



Memorandum to Presidents

Date: July 15, 2026

To: Presidents, State-operated Campuses
Presidents, Community Colleges

From: Donna Linderman, Senior Vice Chancellor for Student Success

Subject: Implementation Guidance: Policy on the Equitable Evaluation of Transfer Credit

Copy: President, University Faculty Senate; President, Faculty Council of Community Colleges;
President, Student Assembly; Campus Chief Academic Officers; and Campus Registrars

This Memorandum to Presidents (MTP) includes attached guidance which establishes expectations for campus review, development, and adoption of policies necessary to align with the [Adoption of a Policy on Equitable Evaluation of Transfer Credit](#) resolution approved by the SUNY Board of Trustees on June 2, 2026. It is further intended to support campuses in reviewing existing policies and practices and in implementing the policy in a manner consistent with their institutional mission, academic standards, accreditation requirements, and shared governance processes.

Campuses are expected to initiate policy review and development in the fall 2026, with the formal development of aligned policies completed by fall 2027. As the work progresses, additional guidance regarding operational implementation within academic systems will be provided. Furthermore, guidance for amendments to the Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation will be forthcoming from the Office of the Provost, as this guidance is specifically related to a prior academic policy.

For questions about this memorandum, additional guidance, or if your campus would like to consult on implementation timelines, please contact the Office of Transfer and Articulation within Student success via sunytransfer@suny.edu. This guidance is also posted on the following web page, along with other relevant resources: <https://transfer.suny.edu/faculty-staff/equitable>.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT GUIDANCE

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK POLICY ON EQUITABLE EVALUATION OF TRANSFER CREDIT

I. Policy Purpose, Scope, and Implementation Principles

A. Purpose

This Memorandum to Presidents provides initial implementation guidance regarding the [SUNY Board of Trustees' Policy on Equitable Grading](#) approved June 2, 2026. This guidance is focused specifically on supporting campuses in the development, review, and adoption of campus policies necessary to align with the Board's policy by Fall 2027. The Policy on Equitable Grading is issued under the authority of the SUNY Board of Trustees, including [Trustees' Resolution 2009 138](#) (Student Mobility) and [Trustees' Resolution 2012 189](#) (Seamless Transfer Requirements), as well as related system guidance in [Memoranda to Presidents, Volume 13, Number 3](#) (June 13, 2013), and subsequent implementation directives.

The policy advances SUNY's commitment to student success, academic integrity, transparency, and the equitable application of academic standards across the State University of New York. The Board's action is intended to ensure that institutional grading policies, grade thresholds, and related academic standards are clear, consistently administered, and equitable for all undergraduate students, including both transfer students and students entering as non-transfer (first-time) students¹.

This guidance affirms that campuses retain discretion to establish and maintain grading policies, grading structures, progression standards, and degree requirements through local academic and shared governance processes. Such policies must be applied equitably and may not impose more restrictive or less favorable standards on transfer students than on similarly situated non-transfer (first-time) students, unless supported by a documented academic, accreditation, licensure, programmatic, or student-success rationale.

Additional guidance regarding the operational implementation of these policies, including guidance related to campus systems, degree audit practices, transcript evaluation processes, and related administrative procedures, will be provided in the fall and throughout the academic year as implementation progresses.

¹ For purposes of this guidance, "transfer student" and "non-transfer (first-time) student" are used to describe a student's admission status as of the student's first term of admission at the current institution. These categories remain based on that initial admission status, including for students who are continuing enrollment in subsequent terms. (See Also: [Appendix](#))

B. Core Expectations

This policy is grounded in the principle that transfer and non-transfer (first-time) students should be subject to equitable academic standards when coursework is applied toward the same or similar degree requirements. Equity does not require identical treatment in all circumstances; it requires campuses to make good-faith, academically grounded efforts to ensure fair treatment within comparable academic contexts. Through appropriate academic and shared governance processes, each campus will determine what constitutes equity within its institutional, curricular, accreditation, licensure, and student-success contexts.

However, campuses may not maintain blanket transfer-only grade thresholds, caps, or restrictions that categorically subject transfer coursework to more restrictive standards than comparable coursework completed in residence. Transfer coursework may be subject to different grading standards only when supported by a documented academic, accreditation, licensure, programmatic, or student-success rationale. Such determinations should be made within the relevant academic context and must not create an inequitable condition for transfer students relative to similarly situated non-transfer (first-time) students.

