

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY POLICY REGARDING RECOGNITION OF GRADUATE CREDITS EARNED AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS

I. Transfer of Previously Earned Graduate Theological School Credits

1. Students who have successfully undertaken graduate studies at a school accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) prior to their admission to Union Theological Seminary may request a transfer of credit(s) to be applied toward the credit requirements for the Union Master of Divinity or Master of Arts degrees. Transfer of previously earned credit is not accepted for the Master of Sacred Theology or Doctor of Philosophy degrees.
2. Normally, requests for transfer of credit are determined after one semester of full time study at the Seminary. However, incoming students may apply for an early credit-transfer determination by submitting a written application to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs no later than July 15th of the calendar year in which studies will begin. It is within the sole discretion of the Dean or Associate Dean of Academic Affairs to grant or deny, in whole or in part, a request for an early credit-transfer determination or to defer a determination until after a full semester of study at the Seminary has been completed.
3. The Dean or Associate Dean of Academic Affairs has sole discretion to authorize and allocate previously earned graduate theological school credits, in accordance with the following requirements and limitations:
 - a) Transferred credits must be relevant to the student's degree program at Union.
 - b) Transfer credit may not be applied to required courses unless a student can demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Dean or Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, that the course at the previous school was similar in level, scope, and approach to Union's required courses.
 - c) No more than half the required credits earned in a degree program in which the student had previously matriculated may be counted toward an MA or MDiv degree at Union.
 - d) A maximum of 45% of credits required for the Union Master of Divinity (35 credits) or Master of Arts (23 credits) degrees may be considered for transfer.
 - e) A grade of B or higher is requisite for credit to be transferred; credit for courses taken Pass/Fail is not transferable.
 - f) Courses taken more than seven years prior to the student's admission to Union are ineligible for transfer of credit in the absence of exceptional circumstances.

4. The application for a credit-transfer must demonstrate, with supporting documentation, that the courses for which credit-transfer is requested meet the requirements listed above. Such documentation should include, at a minimum, an official transcript, course syllabi, and representative samples of the student's work in courses for which credit-transfer is requested. Students requesting a credit transfer should include in their applications a catalog description of courses from which they wish to transfer credit, whenever same is available.
5. It is within the sole discretion of the Dean or Associate Dean of Academic Affairs to determine credit equivalencies between Union courses and courses earned in another school of theology, and to determine how many, if any, credits earned in a particular course at another theological school may be transferred and applied to the Union degree.
6. In order to qualify for a Union degree, transfer students must take at least one course in each of the required fields designated for the applicable Union degree program. (e.g., Bible, History, Theology, Practical Theology, Interreligious Engagement). Therefore, field distribution requirements may not be fulfilled by transfer credits alone.
7. The final semester's work for the Master of Divinity or Master of Arts degree must be done at the Seminary, except by permission of the Dean of Academic Affairs.

II. Registration and Recognition of Graduate Credits Earned in Courses Taken Concurrently at Other Schools

A. Registration Requirements and Procedures in General

Students who are currently enrolled in a degree program at Union Theological Seminary may register to take graduate courses in other schools, subject to the conditions, limitations, and procedures described in the paragraphs below. These limitations do not apply to dual degrees or to students enrolled concurrently in another degree program. (See Section III)

1. The total number of credits for which Union students may register concurrently at another school is limited, according to their Union degree program, as follows:

Master of Arts (MA): 12 credits
Master of Divinity (MDiv): 15 credits
Master of Sacred Theology (STM): 6 credits

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD): 12 credits [16 credits for Bible majors].¹

