

A CAEL RESEARCH BRIEF
APRIL 2025



Accreditor Policies on Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)

Guidance on CPL Provided by the Formerly Regional Accreditors,
Career-Based Accreditors, and Faith-Related Accreditors

REBECCA KLEIN-COLLINS

cael.org



**ACCREDITOR
POLICIES ON CPL**

Guidance on CPL Provided by the
Formerly Regional Accreditors,
Career-Based Accreditors, and
Faith-Related Accreditors

Table of Contents

Institutional Accrediting Bodies and Credit for Prior Learning (CPL).....	3
Guidance to the Accreditors: The <i>Joint Statement on the Transfer and Award of Credit</i>	5
Summary of the Formerly Regional Accreditor CPL Policies	7
Formerly Regional Accreditor CPL Policies	10
Higher Learning Commission (HLC).....	10
Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE).....	13
New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)	17
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU).....	20
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)	22
Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) – Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC).....	24
The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC).....	27
Summary of CPL Policies of Other Accrediting Bodies	30
Final Notes	33
Appendix A. CAEL's Ten Standards for Assessing Learning	34
Appendix B. Details on CPL Policies of Career-Related, Faith-Related, and Other Accreditors	35
Career-Related and Other Accreditors.....	35
Faith-Related Accreditors	38

Institutional Accrediting Bodies and Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)

Postsecondary institutions have a number of decisions to make in designing Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) offerings, including the specific assessment options they make available to students, how assessments of prior learning are administered, what to charge for CPL, how to maintain high academic standards, and so on. States, systems, and private entities like CAEL offer important guidance on these matters (please see the examples in the sidebar on page 4). Perhaps more importantly, both public and private institutions also turn to their accrediting organizations for CPL guidance.

In 2014, CAEL published a report that described how each of the seven formerly regional accrediting bodies addressed CPL in their policy manuals or other materials. Much has changed in these accrediting policy manuals and guides in the ensuing years, necessitating this updated look at CPL and accreditors.

There are four types of institutional accreditors that are recognized by either the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or the U.S. Department of Education:

1. Formerly regional accrediting organizations (they are no longer tied to specific geographic regions)
2. National faith-related accrediting organizations
3. National career-related accrediting organizations
4. Institutional accrediting organizations (consisting of a single organization)

In the pages below, we focus primarily on the seven accrediting organizations that were once known as regional accreditors:

- Higher Learning Commission (HLC)
- Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)
- New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) (formerly NEASC)
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)
- WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)
- Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC)

Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) is the term used for the various ways in which higher education institutions and other organizations assess an individual's extra-institutional learning for the purposes of granting college credit, certification, or advanced standing in a postsecondary education program. This learning can come from work experience, life experience, volunteer work, self-study, military training, non-college instruction, and other sources outside of the traditional instructor-led college classroom.

Common CPL methods include: standardized exams like CLEP and DSST; portfolio or other individualized assessment; and evaluation of noncollege and noncredit programs (e.g., ACE CREDIT, ACE military guide, recommendations from the National College Credit Recommendation Service).

**ACCREDITOR
POLICIES ON CPL**

Guidance on CPL Provided by the
Formerly Regional Accreditors,
Career-Based Accreditors, and
Faith-Related Accreditors

The information provided in this report was primarily obtained by scanning the websites of the various accreditors to identify standards for accreditation or other documents that referenced CPL. For the seven formerly regional accreditors, we connected directly with representatives of these organizations and had them review what we found to ensure accuracy and completeness. Whereas our previous report summarized the policy language in the accreditors' manuals, guides, and standards, this report is providing most of the language verbatim. While this adds a great deal of length to the report, we anticipate that many users of this report will want to read the exact language rather than a summary.

For those interested in the view of other types of institutional accreditors, the report also provides a summary of the CPL policies (where found) of the faith-related, career-related, and other institutional accreditors; the details of these policies are then presented in Appendix B.



CAEL resources on CPL policies and practices include [professional development workshops](#), publications like [*The Four Stages of Building an Effective and Inclusive CPL Program \(And Why Building Internal Buy-in Is Stage 1\)*](#), and CAEL's annual conference. For information on quality assurance guidance, see CAEL's [Ten Standards for Assessing Learning](#) in Appendix A and in [Assessing Learning: Quality Standards and Institutional Commitments, 3rd Edition](#). In addition, states and systems often provide guidance to public postsecondary institutions on CPL policy and practice, with examples found in a [new inventory and policy brief](#) published by ACE and CAEL.

Guidance on CPL Provided by the
Formerly Regional Accreditors,
Career-Based Accreditors, and
Faith-Related Accreditors

Guidance to the Accreditors: *The Joint Statement on the Transfer and Award of Credit*

As a backdrop to the accreditor policies, it may be useful to become familiar with the [*Joint Statement on the Transfer and Award of Credit*](#), issued by American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), the American Council on Education (ACE), and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). According to many of the accreditors CAEL spoke with, and evident through periodic references to it in their policy document, the *Joint Statement* has had a significant influence on the shaping of their CPL guidance.

The three organizations first issued this kind of joint statement in 2001, with the most recent revision in 2021. The purpose of the statement is to provide principles and key considerations regarding the award of academic credit for student learning acquired “elsewhere.” The most recent version makes clear that each institution maintains autonomy in developing specific policies about transfer credit and CPL, and yet the *Joint Statement* positions CPL as “essential” for making a college degree accessible and affordable:

Higher education has a key role to play in driving upward social mobility and boosting individual well-being and economic prosperity. But transfer of credit policies and practices that hinder students’ ability to achieve success will worsen existing inequities that have already been exacerbated by the recent pandemic. For many students, sensible transfer and award of credit policies that recognize a student’s prior learning are essential to making a college degree accessible and affordable. Failure to award credit for learning already acquired doesn’t just increase the cost of a degree in terms of time and money, but it can also end the student’s pursuit of postsecondary education entirely, with lifelong ramifications (p.1).

The statement emphasizes maintaining quality and academic rigor in the awarding of credit for “learning acquired elsewhere,” with three factors that should be part of each credit award decision:

- The educational quality of the acquired learning for which the student seeks credit
- The comparability of the content, scope, and rigor of the acquired learning to that offered by the receiving institution
- The appropriateness and applicability of the learning experience to the programs offered by the receiving institution, in light of the student’s educational goals (p. 2).

ACCREDITOR POLICIES ON CPL

Guidance on CPL Provided by the
Formerly Regional Accreditors,
Career-Based Accreditors, and
Faith-Related Accreditors

The “key considerations” for implementing credit award policies that “lead to greater student success and reflect equity-minded practice” include the following:

- The standards for evaluating and awarding credit for prior learning should be the same, regardless of where the prior learning took place.
- The process for evaluating and awarding CPL should be standardized as much as possible.
- The goal should be to maximize the amount of credit that a student can apply toward their chosen degree or credential.
- Policies must be reasonable, transparent, and easily understood (pp. 2-3).

And most relevant for understanding the policies described in this report:

- “Accreditors should ensure their accreditation standards are consistent with efforts to create more transfer friendly institutional policies and with the principles of this joint statement. They should seek to incorporate and elevate these principles in their review standards, policies, and practices.” (p. 3)

The above language is echoed in many of the accreditors’ policy guidance presented below.

Summary of the Formerly Regional Accreditor CPL Policies

The CPL policies/guidance of the formerly regional accreditors ranged considerably in terms of the level of detail, and also had some notable differences in the specific elements of CPL policy that were included. Examined for the purpose of this report were the presence or absence of the following policy elements:

- Restrictions on the number of CPL credits that can apply to a degree
- Restrictions of CPL to undergraduates only
- References to standards of good practice
- Restrictions of CPL to curricular offerings of the institution
- The need for transparency
- Faculty involvement in CPL
- Transcription of CPL credits
- Transfer and CPL
- Separate and specific policies addressing CPL for service members and veterans.

