

FOCUS

FINDING OPTIONS FOR COLLEGIATE UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES THE FOCUS PROGRAM AT SAINT MARTIN'S UNIVERSITY

General Facts about the FOCUS program:

1. Through the FOCUS program, Saint Martin's University may grant academic credit for documented university level learning students acquired through non-university experience. The credit is not for the experience, but for learning that is equivalent to the knowledge and skills of a particular course offered at Saint Martin's University.
2. The student's previous learning must reflect the equivalent of significant, university-level achievement. Insofar as the learning meets university-wide and departmental or program standards and requirements, the student may be eligible for credit for a specific course listed in the Academic Catalog. Learning which falls outside of the existing university courses could earn credit as a Directed Study or Special Topics.
3. The quality of the documented learning must be rigorous. Credit will only be recommended for learning that is deemed to meet the standard of a grade of B or better in the course for which the credit is requested. If FOCUS credit is approved, it will be denoted on the student's transcript as P.
4. FOCUS credit is not awarded for learning obtained after matriculation at Saint Martin's, for courses or subjects not offered at the university, or for physical education activity courses.
5. Certain programs at Saint Martin's University are not open to the FOCUS program. For more information, consult with the Dean of your academic unit.
6. No more than 15 cumulative semester credits (approximately one semester) can be granted through FOCUS.
7. FOCUS credit may not be used to fulfill the Saint Martin's University requirement that a student complete 30 Saint Martin's University credits for graduation.
8. Students who are interested in receiving FOCUS credit should first obtain the following two documents from the Registrar: *Guidelines for Preparing a FOCUS Portfolio* and *Student Summary Sheet*. For credit to be awarded, students must submit a portfolio documenting their learning. One portfolio is submitted for each course for which credit is requested.
9. Students must begin the procedure for applying for FOCUS credit at least one academic year before graduation and any FOCUS credit must be fully approved at least one semester before graduation. All dates correspond to the Lacey campus calendar.

10. Students pay a one-time, nonrefundable \$80 registration fee to become a FOCUS candidate.
11. Matriculated students who have registered as FOCUS candidates will be given a full, formal review of their request by Faculty Evaluator(s), the Department Chair or Dean of Academic Unit for the course requested, and the Academic Standards Committee, who will then make a recommendation to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The VPAA will have final say in determining whether or not FOCUS credit will be granted.
12. The following grid outlines the procedure and timeline for requesting and earning FOCUS credit for a particular Saint Martin's University course.

Procedure and Timeline For Requesting and Earning FOCUS Credit	
1	Student picks up the following documents at the Registrar's Office: <i>Guidelines for Preparing a FOCUS Portfolio</i> and a <i>Student Summary Sheet</i> .
2	Student meets with her/his academic advisor and discusses the potential of earning FOCUS credit for a particular course.
3	Student obtains a current syllabus for the course from the Department Chair or Dean of the Academic Unit of the course, who then assigns one or more Faculty Evaluators from the department to provide guidance to the candidate.
4	Each Faculty Evaluator obtains the following documents from the Registrar's Office: <i>Guidelines for Evaluating a FOCUS Portfolio</i> and a <i>Faculty Evaluator's Report</i> . With the guidance of the Faculty Evaluators, the candidate prepares a portfolio.
5	The completed portfolio, which includes the <i>Student Summary Sheet</i> , is brought to the Registrar's Office. Once the registration fee is paid by the student, the student becomes a FOCUS candidate and the Registrar's Office will return the completed portfolio to the Faculty Evaluators.
6	Within 10 working days, each Faculty Evaluator reviews the portfolio, completes their portion of the <i>Student Summary Sheet</i> , completes a <i>Faculty Evaluator's Report</i> , adds the report to the portfolio, and then forwards the portfolio to the Department Chair/Dean.
7	Within 10 working days, the Department Chair/Dean reviews the portfolio, adds her/his approval or disapproval of the recommendation to each <i>Faculty Evaluator's Report</i> , and then forwards the portfolio to the Chair of the Academic Standards Committee.
8	Within 10 working days, the Academic Standards Committee reviews the portfolio and recommends a course of action to the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA), who makes the final decision.
10	Within 10 working days, the VPAA notifies the candidate by letter of the decision. The VPAA also notifies the candidate's academic advisor, Faculty Evaluators, the Department Chair/Dean of the course, and the Registrar.
11	If credit is approved, FOCUS fees are charged as per the current catalog and will be indicated on the transcript.

