

AO 35: Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)

Nevada State University may grant academic credit to students who have acquired knowledge and skills outside of traditional credit-bearing courses. To earn credit, students complete an approved assessment and demonstrate that they have met or exceeded NSU's established standards.

35.1 External Requirements

The NWCCU requires that "Transfer credit and credit for prior learning is accepted according to clearly defined, widely published, and easily accessible policies that provide adequate safeguards to ensure academic quality. In accepting transfer credit, the receiving institution ensures that such credit accepted is appropriate for its programs and comparable in nature, content, academic rigor, and quality."

The NSHE Handbook (Title 4, Chapter 14) provides guidelines for credit by examination (Section 21) and directs institutions to evaluate three types of military transcripts for appropriate credit (Section 22):

- Joint Services Transcript (JST);
- Air University transcripts;
- Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) transcripts.

35.2 Earning Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)

35.2.1 Credit by Standardized Exam

The NSHE Handbook allows NSU to use scores on external exams to award college credit. NSU accepts the following exams:

- Advanced Placement (AP);
- College-Level Examination Program (CLEP);
- DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST).
- International Baccalaureate (IB).

Minimum scores on each exam and their course equivalencies comply with NSHE minimums (Handbook Title 4 Chapter 14) and are published in the NSU academic catalog.

35.2.2 Credit by Internal Exam

Students may earn credit by completing a comprehensive examination and earning a score that demonstrates mastery of a course's learning outcomes. Guidelines for credit by internal exam are published in the NSU academic catalog.

35.2.3 Non-traditional Credit

Students may request an evaluation of non-college training, including courses offered by employers or the military. Academic faculty with subject matter expertise and the Office of the Registrar evaluate these requests based on the recommendations of the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning's (CAEL) Standards for Assessing Prior Learning.

Military Transcripts

Academic faculty with subject matter expertise review Joint Services Transcripts (JSTs) and determine course equivalencies based on established outcomes and the American Council on Education (ACE) recommendations. The Office of the Registrar may recommend granting lower-division elective credit instead of credit for a specific course. The Office of the Registrar evaluates transcripts from Air University and the Community College of the Air Force for course equivalencies.

A list of pre-approved course equivalencies is available in the NSU catalog and posted on the NS website; the list is reviewed each term and updated as needed.

35.2.4 Military Service Elective Credits

Veterans who served at least 12 months on active duty in the United States Armed Forces and who were honorably discharged may request to be granted a maximum of 4 lower-division general elective credits. When applying for admission, a copy of the Report of Separation (DD-214) must be submitted to the Office of Admissions and Recruitment.

35.2.5 Other Non-traditional Learning

NSU will consider requests for evaluation of forms of non-traditional learning that are not specified in this policy on a case-by-case basis, using recommendations from the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning's (CAEL) Standards for Assessing Prior Learning.

35.3 Limitations

35.3.1 Maximum Credits

The number of credits earned for prior learning applied toward a NSU degree cannot exceed 50% of the minimum number of credits required for the degree.

35.3.2 GPA and Transcripts

CPL does not affect a student's GPA. The student's transcript will identify any CPL credit with the type, number of credits granted, and a grade of Satisfactory (S).

35.3.3 CPL and Enrollment

CPL does not count toward a student's semester enrollment and does not affect financial aid calculations.

35.3.4 Content Duplication

NSU will not award credit that duplicates previously earned course credit or other credit awarded through CPL. This prevents students from receiving credit twice for the same learning.

35.3.5 NSU Residency

Students pursuing an undergraduate degree must complete 30 upper-division credits at NSU. CPL does not count toward this requirement.

35.3.6 Transferring CPL

NSU must evaluate CPL transferred from another institution unless those courses are already included in the CPL Crosswalk. CPL accepted at NSU may not transfer to other institutions; students should verify transfer acceptance directly with the receiving institution, particularly those outside of NSHE.

35.4 Related Information

- NWCCU 2020 Standard 1.C.8
- [NSHE Handbook Title 4, Chapter 14](#)
- NSHE [P&G Manual Chapter 6, Section 21](#)
- [American Council on Education](#)
- [Council for Adult and Experiential Learning \(CAEL\) Standards for Assessing Prior Learning](#)
- [NSU Academic Catalog](#)

35.4.1 Revision History

- Approved by Dr. Raul Tapia, Chair of Academic Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee, February 2026; Deans Council (6 vote for approval, 0 against), 3/13/2026; Berna Rhodes-Ford, General Counsel, 7/15/2026; Dr. Gwen Sharp, Interim Provost, 7/15/2026; Dr. Amber Lopez Lasater, Acting President, 7/29/2026.