Quick Guide to European Transfer

INTRODUCTION

Transferring to a university abroad requires research and preparation. This guide covers key areas like admission requirements, credit transfer systems, and degree recognition to help you get started, whether you're studying at a European university or an American university abroad. Unless otherwise noted, the information provided applies to *non-American universities* in Europe.

DEGREE STRUCTURE IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

- **Non-American Schools (Europe):** Many European countries follow the Bologna Process, which harmonizes higher education across Europe. The goal is to make degrees more comparable, allowing for easier mobility between countries. The system typically uses the *European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System* (ECTS). A U.S. Bachelor's degree (120 credits) is usually equivalent to 180 ECTS credits. Many programs are designed to be completed in three years (such as in Italy, for example), but this applies mainly to students who start at that campus in year one. For transfer students, year placement depends on how many credits are accepted—so even with many credits, you could still be placed as a "first year" at your international university.
- **American Schools Abroad:** U.S. schools abroad, like St. Louis University in Madrid, follow the *American credit system*. Research the specific university's admissions criteria for transfer students, as it will vary at each school. Like all out-of-state or private American universities, credit transfer policies are campus-specific. While the goal is often to transfer as a junior, it's crucial to work with their Admissions office to determine "year placement" *before* enrolling.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What are the admission requirements for international transfer students?

- **Credits:** European universities typically require a certain number of accepted credits (30-60 ECTS credits; their version of units), proof of language proficiency, and official recognition of your high school diploma. The specific requirements vary by country and university.
  - *Germany* - Many universities prefer or require that transfer students have completed at least 30-60 ECTS credits (equivalent to about 15-30 U.S. credits) before transferring. This is because they want to place students appropriately (usually Year 2 or 3). However, some programs accept transfers with fewer credits, especially if the student starts in Year 1.
  - *Italy* - Requirements vary widely by university and program. Some require at least 30 CFU (≈60 U.S. credits) to transfer into Year 2, while others might allow transfers with fewer credits but generally expect some college-level study completed. Many Italian universities will evaluate case-by-case. Keep in mind that many programs in Italy are 3 years total.
  - *Spain* - Transfer students usually need to have completed at least 30 ECTS credits (≈60 U.S. credits) to be eligible to enter beyond Year 1. Some universities are stricter, requiring more credits for transfer in beyond Year 1.
- **GPA:** Requirements vary per school, but as a starting place, aim for a 2.5-3.0 GPA.
- **Language Proficiency:** Even if a program is taught in English, some European universities may still require proof of proficiency in the local language for administrative purposes or visa requirements.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

2. Will a degree from an international university be recognized in the U.S.?

- U.S. institutions don't automatically recognize international degrees most of the time. To use a foreign degree, you may need a credential evaluation to compare your qualifications to U.S. standards. To have your foreign degree recognized in the U.S., you may need to submit your documents to a credential evaluation agency, such as World Education Services (WES) wes.org or Educational Credential Evaluators (ECE) ece.org, which will assess your degree's equivalency to U.S. standards and provide a report for universities, employers, or licensing boards.

3. How will my U.S. credits articulate at an international university?

- Most international universities won't evaluate credits until after you apply, but some may offer unofficial evaluations. After applying, submitting your official transcripts and course descriptions, the university will review them and decide which credits are transferable.

4. How long does the international transfer admission process take? When should I apply?

- The process can take several months, depending on the country and university. Typically, applications for fall semester enrollment are accepted between April and July. Be sure to check the specific timeline for each university you're applying to. Some may have spring start terms.

STEPS TO BEGIN THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSFER PROCESS

1. Research Your Options: Use university websites, online databases, and resources like the US News & World Report database to explore universities in your preferred countries. Make sure to check if the university is recognized — this means it's officially approved by the country's government to issue valid degrees. Only recognized universities offer degrees that are accepted for jobs, further study, or visas. You can check this through official portals like ENIC-NARIC or the country's education ministry website.

2. Check Admission and Credit Transfer Requirements: Look for information on academic requirements, language proficiency, and credit equivalency for U.S. students.

3. Prepare Your Documents: Gather your passport, academic transcripts, proof of language proficiency, and any other documents required by your target schools. To study abroad, you may need to authorize your high school diploma, which means officially validating it to meet the academic standards of the country you're applying to. This process often involves homologation (in Spain), recognition of your diploma's equivalency by the respective educational authority, or other forms of legalization. It ensures your high school credentials are accepted for university admission in the target country.

- *Spain example* - To enroll in a Spanish bachelor's program (grado), your high school diploma must be homologated, or recognized as equivalent to a Spanish one. This is a long and complicated procedure. Without a certificate of homologation — Volante Accreditation, it is impossible to enter a Spanish university.
- *Italy example* - In Italy, to enroll in a bachelor's degree program, you must have a secondary school diploma that is recognized as equivalent to the Italian "Diploma di Maturità." If you earned your high school diploma abroad, it must be officially recognized (equivalency recognition) by the Italian Ministry of Education or the university before admission.

