Transferring Credit: Information for Incoming Transfer Students to the College of Arts & Sciences

Provided by College of Arts & Sciences Advising:
Transfer Compass, 2026 Version

Transferring Credit

Getting started quickly on the process of requesting transfer credit is important. Since the credit you are awarded by Penn departments should inform your course choices for fall, you want to know what transfer credit you will receive as soon as possible.

During the Admissions process, you were given an *estimate* of transfer credit you *might* receive if you enrolled at Penn. Now is the time for you to submit individual credit requests to specific academic departments for their review and potential approval.

To request transfer credit for a course through a Penn department, you will use XCAT (the External Course Approval Tool). ***Note that a minimum grade of C** is required for a course to be eligible for transfer credit. Any grade you earned in a course at your previous institution that is approved for transfer credit will not appear on the Penn transcript, but the Penn course title and credit will.

How to Submit Transfer Requests through XCAT

To request transfer credit for a course through a Penn department, log in to XCAT (External Credit Approval Tool) from the Path@Penn landing page.

XCAT is the system through which you will submit course syllabi and other supporting materials from your previous institution. (Note that XCAT is also used for several types of external credit requests including "study abroad" and summer "credit away" credit, but as entering transfer students, you should choose **"transfer credit"** for your requests at this point in your Penn career.)

Each course taken at your previous college or university should be individually submitted for review to an appropriate academic department at Penn. **Choosing the department or program to which you submit each request will sometimes be easy to figure out, but in cases where you are unsure, ask your College advisor for advice.**

How to Submit an XCAT Request – Brief PDF:
https://www.college.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/files/Use-XCAT-to-Request-External-Credit.pdf

Step-by-step (more detailed) Guide on Submitting a Request for Transfer Credit:

1. From Path@Penn, click on XCAT

2. On the XCAT welcome page, select "New External Credit Request."

3. Select "Start a New Request"

4. Select the "Transfer" credit type and click "Next"

5. Enter the Institution name and Term you took the course, and then click in the "Precedent List" box. If the course you took is not listed, select "Proceed without a Precedent"

6. Enter the Course Title, Subject, and Course ID; upload syllabus and other supporting documentation (optional) and click "Next"

7. You may select up to three Subject Areas from the dropdown options. Then click "Next."

    A. However, you *don't need* to select more than one department. Only do so if you think there are multiple departments that might approve your request.

    B. Since XCAT is used by the entire university, there are departments listed as options in other schools, including graduate programs. *You will get the best results if you send requests to undergraduate departments in the College of Arts and Sciences (see the list below #8).* Ask your pre-major advisor for help if you are having trouble determining to which department(s) you should send your requests.

    C. **Don't choose "College" (or COLL) in XCAT, as that is an administrative entity and not an academic department. You willnot receive credit via COLL.

8. Review your request and click "Submit."

List of Departments/Programs to request undergraduate transfer credit from:

COLLEGE CREDIT-GRANTING DEPARTMENTS:	Hispanic Studies
	History
African Languages	History of Art
Africana Studies	International Relations
Ancient History	Italian Studies
Anthropology	Jewish Studies
Architecture	Latin American and Latinx Studies
Biology	Linguistics
Chemistry	Mathematics
Cinema and Media Studies	Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures
Classical Studies	Music
Cognitive Science	Neuroscience
Communication	Philosophy
Comparative Literature	Physics
Criminology	Political Science
Design	Psychology
Earth and Environmental Science	Religious Studies
East Asian Languages and Civilizations	Russian and East European Studies
	Science, Technology and Society
Economics	Sociology
English	South Asia Studies
Environmental Studies	Theatre Arts
Fine Arts	Urban Studies
French and Francophone Studies	Visual Studies
Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies	
	Non-College Depts to which Students
German	**Sometimes Submit Credit Requests:**
Health and Societies	Computer Science (in Engineering)
	Statistics (in Business)

How to Review & Update Your Submitted XCAT Requests

Once you have submitted transfer requests, you should check on the status of your course requests in XCAT by clicking "view my submitted requests" in the home menu.

XCAT functions as a communication tool between the student, the reviewing departments, the student's home school advisor, and the Registrar. The reviewing department may ask you to upload more information before they make a determination on whether to award credit, and they will communicate that to you through XCAT.

How to Review and Update Your Submitted Request – Brief PDF: https://www.college.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/files/View-Your-Submitted-External-Credit-Requests-in-XCAT.pdf

- **"In department queue"** means the course is awaiting action from a department and has not yet been approved. Departments are asked to review a request within two weeks of submission. *(An important exception to the 2-week expected turn-around is language courses. Often for language class requests, the departments will request that you take a placement exam during New Student Orientation, so their final determination on credit won't come until the first week of classes.)* You can check on the status of your request if it has not been reviewed by emailing the department's contact for credit evaluation.

- **"More Information Required"** means the department is asking you for more information about the course. They might request a more detailed syllabus or

essays you submitted for the course, or they might ask you to take a proficiency exam. You should respond to their questions through XCAT. Once you enter a response to their question and/or upload the information requested, ***send the XCAT request back to the department*** so that they can review your answer and/or the new material you submitted.

- **"Approved, in Division queue"** means that a department has approved the course and the course is awaiting transcript verification by your College pre-major advisor. You should not upload a copy of your transcript into XCAT. Your College advisor will use the official copy on file with Admissions for verification and credit posting.

Note on updated transcript from previous institution: *If you have not already done so, make sure to ask your previous institution to send an updated official transcript directly to Admissions containing your final semester grades so that you can get transfer credit for that final semester of courses. The official transcript should be sent directly to Penn Admissions at* ***documents@admissions.upenn.edu****.*

Writing Transfer Credit for Juniors

For incoming transfer students with junior class standing: If you have entered a request in XCAT for writing credit (which should be submitted to WRIT), contact the Critical Writing Program to schedule the required diagnostic essay.

Note on Class Standing for Transfer Students

Transfer students are admitted as sophomores or juniors based on the number of semesters they have completed at their previous institution. Students who have questions concerning their class standing should contact the Office of Admissions. Questions concerning the curriculum should be addressed to an academic advisor in the College Office.

- Students who transfer to Penn as juniors are eligible to request transfer credit for a writing seminar. The Critical Writing Program's website will help students determine how to fulfill the Writing Requirement and whether credit from a previous institution is likely to be applicable.

- Students who transfer to Penn with junior standing are not eligible to apply for a dual degree program or for semester study abroad programs.

Note on Pass/Fail Grades and Transfer Credit

In order to be eligible for Penn equivalent credit, courses taken at a transfer student's previous institution must have earned a grade of C or better. If the course was taken on a pass/fail (or credit/no credit) basis, Penn credit may still be awarded.

Transfer students should review the pass/fail or credit/no credit policies of their previous institution: if a P or CR represents a grade of not less than a C, it will be possible to award credit **pending approval in XCAT**. If, however, a P or CR at the previous institution can represent a grade lower than a C, the transfer student should contact the instructor of any course taken this way and ask that person to confirm that the student earned a grade of C or better. This confirmation should be forwarded to the student's College advisor as confirmation that the credit is eligible for transfer.

Reminder: Send an updated transcript with final semester grades

If you have not already done so, **make sure to ask your previous institution to send an updated official transcript directly to Penn Admissions containing your final semester grades** so that you can receive transfer credit for that final semester of courses.

The official transcript should be sent directly to Penn Admissions at **documents@admissions.upenn.edu**.