Table 1 shows how each of the seven (formerly regional) accreditors' policies did or did not address that specific policy element. Of particular note:

- **Credit limits:** Three accreditors do not specifically limit the number of CPL credits that can apply to a degree. Of the remaining four, NECHE and WSCUC limit CPL to 25% of the degree requirements, while HLC and SACSCOC limit CPL to 75% of the degree requirements. NECHE policy also stipulates that for short-term credentials, CPL is similarly limited to 25% of the required credits. Note that WSCUC has a revised CPL policy scheduled for June 2025 that removes its CPL credit restrictions, and NECHE similarly may be revisiting this policy for 2026.
- **Level limits:** Of the six accreditors overseeing graduate-level education (ACCJC focuses only on junior and community colleges), none currently restricts CPL to the undergraduate level — in comparison, three of them did in 2014.
- **Current offerings:** Only two of the accreditors currently limit CPL to learning aligned with the curricular offerings of the institution — four did in 2014.
- **Recommended practice:** All seven include some references to recommended CPL practices, although some are more detailed than others.
- **Faculty review:** Six of the seven discuss the involvement of faculty in the evaluation of learning for credit.

All seven have some mention about the transparency of policies and practices and reference CPL within their overall transfer policies.

With respect to CPL programs for **service members and veterans**, several of the accreditors' policies mention military training as a source of CPL-related learning, but none had specific or separate policies for awarding credit for military training or occupations.

ACCREDITOR
POLICIES ON CPL

TABLE 1. CPL POLICY ELEMENTS BY ACCREDITOR

	HLC	MSCHE	NECHE	NWCCU	SACSCOC	ACCJC	WSCUC
Credit limits: Restrictions on the number of CPL credits that can apply to a degree	Yes. CPL can be used for up to 75% of a degree (25% of bachelor's and associate degrees are typically earned at the institution). However, variations are possible if they are explained and justified.	No	Yes. CPL limited to 25% for credentials of 30 credits or fewer. For other degrees, students complete at least 25% of their undergraduate credits, including substantial advanced work in the major or concentration, at the institution awarding the degree. <i>(This policy may be revisited by NECHE for 2026.)</i>	No*	Yes. CPL can be used for up to 75% of a degree; at least 25 percent of the credit hours required for an undergraduate degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. (Institutional credits for an undergraduate degree) At least one-third of the credit hours required for a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree.	No	Yes. CPL is limited to 25% of the degree. At least 75% of the credit hours required for a degree must be through instruction. <i>(This restriction will potentially be removed in June 2025.)</i>
Level limits: CPL for undergraduate only	No	No	No*	No*	No	Not applicable	No*
Current offerings: CPL credit award specifically limited to curricular offerings of the institution	No	No	No	No*	Yes	No*	Yes
Recommended practice: Reference to standards of good practice	Yes	Yes	Yes*	Yes*	Yes	Yes	Yes
Transparency: requirement to clearly communicate policies to students	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes*	Yes
Faculty review required	Yes.	Yes	Yes	No*	Yes	Yes	Yes

Continued...

ACCREDITOR
POLICIES ON CPL

TABLE 1 continued...

	HLC	MSCHE	NECHE	NWCCU	SACSCOC	ACCJC	WSCUC
Transcription of CPL**	Yes. Mentions CPL being on the transcript.	Yes. The institution determines this; requirement to clearly communicate how CPL and transfer are recorded on transcripts.	No	No	Yes. It must be clear that it's not native credit. Guidance includes "question to consider": How does an institution identify on its transcript the name of the institution or source from which a course was taken or credit granted?	Yes. Identified on the student's transcript as credit for prior learning.	Yes. Transcript entries should clearly describe what learning is being recognized and should be monitored to avoid giving credit twice for the same learning.
Transfer and CPL**	Yes. Must have clear policies for evaluating CPL awarded by other providers.	Yes. The institution makes transfer of credit and experiential or prior learning decisions that provide maximum consideration for the student who has changed institutions or objectives or has demonstrated learning in nontraditional formats.	Yes. Transfer-of-credit policies should encompass educational accomplishments attained in extra-institutional settings as well as at accredited postsecondary institutions.	Yes. Transfer-of-credit policies should encompass educational accomplishments attained in extra-institutional settings as well as at accredited higher education institutions.	Yes. The institution publishes policies for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit not originating from the institution. This standard applies to various forms of credit including advanced placement, credit by examination, experiential learning, prior learning assessment, conversion of prior noncredit experiences into credit, or similar situations where credit is awarded for learning not originating from the institution itself.	Yes. Transfer policies must include the criteria used to award CPL.	Yes. Transfer policies must include the criteria used to award CPL.
Separate and specific policies addressing CPL for service members and veterans**	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

* Change in policy or policy detail since 2014

* Not examined in 20214

Formerly Regional Accreditor CPL Policies

Each of the seven formerly regional accreditors' CPL policies and guidance is examined below. For each accreditor, we provide the names of the policy guidance documents, links to those documents, and notes on which policy elements are referenced (and which are not). In each section, a table provides the policy detail: what terms are used by the accreditor for CPL, any definitions that are included in the policy documents, and the exact language on CPL policy found in the policy documents.

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION (HLC)

HLC's policy guidance is contained in its *Policy Book*, which is updated three times per year. Relevant language on CPL is found in the sections on Criteria for Accreditation, Assumed Practices, and Publication of Transfer Policies. Revisions to the Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices are to go into effect September 1, 2025. The revised language that is relevant to CPL is provided below, reflecting minor language changes from the previous versions and the movement of all references to CPL from Criteria for Accreditation to the section on Assumed Practices.¹ There is also a brief mention of CPL in HLC's *Providing Evidence for the Criteria for Accreditation*.

HLC's policies make specific reference to:

- Restrictions on the number of CPL credits that can apply to a degree
- Standards of good practice
- The need for transparency
- Faculty involvement in CPL
- Transcription of CPL credits
- Transfer and CPL.

HLC's policies do not make reference to:

- Restrictions of CPL to undergraduates only
- Restrictions of CPL to curricular offerings of the institution
- Separate and specific policies addressing CPL for service members and veterans.

A note on “substantive change”: In addition to these CPL policy elements, one accreditor staff person explained that if an institution makes any significant changes in its CPL program, it may meet the definition of “substantive change” that requires prior approval from the accreditor. This rule applies across all accreditors and is driven by policy established by the U.S. Department of Education.

¹ Details about the criteria changes are available in this [HLC publication](#).

HLC – POLICIES ON CPL

OFFICIAL POLICY LANGUAGE	CAEL SUMMARY
<p>Terms/Definitions <i>Experiential learning, prior learning, credit for prior learning, credit for prior learning experience.</i></p> <p><i>No definitions in policy documents.</i></p>	
<p>Criteria and Requirements</p>	
<p>Chapter C: Assumed Practices CRRT.C.10.010 Assumed Practices</p> <p><u>A. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct</u> 5. The institution makes readily available to students and to the public clear and complete information including: ...</p> <p>(c) Its policies on acceptance of transfer credit and prior learning, including how credit is applied to educational program requirements. (Except for courses articulated through transfer policies or institutional agreements, the institution makes no promises to prospective students regarding the acceptance of credit awarded by examination, credit for prior learning, or credit for transfer until the institution has conducted an evaluation of such students' credits in accordance with its transfer policies.)</p> <p><u>B. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support</u> 1. Programs, Courses, and Credits</p> <p>(b) The institution maintains structures or practices that ensure the coherence and quality of the programs for which it awards an academic credential. Typically institutions will require that at minimum 30 of the 120 credits earned for the bachelor's degree and 15 of the 60 credits for the associate's degree be credits earned at the institution itself, through arrangements with other accredited institutions, or through contractual relationships approved by HLC. Any variation is explained and justified.</p> <p>(e) The institution has policies and procedures for ensuring that all courses transferred and applied toward educational program requirements demonstrate equivalence with its own courses required for that educational program or are of equivalent rigor.</p> <p>(f) The institution has a clear policy on the maximum allowable credit for prior learning as a reasonable proportion of the credits required to complete the student's program. Credit awarded for prior learning is documented, evaluated, and appropriate for the level of academic credential awarded. (Note that this requirement does not apply to courses transferred from other institutions.)</p> <p><u>C. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement</u> 2. The institution evaluates all academic credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning. The institution has clear policies for evaluating and accepting credits awarded by other education providers and may rely on credit evaluation undertaken by responsible third parties. The institution refrains from the transcription of credit from other institutions or providers that it will not apply to its own programs.</p>	<p>Transparent Policies Institutions must be transparent and provide details on acceptance of transfer credits and how those can be applied to degree requirements.</p> <p>There should be no promises that CPL credits will be accepted until the institution conducts a review of those credits.</p> <p>Transparency, Rigor, and CPL Credit Limits The institution has clear policies about CPL including maximum allowable CPL credit for the student's program. One-quarter of bachelor's and associate degrees should be earned at the institution itself.</p> <p>All transferred courses applied toward degree requirements must be of equivalent rigor.</p> <p>The institution ensures that CPL credit/prior learning is documented, evaluated and at the appropriate level.</p> <p>Importance of institutional evaluation of learning with respect to CPL credits Institutions ensure the quality of educational offerings by evaluating all credits that they transcript, including CPL credits.</p> <p>Institutions can rely on the evaluation of responsible third parties.</p>

Continued...

