



ILR School

Transfer Guidelines

Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations (ILR) only admits transfer students for the fall term. The Transfer Application deadline is March 15. These instructions are for students applying to enter in the **fall of 2026** and this document is updated as of 12/18/25.

The most important criterion for transfer admission to the ILR School is your performance in college-level courses. Most admitted transfers have at least a 3.4 cumulative average in college when they apply, and a strong background in ILR-relevant courses such as business, history, economics, mathematics, and English. However, grades are not all the selection committee looks at. Your essays, work experience, life experience, and extracurricular activities also play a part in our decision.

Approximately one-third of ILR graduates are transfer students, and we accept students from two-year and four-year colleges throughout the world. Some applicants will have recently graduated from high school, while others may have significant work and life experience. We encourage students who know they want to transfer to email our office when planning their schedule so we can assist in selecting courses that meet our requirements.

Credit Requirements

Students must complete at least four semesters of full-time study at Cornell, including a minimum of 60 credits, to complete ILR's degree requirements. You may transfer up to 60 credits of test/transfer credit. However, your ability to graduate in four semesters will depend on how your credits transfer. Students who transfer are eligible to apply for the semester-long Study Abroad and ILR Credit Internship Programs in Washington D.C., New York City, Albany, Ireland, England, Australia or other domestic and international areas. The ability to participate in these programs depends on how many credits transfer to Cornell to

fulfill program requirements and the successful completion of remaining program requirements once in attendance.

Financial Aid

Transfer student aid is distributed according to the same policies as first-year students. To access our financial aid calculator or to learn more about the current costs and our affordability initiatives, please review the [financial aid website](#).

Prerequisite Courses

To have your courses evaluated for transfer credit, email a list of the titles, course descriptions, and grades to ims25@cornell.edu. Please include the titles and course descriptions for any courses you are currently taking and all AP/IB scores.

If you are applying **to enter ILR as a sophomore**, the courses you will want to complete (or be in the process of completing) by the time you apply are:

- 1 English Composition/Writing-Intensive course
- 1 introductory macroeconomics or microeconomics course
- Your next appropriate level of math up to Statistics or Calculus
- 1 course to fill our Science & Technology distribution requirement (such as chemistry, biology, astronomy, physics, evolution, or geology) **or** ILR elective credits (through a foreign language class)

If you have completed the above requirements and wish to take more classes to progress through our requirements, we recommend completing another introductory economics course (micro or macro), a second English Composition/Writing-Intensive course,

and/or additional language classes to fill ILR elective credits.

If you are applying **to enter ILR as a junior**, the courses you will want to complete (or be in the process of completing) by the time you apply are:

- 2 English Composition/Writing-Intensive courses
- 2 Introductory Economics courses: macroeconomics and microeconomics
- Math up to Statistics or Calculus
- 1 course to fill our Science & Technology distribution requirement (such as chemistry, biology, astronomy, physics, evolution, or other science class)
- At least 2 courses to fill ILR elective credits (these can be filled through foreign language classes)

Please note: Students who are not able to complete all of these courses can apply and be considered for admission. However, if you aim to graduate after 4 semesters at Cornell, you will want to complete summer courses, which can be taken at any two- or four-year school) to both complete these requirements and transfer in as close to the maximum of 60 credits as possible.

In all cases, to be eligible for fall or spring off-campus opportunities, you must work closely with ILR's Registrar to ensure that you complete your remaining program requirements.

Grades

ILR does not award credit for courses in which a student has earned a grade less than C. Grades for courses taken at other institutions do not appear on the official Cornell transcript and are not included in the Cornell cumulative GPA.

Type of Institution

Transfer credit will only be awarded for courses offered by non-profit, regionally accredited, degree-granting institutions. MOOCs and other non-degree courses are not eligible for transfer credit. Transfer credit will not

be awarded for technical skills or general knowledge acquired through personal experience, employment, or military training. Credits can transfer if earned at an accredited college or university in the United States or the student's country of permanent residence. A list of the recognized accrediting bodies accepted by Cornell is available on the Council for [Higher Education Accreditation's website](#).

AP, IB and Other Credit Policies

Credit from AP, IB and other standardized exams is awarded based only on ILR's policies. For example, you may receive credit for AP Microeconomics with a score of 4 at your first school, but a score of 5 is required at Cornell. A maximum of 12 credits of Advanced Placement work may be used for Cornell credit. Test credits are included in the maximum 60 credits of test/transfer credit.

Please see the Summary of Credit Policies on our [Academics site](#) for detailed information on how credits transfer and guidelines for completing credits once you matriculate at Cornell.

