

# Guidelines for Transfer Credit Examiners

SHASS Dean's Office, August 24, 2022

## General Information

- In general, two types of students will come to you seeking transfer credit: students who started their studies elsewhere and transferred to MIT, and regular MIT students who have taken classes elsewhere under a variety of circumstances (study abroad, summer sessions, etc.)
- Students of either kind request credit through the form entitled "MIT Request for Additional Credit Based on Subject(s) Completed at Outside Institution", which is available from the Registrar's Office: [registrar.mit.edu/registration-academics/transfer-credit](https://registrar.mit.edu/registration-academics/transfer-credit). Questions concerning this form may be directed to the Registrar's Office at [hassreq@mit.edu](mailto:hassreq@mit.edu).
- The Registrar's Office strongly recommends that students receive a grade of A or B in order to qualify for transfer credit.
- Currently enrolled MIT students are advised to talk with the appropriate Transfer Credit Examiner before taking a subject away from MIT. This is not required by the Institute (except for students planning to study abroad). Since you would be making predictions based on incomplete information, you are not bound by any advice you have given in advance, but we recommend assigning the credit you've agreed upon unless the subject content differs significantly from what was pre-approved. If students contact you in advance, use that opportunity to inform them of all requirements.
- You are under no obligation to grant any transfer credit. If you believe the work done at another institution is insufficient in quality or quantity to warrant MIT credit, you may deny credit. If you believe the work is insufficient for HASS credit, but warrants some acknowledgement, you may want to assign general unrestricted elective credit.
- HASS Elective credit may be approved for subjects completed outside of MIT, when appropriate. Subjects should be evaluated in relation to a similar subjects offered at MIT before being approved to count towards HASS Requirement.
- HASS Distribution credit for subjects completed outside of MIT is almost never allowed. Normally, students may count subjects taken at other institutions towards the HASS Requirement as elective subjects. In certain exceptional instances, students may petition the Subcommittee on the HASS Requirement for distribution credit. Questions about petitioning for HASS Distribution credit should be directed to the Registrar's Office at [hassreq@mit.edu](mailto:hassreq@mit.edu).

## Assigning Credit

- You should require that the student provide a grade report, syllabus, and as much additional material as possible, including assignment sheets and samples of written work. A catalog description is ordinarily insufficient unless it is a class you know well.
- Please factor in which university offered the subject in question. The host institution is one of the considerations in deciding what kind of credit and how many units to grant. Based on your judgment, if there is some question about the rigor or depth of a subject, you may grant general elective instead of HASS elective credit, or six units instead of nine or twelve.
- If you believe the work warrants MIT credit, you have the following options:

- Grant the subject “General Unrestricted Elective Credit” and state the number of units on the form. These units will count as general unrestricted elective credit toward the student’s graduation requirements.
- Grant the subject generic “HASS-E Credit” and state the number of units on the form. (A HASS-Elective must be at least 9 units.) This subject may count toward the eight-subject HASS Requirement. Departments have the option of accepting these units toward the student’s major, minor, or concentration.
- Recommended in most cases: assign a specific MIT subject number and assign “HASS-E Credit Only.” This provides the best of both worlds by making it obvious what the subject matter is while reserving the distribution credit for those subjects not transferred in.
- Assign “CI-H Credit,” “CI-HW Credit,” “CI-M Credit,” “HASS-A Credit,” “HASS-H Credit,” or “HASS-S Credit.” These options are rarely appropriate and require official approval by other entities. (See below.)
- Assign an MIT subject number with a HASS-A, HASS-H, or HASS-S designation. This is very rare. If you assign an MIT subject number, the transferred subject will count exactly as that MIT subject (with the same number of units, same title, and any of its HASS-E, HASS-A, HASS-H, HASS-S, HASS-D, CI-H, CI-HW, and/or CI-M designations). Choose this option only when the transfer subject corresponds almost exactly to the MIT subject in terms of content, workload, and overall experience (and if there is a specific reason why the student needs the subject to be listed with a course number on his/her transcript). You should assign the number of a CI-H subject only if all the mechanical criteria have been met.

## Assigning Specific Credit

If you assign anything other than general unrestricted elective credit, additional approval is needed.

