer”. This question is answered by the process known as “transfer articulation”. This is just the fancy name for the evaluation of the content and credit load etc of courses at other institutions to see if they are really the equivalent of courses that meet U of U requirements. The responsibility for transfer articulation is shared by different organizations across campus and depends greatly on what U requirements are potentially being filled -the most important difference being whether the class could be used to fill General Education and Bachelors Degree requirements or those for a particular major or minor.

One of the first questions that advisors usually hear from transfer students is, “How can I know which of my classes will transfer to the U?” In most cases this is not really the question that they should be asking. If the school they attended previously was an accredited institution, then all their credits should transfer (with the exception of vocational or religious classes). The real question most students should be asking is: “how will my credits transfer”. This is a rather complex question that often requires that students meet different campus representatives to get a full answer.

Initial transferability of credits is determined by the Admissions Office. This office will look at the accreditation of the students’ previous institution (or institutions) to determine if credits can be transferred and posted on their U record. In most cases, transfer students have attended accredited institutions and their credits will transfer just fine. This is not absolutely always the case however. With increasing numbers of private, for-profit and online institutions on the American higher education scene, we are beginning to see more cases where students’ credits will not transfer at all. These for-profit schools are often not accredited in a way that allows credits to
transfer. It is very important for advisors to check in with the Admissions Office on transferability of credits (or have the student do so) before providing any in-depth advising to students. Transferability of international credits is determined by the International Admissions Office.

**Getting Ready Guides**
One of the most helpful advising tools for working with transfer students are the “Getting Ready Guides.” These are articulation charts that are put together every year by the Admissions Office. They show how classes from all state schools (including BYU, BYU-Idaho, Westminster and LDS Business College) match up to requirements for U of U majors. The reason these are so helpful is that rather than just a course-by-course match up of classes, these guides match up only classes that are actually required for each of our U of U majors. This allows students to know which classes they can take at their school that will actually clear specific U requirements.

The Guides are on-line and can be accessed from the Admissions web site under the “Transfer Students” section. On the web site, students and advisors can use drop-down menus to select the school and major they want to review. There are also some general guidelines on how credits transfer between these schools to meet U General Education requirements. Hard copies of all guides are also printed each year and given to advisors in all the schools across the state. In University College each advisor receives a guide for each participating school as well as a general guide that shows course by course articulation for all U undergraduate courses.

**Transfer “Packages”**
In looking at whether credits can fill General Education requirements it is helpful to consider the concept of a transfer package. The most common transfer package for students transferring to the U is the Associates Degree.

**Associates degrees** (which usually come in two forms: Associates of Science and Associates of Arts) are 2-year degrees awarded by community colleges and some 4-year colleges and universities. Most AA and AS degrees consist of around 60 credit hours and have two component parts. Half of these degrees (around 30 credits) usually consist of general education-type requirements while the other half consist of focused credits in one particular subject (such as an AS in Business) or in the case of a General Studies degree the other half can be a mix of student-chosen electives. Associates degrees are looked at as a “package” by the U when a student transfers and will clear General Education requirements differently than the same group of classes taken without the completion and posting of a degree. How these packages are accepted depends on where the student received their degree.

**For Utah System of Higher Education (or USHE) schools, an AA or AS degree will automatically clear all U of U General Education requirements.** The same is true for LDS Business College, a small private school in Salt Lake City. It is important to note that Bachelors Degree Requirements are not cleared in this package (with one exception that will be explained in a moment).
Applied Associates Degrees (or AAS degrees) are vocationally oriented programs that look very different from academic AA and AS degrees. Credits from AAS degrees in the USHE system do transfer to the U but since these degrees contain significantly fewer general requirements they do not clear General Education requirements at the U.

Associates degrees from out-of-state institutions
As a rule, will automatically clear the lower-level writing requirement (WR2) and all of the Intellectual Exploration requirements. The Admissions Office will not automatically clear the QA/QB or American Institutions requirements with an out-of-state degree however. They will look at the students’ transcripts to see if they have taken courses that appear to match the content required of these classes at the U of U before clearing these requirements.