ACCREDITOR
POLICIES ON CPL

HLC continued...

Policies Related to Compliance With Federal Regulation	
<p>FDCR.A.10.040 Publication of Transfer Policies Each institution shall determine its own policies and procedures for accepting transfer credits, including credits from accredited and non-accredited institutions, from foreign institutions, and from institutions which grant credit for experiential learning and for non-traditional adult learner programs in conformity with any expectations in HLC's Assumed Practices. An institution's periodic review of its transfer policies and procedures should include evaluation of their clarity to those who administer them, to the students who follow them, and to employers and other stakeholders. It should also include the consistency of their interpretation and application throughout the institution, as well as their responsiveness to new types of learning opportunities outside institutions of higher education.</p> <p>An institution shall demonstrate that it has transfer policies that are publicly disclosed and that such policies include, at a minimum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any established criteria the institution uses regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution and any types of institutions or sources from which the institution will not accept credits; 2. A list of institutions with which the institution has established an articulation agreement; and 3. Written criteria used to evaluate and award credit for prior learning experience including, but not limited to, service in the armed forces, paid or unpaid employment, or other demonstrated competency or learning. 	<p>CPL Transfer and Transparency. Institutions should have transparent transfer policies, and the transfer policies should include details of how the institution recognizes various learning opportunities acquired outside of a higher education institution.</p>
Providing Evidence for the Criteria for Accreditation	
<p>Criterion 4. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement 4.A. The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings. [Among the examples listed:] ... Transfer credit policies, course equivalent guides, and credit validation process for prior learning and third-party providers.</p>	<p>Quality assurance for all credits awarded through CPL.</p>

**ACCREDITOR
POLICIES ON CPL**

Guidance on CPL Provided by the
Formerly Regional Accreditors,
Career-Based Accreditors, and
Faith-Related Accreditors

MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION (MSCHE)

MSCHE's main accreditation policy documents are the [Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation](#) (14th Edition) (2023) and [Evidence Expectations by Standard](#) (2023).

MSCHE also publishes [three additional documents](#) that have relevant language for CPL, dated July 1, 2022:

- Transfer of Credit, Prior Learning, and Articulation Agreements Policy
- Transfer of Credit, Prior Learning, and Articulation Agreements Guidelines
- Transfer of Credit, Prior Learning, and Articulation Agreements Procedures.

Middle States' policies make specific reference to:

- Standards of good practice
- The need for transparency
- Faculty involvement in CPL
- Transcription of CPL
- Transfer and CPL.

Middle States' policies do not make reference to:

- Restrictions on the number of CPL credits that can apply to a degree
- Restrictions of CPL to undergraduates only
- Restrictions of CPL to curricular offerings of the institution
- Separate and specific policies addressing CPL for service members and veterans.



MSCHE – POLICIES ON CPL

OFFICIAL POLICY LANGUAGE	CAEL SUMMARY
<p>Terms/Definitions <i>Prior non-academic learning, prior learning, credit for prior learning, prior learning assessment, experiential learning, prior learning experience.</i></p> <p><i>Credit for prior learning.</i> Academic credit granted for demonstrated college-level equivalencies gained through learning experiences outside of the college classroom, using one of the well-established methods for assessing extra-institutional learning, including third-party validation of formal training or individualized assessment, such as portfolios (definition from American Council on Education and Center for Education Attainment & Innovation).</p> <p><i>Prior learning assessment.</i> The process for recognizing and awarding credit for college-level learning acquired outside of the classroom. There are several ways in which students can demonstrate this learning and earn credit, including but not limited to, standardized examination, program challenge exam, portfolio-based or other individualized assessment, evaluation of non-college programs, etc. (definition adapted from the Center for Law and Social Policy).</p>	
<p>Standards and Required Evidence</p>	
<p>Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience Criterion 2</p> <p>A candidate or accredited institution possesses and demonstrates ... fair and transparent policies and procedures regarding evaluation and acceptance of transfer credits, credits awarded through experiential learning, prior non-academic learning, competency-based assessment, and other alternative learning approaches.</p> <p>Evidence Expectations by Standard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and procedures for making decisions about the transfer of credits earned at other institutions (regardless of modality) (Transfer of Credit, Prior Learning, and Articulation Agreements Policy and Procedures and federal regulation 34 CFR § 602.24(e) and 668.43(a)(11)) • Policies and procedures for awarding credits for experiential learning, prior non-academic learning, competency-based assessment, and other alternative learning approaches • Documentation, including URL, catalog, or other public location of public disclosure of transfer of credit policies and procedures (Verification of Compliance-Transfer of Credit Policies and Articulation Agreements and federal regulation § 602.24(e)) • Transfer data (Available in IPEDS) • Documentation of public disclosure including URL and other public locations of the list of institutions with which the institution has established an articulation agreement (e.g. high schools, other colleges), with evidence of regular updates (Transfer of Credit, Prior Learning, and Articulation Agreements Policy and Procedures and federal regulation 34 CFR 668.43(a)(11)(ii)) • Documentation of training for faculty or other appropriate professionals to properly advise both incoming and outgoing transfer students (Transfer of Credit, Prior Learning, and Articulation Agreements Policy and Procedures) 	<p>Policy Transparency Explicitly states that CPL policies are to be transparent. Evidence guide specifies the kind of evidence that institutions need to provide to meet accreditation standards, including policies and procedures for CPL generally, CPL transfer, CPL transparency, and faculty training.</p>

Continued...

ACCREDITOR
POLICIES ON CPL

MSCHE continued...

Transfer of Credit, Prior Learning, and Articulation Agreements Policy	
<p>II. Statement of Policy</p> <p>The Commission shall provide flexibility to institutions to determine its own policy and procedures with regard to transfer of credit, so long as the institution strives for appropriate balance among consistency, fairness, flexibility, good educational practice, and academic program integrity. The institution's policies and procedures shall address the decision-making process on the acceptance or denial of credit for learning experiences and shall seek to minimize the loss of credit for students wherever possible. The Commission shall require that member institutions develop transfer of credit policies and/or procedures that are clearly articulated, consistent, and transparent.</p>	<p>Policy Transparency</p> <p>CPL is addressed as part of the overall transfer credit policy. Institutions have the flexibility to determine their own policies, striving for balance among consistency, fairness, good practice, and academic integrity. Policies and procedures are to be clearly articulated and transparent.</p>
Transfer of Credit, Prior Learning, and Articulation Agreements Guidelines	
<p>II. Best Practices in Transfer of Credit Policy and Procedures</p> <p>Although the extent to which transfer, prior learning, and articulation issues apply to each institution will vary, the following usually characterize effective policies for the recognition of transfer of credit, experiential and prior learning (including military service), articulation agreements, and their implementation. These best practices are intended to recognize the increasing complexity of transfer, assure consistency in transfer of credit decisions, encourage appropriate transparency about transfer policy and practice, and minimize loss of credit for students.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The institution's policy and procedures are well-articulated and accessible to the public. The institution's basic principles regarding transfer of credit and credit for prior learning are clear. The institution makes transfer of credit and experiential or prior learning decisions that provide maximum consideration for the student who has changed institutions or objectives or has demonstrated learning in non-traditional formats. The institution's student learning outcomes, academic goals, and strategic priorities guide the formulation of policies and procedures for transfer of credit and prior learning experiences. The institution evaluates courses, programs, and other learning experiences on their learning outcomes and the existence of valid evaluation measures. The institution utilizes third-party review by appropriately qualified reviewers and recommendations from organizations experienced with such evaluations (e.g., ACE, CAEL). The institution provides students with a reasonable explanation about how work for which students seek credit is or is not comparable with curricula and standards to meet degree requirements. The institution is clear about what degree requirements may or may not be met by prior or experiential learning, including major requirements, general education, core course requirements, and electives. 	<p>Best Practices, Including: Transparency, "Maximum Consideration" for the Student, and Qualified Reviewers</p> <p>List of "best practices" to apply to transfer credit, experiential and prior learning (including military service), articulation agreements, and their implementation. Key points are that institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide "maximum consideration" for the student who has changed institutions or objectives or has demonstrated learning in nontraditional formats Provide transparency Provide reasonable explanations to students if the learning for which they seek credit is or is not comparable with curricula and standards to meet degree requirements Utilize third-party review by appropriately qualified reviewers (e.g., ACE, CAEL).