Dual Enrollment Courses

Some applicants to Cornell take college courses during high school. Non-Cornell credit may be accepted when:

- the credits are earned at an accredited institution
- the course is taken on a college/university campus or online with matriculated college students and is taught by a college professor
- the credits have not been applied toward high school graduation requirements
- a letter/email from a HS counselor is sent to ilradmissions@cornell.edu confirming that the course meets the above criteria

Transfer Application Requirements

All applicants should apply through the Transfer Common Application and select Cornell University as the targeted program. After you select Cornell, you will see four sections to complete: Personal Information, Academic History, Supporting Information, and Program

Materials. The following notes will help you complete each section.

Supporting Information/Documents

*Please note: you **do not** need to submit a CV/Resume.
Program Materials/Cornell/Questions tab

You will need to select **Industrial and Labor Relations as both the school and major** in this section.

Writing Supplement Essays

Once you select ILR as the school and major, you must respond to the 2 supplement essay prompts:

1. Cornell University Supplement Essay (350 word limit)

“We all contribute to, and are influenced by, the communities that are meaningful to us. Share how you’ve been shaped by one of the communities you belong to.

Define community in the way that is most meaningful to you. This community example can be drawn from your family, school, workplace, activities or interests, or any other group you belong to.”

In this essay, we **are not** looking for lists of achievements, the names of Cornell clubs, institutes or activities that you find interesting, or your saddest or most intense personal story. We are looking to get a sense of who you are, what type of student, friend, or team member you will be, and how a community has impacted the way you will live and learn at Cornell.

2. ILR School Supplement Essay (650 word limit)

“Using your personal, academic, or volunteer/work experiences, describe the topics or issues that you care about and why they are important to you. Your response should show us that your interests align with the ILR School.”

This essay must demonstrate your fit with the ILR School. We **do not** believe fit is demonstrated by listing course titles, names of alumni, career outcomes, abroad opportunities, or other aspects of our school. Rather, this essay must help the Committee understand which

topics you hope to explore in our program and why they matter to you.

With that in mind, we strongly recommend that all students follow the Application Tips in this document to explore the range of issues covered in our school and to understand how students explore law, business, government, international affairs and other areas in our program.

Personal Statement Essay (650 word limit)

Under the Documents tab of Cornell’s Program Materials section, you will find the prompt for the third essay, the Personal Statement:

“How does continuing your education at a new institution help you achieve your future goals?”

While the ILR Supplement should specifically address your areas of interest in the ILR School, the Personal Statement should cover aspects of your overall academic path. “Future goals” does not mean we want you to tell us of career or graduate school plans, but why you feel a transfer is the right next step for you. This essay should address one or any combination of the following topics:

- How you wound up studying what and where you are studying, and why another program now seems like a better fit
- If you took time off between HS and college or started and stopped taking college courses at any point
- If there have been any major shifts in your academic performance, whether during college or from HS to college
- If there is anything else about your background or overall academic path that you would like the committee to know

Recommendations

Under the Recommendations tab of the Program Materials section, you will have the ability to request recommendations. Only one Academic Recommendation from a college professor is required. We do not suggest submitting more than one additional recommendation.

***As noted in this section of the app, this tool can be used to request a copy of your final high school transcript (they only need to submit the transcript, not the reference).

High School Transcript

We need official transcripts from every high school attended (even if you did not finish your degree) and scores from any high school equivalency exams completed. Please have your high school submit the official transcript using the Recommendation tool (as mentioned above), by having any staff member at the school email the transcript to support@admissions.cornell.edu or using the mailing instructions at the end of this document.

Standardized Tests

Transfer applicants **are not** required to submit SAT or ACT scores for transfer admissions.

College Transcript

We need official transcripts from **every** college attended after high school. We will also need this from any college where dual enrollment courses were completed **if the courses meet our criteria above regarding transferable credits**. If you have taken classes at multiple schools and your previous courses are listed on the transcript at your current college or if you did not finish your degree, we will still need official transcripts from each school.

Official transcripts must be submitted directly to Cornell from the issuing institution. Please have your college submit the official transcript using the mailing instructions at the end of this document. If your school sends official electronic transcripts, they can send it to support@admissions.cornell.edu.

Interviews

Formal interviews are **not** offered due to the number of applicants. A staff member from the ILR Admissions Office may contact a student if there is a section of the application that was not fully completed or if there is additional information that they believe will assist the Admissions Committee when reviewing the application.

Application Tips

Before submitting your application, we encourage all students to:

- Review the [Curriculum and Sample Electives](#) to see some of the ways students tailor our program to various interests.
- Read course descriptions from [all of our departments](#) to see the full range of topics covered at the school.
- Watch our [information session](#).

Mailing Instructions

Transfer application materials should be submitted electronically, but if necessary, they can be mailed to:

Undergraduate Admissions Office
Transfer Processing
Cornell University
410 Thurston Avenue
Ithaca, NY 14850

If you have any additional questions about the ILR School or transfer process, please contact our transfer advisor at ims25@cornell.edu.