Letter of Completion
This is a certificate that can be sent from one USHE school to another that verifies that a student has completed all the general education courses at that institution. As previously mentioned, general education requirements usually fill about half of a typical Associates degree’s requirements and to complete them a student will usually have taken around 32 credit hours. A Letter of Completion will also clear the General Education requirements at the U when a student transfers. It is important to note that it also does not clear Bachelors Degree requirements. This certificate is only sent between schools within the USHE system and is not something recognized or sent to schools out-of-state. A Letter of Completion is a great option for students who are taking classes at a USHE school that does not offer courses that will transfer into the student’s U of U major. Rather than staying at their school for a full 2 years to get an Associate’s degree to complete their general education they can get this done quickly with the Letter of Completion and then transfer to the U to begin working on their major.

Transferring Without a “Package”
Some students assume that they must complete some kind of degree to transfer to the U, but this is not the case. Students can transfer without any package of credits. Courses transferred in this way will be evaluated on a class-by-class basis. The content of the courses will be considered and matched with requirements. The Admissions Office does the initial review of transfer work to see if it can clear any general education requirements. Occasionally courses that could actually meet GE requirements are missed in this initial evaluation. In this case a student can come to the Transfer Center and meet with an advisor who can review the course and do a substitution in DARS if the course does appear to have the right content.

In the case of Bachelors Degree requirements, The Transfer Center is the only office on campus with the ability to do substitutions for a transfer course. Students who believe they have a course that might meet one of these requirements are encouraged to contact the Transfer Center to find out how to go about getting this evaluation done.
The one exception to this process is the case of Diversity Courses from Salt Lake Community College. SLCC has also has a diversity requirement as part of their general education program. In order to be sure that SLCC Diversiy courses will transfer and clear the U of U’s Diversity requirement, they send every one of their DV courses to the U to be approved by our Diversity committee before adding the class as a DV offering at their school. Because of this, our Admissions Office will actually code all DV coursed from SLCC so they automatically appear on the students DARS as filling the U’s Diversity requirement.

**Filling Major Requirements with Transfer Credits**

Departmental advisors are charged with the evaluation of all transfer course work to meet major requirements. The Admissions Office does not do any evaluation or coding of these requirements. Departments are also in charge of taking care of all DARS substitution for major requirements as well.

**Concurrent Enrollment**

One kind of transfer credit that advisors will encounter regularly is concurrent enrollment credit. This is college credit awarded to students for courses taken while still in high school. The format for taking these college courses varies from high school to high school. Sometimes the students receive instruction at their high schools while in other programs students actually leave their high school campuses to attend courses at a college or university campus. In either case, the credits received are treated like any other transfer coursework. The credits must be transferred from the awarding institution at the request of the student. Many students assume this will be handled automatically by their high school, but this is not the case. Students must follow the same process to have their concurrent enrollment credits sent to the U as any other transfer student, and Admissions will use the same process to evaluate concurrent enrollment credits as they do any other type of transfer course work. One important difference for students with concurrent enrollment versus those who received their transfer credits after high school graduation is that they will not be coded by the Admissions Office as transfer students. They will instead be coded in as Freshmen. This allows them to be considered for scholarships open to only Freshmen.

**SUMMARY OF TRANSFER CREDIT**

When a transfer student is accepted to the U the Admissions Office evaluates all the transcripts from their previous schools. All course work that has been accepted for credit will be put on a document called a “Summary of Transfer Credit.” This is sent by mail to the student. A copy can be obtained at the Transcript Office as well. This Transfer Summary includes the following information:

- It will show all the schools that the student attended for which credits were accepted.
- The classes will be listed according to the semester (or quarter) in which they were taken.
- Classes taken at schools on a quarter system will have the credits converted to semester hours.
The grades for all classes will be listed. These grades will not be mixed with the student’s U of U GPA. Transfer students will always have a separate transfer GPA which will combine all accepted transfer classes.

NOTE: Classes must be 1000 level or higher to count for credit and must be passed with a D-grade or higher. Prior to Fall 1999 only transfer courses with a C- or higher were accepted. Grades lower than a C- were counted in the student’s transfer GPA but were not accepted for credit. Students admitted before Fall 1999 can petition to have D transfer credits accepted by going to the Admissions Office.