C. Campus Discretion and Institutional Authority

Campuses retain authority, consistent with applicable law, regulation, accreditation requirements, policy, and shared governance processes, to establish academic standards for their courses, programs, and degrees. Nothing in this guidance limits institutional authority over curricula, degree and program requirements, prerequisites, progression standards, academic standing policies, or faculty judgment in the assessment of student learning. Nor does it supersede faculty governance or faculty responsibility for establishing academic expectations and maintaining academic integrity.

The policy shall not be construed to require a uniform SUNY grading scale, standardized local grading systems or grade equivalencies, acceptance of coursework that fails to meet academic standards, waiver of accreditation, licensure, or certification requirements, limitation of faculty authority, modification of shared governance processes, or uniform academic policies across campuses, programs, or disciplines.

D. Examples of Campus Policy Areas to Review

Campuses should review local policies and practices to ensure they are equitable, transparent, and consistently applied to transfer and non-transfer (first-time) students. Areas for review may include grade requirements for credit and degree applicability; prerequisite and co-requisite standards; treatment of alternative grading modes (e.g., pass/fail, satisfactory/unsatisfactory); policies governing transfer coursework below locally established grade thresholds; application of transfer credit to institutional and program requirements; and communication of transfer credit and grading policies to students.

This review is not intended to limit institutional variation in academic policies. Its purpose is to ensure that any differences in grading standards, grade thresholds, or related academic requirements are

intentional, academically justified, clearly documented, and applied equitably within the relevant academic context.

E. Policy Development Expectations and Timeline

Beginning fall 2026, campuses are expected, through established shared governance bodies, to review and, as appropriate, reaffirm, revise, or establish policies to align with the requirements outlined above. All such policies must be adopted by June 30, 2027.

In cases where full implementation in systems and in practice will extend beyond Fall 2027, a campus shall establish in collaboration with the Office of Transfer and Articulation and Student Success and submit for approval alternative implementation plans and timelines.

At a minimum, campuses are advised to review and revise as needed, the policy areas [described in Section II](#) to align campus policies with the Board's policy.

F. Transparency and Communication

Transparency is a central expectation of the policy. Students should be able to clearly understand the grading standards that affect their academic progress and degree requirements. Campuses should make these policies readily accessible through appropriate channels, including catalogs, websites, advising materials, degree-audit systems, program handbooks, and academic regulations.

Student-facing materials should clearly explain: (1) grades required for credit and degree applicability; (2) how transfer coursework is evaluated and applied; (3) circumstances under which credit may not apply toward specific requirements; and (4) processes for seeking clarification of, or appealing, transfer credit decisions.

II. Reviewing Grading Practices

The following policy areas are provided for consideration to help campuses identify practices that support the equitable application of grading policies. As a general principle, equivalent coursework should be evaluated under the same grade standards for transfer and non-transfer (first-time) students when applied to the same academic requirements.

In all cases, if a campus applies a different grade threshold, acceptance standard, or applicability rule to transfer coursework than to comparable coursework completed in residence, the distinction should be clearly documented and supported by an academic, accreditation, licensure, programmatic, or student-success rationale. The rationale should explain why the distinction is necessary in the student's academic context and why it does not create an inequitable condition for transfer students.

A. Comparable Grade Thresholds for Comparable Coursework

For comparable coursework, grade thresholds should be applied equitably to non-transfer (first-time) students and transfer students. If a non-transfer (first-time) student would satisfactorily complete a course with a locally defined passing grade toward a degree requirement, a transfer student with comparable coursework and the same transfer grade should be treated in the same manner. Likewise, where a department or program requires a grade which is higher than the campus minimum passing

grade for major requirements, prerequisites, progression, or other program-level purposes, that standard should be applied consistently to transfer and non-transfer (first-time) students. Program-level grade requirements remain permissible when established through appropriate academic processes and applied equitably to all students subject to the requirement.

B. Limiting Blanket Transfer-Only Restrictions

Campuses should not apply categorical transfer-only restrictions that impose higher grade thresholds on transfer coursework than on comparable coursework completed in residence. As a baseline, comparable coursework with comparable grades should be treated equitably, regardless of whether the coursework was completed at the receiving campus or transferred from another institution.

