

1. Purpose

ADA University strives to ensure the high quality and integrity of its degrees. This requires that credits and degrees be awarded only to students who have fully and at least satisfactorily fulfilled all requirements of their respective courses and programs. It also presupposes that credits that were previously awarded by other institutions of higher education and that are to be transferred to ADA University fully meet the standards set forth by ADA University for its degree programs. The purpose of this document is to define such standards and requirements and provide a framework for the awarding of in-residence credits as well as for the assessment of non-residence credits requested for transfer.

Azerbaijan is part of the European Union's Eastern Partnership, and this partnership also extends to the field of education. As a result, and to enable its students to fully benefit from the opportunities opened by this partnership, ADA University bases its credit system on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). In addition, and as a part of its strategy of internationalization, ADA University aims to ensure that its credit regulations are translatable into the standards of the U.S. system of higher education.

2. Scope and Recommendations

These regulations apply to all undergraduate and graduate degree programs and to all credit-based certificates at ADA University.

Teachers are expected to clearly define learning outcomes and workload expectations for any learning activity leading to the awarding of academic credit. Workload expectations must comply with the rules defined in this document. Learning outcomes must correspond to the standards set forth in ADA University's *Core Competence and Learning Outcome Specification Policy*.

Students who intend to transfer credit to ADA University earned either prior to or during their enrollment for a degree program at ADA University are expected to thoroughly familiarize themselves with the rules and procedures set forth in this document.

3. Definitions

The following definitions are based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS):

1. *Credit* or *Credit Hour* is defined as a quantified means of expressing a specific volume of learning. This volume is composed of clearly defined learning outcomes and of the workload associated with the achievement of these outcomes. Credit hours are not identical to contact hours or with 60-minute hours.
2. *Learning Outcomes* are statements of what a student is expected to know, understand and be able to demonstrate upon the completion of a course or degree program.
3. *Workload* is defined as an estimation of the time a student typically needs to complete all learning activities required to achieve expected learning outcomes. Learning activities include lectures and seminars, projects, practical work and internships, as well as independent study activities and examinations. Workload is therefore not calculated based on contact hours or class time alone.

4. *Contact Hour* or *Class Time* is defined as a specific period of time students spend on activities guided by teaching staff.

4. Credit Hours

4.1 Calculation of Credits

- a. At ADA University, 1 contact hour consists of 37.5 minutes.
- b. Fall semester and Spring semester include 15 weeks of instruction, while Summer term consists of 6 weeks of instruction.
- c. At ADA University, 1 credit hour represents 25 minutes of class time and 95 minutes of further learning activities per week. This is equivalent to 6.25 hours of class time and 23.75 hours of further learning activities per semester (based on a 60-minute hour).
- d. 1 credit hour accordingly corresponds to a semester workload of 30 hours (based on a 60-minute hour). Compared to the U.S. credit system, where a semester credit hour consists of a semester workload of 45 to 48 hours (based on a 50-minute hour) or of 37.5 to 40.0 hours (based on a 60-minute hour), 2 credit hours at ADA University approximately correspond to 1.5 credit hours within the U.S. credit system. (Against the high-quality background of U.S. university degrees, ADA University usually accepts credits earned at U.S. institutions of higher education based on a conversion rate of 1 U.S. semester credit hour being equivalent to 2 ECTS.)
- e. Most courses at ADA University award 6 credit hours. This is equivalent to 150 minutes of class time (= 4 contact hours) and 570 minutes of further learning activities per week and to 37.5 hours of class time (= 60 contact hours) and 142.5 hours of further learning activities per semester.

4.2 Awarding of Credits

- a. Credits are awarded for all learning activities that are required by any of the degree programs and credit-based certificates offered at ADA University.
- b. Credits are only awarded if a student has completed the expected workload and achieved the previously stated learning outcomes associated with a specific unit of study or volume of learning. The evaluation of student achievement and workload completion (including minimum grade requirements for the awarding of credit) is based on ADA University's *Student Assessment Regulations*.

4.3 Credit Hour Requirements

- a. A typical Bachelor's degree program requires at least 240 credit hours to be earned by the student. This entails the successful completion of approximately 40 courses, depending on the respective degree program. Translated into the U.S. semester credit hour system, a typical Bachelor's degree program at ADA University consists of approximately 180 semester credit hours. Further requirements are detailed in ADA University's *Undergraduate Degree Regulations*.
- b. A typical Master's degree program requires at least 90 credit hours to be earned by the student (including an Independent Study Project). Translated into the U.S. semester credit hour system, a typical Master's degree program at ADA University consists of approximately (a minimum of) 67.5 semester credit hours. Further requirements are detailed in ADA University's *Graduate Degree Regulations*.
- c. Credit hours are used to determine student enrollment status. Students are considered full-time if they register for a minimum number of credit hours per semester (for details, see the University's *Academic Catalogue*).