The Admissions Office does an initial evaluation of which transfer classes will meet U of U General Education requirements. They will put GE codes (AI, FF, WR1 etc.) next to these classes on the Transfer Summary.

Sometimes test credits and other special credits (military etc) will appear on the Transfer Summary. They are not always present, however, because often the sending institution does not send this credit with the student’s transcripts. If it does not appear, the student can contact the Admissions Office to find out how to get this credit on their U of U record.

If a student has an Associates Degree it will be noted at the end of the Summary with the total credits and GPA.

The Summary of Transfer Credit does not tell us:

- Which courses will be accepted by an individual department toward a student’s major. Transfer students must meet with their departmental advisors to find out this information.
- Which transfer courses count for upper division credit. All USHE schools use the same numbering system, so anything 3000 level or higher from these schools will automatically count as upper division credits. Since we get quite a few BYU and BYU-Idaho transfer students their upper division classes are also automatically counted. Students from out-of-state institutions should contact the Admissions Office to find out how to receive upper division credit for any transfer work they may have.
- Bachelors Degree requirements are not evaluated by The Admissions Office, so they are not coded on the Summary. These are done as DARS exceptions by UC advisors.
- There may be transfer courses that can count for General Education requirements that are not coded by Admissions. They may be courses with unusual topics or titles or sometimes they are just missed by the Admissions evaluators. UC advisor can do DARS exceptions for these classes.

TRANSFER STUDENT DARS REPORTS
Transfer students can usually run a DARS report after their course work has been evaluated, put into PeopleSoft, and the articulation program has been run in the Admissions Office. For the most part, the DARS of a transfer student looks like that of a “native” student. There are a few differences to be aware of:

- Remember, the U GPA of a transfer student will include only U of U courses. If it is a student’s first semester at the U and no grades have been posted, then this section of the DARS indicates that the student has not met the GPA requirement. “2.0” is listed in the GPA column (because 2.0 is the minimum to maintain good standing at the U.) This can be a source of confusion and concern for some transfer students.
The “Total Hours” section of a transfer student’s DARS will give a grand total but will also separately show how many U and transfer hours a student has.

Department codes for transfer courses often begin with an “X”

Some transfer courses from USHE schools have been articulated, or officially matched, to U of U classes and will automatically meet specific U requirements. In many cases the U class that the transfer class is matched to is the class listed most prominently in the requirement field on the DARS. The actual transfer class number and school it came from appears off to the side of the field.

If a student has an Associates Degree there will be a field at the beginning of the DARS which states that an AA or AS degree is posted. Any general education requirement that is filled by this degree will say, “Completed with Associates Degree.”

The back pages of a transfer student’s DARS will list a student’s transfer classes on a separate list from the U of U classes taken.
TOP 10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT TRANSFER STUDENTS

1. The Transfer Center provides resources and services for transfer students.

2. Most U of U transfer students come here from Utah State System of Higher Education (USHE) schools. It is helpful for advisors to be familiar with these schools.

3. Transfer students often expect the U to be like their previous school – this leads to some mistaken expectations and misunderstandings.

4. Transfer students are more likely than native students (those who began as Freshman at the U) to be first generation college students and are often older and thus more likely to have family, jobs etc which can conflict with school.

5. The most popular majors for transfer students when they start at the U are competitive, professional majors (Business, Pharmacy, Engineering etc.). Students often don’t understand the complexities of getting into these restricted majors.

6. One of the biggest problems for transfer students is that they wait too long to start the transfer process.

7. All new transfer students must attend an Orientation and meet with an advisor before they can register for their first semester.

8. “Will my classes transfer to the U?” This is the most common question advisors hear from transfer students. What they should be asking is, “How will my classes transfer to the U?” Do you know how to answer them?

9. Advisors should be familiar with these three great advising resources for working with transfer students: Transfer Summaries, DARs reports, and The Getting Ready Guides.

10. Advisors are often the first point of contact at the U for prospective transfer students. We can be the reason they come here or go somewhere else.

Transfer advising questions?
Contact: Terese Pratt, Assistant Director of the Transfer Center – 581-8588, tpratt@uc.utah.edu