Continued...

ACCREDITOR
POLICIES ON CPL

MSCHE continued...

Transfer of Credit, Prior Learning, and Articulation Agreements Procedures	
<p>II. Procedures for Commission Review of Transfer of Credit Policy</p> <p>[A.] The institution will develop a transfer of credit policy and/or procedures that align with student learning outcomes, academic goals, and strategic priorities, are fair and equitable to students, and take into consideration new and innovative methods or sources for learning and alternative assessment methods.</p> <p>[I.] The institution will involve faculty and other appropriate professionals in the creation, review, and implementation of transfer and prior learning policies and/or procedures.</p> <p>[K.] ... The institution will make a statement of its transfer of credit policies and procedures readily available to prospective and current students, which will include ...</p> <p>3. Written criteria used to evaluate and award credit for prior learning experience including, but not limited to, service in the armed forces, paid or unpaid employment, or other demonstrated competency or learning.</p> <p>[L.] The institution will clearly communicate how credit for prior learning and transfer will be recorded on transcripts and how credit hours will be assessed for coursework, experiential learning, prior non-academic learning (including military service), competency-based education, direct assessment, and other alternative learning approaches.</p> <p>[M.] The institution will minimize additional fees or finance charges related to the evaluation of transfer of credit for prospective students and will be transparent about any additional financial charges or fees, if any.</p> <p>[N.] The institution will conduct evaluations of transcripts and prior learning in a timely manner and institutional decision-making regarding individual students will be swift and definitive.</p> <p>[P.] The institution will regularly review its transfer of credit, experiential and prior learning, and articulation policies, procedures, and/or methodologies and utilize outcomes assessment data to evaluate the effectiveness of transfer of credit policies and procedures.</p> <p>[R.] The institution will provide, at a minimum, the following information to the Commission as evidence of compliance at the time of application, grant of candidacy, grant of accreditation, self-study evaluation, and at any other time deemed relevant by the Commission:</p> <p>[2.] Policies and procedures on the decision-making process on credits awarded through the assessment of experiential learning, prior non-academic learning (including military service), competency-based education, direct assessment, and other alternative learning approaches...</p>	<p>Additional Details: Transparency, Fees, Monitoring, etc.</p> <p>Additional emphasis on establishing transparent policies, regularly reviewing those policies, keeping fees to a minimum, transcription of credit, role of faculty in these policies, and timeliness of credit reviews. This section also indicates that MSCHE considers the review of CPL policy details to be a part of the accreditation process.</p>

**ACCREDITOR
POLICIES ON CPL**

Guidance on CPL Provided by the
Formerly Regional Accreditors,
Career-Based Accreditors, and
Faith-Related Accreditors

NEW ENGLAND COMMISSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION (NECHE)

NECHE publishes two policy documents with references to CPL, effective January 1, 2021:

- Standards for Accreditation, <https://www.neche.org/standards-for-accreditation/>
- Policies and Procedures, <https://www.neche.org/policies-procedures/>

NECHE's policies make specific reference to:

- Restrictions on the number of CPL credits that can apply to a degree
- Standards of good practice
- Faculty involvement in CPL
- The need for transparency
- Transfer and CPL.

NECHE's policies do not make reference to:

- Restrictions of CPL to undergraduates only
- Restrictions of CPL to curricular offerings of the institution
- Transcription of CPL
- Separate and specific policies addressing CPL for service members and veterans.

The restrictions on the number of CPL credits that can apply to a degree is currently being discussed at NECHE as part of the standards revision process; the next standards revision would become effective in 2026.



NECHE – POLICIES ON CPL

OFFICIAL POLICY LANGUAGE	CAEL SUMMARY
<p>Terms/Definitions <i>Evaluation of prior learning, credit for prior experiential or non-collegiate sponsored learning, credit for prior or experiential learning, prior learning assessment, credit recommendation services</i></p> <p><i>No definitions in policy documents.</i></p>	
<p>Standards for Accreditation</p>	
<p>Standard Four: The Academic Program Subsection: Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit</p> <p>4.36 The institution demonstrates its clear and ongoing authority and administrative oversight for the academic elements of all courses for which it awards institutional credit or credentials. These responsibilities include [...] evaluation of prior learning. ...</p> <p>4.37 The evaluation of student learning or achievement and the award of credit or certification of competencies are based upon clearly stated criteria that reflect learning objectives and are consistently and effectively applied. They are appropriate to the degree level at which they are applied.</p> <p>4.38 Credit awards are consistent with Commission policy and the course content, appropriate to the field of study, and reflect the level and amount of student learning. The award of credit is based on policies developed and overseen by the faculty and academic administration. There is demonstrable academic content for all experiences for which credit is awarded, including study abroad, internships, independent study, experiential learning, and service learning. No credit toward graduation is awarded for pre-collegiate-level or remedial work designed to prepare the student for collegiate study.</p> <p>4.39 Credit for prior experiential or non-collegiate sponsored learning is awarded only with appropriate oversight by faculty and academic administration and is limited to 25% for credentials of 30 credits or fewer. When credit is awarded on the basis of prior experiential or non-collegiate sponsored learning alone, student learning and achievement are demonstrated to be at least comparable in breadth, depth, and quality to the results of institutionally provided learning experiences. The policies and procedures for the award of credit for prior or experiential learning are clearly stated and available to affected students.</p> <p>4.40 Students complete at least one-fourth of their undergraduate credits, including substantial advanced work in the major or concentration, at the institution awarding the degree.</p> <p>4.41 The institution that advances students through their academic programs through transfer or articulation agreements, dual or concurrent enrollment, prior learning assessment, credit recommendation services, or other extra-institutional arrangements evaluates the effectiveness of such arrangements to ensure student achievement in institutionally offered coursework validates the suitability of the credit awards.</p>	<p>Quality Standards, Transparency, CPL Credit Limits CPL credits are based on clearly stated criteria that reflect learning objectives, are appropriate to the field of study, are appropriate to the level of learning, and are consistently applied. For credentials of 30 credits or fewer, CPL credits are limited to one-fourth of the credits required. For other degrees, students must complete at least one-fourth of the degree requirements at that institution.</p> <p>Faculty Involvement Faculty and academic administration are to oversee policies regarding the awarding of credit.</p>

Continued...

ACCREDITOR
POLICIES ON CPL

NECHE continued...

