

John Carroll University Educational Policy Proposal

Date: September 2020 (updated 12/7/2020)

Authors/Sponsors: UCEP

Policy Name: Revisions to Transfer Credit Evaluation

Time Sensitivity: Urgent to comply with DOE regulations

Population concerned (please circle one): **UG** GRAD BOTH

- Current University Policy - [Transfer Credit Evaluation](#)

The University offers new students two ways to receive transfer credits towards the John Carroll degree. Prior to matriculation students may earn college credits through 1) exams administered by major testing programs, or 2) course work taken at regionally accredited or CHEA recognized institutions of higher education or their foreign equivalents. Initial determination of credit transferability occurs at the time of evaluation for admission. All requests for transfer of credits earned prior to matriculation must be submitted by the end of the second semester after matriculation.

Currently enrolled students may also receive transfer credit for course work taken at another regionally accredited or CHEA recognized academic institution or a foreign equivalent. To ensure transferability of credits after matriculation, students must have an approved petition in advance of taking courses through University-approved study abroad programs or at other regionally accredited institutions. Students are responsible for having their transcripts sent directly to the University Registrar.

Courses proposed for transfer credit must be completed with a C or higher (not Pass/Fail, unless it can be determined that the passing mark is equivalent to a C or higher). Courses completed at non-regionally accredited institutions or programs (e.g., the Washington Center, Disney Executive program) will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. All courses are reviewed by department chairs, program directors, and academic deans using the following criteria:

- **Acceptability:** course work acknowledged by the University as having met standards for evaluation and award of undergraduate transfer credit, independent of delivery method.
- **Comparability:** the course work is comparable in content, expectations, and credit hours to courses offered at John Carroll.
- **Applicability:** the course work is deemed appropriate for use within a degree program to fulfill specific requirements.

(These definitions will also appear in the Bulletin's glossary.)

Some restrictions apply. John Carroll does not accept remedial courses, English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, or courses taken as part of Technical Preparation programs. John Carroll does not award credit for prior learning experiences that are not included on an official transcript from a regionally-accredited institution, or a foreign equivalent (see below for exceptions for military training). Qualitatively, credits from other schools must be within one credit hour of comparable work at John Carroll. Quality points and grades are not transferred, only credits. **A minimum of 30 credit hours must be completed in residence at John Carroll.** At least 50% of the credits for the major must be earned at John Carroll or through an approved dual-degree or study-abroad program. **The limit of transfer credit from a two-year institution is 60 semester hours.**

Credit will be given for courses completed under the auspices of the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES), providing they are equivalent to those offered by John Carroll University. Credit may also be given for military training as indicated by the American Council on Education (ACE) credit

recommendations for training courses. Students with military training must submit an official JST transcript for evaluation.

- Revised or New University Policy

See revisions in red above.

- **Rationale and Discussion**

Back in 2017, John Carroll changed its transfer credit policy to require 50% of the degree (60 credits) and 50% of the major be done in residence at John Carroll. Since that time, we have seen a precipitous drop-off in the number of transfer applications and the number of transfer students. Our transfer population comes primarily from students who transfer from 4-year schools. While much work is needed to build better pipelines for students coming from 2-yr institutions, this policy change is necessary to promote a more transfer-friendly environment for our primary transfer audience. The proposed change keeps the 50% in the major rule, but requires a minimum of only 30 credits be completed at John Carroll. Students who are transferring in more than 45 credits qualify for the Transfer core, which requires 15 credits be taken in residence. Coupled with the 50% in the major rule, these students will have to complete 30 credits at a bare minimum. Given that most of our majors are more than 30 credits and that transfer courses do not align seamlessly from one school to another, students will most likely need to take more than the 30 credit minimum. Thus, we can ensure degree integrity and say with confidence that the student has completed a John Carroll degree.

UCEP has spoken with Financial Aid and addressed concerns about transferring in more than 60 credits and any aid implications. Our Financial Aid office reached out to other schools to see how they managed students with larger amounts of transfer credit and the feedback indicated that early counseling on how much aid a student still had available was crucial to that student's completion. The Admissions and Financial Aid Offices at John Carroll have a very strong relationship and everyone consulted felt that the counseling necessary for these students was already in place. Again, based on feedback from other institutions, the number of students who would be close to their aid limit would be very small. With counseling measures in place, concerns about SAP and aid eligibility are quite manageable.

One other concern that was raised was the issue of awarding, for instance, 100 credits to a transfer student, but that student would need well more than 20 to earn a degree (after factoring in core and major requirements). UCEP members were concerned this might appear to be a bait and switch. This is where a strong relationship between Admissions and advising on campus are important. With the implementation of Degree Works in the next year or so, we will have the capacity to show transfer students exactly what transferred and how it applies to their degree plan. We have not had this ability prior to this and it makes it difficult for transfer students to determine how many semesters it would take for them to finish at JCU. With investments in advising and advisors on campus, and the implementation of Degree Works, we will be able to counsel incoming transfer students more effectively on what their degree path looks like and how long it will take them to finish. This information is paramount to the decision-making process for transfer students. UCEP felt that addressing the questions of degree completion through advising and planning addressed the concerns of a bait and switch.

To conclude, this is the first step in changing the perception that John Carroll is not a transfer-friendly institution. It will directly impact our largest transfer audience and set the stage for other initiatives. The proposed revision takes a balanced approach to degree integrity, the need for a residency requirement, as well as financial aid and advising concerns. It provides flexibility and demonstrates a desire to work with transfer students.

Implementation Timeline, Budget, and Recommendations

These revisions need to be included in the 2021-2022 Bulletin and shared with the Admissions Office for updating their respective documentation. There are only positive budget implications.

- **Appendix Documents**

Similar AJCU schools, as well as local Cleveland and other competitor schools were reviewed in developing this proposal. This proposed revision puts JCU squarely in line with other schools while maintaining our Jesuit degree integrity. [The benchmarking data](#) is available for review.