


# MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

December 23, 2008

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Directors and Chairpersons

FROM: Linda O. Stanford   
Associate Provost for Academic Services

RE: **New Policy - Allow a combined maximum of 9 credits to be applied to a Master's degree program from transfer courses, Lifelong Education enrollment status, and the Graduate Certificate level with no more than 9 credits from each category, except for 12 graduate certificate credits permitted in the College of Education.**

The University Committee on Curriculum (UCC) made and approved a recommendation to allow a combined maximum of 9 credits to be applied to a master's degree program from transfer courses, Lifelong Education enrollment status, and the Graduate Certificate level with no more than 9 credits from each category, except for 12 graduate certificate credits permitted in the College of Education. The recommendation was reviewed by the University Graduate Council (UGC) and approved at its May 5, 2008 meeting. The UGC submitted the following motion for consideration by Academic Council on November 18, 2008, which was approved.

### **Motion for Academic Council:**

Allow a combined maximum of 9 credits to be applied to a master's degree program from transfer courses, Lifelong Education enrollment status, and the Graduate Certificate level with no more than 9 credits from each category, except for 12 graduate certificate credits permitted in the College of Education.



### **UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM and CATALOG**

Michigan State University  
176 Administration Building  
East Lansing, Michigan  
48824-1046

PH: 517/355-8420  
FAX: 517/353-1935

### **Proposal:**

#### ***Benefits***

Adopting this policy allows for consistent transfer of credit policies to be in place for all master's degree programs and enhances the quality and integrity of a Michigan State University master's degree.

#### ***Impact***

No negative impact. Department determination of the applicability of credits to master's degree programs is maintained within a holistic context. The maximum number of credits from each category is stipulated in different policy statements and still applies. Students currently enrolled in either the Lifelong Education enrollment status and/or the Graduate

Certification level, who have also earned credit at other institutions and who are interested in applying to a master's degree program will know how the credits earned will relate to the master's degree program to which they are applying.

***Previous Policy***

Previously, no institutional policy addressing the maximum number of credits that could be applied toward a master's degree program existed. Individual policies exist or have been proposed that address specific categories such as transfer credit, credit at the Graduate Certification level, and credit at the Lifelong Education enrollment status.

***Rationale for Change***

The *Academic Programs* catalog states that master's degrees are composed of a minimum of 30 credits. In order to provide flexibility for students, policies exist that allow students to transfer credit from various entities. Because no policy governing the application of credits existed holistically, it was possible for a student to argue that nine credits should be accepted from another institution, nine credits be accepted from the Graduate Certification level at MSU, and nine credits be accepted from the Lifelong Education enrollment status at MSU, for a total of 27 credits accepted and applied toward the completion of a master's degree. While this is an unlikely scenario, there was no policy in place to disallow the transfer and application of the credits as described. Allowing 27 credits to be transferred and applied to an MSU master's degree would significantly devalue the reputation of master's degree programs at MSU.

**View Academic Programs:**

You may view *Academic Programs* for the updated language with regard to the approved changes.

Academic Program Terminology –

<http://www.reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.asp?Section=112#s507>

Master's Programs –

<http://www.reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.asp?Section=111#s373>

Specific questions regarding applicability of credits to master's programs may be directed to Doug McKenna, Associate Registrar for Certification Services, [mckenn62@msu.edu](mailto:mckenn62@msu.edu) or 3-7283.

cc: Kim Wilcox, Provost  
Karen Klomparens, Associate Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of The Graduate School  
Doug Estry, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of Undergraduate Studies  
Dugald McMillan, Acting University Registrar  
Linda Good, Chairperson, University Committee on Curriculum  
Doug McKenna, Associate Registrar for Certification Services  
Traci Gulick, Associate Registrar for Academic Records  
Joy Speas, University Curriculum Administrator