Policies and Procedures	
<p>Commission Practices: Transfer and Award of Academic Credit “... each institution is responsible for determining its own policies and practices with regard to the transfer and award of credit. Institutions are encouraged to review their policies and practices periodically to ensure that they accomplish the institution’s objectives and that they function in a manner that is fair and equitable to students.”</p> <p>Validation of Extra-institutional and Experiential Learning for Transfer Purposes Transfer-of-credit policies should encompass educational accomplishments attained in extra-institutional settings as well as at accredited postsecondary institutions. In deciding on the award of credit for extra-institutional learning, institutions will find the services of the American Council on Education’s Office of Educational Credit helpful. [...]</p> <p>For learning that has not been validated through the ACE formal credit recommendation process or through credit-by-examination programs, institutions are urged to explore the Council for Advancement of Experiential Learning (CAEL) [sic] procedures and processes. Pertinent CAEL publications designed for this purpose are available.</p>	<p>Institution Determines Policies and Practices ... and reviews policies and practices periodically to ensure that they are meeting institutional needs and are fair and equitable to students.</p> <p>Transfer Credit from Non-College Training NECHE refers institutions to ACE and CAEL for guidance on awarding credit for extra-institutional learning.</p>

ACCREDITOR
POLICIES ON CPL

Guidance on CPL Provided by the
Formerly Regional Accreditors,
Career-Based Accreditors, and
Faith-Related Accreditors

NORTHWEST COMMISSION ON COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (NWCCU)

There are two current NWCCU policy documents that mention CPL:

- **NWCCU Handbook of Accreditation (2024)**
<https://nwccu.app.box.com/s/lcp7r49i8409za7bt0jeqx0zbp89eyi>
— Includes NWCCU 2020 Standards,
<https://nwccu.org/accreditation/standards-policies/standards/>
- **Transfer and Award of Credit Policy, last revised January 2022**
<https://nwccu.app.box.com/s/jn1xz3lz2oknw1a7fljmok3ul1ud7o0e>.

On the NWCCU website, there is also a “Rubric for Student Learning Standards” related to NWCCU’s 2020 Standards for Accreditation that includes references to CPL policies,
<https://nwccu.app.box.com/s/gbj5waxtyignubvkjq9ufq3cknadxgr>.

An important change with the 2020 standards revision is that the accreditor no longer limits CPL credits to no more than 25% of the credits for a degree.

NWCCU’s policies make specific reference to:

- Standards of good practice
- The need for transparency
- Transfer and CPL.

NWCCU’s policies do not make reference to:

- Restrictions on the number of CPL credits that can apply to a degree
- Restrictions of CPL to undergraduates only
- Restrictions of CPL to curricular offerings of the institution
- Faculty involvement in CPL
- Transcription of CPL
- Separate and specific policies addressing CPL for service members and veterans.



NWCCU – POLICIES ON CPL

OFFICIAL POLICY LANGUAGE	CAEL SUMMARY
<p>Terms/Definitions <i>Extra-institutional learning, prior learning assessment, credit for prior learning, (credit for) prior experiential learning</i></p> <p><i>Prior Experiential Learning (credit for)</i> Credit granted toward the award of a certificate or degree for prior learning experiences that can be shown through various means of assessment to be the equivalent of learning gained through formal collegiate instruction.</p>	
<p>The Handbook of Accreditation</p> <p>1.C.8 “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.”</p> <p>Instructions for preparing the institution’s seven-year report include a request to provide “Evidence of published and easily accessible transfer of credit and credit for prior learning policies to safeguard academic quality.”</p> <p>With reference to NWCCU’s 2020 <i>Accreditation Handbook</i>, there is also a “Rubric for Student Learning Standards.” The rubric contains descriptions of different stages of CPL policy: “initial,” “emerging,” “developed,” and “highly developed.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial: “Prior learning credit awards are addressed individually, one-on-one as requested by students.” • Emerging: “Some disciplines, programs or colleges have identified procedures for granting prior learning credit; institutional policies exist but may be difficult to decipher.” • Developed: “Policies for applying for and granting prior learning credit are established to ensure comparable quality; procedures are made available to students and the public.” • Highly developed: “An established process of review for prior learning engages faculty in determining comparable quality on an ongoing basis; the process of applying for prior learning credits is clearly mapped out for students and publicly available.” 	<p>Transfer and Transparency Requirement that transfer and CPL policies are clearly defined, widely published, and provide safeguards to ensure academic quality.</p> <p>Defined Stages of CPL Policy Rubric provides detail on what is an “initial” stage CPL policy, vs “emerging,” “developed,” and “highly developed.”</p>
<p>Transfer Policies</p>	
<p>Transfer and Award of Academic Credit</p> <p>Transfer of Credit Transfer of credit between institutions [...] may involve: (2). Extra-Institutional and Experiential Learning a. American Council on Education’s College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT) b. Prior learning Assessment</p> <p>Validation of Extra-Institutional and Experiential Learning for Transfer Purposes Transfer-of-credit policies should encompass educational accomplishment attained in extra-institutional settings as well as at accredited higher education institutions.</p> <p>The American Council on Education (ACE) can be helpful in deciding on the award of credit for extra-institutional learning. ACE’s Learning Evaluations maintain evaluation programs for formally structured courses offered by the military and civilian non-collegiate sponsors such as business, corporations, government agencies, and labor unions. Evaluation services are also available for examination programs for occupations with validated job proficiency evaluation systems and for correspondence courses offered by schools accredited by the Distance Education and Training Council. The results are published in a Guide series.</p> <p>Prior Learning Assessment For learning that has not been validated through the ACE formal credit recommendation process or through credit-by-examination programs, institutions are urged to explore the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) procedures and processes for Prior Learning Assessment.</p>	<p>CPL Treated as Part of Transfer Policy States that transfer-of-credit policies should encompass learning that takes place in extra-institutional settings. Reference to ACE as helpful in deciding on the award of credit for extra-institutional learning. For learning not validated through ACE, institutions are urged to explore policy and practice recommendations from CAEL.</p>

SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS COMMISSION ON COLLEGES (SACSCOC)

There are two main resources for guidance on CPL provided by SACSCOC:

- *The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* (2024 Edition). These provide short descriptions for each principle. <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2024/01/2024PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf>
- *Resources for The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* (2024 Edition). In this resource are additional details for each principle, including rationale, notes, questions to consider, and sample documentation. <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2024/02/2024-POA-Resource-Manual.pdf>.

In addition, there are two documents that provide further detail and discussion about an institution's responsibility to uphold quality and integrity in the awarding of credits, particularly in the context of student transfer, that mention CPL briefly:

- *The Quality and Integrity of Educational Credentials*, Policy Statement (Last edited September 2020)
- *Transfer of Academic Credit*, Position Statement (Last revised March 2022).

An important change to note from CAEL's 2014 report on accreditors and CPL is that SACSCOC no longer holds the position that some forms of CPL could apply toward residency requirements (if, for example, experiential learning was evaluated by faculty at the institution). The updated guidance is that only credit through direct instruction may be considered as native/residency credit.

SACSCOC's policies make specific reference to:

- Restrictions on the number of CPL credits that can apply to a degree
- Restrictions of CPL to curricular offerings of the institution
- Standards of good practice
- The need for transparency
- Faculty involvement in CPL
- Transcription of CPL
- Transfer and CPL.

SACSCOC's policies do not make reference to:

- Restrictions of CPL to undergraduates only
- Separate and specific policies addressing CPL for service members and veterans.