Consideration of a student's academic context becomes relevant when a campus determines that transfer coursework should be treated differently from comparable coursework completed in residence. In such cases, the campus should evaluate the distinction considering the applicable academic circumstances, including the nature of the course, the requirement being satisfied, the student's program of study, and any relevant accreditation, licensure, progression, or student-success considerations. A higher threshold for transfer coursework may be appropriate in certain circumstances; however, such distinctions cannot be based solely on the fact that the coursework was completed at another institution.

C. Clear Distinctions Between Requirement Fulfillment and Credit Application

Campuses may distinguish between accepting coursework for academic credit and recognizing coursework solely for requirement fulfillment without award of credit only in clearly documented circumstances. As a general principle, when coursework is determined to be acceptable for purposes of satisfying an academic requirement, the coursework should also be accepted for academic credit, provided that doing so is feasible, consistent with campus transfer policies, and aligned with applicable academic standards.

Campuses should not use requirement-only recognition as an alternative to awarding credit for otherwise eligible transfer coursework. Such treatment should occur only where the campus has identified a clear academic, policy, accreditation, licensure, or programmatic basis for doing so, and where the distinction is transparent to students and the practice results in an equitable condition for transfer and non-transfer (first-time) students in comparable academic circumstances.

D. Transfer GPA Standards for Acceptance or Application of Transfer Coursework

Campuses may establish policies regarding the acceptance or application of transfer coursework where the student's transferable coursework, taken as a whole, meets or exceeds an established minimum grade point average. Any such minimum GPA standard should be academically grounded, clearly documented, and aligned with the campus's academic progress expectations for non-transfer (first-time) students, such as standards related to good academic standing, satisfactory academic progress, or minimum cumulative GPA requirements.

A policy of this type may allow, for instance, the acceptance or application of all otherwise eligible transfer coursework where the combined GPA of the transferable courses is 2.0 or higher, provided that

the standard reflects a meaningful campus academic benchmark and is applied equitably to transfer and non-transfer (first-time) students in similar academic circumstances.

The policy should specify how the GPA is calculated, what coursework shall be included, which requirements the coursework may satisfy, and whether program-specific, accreditation, licensure, prerequisite, or progression standards may require additional review or limits. Such policies should not be used to impose a more restrictive standard on transfer students than the campus applies to non-transfer (first-time) students under comparable academic progress standards.

E. Limits on the Number of Courses Accepted or Applied Below Certain Grade Thresholds

Campuses may establish policies that limit the number of courses or credits that may be accepted or applied below a specified grade threshold, provided such limits are specific, academically grounded, equitably applied, and administered within the student's academic context.

Any numerical limit - such as a policy permitting no more than a specified number of courses below a particular grade threshold - must be supported by a clear academic rationale. Such rationale may include degree completion requirements, alignment with satisfactory academic progress considerations (including non-transfer (first-time) student academic probation standards), accreditation or licensure requirements, or other programmatic standards. The limit should reflect a meaningful academic standard versus an arbitrary cap.

Campus policies must clearly define when coursework beyond the stated limit is accepted or applied. Any allowances, standards, or procedures should be part of a formal policy framework and campus procedures. This mechanism should consider whether additional coursework is academically appropriate, beneficial, and consistent with degree integrity, program requirements, accreditation, licensure expectations, and student-success considerations. Any change of major or program affecting these limits must prompt an appropriate re-evaluation of credit.

F. Equitable and Transparent Treatment of Non-Letter or Alternate Grades

Campuses may continue to establish policies governing the evaluation and application of coursework graded on a pass/fail, satisfactory/unsatisfactory, credit/no credit, or other comparable non-letter-grade basis. Campus policies should specify whether and how non-letter or alternative grades may be used to satisfy institutional requirements, general education requirements, major or program requirements, prerequisites, electives, or other degree requirements. Where a campus permits coursework with non-letter or alternative grades to earn credit or fulfill requirements for non-transfer (first-time) students, the same policy should be applied equitably to transfer students in comparable circumstances.

