

Transferring Credits



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INTRODUCTION

When students transfer from one college or university to another, it commonly happens that not all of their credits will transfer. This is true even when the transfer involves two fully accredited institutions. There are a number of reasons for this: 1) A course taken at one school may not have an equivalent in another school. 2) General Education requirements vary from school to school. 3) Some, if not many, of the courses at the first school may not fit into the major or minor course requirements at the second.

For these and other reasons, it will generally take a transfer student more than four years to complete his bachelor's degree, and he may graduate with an "excess" of credits. However, the student who recognizes the value of education for himself personally and for a future career will surely not regard this situation as a waste of time or money! (It might be added here that even if a transfer is not involved, most students take more than four years to get a bachelor's degree. In fact, five to seven years is typical at public universities!)

For the reasons stated above, an ILC student should not expect that 100% of his credits will be accepted by another college or university. And, even though many of them may be accepted, possibly only a few will actually fit into his new program. The aim of this booklet is to suggest ways in which students from our college department may achieve greater success in the transferring of ILC's credits.

It is true that ILC is not accredited by any regional accrediting agency. Yet for most of our former students this has not prevented the transfer of at least some of the credits which they earned here. In our Transfer-of-Credit Surveys, these students have given valuable advice on how to facilitate the transfer process - advice which we wish to share with you. Moreover, the large majority of those who responded to the surveys affirmed that the course work which they completed at ILC did prepare them well academically for successful work at other institutions.

THINGS TO DO WHEN FIRST ENROLLING AT ILC

Suppose that you are enrolling at ILC with the intention of completing one or more semesters here and then transferring to another institution. At first thought it may seem advisable to ask that school in advance whether or not they will accept ILC's credits. This, however, may not be too practical. For the initial response of admissions officers in other colleges and universities may often be a quick, automatic "No, we don't accept credits from non-accredited colleges." If, however, you confront an admissions officer later on with an actual ILC transcript, he may well be willing to accommodate you in some fashion. Here's what one of our former students suggested: "Go to ILC first, and ask later!"

Planning Ahead. But it does pay for you to do some investigating in advance. Early in your career at ILC, write for a catalog from the institution to which you may be transferring. First

read through the General Education requirements of that school. These are the basic, introductory courses in a variety of subject areas which are required of most students who pursue a college degree. Usually these General Education courses will occupy most of the student's time during the first two or three semesters of his college career.

It is probable that ILC's A.A. program will satisfy most, if not all, of the General Education requirements in the school which you are considering. But it does pay to do some planning in advance, so that you can tailor your program at ILC to meet such requirements as fully as possible. For example, the UW-EC requires 11 credits in the subject area of Humanities. You could meet this requirement by selecting such courses at ILC as the following: English 203-204, Art 101, History 101-102, or Music 102.

If you have already made some decisions about a major and minor in the school to which you will be transferring, it pays also to note the courses which are required as prerequisites for your major or minor, or which are part of the major or minor programs. Perhaps you will be able to select some electives at ILC which will be applicable, such as in the area of mathematics.

The academic dean of ILC stands ready, of course, to assist you in arranging your program at ILC and making plans for a future transfer.

A.A. vs. Special. If a student enrolls in our college department and intends to transfer to another institution some day, he may wonder whether he should pursue our A.A. program or rather take selected courses as a special student. Generally it is advisable to enroll in the A.A. program. For you will thereby automatically be taking basic, necessary college courses, such as writing fundamentals and composition, which you might otherwise bypass. Occasionally, a four-year college may excuse a transfer student from all of its General Education requirements on the basis of our A.A. degree. This is not true, however, of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire or Minnesota State University Mankato. These schools evaluate ILC's credits course by course, since ILC is not regionally accredited.

THINGS TO DO WHEN TRANSFERRING CREDITS

Save Catalogs! It is very important that you secure ILC catalogs for the years that you are in attendance here, and that you retain these catalogs as part of your permanent personal records. The reason for this is that the catalogs give fuller course descriptions than are contained on your ILC transcript. Whenever you consult with admissions officers in other colleges and universities, you should always bring along your ILC catalogs. It may be advisable to bring also your personal copy of your ILC transcript. Ask the registrar at ILC for such a copy.

On occasion it may happen that a course description in the catalog may not be specific enough to identify the equivalent course in the institution to which you are transferring. In some cases, your class notebook, or the syllabus which may have been given to you by the

instructor, may provide the needed information. If not, contact ILC, and we will provide whatever may be necessary. Or if you have lost your ILC catalogs, direct them to our web page which contains the catalog (<http://www.ilc.edu/>) or contact us and we will submit the course descriptions.