- Any form of HASS credit requires approval from the SHASS Dean’s Office. You may seek such approval by emailing <[shass-ug@mit.edu](mailto:shass-ug@mit.edu)>, from where your request will be forwarded to the Dean’s Office for approval.
- HASS-A, HASS-H, or HASS-S credit requires additional approval from the Subcommittee on the HASS Requirement (SHR). Almost all MIT HASS subjects carry a designation for one of the HASS categories. Once a department’s transfer credit examiner recommends distribution credit for a subject, the student must then petition SHR for approval. For more information, refer to the HASS Requirement website at: <https://registrar.mit.edu/registration-academics/academic-requirements/hass-requirement/substitutions-within-hass-requirement> or contact the Registrar’s Office at <[hassreq@mit.edu](mailto:hassreq@mit.edu)>.
- CI-H, CI-HW, or CI-M credit must be approved by the Subcommittee on the Communication Requirement (SOCR). Once a department’s transfer credit examiner recommends CI credit for a subject, the student must then petition SOCR for approval. Questions about the petition process should be directed to the Assistant Dean for the Communication and HASS Requirements at <[commreq@mit.edu](mailto:commreq@mit.edu)>.

## College Subjects Taken during High School

If a student asks you to approve transfer credit for a college or university subject taken while the student was still in high school, the following restrictions apply:

- The student must have an official transcript from the university or college.
- The student must have received a grade of A or B.

MIT has no further restrictions on transfer credit for high school subjects. If a student has received an A or B, and can produce a college transcript, credit may be assigned at your discretion. That said, we recommend that you keep the following in mind:

- Were there high school or college students in the class? (If the class was physically on a college campus, but was made up of several high school students, we do not recommend GIR credit.)
- Did the class count towards the student's high school graduation requirements? (If the class shows up on a high school transcript, we do not recommend GIR credit.)
- Was the class in question rigorous enough to substitute for one of the student's eight required HASS courses?

## Subjects taken Abroad

- Students will occasionally take subjects at universities outside of the United States. The host institution is an important consideration when assigning transfer credit, but not all MIT professors are familiar with international universities. The MISTI Office (<https://studyabroad.mit.edu/>, [misti@mit.edu](mailto:misti@mit.edu), E40-4th floor, 617-258-0385) may be consulted if you need more information about an international university's curriculum or reputation.
- Students planning to study abroad are required to submit a "Worksheet for Study Abroad" (<https://studyabroad.mit.edu/study-abroad/prepare-your-trip/transfer-credit>), which outlines the subjects that they are planning to take and requires TCE approval. Please carefully review these plans, as students studying abroad usually count on the credit that has been pre-approved.
- Sometimes subjects taken abroad are language subjects that can be reviewed by Course 21G Global Languages, but sometimes these subjects are other HASS subjects that just happen to have been taught in another language. For example, a student could take a French history subject in French, for which s/he should consult the History TCE. Students should consult the appropriate TCE for the subject matter, but other professors may also be consulted for translation if necessary. We do not recommend that TCE's base decisions on the students' translation alone, but it is usually possible to find another professor who is capable of translating or summarizing the subject matter. This is handled on a case-by-case basis, so feel free to contact [<shass-ug@mit.edu>](mailto:shass-ug@mit.edu) with any questions.

## Online or Hybrid Subjects

There is no formal rule banning transfer credit for a subject taken wholly or partly online, but it is currently discouraged by SHASS. Should you encounter an online or hybrid course you believe is rigorous enough to count for one of a student's eight required HASS subjects, you may assign HASS Elective credit as appropriate. However, we do not recommend this at the present time.

## Subjects for which Transfer Credit May Not Be Granted

- Advanced Placement (AP) credit may not be used to satisfy any part of the HASS Requirement. Students may not receive credit for HASS subjects through advanced placement. HASS Transfer

Credit Examiners should have nothing to do with AP; students can be referred to the Office of Undergraduate Advising and Academic Programming (UAAP).

- Subjects taken at a secondary school, whether in the U.S. or in another country, should never be granted transfer credit. This is true even if the student has completed a total of thirteen years of schooling at the end of secondary school. (Keep in mind that different terms for secondary and tertiary institutions are used in other countries; Kolleg or Collegio, for instance, might not be the same as “college” in the United States.)
- Subjects taken at unaccredited and/or non-degree-granting post-secondary institutions should never be granted transfer credit. This often applies to religious institutions but applies to secular institutions as well.