A receiving campus is not required to accept coursework with a non-letter or alternative grade where the sending institution does not provide a clearly articulated grade standard, grade-point equivalent, or minimum level of student performance associated with the award of that grade. For example, coursework graded as "satisfactory" may be evaluated at the receiving campus's discretion if the sending institution does not identify a consistent minimum grade or grade-point equivalent for that designation.

To support transparency and transferability, all campuses are encouraged to publish the meaning of, and academic standards associated with, non-letter or alternative grades in the transcript key, catalog,

bulletin, or other official institutional materials. This should include any minimum grade or grade-point equivalents that apply. Such information should be sufficient to allow receiving institutions, students, advisors, faculty, and staff to understand how the grade reflects student performance and how the coursework may be evaluated for credit or requirement fulfillment.

G. Documented Higher Thresholds in Selected Programs

Programs with accreditation, certification, licensure, clinical, professional, progression, or other academically justified requirements may establish minimum grade thresholds above the institutional passing standard. Such requirements remain permissible when they are academically grounded and applied equitably to non-transfer (first-time) students and transfer students subject to the same program or requirement.

H. Accessible Student-Facing Explanations

Grading and transfer credit policies should be written and communicated in a manner that allows students to understand how both prior and current coursework will affect degree progress. Student facing materials should make clear how grade thresholds or standards may apply to non-transfer (first-time) students and transfer coursework, including whether coursework may satisfy institutional, general education, major, prerequisite, elective, or other degree requirements. At minimum, the campus policies and requirements must be published in an accessible, visible manner in the campus catalog or bulletin. Additional guidance may be provided through a combination of catalog language, transfer credit webpages, advising materials, student orientation, degree audit notes, program handbooks, academic regulations, or other appropriate communications.

I. Periodic Review of Grading Policies for Unintended Barriers

Campuses should periodically review grading thresholds, transfer-credit practices, and related academic policies to determine whether they are operating as intended and whether they create unintended barriers to student progress.

III. Common Implementation Questions

This section presents a set of illustrative questions and responses intended to support campus understanding of how the policy may be interpreted and applied in practice. The examples provided reflect current guidance and prevailing interpretations at the time of publication and are designed to clarify expectations, highlight common implementation scenarios, and promote consistency across institutions. These questions and responses are not exhaustive and do not constitute formal policy requirements; rather, they serve as supplemental guidance that may be refined or updated in future Memoranda to Presidents (MTPs) or additional SUNY guidance as implementation evolves.

In all cases, grade policies should be stated clearly in campus policy, communicated to students, and administered consistently across advising, transfer evaluation, degree audit, catalog, and program materials.

Q1: Are campuses permitted to set a minimum grade threshold for transfer credit eligibility?

Yes, under specific circumstances. A campus can require a minimum grade for coursework to be accepted for credit or meet academic requirements, provided the policy is based on academic considerations, clearly documented, and applied equitably to transfer and first-time students.

A receiving campus may, for example, determine that only coursework completed with a grade of C or higher may satisfy a particular major requirement, prerequisite, licensure-related requirement, or progression standard. Generally, this is permissible where the same standards apply to non-transfer (first-time) students completing the equivalent coursework.

Campuses may not establish a blanket transfer-only rule that categorically requires transfer students to meet a higher-grade threshold solely because the coursework was completed at another institution. For example, a campus should not require transfer students to have earned a C or higher for coursework to apply toward a requirement if non-transfer (first-time) students may apply the equivalent course with a lower passing grade. Exceptions may apply only where the campus has clearly documented and communicated why the difference is necessary and why the policy remains equitable.

Q2: Can campuses collectively evaluate a student's transfer coursework and accept only those that meet an established minimum GPA, excluding others?

Yes, provided the policy is academically grounded, clearly documented and communicated, and applied equitably. A campus may establish a policy under which otherwise eligible transfer coursework is accepted or applied when the student's transferable coursework, considered in the aggregate, meets an established minimum GPA standard, such as a 2.0 or higher.

Such a policy should be tied to an academic rationale and should align with the campus's standards for non-transfer (first-time) students, including standards for good academic standing, satisfactory academic progress, degree completion, or minimum cumulative GPA expectations.

For example, if a campus generally requires non-transfer (first-time) students to maintain a 2.0 GPA for good standing, academic progress or graduation, the campus may determine that a 2.0 transfer GPA provides an appropriate basis for accepting all otherwise eligible passing transfer coursework.