5. Transfer Credit

5.1 In-Residence and Non-Residence Credits

- a. Credits are considered in-residence if they are awarded to full-time, part-time, non-degree and incoming exchange students in courses taken at ADA University, or in courses coordinated by an academic unit of ADA University in any instructional modality.
- b. Credits are considered non-residence if they are transferred to ADA University, and/or if they have been awarded by another institution of higher education during a student's enrollment for a degree program at ADA University. The latter requires that the student received a prior permit from ADA University to study at another institution.
- c. Some ADA University courses and learning activities are conducted at physical sites other than the ADA University campus. They are typically considered as in-residence courses and learning activities. In most cases, students receive in-residence credits for such courses and learning activities.

5.2 General Rules for the Transfer of Credit from Other Institutions

- a. ADA University accepts transfer credits mainly for courses taught in English. Credits for courses taught in another language can only be transferred in exceptional cases and after prior approval by the Dean (or designee) of the School that serves as the administrative home of the student's degree program.
- b. Students may not receive graduate credit for any learning activity designated as solely undergraduate at the institution where the learning activity was completed.
- c. The acceptance of credit requested for transfer is subject to minimum grade requirements. These are applicable to each individual course for which the transfer of credit is requested (see chapters 5.3 and 5.5 below). Grades are evaluated according to ADA University's grading scale. The conversion of grades is based on the *Credit Transfer Manual* that is in effect during the academic year in which a student enrolls or re-enrolls at ADA University.
- d. Approved transfer credit will be posted to the student's transcript. All transferred credits, courses and grades will be clearly marked as coming from another institution of higher education. Grades from approved transfer courses taken at another institution will not count towards a student's cumulative GPA at ADA University. Yet, approved transfer credit will count towards the total number of credits needed for graduation.

5.3 Transfer of Credit Earned Prior to Enrollment at ADA University

- a. Undergraduate students may request to transfer credit for courses taken at another accredited institution prior to their admission to ADA University. The total number of credits transferred for a single degree program is subject to in-residence degree requirements (for details, see the University's *Undergraduate Degree Regulations*) and may not exceed 30 credits (if they are to be transferred from an international institution) or 12 credits (if they are to be transferred from an Azerbaijani institution). Courses proposed for transfer must have been completed with a grade of C or better (after conversion to ADA University's grading scale) and must have been completed no more than 3 years prior to the beginning of the semester for which the student is seeking admission to ADA University.
- b. Graduate students may request to transfer credit for courses taken at another accredited institution prior to their admission to ADA University. The total number of credits transferred for a single degree program is subject to in-residence degree requirements (for details, see the University's *Graduate Degree Regulations*) and may not exceed 18 credits (if they are to be transferred from an international institution) or 12 credits (if they are to be transferred from an Azerbaijani institution). Courses proposed for transfer must have been completed with a grade of B- or better (after conversion to ADA University's grading scale) and must have been completed no more than 2 years prior to the beginning of the semester for which the student is seeking admission to ADA University.

- c. The transfer of credit must be approved prior to a student's admission to ADA University. Responsibility for the approval or denial of transfer credit rests with the Dean (or designee) of the School that serves as the administrative home of the student's degree program.
- d. Students must provide the Office of Admissions and Student Records with an official transcript from the institution at which the proposed course(s) was (were) completed. They must also include a syllabus for each course for which the transfer of credits is requested. The Office will submit all documents received to the respective Dean (or designee).
- e. The Dean (or designee) will inform the Office of Admissions and Student Records of credits and courses approved for transfer. The Office will update the student's transcript accordingly.
- f. After prior approval, credits for in-residence courses that are part of a graduate degree program at ADA University and that were earned before the admission to a subsequent graduate degree program at ADA University may be shared. There is no maximum number of credits that can be shared. Responsibility for the approval or denial of shared credit rests with the Dean (or designee) of the School that serves as the administrative home of the subsequent graduate program. Sharing credit is only permissible if the respective course(s) was (were) completed with a grade of B- or better (based on ADA University's grading scale).