2. Normally, Union students may only take up to one course per semester (up to 3 credits) at other schools, exclusive of January and summer terms.
3. In the absence of exceptional circumstances, courses that are available at Union must be taken at Union. Further, students may not substitute courses taken at other schools for courses requisite to fulfillment of the field distribution requirements of the student's Union degree.
4. Union students who wish to apply toward their Union degree requirements credits for courses taken at another school must obtain the written approval of their faculty advisor and of the Dean of Academic Affairs *prior to registration*. A completed Request for Approval form, signed by the advisor and Dean, must be submitted to the Registrar at the time of registration. The form must include the name of the other school; course title; course number; a brief catalog course description; the identity of the instructor; the itemized cost of attendance (if any); the amount for which the student and the Seminary is expected to be responsible; and an explanation of how the course is relevant to and will contribute to the student's Seminary degree program.
5. Students must register at Union for every course for which they intend to seek application of credits toward their Union degree (with the exception of *Hispanic Summer Program* courses). In the case of most *partner schools* (see section II.B.1. below), the Registrar will submit approved registration requests to the host school on the student's behalf. In the case of some partner schools (such as Fordham University and St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary), and in the case of all "non-partner schools," the student must also register at that school in person. If the host school requires permission of the instructor to register, it is the student's responsibility to obtain permission prior to registration.
6. Courses taken concurrently at other schools must be taken for full credit. Students may not audit courses or take courses in other schools for Pass/Fail or for "R" (reading only) credit.

¹ As their particular research and ancient language needs warrant, PhD bible majors may, with their advisor's written approval, take more than 16 credits at partner (or non-partner) schools.

7. Students enrolled in courses at other schools are subject to the rules of Union Theological Seminary with respect to extensions and other deadlines.

B. Partner Schools: Cost; Recognition of Concurrently Earned Credit

1. Students enrolled in a degree program at Union Theological Seminary may register concurrently for graduate courses at the following partner schools, in accordance with the terms of current cross-registration agreements,
 - a) **New York Theological Group Schools** (a/k/a “Consortium”), including New York Theological Seminary, General Theological Seminary, Fordham University (Graduate School of Arts and Sciences), St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary, and Hebrew Union College.
 - b) **Jewish Theological Seminary;**
 - c) **Drew University School of Theology;**
 - d) **Columbia University** Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, School of the Arts, School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA),² and inter-faculty courses. Courses that are available for cross-registration begin with the letters G, R, U, or W and must be at the 3000 level or higher. *Note: Teachers College is not a partner school.*
2. Students who take courses at partner schools listed above with the prior authorization of Union do not pay any tuition or fees to the host school; the cost is included in Union tuition.
3. Academic credit for authorized courses at partner schools will be recognized by Union without a formal credit transfer request and will be applied toward Union degree requirements upon receipt of an official transcript from the partner school, provided the student earns a minimum grade of B (or equivalent).

C. Hispanic Summer Program (HSP)

1. The Hispanic Summer Program is an independent ecumenical academic program currently directed by Dr. Daisy Machado. The faculty from ATS seminaries and schools of theology, Protestant and Catholic, offer courses at various U.S. campuses in the summer. The program is intended to enhance Christian Reflection and Ministry in and among the Latino/a community but non-Latino students may also apply. Union is one of over thirty-five sponsoring seminaries and departments of theology and currently hosts the HSP offices. For more information visit <http://hispanicsummerprogram.org/>.

² SIPA limits cross-registration to 9 credits.

2. Union students may take one three (3) credit HSP course per summer; those credits may be counted toward partial fulfillment of their Union elective requirements, provided the student earns a minimum grade of B (or equivalent).
3. Students who wish to register for HSP courses do so directly through the HSP web site. Union faculty advisor approval is required. Students should consult the HSP web site for course offerings and are encouraged to register early, as courses fill up quickly.
4. Students are directly and solely responsible for all costs associated with taking courses at HSP. Since Union is a sponsoring institution, Union students can attend HSP for a reduced fee of \$425.00 (includes housing, meals, and travel + 3 graduate credits) for up to two summer sessions. Thereafter, the higher published rate will apply.
5. Academic credit for HSP courses will be recognized by Union without a formal credit transfer request. Credit will be applied toward Union degree requirements upon receipt of an official transcript from the ATS seminary or school of theology hosting the HSP that summer.