Q3: May campuses have a pre-defined limit on the number of courses below a certain grade for transfer?

Yes, if the limit is academically grounded, clearly documented, equitably applied, and administered within the student's academic context. However, it shouldn't be a blanket transfer-only restriction or arbitrary cap.

Any pre-defined limit must be tied to a documented academic rationale, such as campus academic progression standards, historical grading patterns for non-transfer (first-time) students, satisfactory academic progress expectations, degree-completion standards, accreditation or licensure requirements, programmatic requirements, or other student-success considerations. For example, if a campus permits non-transfer (first-time) students to apply a certain number of courses below a "C"

toward degree requirements, a transfer policy establishing a similar limit may be grounded in that same academic framework.

Campus policy should also include a clear mechanism for determining when coursework beyond the stated limit may be accepted or applied when doing so is academically appropriate, beneficial to the student, and is consistent with degree integrity, program requirements, accreditation or licensure expectations, and student-success considerations. That mechanism should be part of the formal campus policy, not administered as an informal exception.

Numerical course limits are challenging to justify, administer, and apply consistently, so such policies are expected to be used sparingly. Campuses may instead choose to pursue a minimum GPA standard, which is easier to document and measure, especially when it aligns with academic progress expectations for first-time non-transfer students.

Q4: Are campuses permitted to require a student to “opt in” to the equitable grading policy before applying it?

No. Campus policies adopted under the equitable grading policy can’t be administered only upon student request or through an “opt-in” process. The policy sets equitable institutional standards for evaluating and applying coursework, not an individualized benefit that students must request.

Requiring students to opt in could result in inconsistent application, create unnecessary administrative barriers, and disadvantage students who are unaware of the policy or uncertain how to request its application.

Campuses should establish appropriate processes for students to seek clarification, request review, or appeal the application of a grading or transfer-credit determination. Such processes should supplement, not replace, the campus’s responsibility to apply equitable grading policies consistently in the first instance.

Q5: Can a student “opt out” of accepting transfer credit allowed under the equitable grading policy?

Generally, yes, where permitted by campus policy and where it is academically appropriate. A campus may establish a process allowing a student to decline, exclude, or defer the application of otherwise acceptable transfer coursework, including coursework accepted under an equitable grading policy, when the student determines that accepting the coursework would not support their academic goals or degree plan.

Campus policy should specify whether students may decline transfer credit entirely or only decline its application to specific requirements; whether declined coursework may later be applied; how the decision may affect degree progress, financial aid, prerequisite completion, repeat rules, or graduation requirements; and how the student’s decision is documented. Ideally, decisions should be made in consultation with an advisor.

Q6: May campuses exclude students seeking academic recovery or a “fresh start” from the equitable grading policy? ²

In clearly defined circumstances, yes. Campuses may establish separate policies governing students engaged in academic recovery, academic renewal, readmission, or similar “fresh start” pathways, provided such policies are clearly documented, academically grounded, and applied equitably.

These policies may recognize that students pursuing academic recovery present a distinct academic context from students whose prior coursework is evaluated through the standard transfer credit process. For example, a campus may determine that some prior coursework will not be applied, or will be applied differently, where doing so supports the student’s academic progress, successful reentry, or long-term degree completion and is consistent with institutional academic standards.

However, campuses may not use academic recovery or fresh-start policies to create a categorical exclusion of transfer students or to impose more restrictive standards on transfer coursework solely because it was completed at another institution. Any distinctions must be based on documented academic considerations and applied consistently across similarly situated students.

Q7: Are campuses required to apply the same grade threshold to all programs, departments, or degree requirements?

No. The policy does not require campuses to adopt a single grade threshold across all programs, departments, or academic requirements. Campuses may establish different grade thresholds for different academic contexts, such as major requirements, prerequisites, progression standards, clinical or professional requirements, licensure-related coursework, or accredited programs. However, any such threshold must be applied equitably to transfer and non-transfer (first-time) students subject to the same requirement.

For example, if a program requires a grade of C or higher in a prerequisite course for students to progress in a sequence, that standard must apply equally to comparable transfer coursework and in-residence coursework. A campus may not impose a higher threshold on transfer coursework solely because the coursework was completed at another institution.