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING A FOCUS PORTFOLIO

The portfolio is the student's means for describing and documenting her/his relevant experiential learning. In evaluating the portfolio, the primary consideration of each Faculty Evaluator is that the candidate can document that s/he has knowledge and skills comparable to those students who successfully complete the course in question through traditional means. A student candidate needs to understand the major objectives of the course and must demonstrate that s/he has mastered comparable objectives, including comparable theoretical depth and breadth of application.

The candidate is responsible for collecting or preparing the materials listed below and for presenting them in a well-organized, well-written format. Faculty Evaluators will guide each candidate as well as alert them to any additional material needed. The Registrar is also available to consult with the candidate and their Faculty Evaluators in this process.

Section 1. General Information. Each portfolio must include:

- ____ Student's name
- ____ Complete mailing address
- ____ Telephone number
- ____ Student ID number
- ____ Course title and number for which FOCUS credit is being requested
- ____ Student's major
- ____ Student's academic advisor
- ____ Expected date of graduation

Section 2. Catalog Course Description and Syllabus. Include the following:

- ____ Catalog Course Description
- ____ Syllabus for existing course and relevant performance standards which include
 - a list of learning outcomes and
 - areas of assessment
- ____ Student Summary Sheet

A candidate can receive credit for a Directed Study or Special Topics course that conceivably could be offered by the University given sufficient resources, but not generic credit for life experience. For credit to be awarded, the candidate's experience and learning must meet the same standards regularly required in such a course. Specifically:

1. The topic needs to be one that this academic unit would consider a valid course or directed study proposal.
2. Course objectives need to be identified independently of the evidence presented.

Section 3. Description and Documentation of Applied Learning. In this section, the candidate must describe and document the experiences from which s/he derived the learning. Specifically, the candidate must relate her/his experiences to specific concepts, theories and competencies listed in the course description, objectives and relevant standards.

_____ The candidate must provide a description of the knowledge and competencies they have acquired relevant to the subject matter in question, how or where they acquired them, and verification of the learning and its quality. The candidates may use certificates, job evaluations, samples of their work, and letters of commendation. S/he also may include any performance evaluations made by their Faculty Evaluators.

_____ The candidate must provide documentation of where s/he worked and what her/his job entailed. Cite the name and complete address of the agency (paid or volunteered), name and title of supervisor, length of service, hours per week, year(s) involved, primary duties, and job activities that contributed to the knowledge and skills in question.

_____ The candidate may also include supporting evidence, such as: job description; supervisory reviews or letters of verification substantiating their claims; workshops, seminars, lectures, or symposia information; special projects; books read that added to the knowledge and skills in question; certificates; receipts; program materials; and letters of verification.

_____ A statement or summary making clear how what the candidate has learned has relevance or application beyond the particular setting in which it was learned, to include what general categories the learning applies.

Student Summary Sheet

In justifying their FOCUS decision, Faculty Evaluators will use the portfolio and the following information, submitted by the FOCUS candidate, to evaluate the evidence of learning for the course in question.

The Faculty Evaluator will compare evidence presented by the candidate in her/his completed portfolio to the syllabus provided by the Department Chair or Dean of the Academic Unit.

The candidate is responsible for providing a complete and thorough representation in columns (a), (b), and (c).

Faculty Evaluators must complete column (d) and use the information provided to justify their recommendation.

(a) Course Objectives and/or relevant standard	(b) Provide justification for A or B level of achievement for course objectives	(c) Location of information or evidence in the portfolio.	(d) Faculty Evaluator's Comments (objective Met or Not Met)
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			