The First Step. Well in advance of the actual transfer to another school, secure its official application form and submit it together with any other documents or statements which may be required. You can ask our registrar to send in both a preliminary and final transcript of the credits which you have earned here. You can arrange to have your ACT report sent to the school in question. The dean of students stands ready to submit any necessary character recommendation. (Generally transcripts, etc., must be sent directly to the school, and not through your hands.)

As you begin this transfer process, be *positive* in your attitude about your work at ILC and proceed with the assumption that your credits will transfer. For if you have applied yourself at ILC, you have earned college credits that deserve to be accepted by any other college or university. We encourage you to achieve as high a grade-point average (GPA) at ILC as you can achieve, since this will surely facilitate the transfer process!

Some time after the college or university has received your application form, you will receive from them a letter indicating whether or not you have been accepted as a student. If you are accepted, a preliminary evaluation of your ILC credits will be attached.

How many of your ILC credits can you expect them to accept on this preliminary evaluation? That will vary from school to school. The UW-EC, Mankato State University, and certain other institutions routinely accept 72 or more semester credits from ILC. (This represents two or more years of work at ILC.) Other schools may initially accept few or none. If most or all ILC credits are accepted, there is little more for you to do than to pursue the normal entrance procedures for that institution. If few or none are accepted, you will probably want to explore the matter further. In the following paragraphs we shall suggest procedures which you can use as you try to alter the situation in your favor.

THINGS TO DO IF YOUR ILC CREDITS DO NOT INITIALLY TRANSFER

The reason why ILC's credits may not transfer initially has to do with its listing in *Transfer Credit Practices of Designated Educational Institutions*—a booklet commonly used by admissions officers in our country. The information found in this booklet is supplied by designated reporting institutions in each of the states. The reporting institution for Wisconsin is the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and it has indicated its practice with respect to ILC credits as follows: "Credit not ordinarily accepted." Notice the words "not ordinarily"—which imply that exceptions can be made at the discretion of school officials. While the UW-Madison has not accepted our credits during the past decade, other institutions around the country have done so—including several reporting universities in other states!

Persistence Pays. Do not give up, therefore, if some or all of your ILC credits are not accepted initially. Through *polite persistence*—we like this phrase—you may ultimately succeed in getting many of your ILC credits accepted. In the Transfer-of-Credit Surveys, we learned of the success that a number of former students had in applying such polite persistence to the situation. In a couple of cases, none of the ILC credits was initially accepted. Then, after an appeal, all but the religion credits were accepted. And then, after the students had established themselves at the new college or university and had made a second appeal, even the religion credits were accepted! These happy outcomes were the result of talking to the right people and making appeals at appropriate times.

Religion Credits. While we are on the subject of religion credits, it should be stated that religion credits will generally not be transferable, either because the college or university regards our approach to religion as being too narrow or because it cannot find equivalent courses in its own curriculum. Nevertheless it may be worth your effort to attempt to get some transfer credit from your religion courses at ILC. Try to get them accepted in such elective areas as the following: religious studies, comparative religion, philosophy, humanities, literature, or even history. Minnesota State University Mankato has been accepting up to 15 religion credits from ILC, and on occasion a department head at the UW-EC has found a place for our Religion 101-102.

How to Begin. Let us get back to the subject. If initially most or all of your ILC credits are not accepted, make an appointment with an admissions officer at the institution to which you wish to transfer. Dress well for the appointment; bring along ILC catalogs and a copy of your ILC transcript; be ready to present in a positive way your God-given abilities and your achievements.

1st

When you meet with the admissions officer, point out to him that ILC is an established college and that its students have transferred credits successfully to a rather large number of colleges and universities in many different states. (The academic dean of ILC can supply a list of such institutions, if desired.)

2nd

Advise the admissions officer also of the fact that ILC has entered into a transfer-of-credit agreement with the UW-EC, whereby that university routinely accepts up to 72 credits per student from ILC. This agreement states that "the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire accept[s] the transfer of credits (up to 72 credits for each student) from Immanuel Lutheran College provided that the credits are applicable to the curriculum of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and that at the conclusion of the semester or session in which the transfer student completes his or her first twelve credits at the University the student is in good academic standing and has a minimum 2.00 resident gradepoint average." (A 2.00 GPA is equivalent to a C average.) Should the admissions officer wish to verify the existence of this agreement, offer to secure for him a

letter of verification from ILC (we can provide a copy of the official letter from the University of Wisconsin System at Madison), or suggest that he communicate with the Director of Admissions, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, 112 Schofield Hall, Eau Claire, WI 54702-4004 (phone: 715-836-5415).

