

## INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS SEEKING COURSE EQUIVALENCY IN ECONOMICS

Students going on exchange should be aware that they face a substantial risk. The onus is on those who are seeking equivalency to provide convincing evidence that their work approximates what is expected at McGill. The reason for placing the onus there is that a McGill Economics degree provides a signal of quality in the outside world, for the many students who have taken or will take Economics at McGill. It is in the interest of all McGill Economics students for us to preserve the value of their degree. Consequently, course equivalency will be granted only if I am able to judge confidently that the course is indeed equivalent to one of ours or if it meets the standards our department would set if a course in examining the subject matter were given at McGill. In general, transfer credit is not granted for economics courses which are a part of the core courses in the student's programme. Many courses are not equivalent or may be equivalent to a lower number at McGill rather than the level being requested. Students going on exchange should also be aware that it frequently happens that a student arrives at a host university to find that a course that has been planned is not offered or is full.

The benefits of being away almost always compensate for these and other risks, however. There is at least one way to manage the risk that might be considered. Plan to take mainly elective courses unless there is a special reason to take an economics course at the host university. As far as I can tell, you will get full credit for electives if McGill has a formal agreement with the host university.

You should provide all the information that you can. Below is a list of criteria that are among those that guide my decisions. It is as complete as I have been able to make it, and I may add to it from time to time as I gain experience. You should consider the criteria when choosing the course, either before you go away or when you get to the host university. Usually I do not pre-approve a course, but I am willing to give some feedback on examples of *at most two* courses. If you wish to have the feedback, please put together a brief statement of how the proposed course or courses fit the criteria and then follow the procedure below.

I must still see the required information after a course is finished and you return to McGill, including a more elaborate statement of how the course fits the criteria.

### Criteria and Guidelines

1. The course must be rigorously analytical.
2. The course must have a comparable number of lecture hours to McGill courses. McGill's number, 39 hours per course, is on the high side. More common is 36. The number of lecture hours should not be far below 36.
3. If a student has gone to a university I know, I am more comfortable with making a favourable decision.
4. I am more sceptical of any course as the practices of the university or culture are more distanced from North-American practices or as the host country is less developed or less modern.
5. Closeness to our practices is no guarantee of acceptability, however. There are plenty of weak universities in North America.
6. *Ceteris paribus*, a better student has more credibility.
7. I am sceptical of any course that has a significant number of lectures given by individuals other than the instructor. The likelihood of my approving equivalency declines nearly to zero if external lecturers are not academic economists with strong research records.
8. Electronic courses are suspect for not having adequate quality control and transparency. Very careful documentation is required.
9. The relevance of the fact that other units at McGill may have approved courses in their disciplines is very limited.
10. I am even more careful if more than two Economics courses per semester are taken away from McGill.
11. Equivalency to a four-hundred-level course demands especially cautious evaluation.

### Procedure

**Practically all of the decisions and procedures can be handled by email.** Please do not telephone me or come to my office without an appointment. Instead, **please send to me by email** ([equivalency.econ@mcgill.ca](mailto:equivalency.econ@mcgill.ca)), for at most two courses prior to going away and for all courses after returning to McGill,

- (1) a detailed course outline or syllabus;
- (2) an up-to-date, unofficial transcript from McGill and from the university where the course was given;
- (3) the title of the textbook and list of readings if they are not in the outline; and, in the same file as the title and list,
- (4) a statement of performance in all Mathematics, Statistics and Economics courses listed on the transcripts; and, again in the same file,
- (5) a statement of how each course fits with the criteria.

Obviously, if you try to fool me and I find out, your request will be denied.

**Please be timely in your requests. It may take several days for me to get back to you. It may take weeks to reach a decision in complicated cases or if information is not adequate.**

Please do not bother the staff in the departmental office. They do not have the details of any request and in any case are very busy. If I reply to you that I have approved the course, please fill out the appropriate form on Minerva and submit it to me.

Professor Robert Cairns  
July 2013

## Transfer Credits & Course Equivalency in Economics

### Arts OASIS Transfer Credit Policy

Please review in its entirety: <http://www.mcgill.ca/oasis/transfercredits>

Information on this site as follows:

1. Overview
2. Which institutions are approved for transfer credit?
3. Which courses are acceptable or not acceptable for transfer credit?
4. What grade is required for transfer credit?
5. How many credits can I get?
6. Is there a form to fill in so that credits are indicated on my McGill record?
7. How are transfer credits processed?
8. Do I have to transfer credits completed at another approved host institution to my McGill BA degree?

### How to access the Course Approval and Transfer Credit Form in Minerva

1. Login to [Minerva](#)
2. Select the **Student Menu**.
3. Select the **Student Records Menu**.
4. Select **Exchange/Study Away Menu**.
5. Select **Request for Course Approval and Transfer Credits**.
6. Click on **Select** beside the application that you would like to access.
7. Select Prof. Robert Cairns ([equivalency.econ@mcgill.ca](mailto:equivalency.econ@mcgill.ca)) as the transfer credit evaluator.