Q8: If a campus accepts transfer coursework for credit, must the coursework also satisfy a specific major, general education, prerequisite, or degree requirement?

Campuses should, wherever possible, apply transfer coursework to satisfy specific course equivalencies, major requirements, general education requirements, prerequisites, progression requirements, or other degree requirements. Application to major, general education, prerequisite, progression, elective, or other degree requirements is generally more supportive of student academic progress and timely degree completion than application only as general elective credit.

Campuses may continue existing practices of accepting transfer coursework as elective credit where appropriate, however. A campus may determine that transfer coursework will apply only as elective credit where there is an academic basis for concluding that the coursework does not satisfy a

² Campuses are advised to carefully consider local policies regarding fresh start or academic recovery to be assured they align with relevant state and federal financial aid regulations.

specific requirement. However, elective credit should not be used as a routine or default substitute for applying transfer coursework to applicable degree requirements.

Q9: May campuses continue to recognize General Education coursework for requirement fulfillment only (e.g. when below a C), without awarding credit? ³

Only in limited circumstances. Campuses must first evaluate General Education coursework under the superseding applicable equitable transfer credit standards. Recognition of coursework for requirement fulfillment without the award of academic credit should not be used where credit can otherwise be awarded via equitable application. Requirement-only recognition should be limited to circumstances in which transfer credit cannot be awarded (for example, due to residency requirements) and where requirement-only recognition is the only allowable or applicable mechanism for acknowledging the student's prior coursework.

Q10: May a campus require a higher grade for transfer coursework to satisfy a prerequisite than it requires for students who completed the equivalent prerequisite in residence?

Generally, no. If a non-transfer (first-time) student may satisfy a prerequisite with a particular grade in an equivalent course completed at the receiving campus, a transfer student with comparable coursework and the same grade should generally be treated in the same manner.

A different standard may be permissible only where the campus has identified and documented an academic, accreditation, licensure, programmatic, or student-success rationale for the distinction. The rationale should explain why the different threshold is necessary in the applicable academic context and why the distinction does not create an inequitable condition.

Q11: How should campuses document the rationale for different treatment of transfer and in-residence coursework in policies?

Campuses should maintain documentation sufficient to explain the academic basis for any policy or practice that requires the campus to treat transfer coursework differently from comparable coursework completed in residence. The documentation should not impose an undue administrative burden; however, it should be sufficiently clear to establish that the distinction is deliberate, academically justified, and equitably applied to students in comparable academic circumstances.

Documentation may include – where appropriate – references to accreditation, licensure/certification requirements, program progression rules and other relevant academic considerations. Documentation should be maintained through appropriate campus processes and should be available to inform advising, transfer evaluation, degree audit configuration, student appeals, and future policy review. Documentation should be available via the campus catalog, bulletin or other student-facing academic policy set.

³ Please see the current SUNY General Education guidance which indicates that campuses must accept the requirement as fulfilled at minimum, where a campus certifies that a requirement has been completed. (See section III, iv.-ix. Accessible here: https://system.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/academic-affairs/general-education/suny-ge/MTP-SUNY-General-Education_Vol-25_No-1.pdf)

Campuses are not expected to maintain separate documentation for every individual student-level determination. Campuses should maintain sufficient documentation at the policy, program, course, or requirement level to explain the academic basis for standards or practices that will result in different treatment of transfer coursework.

Q12: Are campuses required to revise all existing grading or transfer-credit policies?

No. Campuses are expected to review relevant policies and practices to determine whether they are equitable, transparent, consistently applied, and supported by appropriate academic rationale where distinctions exist.

Following that review, a campus may determine that some existing policies already align with the Board policy. In other cases, revisions, clarifications, or additional documentation may be appropriate.

Q13: May campuses use degree audit systems or advising notes to implement policies before all catalog language is fully updated?

Yes, provided the campus has an approved or otherwise authorized policy basis for the practice and communicates the applicable standards clearly to students. Operational tools should not substitute for formal policy where formal policy is required.

Where full operational implementation requires additional time, campuses should identify the affected systems and processes and develop an appropriate implementation timeline in concert with the Office of Transfer and Articulation.

Q14: May campuses treat courses differently when the same transfer course is being used for different purposes?