5.4 Studying at Another Institution

- a. Undergraduate and graduate students of ADA University may participate in an exchange program and thus take courses at another institution of higher education, provided that the institution of higher education is an international partner institution of ADA University. Students who wish to participate in one of ADA University's exchange programs must meet the requirements and conditions and successfully complete the application process outlined in 5.4.b to 5.4.p.
- b. Students may study for one semester at another institution if they wish to transfer credits earned at that institution to ADA University. They may reapply for a second semester at an international partner institution, but they will not be able to transfer credits earned during that period (for details on the transfer of credit, see chapter 5.5 below). This may result in a delayed graduation date. Priority will be given to those students who have not yet taken part in an exchange program.
- c. Undergraduate students must have completed the first 60 credits of their respective degree program in residence and have a minimum of 2.50 cumulative GPA at the time of their application for an exchange program. In addition, students must be in residence during their final semester. Students are not permitted to study at another institution at that time.
- d. Graduate students must have completed the first 18 credits of their respective degree program in residence and have a minimum of 3.00 cumulative GPA at the time of their application for an exchange program. In addition, students must be in residence during their final semester. Students are not permitted to study at another institution at that time.
- e. Exchange programs offering scholarships or any other kind of financial aid are available to all students with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 at the time of their application for the program. Students must also meet any other requirement set forth by the prospective host institution.
- f. Students with a violation of ADA University's *Honor Code* and/or the *Student Code of Conduct* on their record are not eligible to apply for an exchange program.
- g. There are two application cycles per academic year, starting at the beginning of the Fall semester and the Spring semester.
- h. Before the beginning of each semester, and after having consulted with Deans, Associate Deans and Academic Advisors, the University's Office of Global Outreach and Partners will provide students with a current overview of all exchange programs and courses available. It will furthermore support students in all academic matters related to their application for an exchange program and at the prospective host institution.

- i. During the application period, and based on their priorities, students can apply for four exchange programs by using the University's application form that can be found [here](#) on the University's website.
- j. Once the application period has ended, students will be selected and nominated for an exchange program based on their prior academic performance (cumulative GPA and number of completed credits).
- k. The Office of Global Outreach and Partners will announce the results of the selection process and inform those students that were nominated for an exchange program. They will be requested to confirm their participation in or their withdrawal from a program within two days after the announcement has been made.
- l. Places of students that withdrew will be offered to students on a waiting list.
- m. Upon the completion of the nomination process, the Office of Global Outreach and Partners will send official nomination letters to all the relevant partner institutions. Students must provide all the application documents required by their prospective host institution and by ADA University well before the end of the semester preceding the beginning of their anticipated studies abroad. This includes a learning agreement that must be completed (using ADA University's *Learning Agreement Form*) in consultation with the student's Academic Advisor and that must be confirmed by the Office of Admissions and Student Records. Confirmation is required for each course and for the number of credits proposed for transfer to ADA University. Students may additionally be requested to complete a second learning agreement from the partner institution (this is obligatory for ERASMUS+ exchange programs).
- n. After having received an acceptance letter from their prospective host institution, it is the students' responsibility to ensure that they complete all the formal requirements (including visa and accommodation arrangements) in a comprehensive and timely manner.
- o. Students temporarily enrolled at another institution are strongly recommended to take only courses taught in English. In exceptional cases, when proposed courses are not taught in English at the host institution, students may be permitted to take courses in another language. This is subject to the prior approval by the Dean (or designee) of the School that serves as the administrative home of their respective degree program. Approval may only be granted if students meet the language requirement of the receiving institution.
- p. Retaking a course at another institution is only possible if the first attempt at ADA University was assigned a Withdrawal (W).
- q. Students who participate in an exchange program and are thus permitted to study at another institution will be placed on temporary leave for the respective semester. Upon the termination of their leave, they will be re-enrolled at ADA University.

5.5 Transfer of Credit from Another Institution During Enrollment at ADA University

- a. After their return to ADA University, and to transfer credits earned during their stay at another institution, students are required to meet with their Academic Advisor to complete the *Credit Transfer Form*. They must provide the Academic Advisor with an official transcript from the institution at which the course(s) and credits proposed for transfer were completed and with a syllabus for each course for which the transfer of credit is requested.
- b. Students must submit the completed *Credit Transfer Form* and the official transcript from the host institution to the Office of Admissions and Student Records.
- c. Undergraduate students may transfer up to 30 credits from an international institution of higher education.
- d. Graduate students may transfer up to 18 credits from an international institution of higher education.
- e. Credits for courses will not be transferred if (after conversion to ADA University's grading scale) the grade of a course for which the transfer of credit is requested is below C for undergraduate students, or below B- for graduate students. Neither will such credits count towards the total number of credits required for graduation.

- f. The Office of Admissions and Student Records will update the student's transcript at ADA University based on the information submitted by the student and according to the regulations delineated in 5.5.c to 5.5.e.