4. Contact Admissions: Reach out to the admissions offices of universities you're interested in to ask about specific requirements for transfer students, credit transfers, and any other concerns you may have. *Note: Some schools don't allow international applicants.*

STEPS TO BEGIN THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSFER PROCESS

1. Research Your Options: Use university websites, online databases, and resources such as the *European Union's education portal* to explore universities in your preferred countries. If you don't speak the native language, consider starting your search with American universities located abroad or non-American campuses that offer programs conducted in English.

2. Check Admission and Credit Transfer Requirements: Look for information on academic requirements, language proficiency, and credit equivalency for U.S. students. Some universities may require a college entrance exam. For example, Germany requires the Abitur, which is roughly equivalent to completing the U.S. 12th grade with a high school diploma, strong SAT scores, and several AP courses or exams. Be sure to check with admissions whether an entrance exam is required and how to fulfill that requirement.

3. Prepare Your Documents: For international transfer applications, you may need to translate or notarize documents such as your high school or college transcripts, diploma, course descriptions, language proficiency test scores, passport copy, and any required entrance exam results.You will also likely need proof of diploma recognition (referred to as ***homologation*** in Spain). The process of validating your diploma is done directly through that Country's Ministry/Office of Education and will confirm that your diploma meets the academic standards of the country you're applying to, ensuring it's officially recognized for university admission. Here are some examples:

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** **PLEASE NOTE:** Attending an American school abroad can simplify the process of transferring, as these institutions typically follow U.S. academic standards and admissions procedures, bypassing many of the complex steps like diploma recognition or language proficiency requirements that might apply at local universities.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU APPLY?

1. Submit Your Official Transcripts and Course Info: Send official transcripts from all colleges you've attended, along with detailed course descriptions or syllabi, after applying.
2. University Reviews Materials: Admissions or the registrar's office will look at your courses, grades, and compares them to their own program to see what matches.
3. Transfer Credit Evaluation Report: Universities will pick courses that are similar and have passing grades, and then convert your credits to their system (like ECTS in Europe).
4. Placement into the Right Year: Based on the accepted credits, they will decide in which year you'll start (usually 1st, 2nd, or 3rd year).
5. Plan Your Remaining Courses: Work with advisors to plan the classes to finish your degree.

EXPLORING 3 CAMPUSES IN SPAIN, GERMANY, AND ITALY

Saint Louis University – (American University in Spain)

Saint Louis University-Madrid (SLU-Madrid) is an American-style liberal arts university in Spain's capital. Transfer students from U.S. schools must submit transcripts and syllabi; U.S. high school diplomas are recognized without homologation. Up to 50% of college credits may transfer, evaluated on a case-by-case basis. English proficiency can be met by four years at a U.S. English-instruction high school or a TOEFL score. Check approved courses via CollegeSource, SLU's Credit for Prior Learning page, or Transferology (where accessible).

LUISS Guido Carli University – (Private University in Rome)

LUISS in known for its strong programs in social sciences, business, law, and political science. Transfer to LUISS is possible after an academic review of completed courses and credit recognition and offered in the fall only. Admission beyond the first year is not automatic and depends on how your previous studies fit your chosen degree. . U.S. students need a high school diploma plus at least three relevant AP exams with scores of 3-5, or they can meet requirements by completing one year of college or a recognized Foundation Program. Full details on transfers, documents, and deadlines are available on LUISS's website, along with criteria for foreign diploma eligibility.

Constructor University – (Private University in Germany)

Constructor University is a private, English-speaking research university in Bremen, Germany, with programs in science, engineering, and social sciences. Unlike the US, students in Germany go straight into their major in year one. For example, BioChem majors start BioChem and Organic Chem courses in year one. Constructor University is a private school, which may make admission requirements less strict than public universities. With a full associate's degree, direct admission to a program may possible. Only 50% of units will be accepted. Those without an associate's degree may enroll in their International Foundation Year before entering a program, but a high school diploma is required. Those with a US passport do not need to complete the English proficiency exam.

MORE UNIVERSITIES TO CONSIDER

EUROPEAN SCHOOLS

Non-American schools with certain programs taught in English:

Italy:

- Università Bocconi (Milan)
- LUISS Guido Carli University (Rome)

Spain:

- Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (UC3M)
- IE University (Madrid and Segovia)
- Universidad Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona)

Germany:

- Frankfurt School of Finance & Management
- Technical University of Munich (TUM)

AMERICAN SCHOOLS ABROAD

Below are American schools offering programs operating entirely abroad and taught in English. Many of the admission rules above, such as translating transcripts and certifying your high school diploma, will not apply:

- American University of Rome (Italy)
- Saint Louis University Madrid campus (Spain)
- John Cabot University (Rome, Italy)
- American University of Paris (France)
- Richmond, The American International University in London (UK)

Once you've researched and spoken with universities, visit the Transfer Center: transfer.santarosa.edu