Yes. The same transfer course may be treated differently depending on the academic requirement it is being used to satisfy. For example, a course may be accepted for elective credit but may not satisfy a major requirement if the major requires a higher grade, specific learning outcomes, accreditation-related content, or other program-specific standards.

Any distinction should be based on the academic requirement at issue, not solely on the transfer status of the coursework. Campus or program-level policy should clearly explain how coursework may apply differently to general education, electives, majors, prerequisites, progression standards, or graduation requirements.

Q15: How do we ensure that policies are equitable for both transfer and non-transfer (first-time) students?

Each campus shall define and implement equity standards consistent with its institutional mission, student population, and academic programs.

This policy does not require or seek to confer preferential treatment on transfer students or alter the academic standards applied to non-transfer (first-time) students. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that transfer and non-transfer (first-time) students are treated equitably through the

consistent application of academic standards, transparent criteria, and comparable expectations for student learning and progression.

Institutions shall assess whether transfer students are subject to more restrictive credit-awarding practices than students completing equivalent coursework at the home institution. Where comparable coursework completed by non-transfer (first-time) students would earn credit or satisfy academic requirements, transfer coursework shall be afforded equivalent consideration, absent a documented academic rationale for a different determination.

Campuses are expected to evaluate transfer coursework within the full academic context and to avoid the application of broad or categorical restrictions that may impede academic progress or result in inequitable outcomes. Equity, in this context, does not require identical treatment. Instead, it requires the fair, consistent, and transparent application of policies that result in comparable opportunities for academic progress and degree attainment.

Appendix – Policy Guidance Glossary of Terms

This section defines key terms used throughout the document to ensure clear, consistent, and aligned interpretation of policy provisions. These definitions may differ from the SIRIS definitions,⁴ which are used specifically for campus data reporting purposes.

Term	Definition
Academic Standing Criteria	Institutionally defined benchmarks (e.g., GPA thresholds, course completion requirements) used to determine good standing, probation, or eligibility for continuation.
Blanket Transfer Restriction	A policy that categorically imposes stricter academic standards on all transfer coursework compared to in-residence coursework, without individualized academic justification.
Campus Minimum Passing Grade	The lowest grade at which a course is considered successfully completed for credit at an institution.
Comparable Coursework	Courses that are determined by the receiving institution to be equivalent or sufficiently similar in content, learning outcomes, and rigor for the purpose of credit evaluation or requirement fulfillment.
Comparable Academic Circumstances	Situations in which students (transfer and non-transfer (first-time) students) are applying coursework toward the same or similar academic requirements under similar program conditions.
Coursework Completed in Residence	Courses taken at and awarded credit by the degree-granting (receiving) institution.
Equity / Equitable Treatment	The principle that policies are applied fairly and consistently across student groups, allowing for differences only when

⁴ SIRIS Data Glossary available here: <https://system.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/institutional-research/Glossary-of-Terms-Dec-1-2022.pdf>

	supported by a documented academic rationale. Equity does not require identical treatment in all cases.
Grade Threshold	The minimum grade required for a course to earn academic credit, and/or be applied toward a specific academic requirement.
Non-Letter Grade / Alternate Grading	Grades such as Pass/Fail, Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory, or Credit/No Credit that do not use a traditional letter-grade scale.
Non-Transfer (First-Time) Student	A student who initially enrolls at an institution with no prior postsecondary enrollment after high school graduation, rather than transferring from another postsecondary institution. The IPEDS-aligned term used in formal reporting is first-time student.
Progression Standard	A requirement students must meet to continue in a course sequence, major, or program (e.g., minimum GPA or grade in key courses).
Receiving Institution	The institution evaluating and awarding credit for coursework completed elsewhere.
Requirement Fulfillment	Recognition that coursework satisfies a specific academic requirement, regardless of whether additional credit is awarded.
Student Success Considerations	Specifically identified factors related to persistence, retention, timely graduation, and academic achievement that inform policy decisions.
Transfer GPA (Grade Point Average)	The grade point average calculated on coursework eligible for transfer from prior institution(s). This measure may be used for evaluative or analytical purposes (e.g., admissions decisions or the assessment of transfer credit eligibility) but is not a required or standardized category of grade point average for reporting purposes.