D. Non-Partner Schools: Cost; Transfer of Concurrently Earned Credit

1. Students enrolled in a degree program at Union Theological Seminary may request authorization to register concurrently for graduate courses at an accredited non-partner school, subject to the credit limitations and in accordance with the procedures set forth in section II.A.
2. If the non-partner school is a graduate school of theology in the United States or Canada, it must be accredited by the Association of Theological Schools. If the non-partner graduate school of theology is located elsewhere, it must be accredited by the comparable accrediting body. All other non-partner schools must be accredited by a principal regional accrediting body.
3. In the absence of exceptional circumstances, online and hybrid/blended courses at non-partner schools will not be authorized.
4. The cost of authorized courses taken concurrently at non-partner schools is *not* included in Union tuition and shall be the sole responsibility of the student. However, students may apply to the Dean of Academic Affairs for a subsidy in whole or in part.

It is within the sole discretion of the Dean to grant or deny such a request in whole or in part.³

5. Upon the completion of an authorized course taken concurrently in a non-partner school, Union students who have earned a minimum grade of “B” may apply for a transfer of credit(s) to be applied toward their Union degree. The transfer credit application must be submitted *no later than 90 days* after the student has received the grade, and must be accompanied by an official transcript, a course syllabus, and a sample of the student’s written work in the course.
6. It is within the sole discretion of the Dean or Associate Dean of Academic Affairs to determine the credit equivalencies between Union courses and courses taken concurrently in non-partner schools, and to determine how many, if any, credits earned concurrently in a particular course at a non-partner school may be transferred and applied to the Union degree.

III. Dual Degree and Concurrent Enrollment Programs

A. Dual Master of Divinity/Master of Science in Social Work at Union Theological Seminary and the Columbia University School of Social Work:

1. Students concurrently enrolled at both Union Theological Seminary and at the Columbia School of Social Work may earn the MDiv degree from Union and the MSSW degree from Columbia University in four years of full-time study. Degrees are conferred separately but simultaneously by Union and Columbia.
2. This dual degree program requires successful completion of a total of 105 credits consisting of 45 credits taken at Columbia and 60 credits taken at Union. In order to enable students to graduate with both degrees in four years, Union effectively recognizes Social Work credits in lieu of Seminary Field Education (6 credits) and concentration courses (12 of the 15 credits required) in order to satisfy the 78-credit minimum credit requirement for the MDiv degree.
3. Students in this dual degree program will take courses at Union for the first two years and at the Columbia School of Social Work in the following two years, with the exception of a two-credit integrative seminar that must be taken at Union in the fourth year. While taking courses at Columbia, students may also take or audit courses at Union as their schedules permit, at no additional cost.

³³ Doctoral students who are required to take biblical language courses that are available only at non-partner institutions will not be expected to bear the cost.

4. Academic credit for courses taken at Columbia University School of Social Work will be recognized by Union without a formal credit transfer request and will be applied toward Union degree requirements upon receipt of an official transcript from Columbia University indicating a passing grade for social work courses.
5. Dual degree students will be subject to four semesters of full-time tuition (i.e., four full tuition units) at the Seminary, payable to Union in the first two years, instead of the usual six required for the regular M.Div. program. The candidate is required, however, to register at the Seminary in every semester he or she is registered as a student in the School of Social Work. Tuition for the following years at Columbia University School of Social Work is paid directly by the student to Columbia University.

B. Concurrent Seminary/Law School Enrollment Program

1. The Concurrent Seminary/Law School Enrollment Program is intended to enable Union students to develop interdisciplinary competencies for justice-oriented ministries and/or theologically informed professions. The program is designed to enable students to complete an MDiv and JD degree concurrently within five years of full time study (instead of six); and to complete an MA and JD degree concurrently within 4.5 years of full time study (instead of five).⁴ The Union degree and the law degree would be conferred separately by Union and the law school upon completion of the requirements for each degree.
2. The total number of credits that must be earned in satisfaction of Union MDiv degree requirements is 78; the total number of credits that must be earned in satisfaction of the Union MA degree is 51, whether earned at Union or accepted *via* transfer of credits earned at the law school.
3. MDiv/JD Concurrent Enrollment Requirements and Transfer Credits:
 - a) Concurrent MDiv/JD students must take a minimum of 54 credits at Union, which must include 34-38 credits in satisfaction of the credit distribution requirements in the Biblical, Theological, Historical, Practical, and Interreligious Engagement fields; a 3 credit integrative independent study or seminar; and the number of general elective credits needed to satisfy the minimum credit requirement for completion of the degree.
 - b) Concurrent MDiv/JD students may take a maximum of 24 law school credits in lieu of additional MDiv degree requirements as follows: up to 6 credits

