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OFFICE OF THE  
ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AND ASSOCIATE PROVOST

MEMO

ATTENTION	Senate
FROM	Bill Krane, Chair Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies 
RE	Letters of Permission (SCUS 09-25)
DATE	March 10, 2009

**For information:**

Acting under delegated authority at its meeting of March 5, 2009, SCUS approved the following curriculum revisions:

1. Letters of Permission

That the proposed new policy replaces the current policy in the calendar, effective September 2009.

**Any Senator wishing to consult the full report of curriculum revisions should contact Bobbie Grant, Senate Assistant at 778.782.3168 or email [bgrant@sfu.ca](mailto:bgrant@sfu.ca)**

SFUFACULTY OF  
ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

## MEMO

TO: Bill Krane, Chair  
Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies

FROM: Paul Budra, Chair  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Curriculum Committee

RE: Letters of Permission

DATE: February 19, 2009

For the past year, the Enrolment Management Coordinating Committee (EMCC) has been working on a new policy on Letters of Permission (LOP) to replace the current policy in the calendar. The existing policy is very lenient and allows students to obtain approval to take courses at another institution for a number of reasons.

Some of the justifications students use in requesting a LOP include: the course being cheaper in college, the college being closer to home or work, the course being easier in college, or wanting to complete courses that come with a WQB designation in college (note: the courses most frequently taken by our students at other institutions - mostly colleges- are lower division courses that come with a WQB designation, either because they are easier or because the course would provide the student with 3 units of credit plus FAL or FAN). Even though the Faculties would like to deny requests for Letters of Permission for the reasons just stated, the current policy would not back such action.

Student Services staff, departmental advisors and Faculty advisors spend a significant amount of time reviewing, approving and processing Letters of Permission for students who could be taking the very same courses at SFU. To put this into a financial context, Student Services ran a report in May 2008 showing that over the 10 semesters from 1051 through to the end of 1081 the university approved at least 5143 Letters of Permission (out of 5908 requests). If we assume an average of 3 credits per LOP, this represents 15,429 credits. Assuming that 8% of those credits were taken by students paying international tuition fees and 92% taken by students paying domestic fees, this is equivalent to lost tuition revenue over these 10 semesters of \$2,790,674 and a loss of more than 1,000 FTEs. We believe that by adopting the proposed new policy on Letters of Permission, we will be able to keep our students at SFU taking our courses, thereby increasing enrolments and ensuring that SFU students graduate with a degree that maintains a level of academic integrity.

Would you please place this item on the agenda of the next meeting of SCUS.



2.

## PROPOSED NEW POLICY: LETTERS OF PERMISSION

FROM:

~~Courses at Other Institutions / Letters of Permission~~

~~Simon Fraser University students who wish to complete academic work at other institutions for undergraduate degree, diploma or certificate credit at this University must obtain permission in advance from their department chair (if a major has been declared) and the Faculty dean. Students in a non-seeking degree program who wish to complete academic work at other institutions for credit must first obtain program approval into an undergraduate degree, diploma or certificate program from the appropriate department and faculty. The appropriate form may be obtained from Student Services. When approval has been granted, Student Services will issue a Letter of Permission to the institution which the student plans to attend, if required by that institution. A student on academic probation or RTW (required to withdraw) may not receive a letter of permission to attend another university.~~

~~Except as noted below, total transfer and course challenge units may not exceed 60 units and not more than 15 transfer units may be used toward upper division requirements. Each diploma and certificate program has its own specific limit, and students should consult the appropriate Calendar section for such restrictions. Within these limits and limits on course repeats and duplicate transfer credit, credit may be transferred for all courses passed with a C grade (2.0 numeric equivalent) for institutions reporting on a letter grade basis, or 60% for institutions reporting on a percentage grading basis, or higher, and which are acceptable under the University's transfer policies. Transfer credit is not used in the calculation of the cumulative grade point average. See "Admission and Readmission" on page 17 for transfer credit information.~~

~~For information concerning maximum transfer credit pertaining to EDUC 401/402, 405, see "Transfer Credit" on page 206.~~

~~For students working toward a bachelor of general studies degree, special regulations provide more units of transfer credit from a degree granting institution recognized by Simon Fraser University. Please see "Transfer Credit Regulations" on page 135.~~

~~Students who are pursuing a bachelor of applied science degree in engineering science should see "School of Engineering Science" on page 120.~~

~~Students participating in formal exchange programs may receive exchange credit for courses completed at the host university with a passing grade.~~

~~See "SFU International" on page 483 for more information.~~

TO:

## Letters of Permission

Simon Fraser University students who wish to complete academic work at other institutions for undergraduate degree, diploma or certificate credit at this University must obtain permission in advance by applying for a Letter of Permission through Student Services. All students considering requesting a Letter of Permission should consult an academic advisor. The Faculty advisor (and the department advisor if a program has been declared) will be contacted by Student Services for approval. Students should allow 6 to 8 weeks for processing of their request. Normally, a Letter of Permission will not be approved retroactively.

Students must have completed a minimum of 9 units at SFU and must be in good academic standing at the time they submit their request for a Letter of Permission to Student Services. Since standing is achieved once all grades for the term have been received, students may have to wait until their third term at SFU to be eligible to take a course elsewhere.

Permission to take a course at another institution will not be granted unless a valid academic reason is provided - for example, taking a course in a discipline not offered at SFU, such as Czech language. While an approved Letter of Permission guarantees that the credit will count toward the overall credit requirement, it does not guarantee that the credit will meet a specific program requirement.

A Letter of Permission is automatically denied if a student's standing is On Academic Probation (OAP), Continued Academic Probation (CAP) or Required to Withdraw (RTW). Courses taken at another institution cannot be used to satisfy SFU's minimum residency requirement and will not be included in the calculation of the CGPA. Therefore, such courses cannot be used to raise standing.

Students must achieve a grade of at least C (2.0 numeric equivalent) or 60% in order to receive transfer credit for courses completed at other institutions. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that an official transcript from the host institution is forwarded to Student Services at SFU in order for transfer credit to be granted.

Students participating in formal exchange programs should see the "SFU International" section of the calendar for more information.