3rd

Further Action. If the foregoing attempts do not meet with success, do not hesitate to appeal to other officers in the admissions office or to submit a petition for reconsideration. Or you may wish to try the following approach, which has often in the past met with success:

4th

Ask that you be accepted on a probationary basis, and that the acceptance of your ILC credits be deferred until such time that you have demonstrated that you are capable of doing good college work. This procedure may well be accepted by the admissions office as a

kind of "compromise" to the situation.

In the student survey, we learned that a number of students were able to get their ILC credits accepted after talking to the head of the department in which they planned to continue

their education. They indicated that the admissions officers went along with the recommendation of the department head to accept credits from ILC. If the admissions department initially refuses to accept your ILC credits, you should probably make an appointment with the head of the department in which you plan to pursue your major and discuss the situation with him/her.

5th

If you have exhausted the various appeals and approaches open to you and none of your ILC credits has been accepted, you may wish to try the following as a last resort. Ask the

director of admissions what his institution does with credits brought by students from foreign institutions which are not covered by regional accrediting agencies in the United States. He might well respond that they accept the credits provisionally, subject to the student's doing satisfactory work in residence. If he does so respond, ask that you be treated in a similar way. (Some colleges and universities in California and Florida have a relatively large percentage of foreign students, and have therefore adopted the policy of putting all transfer students from non-accredited institutions on academic probation and then accepting their transfer credits after they have shown their ability to do acceptable work in residence.)

6th

Other Courses of Action. It is probable that by this time at least some of your ILC credits will have been accepted, at least provisionally. But if not, there are other courses of action open to you, such as the following:

1) You may decide to enroll first in an accredited institution which has shown itself to be "friendly" to ILC, that is, an institution which will accept ILC's credits toward a degree program. (We stand ready to advise you of such colleges and universities.) By validating ILC's credits in this fashion, the institution of your choice may then be willing to accept them. Unfortunately, however, this has not happened in every case.

2) You may wish to receive credit for courses taken at ILC by testing out of them at the institution to which you are transferring. While you may not especially enjoy taking tests, it would surely pay for you to spend a few hours taking tests so as to avoid repeating courses.

3) You may try to achieve your educational goals at a smaller, private college or university. Such schools will probably be more willing to accommodate you than larger institutions. Several respondents to the 1990 survey mentioned that community colleges were very willing to accept ILC credits. It sometimes pays to shop around!

Education Graduates. Graduates of ILC's education program have had varied experiences when trying to transfer their credits. Some who have gone to "friendly" institutions have found acceptance of even their professional education and methods courses. Others have been able to transfer only two years of their work at ILC. If our education graduates have already had a year or more of teaching experience, they should definitely cite this experience as a means of bypassing certain required courses at the institution to which they are transferring. Letters from the principals of the elementary schools which they served may be helpful.

There is another route that our B.S. education graduates may wish to consider. Some universities, such as the UW-EC and Minnesota State University Mankato, have a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program, designed for a person who has a bachelor's degree in some subject area and who wishes to become certified for teaching in junior or senior high schools. If the graduate school in such a university is willing to accept ILC's B.S. degree for entrance into a graduate program, the student might be able to achieve, in a relatively short period of time, state certification for teaching on the upper-grade level. Several graduates of our B.S. and B.A. program have been accepted into graduate schools at universities.

Advice from Others. Many former ILC students have gone through the process of transferring credits to other educational institutions. They were happy to have an opportunity, through the Transfer-of-Credit Surveys, to talk to you about their experiences and to offer some suggestions:

- *Keep your old ILC catalogs; take your ILC catalog with you.*
- *Keep up to date with the requirements of the university to which you plan to transfer; talk to other students in your desired program; possibly take some filler courses at UW-EC in order to speed graduation.*
- *Study degree requirements and talk to admissions counselors early.*