Guidance on CPL Provided by the
Formerly Regional Accreditors,
Career-Based Accreditors, and
Faith-Related Accreditors

SACSCOC – POLICIES ON CPL

OFFICIAL POLICY LANGUAGE	CAEL SUMMARY
<p>Terms/Definitions <i>Experiential learning, prior learning assessment, credit by examination, conversion of prior noncredit experiences into credit</i></p> <p><i>No definitions in policy documents.</i></p>	
<p>Resources for The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement (2024 Edition)</p>	
<p>9.4. At least 25 percent of the credit hours required for an undergraduate degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. (Institutional credits for an undergraduate degree)</p> <p>Rationale and Notes ... “Credits ‘earned through instruction offered by the institution’ would not include coursework transferred from other institutions, prior learning assessments, AP or CLEP credits (or credit by examination), or credits earned through a consortium that did not originate from the institution. Unless awarded upon entry into the program, this would include competency-based credits or credit equivalents for competencies or skills exhibited after the institution offered instruction on that skill or competency.</p>	<p>CPL Credit Limits The SACSCOC policy clearly outlines limits for the use of any forms of CPL in undergraduate (9.4) and graduate and other post-baccalaureate (9.5) degrees. CPL and other similar credits (including transfer credit) can only account for up to 75% of an undergraduate degree and only up to two-thirds of the credits for a graduate degree.</p>
<p>9.5. At least one-third of the credit hours required for a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. (Institutional credits for a graduate/professional degree)</p> <p>Similar rationale and notes section as in 9.4.</p>	
<p>10.8 The institution publishes policies for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit not originating from the institution. The institution ensures (a) the academic quality of any credit or coursework recorded on its transcript, (b) an approval process with oversight by persons academically qualified to make the necessary judgments, and (c) the credit awarded is comparable to a designated credit experience and is consistent with the institution’s mission. (Evaluating and awarding external academic credit)</p> <p>Rationale and Notes ... “This standard applies to approval of transfer credit (including articulation agreements for transfer of credit), advanced placement, credit by examination, experiential learning, prior learning assessment, conversion of prior noncredit experiences into credit, or similar situations where credit is awarded for learning not originating from the institution itself... .</p> <p>“Policies and procedures related to this standard should be approved through appropriate channels, and should be published so that the policies and procedures are available to those affected by the standard (e.g., faculty, current students, admissions staff, and prospective students). Good practices supporting academic quality in these areas include: (1) linking transfer credit, including credits earned at a foreign/international institution, to clearly delineated outcomes of the institution’s own courses and programs; (2) delineating the basis for advanced placement credit awarded for achievements outside commonly accepted programs; (3) awarding credit for experiential learning, professional certifications, and conversion of noncredit activities to credit based on well-documented activities and experiences at the appropriate educational level and evaluated based on clearly developed outcomes for the institution’s own courses for which credit is awarded. A sound academic practice typically involves qualified faculty participation in the evaluation of credit.”</p>	<p>Transcription, transfer, transparency, involvement of faculty, and standards of good practice This policy establishes important standards for CPL that include basic transparency of all institutional CPL policies, the awarding of credit based on clear learning outcomes that are at the appropriate level and aligned with institutional courses, and involvement of qualified faculty in the evaluation/awarding of credit.</p> <p>Per a representative of SACSCOC, this standard applies to the awarding of credit for noncredit instruction, including military training and policy academy training.</p>

ACCREDITOR
POLICIES ON CPL

Guidance on CPL Provided by the Formerly Regional Accreditors, Career-Based Accreditors, and Faith-Related Accreditors

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES (WASC) – SENIOR COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY COMMISSION (WSCUC)

WASC's Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) requires that institutions adhere to three policies that relate to CPL.

- Credit Hour Policy, Revised November 2020
- Credit for Prior Learning Policy, Approved November 2015
- Transfer of Credit Policy, Revised November 2020.

The most direct references to CPL are in the "Credit for Prior Learning Policy" document, as outlined below.

In addition to adhering to these WSCUC policies, institutions must "develop their own CPL policies that support educational quality and rigor, and ensure the learning experiences are relevant to targeted programs and courses." (Language from a WSCUC blog.)

WSCUC's policies make specific reference to:

- Restrictions on the number of CPL credits that can apply to a degree
- Restrictions of CPL to curricular offerings of the institution
- Standards of good practice
- The need for transparency
- Faculty involvement in CPL
- Transcription of CPL
- Transfer and CPL.

WSCUC's policies do not make reference to:

- Restrictions of CPL to undergraduates only
- Separate and specific policies addressing CPL for service members and veterans.

WSCUC is in the process of revising its 2015 CPL policies, with expected adoption in June 2025. In its draft form (available for public comment here), the new policies would remove the limit on CPL to no more than 25% of the credits required for the degree and eliminate mandatory transcript notation requirements. The revised guidelines would also be reorganized to be presented in three distinct categories: credit award parameters, assessment, and administrative procedures.

WSCUC – POLICIES ON CPL

OFFICIAL POLICY LANGUAGE	CAEL SUMMARY
<p>Terms/Definitions <i>Credit for prior learning, prior learning assessment</i></p> <p><i>Credit for prior learning</i> is a practice used by institutions, typically at or near the time of a student's enrollment, to recognize or award credit for demonstrated college-level learning gained in settings outside of higher education.</p> <p><i>Prior learning assessment</i> is one type of credit for prior learning practice: "the evaluation and assessment of an individual's life learning for college credit, certification, or advanced standing toward further education or training. Prior learning assessment is often applied to military and work experience, as well as community service, informal online learning, and other [college-level] learning acquired outside traditional academic institutions" (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning).</p>	
<p>Credit for Prior Learning Policy</p>	
<p>Guidelines</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Credit may be awarded for no more than 25% of the credits required for a degree. 2. Credit is awarded only for documented and assessed college-level learning that ties the student's prior experience(s) to the content of the relevant academic field or discipline at the appropriate level of learning. 3. Credit is awarded only in areas which fall within the regular curricular offerings of the institution. 4. Institutions that use portfolios, documentation, and interviews in lieu of examinations demonstrate that the evidence of learning provided by the student provides academic assurances of equivalency to credit earned by traditional means. 5. Assessment should be focused on student learning and based on clearly articulated standards and criteria at an acceptable level of learning. 6. No assurances are made in advance regarding the number of credits a student may earn. 7. Credit is awarded only by faculty with appropriate subject matter expertise and academic qualifications. The faculty member ensures that assessment procedures are appropriate for the credit awarded. 8. Credit is only awarded to matriculated students and is identified on the student's transcript as credit for prior learning. The institution is prepared, on request, to furnish documentation describing the learning that was assessed, how such learning was evaluated, and the basis on which such credit was awarded. 9. Steps are taken to ensure that credit for prior learning does not duplicate credit already awarded or remaining courses planned for the student's academic program. 10. Policies and procedures for assessing and awarding credit for prior learning (including provisions for appeals) are adopted, transparently described in appropriate institutional publications, and reviewed at regular intervals. 11. Fees charged are realistically related to the cost of the assessments. Adequate precautions are provided to ensure that payment of fees does not influence the award of credit. 	<p>Credit Limits, Standards for Good Practice, Transcription, Transparency, Restricted to Curricular Offerings</p> <p>The WSCUC Credit for Prior Learning Policy provides definitions and implementation guidelines that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPL is limited to no more than 25% of the credits for a degree. • CPL is to be awarded for documented learning at the appropriate level. • CPL is to be awarded only for areas that are part of an institution's regular curricular offerings. • CPL credit is to be awarded by faculty with appropriate subject-matter expertise. • CPL is listed on the transcript as credit for prior learning; the institution must be prepared to show documentation of how the credit was awarded. • CPL should not duplicate other credits awarded. • CPL policies are to be transparent. • Fees charged should be realistically related to the cost of assessment and should not influence the award of credit. <p><i>Many of the WSCUC guidelines align closely with CAEL's Ten Standards for Assessing Learning.</i></p>

Continued...

ACCREDITOR
POLICIES ON CPL

WSCUC continued...

Transfer of Credit Policy	
<p>Section 668.43 Institutional Information (a) Institutional information that the institution must make readily available to enrolled and prospective students under this subpart includes, but is not limited to —</p> <p>(11) A description of the transfer of credit policies established by the institution which must include a statement of the institution's current transfer of credit policies that includes, at a minimum—</p> <p>...</p> <p>(iii) Written criteria used to evaluate and award credit for prior learning experience including, but not limited to, service in the armed forces, paid or unpaid employment, or other demonstrated competency or learning.</p>	<p>CPL Transfer and Transparency Institutions must make available to enrolled and prospective students the written criteria used to evaluate and award CPL.</p>

**ACCREDITOR
POLICIES ON CPL**

Guidance on CPL Provided by the
Formerly Regional Accreditors,
Career-Based Accreditors, and
Faith-Related Accreditors

**THE ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND
JUNIOR COLLEGES (ACCJC)**

The ACCJC's guidelines for accreditation are contained in the [Accreditation Handbook](#) from November 2024, which contains a general definition of "credit for prior learning" as "college credit awarded to students for college-level skills and knowledge gained outside of a college classroom setting (e.g., military training, job experience, national examinations), after an evaluation or assessment to validate the prior learning."

