



Cornell University

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Subject: Memorandum:
[Receiving Cornell chemistry course credit for a chemistry course taken elsewhere](#)
Date: April 14, 2015
From: Director of Undergraduate Studies
Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology
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One of the jobs of the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology's Director of Undergraduate Studies (C&CB DUS) is assessing whether an Arts and Sciences student should be awarded Cornell chemistry course credit for a chemistry course taken outside of Cornell University. The DUS also makes informal recommendations to Directors of Undergraduate Studies on awarding Cornell chemistry course transfer credit to students in other Colleges within Cornell.

The previous C&CB DUS would only award transfer credit for a course (1) taken at a school whose chemistry degree is certified by the American Chemical Society that (2) would be acceptable for a chemistry major at that school. This requirement meant that a Cornell A&S student could not receive transfer credit for a course taken at a community college in the U.S. This requirement also, unfortunately, excluded from consideration any course taken abroad. *The present DUS has revisited this rule and is now willing to consider recommending transfer credit for courses taken abroad.* This is a significant change, because it takes between 30 and 60 minutes to evaluate a transfer-credit request for a non-ACS-approved chemistry course.

The purpose of this memo is to list and explain the information that a student must present to the C&CB DUS when applying for transfer credit. To accelerate the evaluation of transfer credit from foreign universities, I explain below in some detail the information that I need in order to consider awarding transfer credit for a course taken abroad.

CHEMISTRY TRANSFER CREDIT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Before taking a course outside Cornell, read the following checklist carefully. If you have any questions then please discuss the course with the Director of Undergraduate Studies for Chemistry and Chemical Biology *before* taking it (chemdus@cornell.edu, jam99@cornell.edu).

A. DOMESTIC

1. We do not accept transfer credit from community colleges in the U.S.

2. If transfer credit is sought from a 4-year college or university in the U.S., then the school must offer an **American Chemical Society (ACS) approved chemistry degree**. For a list of ACS-approved chemistry programs, please see:

<http://chemistry.cornell.edu/courses/transfer-credit.cfm> or
<http://tinyurl.com/lz3qogq>

3. The course must be **acceptable for a student majoring in chemistry** at that school.

Quite a few ACS-certified degree programs elsewhere offer special premedical chemistry courses that are not rigorous enough to count towards an ACS-certified chemistry degree. That is not the case here. Cornell's premed general chemistry courses, Chem 2070 and 2080, are rigorous courses that count towards the chemistry degree. If you are seeking transfer credit for Chem 2070/2080, then we require that the course(s) elsewhere likewise be rigorous enough to count towards an ACS-certified chemistry degree.

B. FOREIGN

The C&CB DUS, at his or her discretion, may consider accepting transfer credit from an institution outside the U.S. The following criteria are used to evaluate an application to receive transfer credit for a Cornell chemistry course.

1. Does the course have a **laboratory**?
 - a. If the course *does not* have a lab, then you may only seek credit for a Cornell chemistry course without a lab. Cornell chemistry courses without a lab include Chem 1150 (3 credits; The Language of Chemistry), Chem 1570 (3 credits; Introduction to Organic and Biological Chemistry), and upper-level lecture courses.
 - b. If the summer course *does* have a lab, or has a separate lab course that you also take, then you may apply for credit for a 4-credit chemistry course with an integrated lab – Chem 1560, Chem 2070, Chem 2080, or Chem 2090, for example.
2. To assess whether the course is comparable in **course hours** to a Cornell course, I need to know the following information:
 - a. How many lecture hours?
 - b. How many laboratory hours?
 - c. How many problem sets?
 - d. How many exams (in units of hours)?

For comparison, a 4-credit Cornell chemistry course will have 42 hours of lecture, at least 5.5 hours of (hand-graded) examinations, approximately 25 hours of laboratory, and approximately 12 problem sets.

3. I need a detailed **course syllabus**. The syllabus should describe the *scientific content* of the course by, for example, giving a detailed list of the topics covered.
4. I need the following **course textbook** information: author(s), title, publisher, and year. Knowing the textbook helps me assess the rigor of the course.
5. Please give me the name, email, and title of the **courses instructor** so that I can contact them, if needed, with questions about the course structure or syllabus.

Revision history

- 2014/12/19. Original memo.
- 2015/04/14. Added requirement **A3** to spell out that the chemistry course taken elsewhere *must be acceptable for a chemistry major* at that (ACS certified) school.