- *Find out ahead of time which courses at ILC are useful for General Education requirements.*
- *Pick courses at ILC which will be required at a future college.*
- *Let ILC advise students where such credits as religion can be applied.*
- *Take some correspondence courses along with ILC's program.*
- *Be polite, persistent, and dress professionally so the interviewers take you seriously.*
- *The toughest part was finding the right people to talk to; once I dug up the right names it was easy enough to explain the situation.*
- *Be ready to do some leg work and talking to get credits accepted.*
- *Cut through the red tape by going straight to someone in charge.*
- *Talk frankly and face-to-face with someone at the top.*
- *Talk to registrar if possible, to describe ILC and its courses.*
- *Talk to several advisors; be persistent; test out of some courses.*
- *Speak frankly with advisor, trying to fit credits into General Education areas.*
- *Meet individually with professors; talk to as many school officials as possible —especially check with the head of the particular department that you wish to get a degree in.*
- *Don't hesitate to go to the head of the department you wish to enter, since this often avoids a lot of red tape and run-around.*
- *Don't accept initial rejection; appeal; letter from UW-EC helpful.*
- *Mention ILC's transfer agreement with the UW-EC.*
- *Don't give up; keep going back; be firm but not too demanding.*
- *Ask a lot of questions; don't stop at the first "No, I'm sorry"; contact ILC for help and credibility.*
- *A voluntary probationary period is a strong bargaining point.*
- *Don't be discouraged at antagonism; some will be considerate.*
- *Work with colleges —they will listen!*
- *Be sure to try every angle and talk to everyone possible before accepting a "No."*
- *Be persistent, and don't apologize for the size of Immanuel; insist that you have received a good education, and that confidence just might be contagious!*
- *Transfer what you can at first and try again on the ones that they didn't accept originally; after they know you and your work they may accept more.*
- *Have ILC's credits validated first at a school like the UW-EC.*

- *Shop around for a college that will accept your ILC credits.*

Something to Remember. If in spite of all of your "polite persistence" few or none of your ILC credits transfer, we urge you to remember that God may have had other reasons for leading you to ILC than that your credits transfer. In the words of one former ILC student:

I only spent 1 year at ILC, but in no way do I feel it was wasted, even though none of my credits transferred. I value the Christian atmosphere at ILC and have very fond memories of the school, faculty and students.

Another student put it this way:

I feel the Christian education provided by the faculty of Immanuel is something that cannot be measured by the world's standards. Any goals that I have attained or will attain in the future are gifts from the Lord. In short, even if a single credit would not have transferred, I would recommend ILC to anyone. The value of our school is much more than just academic.

One respondent in the 1990 survey said:

I feel that my training at Immanuel was the best preparation possible for public higher learning. The academic aspect was important, but the spiritual training was, and is, the best benefit of ILC.

SOME CLOSING REMARKS

Some have wondered why ILC doesn't become accredited, since accreditation would surely facilitate the transfer process. This question was explored by the CLC, and ILC was advised by the North Central Association, an accrediting agency, not to pursue accreditation. The reasons which they gave involved chiefly ILC's limitations in human and financial resources.

While these limitations may make regional accreditation an impossibility, they do not in themselves prevent ILC from offering a good education. For example, in a report published several years ago the following factors were listed as being least related to a person's becoming a competent student: percent of faculty with PhDs, average faculty salary, the number of books in the library, and the average teaching load for full-time faculty teaching General Education courses.

We also do not beg anyone's pardon for promoting a broad, liberal-arts training in our college department. Studies which have been made in recent years have cautioned against a narrow specialization on the college level and have urged strong liberal arts programs. (One report promoted at least two full years of liberal arts courses for any four-year degree!) The

broader one's educational background, the more effective will he be in dealing with others —and job success often depends on such ability to communicate with others!

IN SUMMARY

You can surely help to facilitate the transfer of your ILC credits if you keep in mind and follow through on the suggestions made in this booklet. Let us repeat the chief points by way of summary:

- 1) Try to maintain a high scholastic average while at ILC;
- 2) Inform yourself early about the General Education and degree requirements at the school to which you plan to transfer;
- 3) Before you visit the admissions office of that school, equip yourself with an ILC transcript and catalog, and inform yourself about the transferability of ILC's credits to such institutions as the UW-EC;
- 4) Do not accept an initial rejection, but be politely persistent and appeal to those who are higher up in the admissions office; discuss the matter also with department heads and advisors;
- 5) Solicit the help of ILC in the transfer process, if you feel that this will facilitate matters;
- 6) Offer to be placed on scholastic probation for a semester, with the acceptance of ILC's credits deferred until you have shown your scholastic competence;
- 7) If all else fails, be willing to take tests to establish your ILC credits.

It goes without saying that you will at all points in the transfer process want to pray to the Lord for His guidance and blessing. Because of His promise to hear your prayers, you can be confident that the outcome will serve your good and His glory!