Two stand alone documents guide institutional policies on CPL:

- [Policy on Credit for Prior Learning](#), June 2024
- [Policy on Transfer of Credit](#), January 2023.

ACCJC's policies make specific reference to:

- Standards of good practice
- The need for transparency
- Faculty involvement in CPL
- Transcription of CPL
- Transfer and CPL.

ACCJC's policies do not make reference to:

- Restrictions on the number of CPL credits that can apply to a degree
- Restrictions of CPL to undergraduates only (not applicable, since ACCJC members are junior or community colleges)
- Restrictions of CPL to curricular offerings of the institution
- Separate and specific policies addressing CPL for service members and veterans.



ACCJC – POLICIES ON CPL

OFFICIAL POLICY LANGUAGE	CAEL SUMMARY
<p>Terms/Definitions <i>Credit for prior learning, prior learning experience</i></p> <p><i>No definitions in policy documents.</i></p>	
<p>Policy on Credit for Prior Learning</p>	
<p>Policy “Institutional policies and procedures must outline the process and standards by which direct assessment of prior learning is conducted and credits, certificates, and degrees are awarded.”</p> <p>Policy Elements</p> <p><u>Assessing Prior Learning</u> In making the determination whether to award college credits, certificates, and degrees to students for prior learning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Credit or its equivalent should be awarded only for learning, and not for experience. 2. Assessment should be based on standards and criteria for the level of acceptable learning that are published. 3. Assessment should be treated as an integral part of learning, not separate from it, and should be based on an understanding of learning processes. 4. The determination of credit awards and competence levels must be made by appropriate subject matter and academic or credentialing experts. 5. Credit or other credentialing should be appropriate to the context in which it is awarded and accepted. 6. If awards are for credit, transcript entries should clearly describe what learning is being recognized and should be monitored to avoid giving credit twice for the same learning. 7. Policies, procedures, and criteria applied to assessment, including provision for appeal, should be fully disclosed and prominently available to all parties involved in the assessment process. 8. All personnel involved in the assessment of learning should pursue and receive adequate training and continuing professional development for the functions they perform. 9. Assessment programs should be regularly monitored, reviewed, evaluated, and revised as needed for currency. <p><u>Selection of Evaluators for Prior Learning</u> Faculty members who conduct the evaluation of prior learning experience exercise professional judgment and competency in applying the evaluative criteria and procedures. Faculty who are involved in evaluating prior learning should have the data necessary to determine the skills, competencies, and knowledge held by the candidate for direct assessment of learning, including position descriptions, outlines of training programs completed, and records of examinations taken, if any, and the means to compare the demonstrated learning with the learning outcomes acquired by students who have completed the related course or curriculum.</p>	<p>Credit Limits, Standards for Good Practice, Transcription, Transparency, Restricted to Curricular Offerings Specific guidelines are outlined for CPL policy, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring all institutions to have established CPL policies and procedures. • Credit is awarded for learning and not experience. • Assessment is based on published standards and criteria. • Determination of credit is made by appropriate subject matter experts. • CPL credits should be clearly marked as such on the transcript. • CPL policies, procedures, and criteria should be published/transparent. • Personnel involved with CPL should be trained. • There should be regular monitoring, reviewed, evaluated, and revised as needed. <p><i>Many of the ACCJC guidelines align closely with CAEL's Ten Standards for Assessing Learning.</i></p>

Continued...

ACCREDITOR
POLICIES ON CPL

ACCJC continued...

Policy on Transfer of Credit	
<p>Policy Elements</p> <p>“Institutions must ensure that their current transfer of credit policies include at a minimum ... Written criteria used to evaluate and award credit for prior learning experience including, but not limited to, service in the armed forces, paid or unpaid employment, or other demonstrated competency or learning.”</p> <p>“Institutions should be flexible and open in considering alternative or innovative forms of educational delivery that may characterize the institution where the student received the credits proposed for transfer; institutions may seek guidance in the Commission’s Policy on Credit for Prior Learning”</p>	<p>CPL as Part of Transfer Policy</p> <p>Institutions are to consider CPL as part of their overall approach to credit transfer, and their official transfer policies need to reference how CPL is to be evaluated and awarded.</p> <p>The language further encourages institutions to be flexible in considering what to accept in transfer from another institution; this presumably includes CPL credits, as the policy says that institutions should seek guidance in the Policy on Credit for Prior Learning.</p>

Summary of CPL Policies of Other Accrediting Bodies

CAREER-RELATED ACCREDITORS AND CPL

Of the six career-related and other accrediting organizations, four have specific policy references to CPL:

- **Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools** requires transparency in CPL policies and does not permit CPL to be used for master's degree programs. In addition, there is language prohibiting non-instructional service provider contracts from awarding CPL.
- **Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges** references CPL policy with respect to credit limits within different types of undergraduate and graduate programs.
- **Council on Occupational Education** does not have a specific policy about CPL, but there is brief reference to CLEP hours in eligibility requirements for accreditation: an institution must have produced a graduate that has earned 100% of the program's required hours at the institution. Implied is that as long as there is evidence of one such graduate, there may be others who do have CLEP credit.
- **Distance Education Accrediting Commission** requires transparent CPL policies and provides guidance on good CPL practice.

No CPL-related policy references were found for:

- Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training
- National Accrediting Commission of Career Arts and Sciences



ACCREDITOR
POLICIES ON CPL

TABLE 2. CPL POLICY ELEMENTS OF THE CAREER-RELATED AND OTHER ACCREDITORS

CPL Policy Elements	Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools	Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges	Council on Occupational Education	Distance Education Accrediting Commission
Credit limits: Restrictions on the number of CPL credits that can apply to a degree	No	Yes	No	No
Level limits: CPL for undergraduate only	Yes	No	No	No
Current offerings: CPL credit award specifically limited to curricular offerings of the institution	No	No	No	No
Recommended practice: Reference to standards of good practice	No	No	No	Yes
Transparency: requirement to clearly communicate policies to students	Yes	No	No	Yes
Faculty review required	No	No	No	No
Transcription of CPL	No	No	No	No
Transfer and CPL	No	No	No	No
Separate and specific policies addressing CPL for service members and veterans	No	No	No	No

FAITH-RELATED ACCREDITORS AND CPL

Of the six faith-related accreditors referenced on the CHEA website, three have specific policy references to CPL:

- **Association for Biblical Higher Education Commission on Accreditation** requires transparency, limits CPL (one part mentions no more than 30% of the degree, another part mentions no more than 30 semester hours), restricts the ability to use CPL to satisfy Bible-theology core requirements, and maintains general guidelines that encourage consistency in CPL administration, the use of technology tools and platforms, and CPL's use to facilitate student success.
- **Association of Reformed Theological Seminaries – Commission on Accreditation** has a general statement about the need to publicize any policies related to CPL.
- **Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools Accreditation Commission** has a general statement about the need to publicize any policies related to CPL.

No CPL-related policy references were found for:

- Association of Advanced Rabbinical and Talmudic Schools
- Association of Institutions of Jewish Studies
- Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools

TABLE 3. CPL POLICY ELEMENTS OF THE FAITH-RELATED ACCREDITORS

CPL Policy Elements	Association for Biblical Higher Education Commission on Accreditation	Association of Reformed Theological Seminaries – Commission on Accreditation	Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools Accreditation Commission
Credit limits: Restrictions on the number of CPL credits that can apply to a degree	Yes	No	No
Level limits: CPL for undergraduate only	No	No	No
Current offerings: CPL credit award specifically limited to curricular offerings of the institution	No	No	No
Recommended practice: Reference to standards of good practice	Yes	No	No
Transparency: requirement to clearly communicate policies to students	Yes	Yes	Yes
Faculty review required	No	No	No
Transcription of CPL	No	No	No
Transfer and CPL	No	No	No
Separate and specific policies addressing CPL for service members and veterans	No	No	No

Final Notes

Institutional accreditation has seen some significant changes in recent years, yet accreditors continue to play an important role in maintaining important standards of quality for our postsecondary systems and institutions. The changes in how the seven formerly regional accreditors have addressed CPL in the last decade may seem small but they are nevertheless important: More accreditors are making graduate-level CPL possible, and some have removed previous restrictions of CPL in terms of limiting it to the institution's curricular offerings.