⁴ This estimated time to complete both degrees assumes a range of 85-90 credits earned over three years for a typical Juris Doctorate, full-time study while the student is in residence in each degree program, and compatible course schedules.

transferred from a supervised legal clinic or internship in satisfaction of the MDiv Field Education Requirement; up to 15 law school credits from courses pertinent to and compatible with MDiv studies in satisfaction of the MDiv concentration requirement; up to 3 additional law school credits in satisfaction of MDiv general elective requirements. Concurrently enrolled MDiv/JD students do not write a thesis.

c) All remaining MDiv requirements must be satisfied at Union.

4. MA/JD Requirements and Transfer Credits:

a) Concurrent MA/JD students must take a minimum of 36 credits at Union, which must include 21-23 credits in satisfaction of the credit distribution requirements in the Biblical, Theological, Historical, and Interreligious Engagement fields; a 3 credit integrative independent study or seminar; and the number of general elective credits needed to satisfy the minimum credit requirement for completion of the degree. The thesis and modern language requirements do not apply to concurrent JD degree students.

b) Concurrent MA/JD students may take a maximum of 15 law school credits from courses pertinent to and compatible with MA studies in satisfaction of the MA concentration requirement. Concurrently enrolled MA/JD students do not write a thesis and they are not required to pass a modern language exam.

c) All remaining MA requirements must be satisfied at Union.

5. Students who wish to pursue a law degree (Juris Doctorate) at an ABA accredited law school concurrently with full time MA or MDiv degree studies at Union Theological Seminary may submit a proposal to do so at the time of application to the Seminary. The proposal must include the following:

a) Name of the particular school of law to which the applicant has applied or intends to apply;

b) Proposed date of admission to the law school and intention to pursue full-or part-time law studies.

c) Identification of the student's law school concentration (if any) or desired practice area in the law;

d) A brief statement of the student's rationale and purpose for pursuing concurrent degrees, including a description of how the student hopes to integrate and apply their learning in ministerial and/or professional contexts;

- e) A detailed sample curriculum and specific course plan for concurrent studies (including legal clinics/internships), for each semester (or term);
 - f) Expected JD completion date.
6. Students proposing to pursue concurrent law and theological studies should plan to complete at least one year of studies exclusively at Union before commencing the study of law. Concurrent law and theological studies may be configured in one of the following ways:
- MDiv/JD:
- Two years at Union followed by three years in law school with an integrative course at Union in the final year; or
 - One year at Union followed by three years in law school and a final year at Union (that will include an integrative course).
- MA/JD:
- One year at Union followed by three years in law school and a final year at Union (that will include an integrative course).
7. Concurrent degree proposals will be reviewed by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, who will direct this program. The Associate Academic Dean, in consultation with the student's academic advisor, will assist the student in designing a program plan that specifies an approved sequence of studies and that identifies appropriate courses for which transfer credit may be applied toward Union degree requirements.
8. Students must obtain an approved academic leave for any semesters that will be devoted to the study of law, in accordance with applicable procedures set forth in the Student Handbook. Students requesting a leave for purposes of concurrent study must be in good academic standing.
9. Credits earned in pre-approved law school courses will be applied to Union degree requirements with no further transfer application required, upon receipt by the Registrar of an official law school transcript, provided the student has earned a minimum grade of B. For courses that have not been pre-approved, the student must follow normal transfer-credit procedures. (See section I)
10. The cost of law school, including all associated expenses, is the sole responsibility of the student. Concurrent Seminary/Law School students are eligible for Union scholarships and/or other forms of financial aid only for the semesters that they are engaged in full time study at Union.