Another change since the 2014 analysis is in how each of the seven formerly regionals have more clearly tied CPL to transfer policies. This is likely the influence of the Joint Statement on Transfer issued by AACRAO, ACE, and CHEA. CAEL and ACE also saw a considerable focus on CPL in the context of transfer policies in the state and system policy review conducted in 2024. In CAEL's view, treating all learning that a student brings to their postsecondary studies — whether acquired at an accredited postsecondary institution or through other learning experiences — is progress in CPL's standing as a legitimate way to recognize and value learning.

This report is intended to help postsecondary institutions and systems better understand CPL in the context of accreditor policies and guidance. For institutions wanting to better understand what is permitted with respect to CPL and accreditation, we recommend that you seek out the most current documents from your accreditor. Accreditors' policies change much more frequently than every decade, and so the above report is a snapshot in time. In addition, there are many areas of study that require [programmatic accreditation](#), and these accreditors may have specific policies or restrictions to the awarding of credit that need to be part of an institution's overall CPL strategy.

Appendix A.

CAEL's Ten Standards for Assessing Learning

One set of quality standards for CPL is CAEL's Ten Standards for Assessing Learning, which provides guidance on ensuring that assessment is done well and that outside learning truly aligns with equivalent coursework. The standards are:

1. Credit or competencies are awarded only for evidence of learning, not experience or time spent.
2. Assessment is integral to learning because it leads to and enables future learning.
3. Assessment is based on criteria for outcomes that are clearly articulated and shared among constituencies.
4. The determination of credit awards and competence levels are made by appropriate subject matter and credentialing experts.
5. Assessment advances the broader purpose of equity and access for diverse individuals and groups.
6. Institutions proactively provide guidance and support for learners' full engagement in the assessment process.
7. Assessment policies and procedures are the result of inclusive deliberation and are shared with all constituencies.
8. Fees charged for assessment are based on the services performed in the process rather than the credit awarded.
9. All practitioners involved in the assessment process pursue and receive adequate training and continuing professional development for the functions they perform.
10. Assessment programs are regularly monitored, evaluated, and revised to respond to institutional and learner needs.

The latest version of these standards is explained in *Assessing Learning: Quality Standards and Institutional Commitments* (Younger & Marienau, 2017), available through [Kendall Hunt](#).

CAEL members have access to additional resources related to the Ten Standards.

Appendix B.

Details on CPL Policies of Career-Related, Faith-Related, and Other Accreditors

This appendix provides the detailed CPL policy language that exists for career-related, faith-related, and other accreditors.

CAREER-RELATED AND OTHER ACCREDITORS

OFFICIAL POLICY LANGUAGE
Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools
<p>Accreditation Manual, 19th Edition (2025)</p> <p>GLOSSARY Advanced Academic Standing: Credit may be awarded for prior academic or professional experience and life experiences through prior learning assessment (PLA), such as DANTES, CLEP, or ACE recommendations. Such advanced academic standing does not apply to a master's degree program.</p> <p>CHAPTER I – GENERAL INFORMATION SECTION B Policies Affecting Institutions and Programs</p> <p><u>Subsection 9 Non-instructional service provider contracts</u> ...“Institutions or programs may not enter into non-instructional service provider contracts for the following: establishing admissions criteria for students; making final admissions decisions; selecting, approving, and appointing faculty; awarding credit for prior or experiential learning; awarding and recording of academic credit and credentials; approving course content and program curriculum; assigning grades and the evaluation of student performance; and assessing program and institutional outcomes (defining outcomes, analyzing, and interpreting evidence, using information for improvement).”</p> <p>APPENDIX C CATALOGS The following items are to be accurate and incorporated: ...23. A policy and published criteria addressing advanced placement and credit for experiential learning (if the institution does not accept advanced placement and credit for experiential learning this fact must be stated).</p>
Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges
<p>SECTION II – PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS A. General Program Requirements <u>9. Independent Study</u> c. A school may not allow more than 10% of any program to be offered via independent study. Students awarded 75% of the required credits through transfer of credit or prior learning experience into the school awarding the completion credential may not be awarded credit for independent study in the remaining 25% of the curriculum.</p>

Continued...

ACCREDITOR
POLICIES ON CPL

Guidance on CPL Provided by the
Formerly Regional Accreditors,
Career-Based Accreditors, and
Faith-Related Accreditors

CAREER-RELATED AND OTHER ACCREDITORS continued...

10. Transfer of Credit and Prior Learning Experience

b. Prior Learning Experience: A school may award credit based on an assessment of an incoming student's prior learning experience acquired outside of formal instructional or educational settings provided that the school:

- i. Has appropriate written criteria used to evaluate prior learning equivalency;
- ii. Only awards credit for documented equivalent prior learning experience gained through settings such as service in the armed forces, employment and on-the-job training, apprenticeships, or other similar learning sources; and
- iii. Limits the award of credit for prior learning experience to no more than 50% of the total number of clock or credit hours required to complete a program.

c. Allowance: Regardless of the acceptance of transfer credit or the award of credit for prior learning experience, minimally:

- i. 25% of the credits required for non-degree and undergraduate degree programs must be earned from the school awarding the credential, with the exception of an approved teachout plan or agreement and
- ii. 50% of the credits required for a graduate degree program must be earned from the school awarding the degree.

Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training

[ACCET Standards for Accreditation](#) (2023) contain no references to credit for prior learning, prior learning assessment, or experiential learning.

Council on Occupational Education

[Handbook of Accreditation for Public and Non-Public Institutions 2025](#)

SECTION III

Affiliation with COE

A. Candidate for Accreditation

2. Eligibility Requirements

...To be eligible for consideration by the Commission for candidacy for accreditation (pre-accreditation status), an institution must comply with each of the following eligibility requirements:

...e. Have produced a graduate from the longest program offered by the institution where the graduate has completed 100% of the program's required hours at the institution. (No hours transferred in and no CLEP hours awarded)

[Handbook of Accreditation for Federal Institutions 2025](#)

Similar language as in the handbook for public and non-public institutions.

[Handbook of Accreditation for Federal Institutions 2025](#)

No mention of CPL, PLA, experiential learning, or CLEP.

All resources can be downloaded here: <https://council.org/handbooks/>

National Accrediting Commission of Career Arts and Sciences

[2024 NACCAS Handbook](#)

No mention of CPL, PLA, experiential learning, or CLEP.

Continued...

ACCREDITOR POLICIES ON CPL

Guidance on CPL Provided by the
Formerly Regional Accreditors,
Career-Based Accreditors, and
Faith-Related Accreditors

CAREER-RELATED AND OTHER ACCREDITORS continued...

Distance Education Accrediting Commission

Definition from [Accreditation Handbook Appendix:](#)

PRIOR LEARNING Learning that has occurred outside the classroom. In some cases, credit may be awarded for prior learning through various means of assessment. An institution offering credit for prior learning assessment publishes and follows evaluation standards consistent with CAEL's Ten Standards for Assessing Learning. Prior learning assessment is performed by qualified individuals with experience in prior learning evaluation.

[Accreditation Handbook Part Three: Accreditation Standards](#) (2025)

Standard X: Academic Policies

Description

The institution establishes, publishes, and enforces academic policies and procedures to ensure faculty and student integrity and academic honesty, as well as compliance with applicable laws in research activities. The institution also publishes clear criteria for admissions, transfer credit, prior learning assessment, and satisfactory academic progress. These criteria are readily accessible by current and prospective students, as well as by the general public.

Core Components

C. Prior Learning Assessment

Credit may be awarded for demonstrated learning appropriate for the level, subject, and amount of credit awarded based on the student's prior professional/military experience, training, credit recommendation services, or other educational experiences outside of traditional academic learning consistent with CAEL's Ten Standards for Assessing Learning (Available in Part IV, Appendix XV, DEAC Accreditation Handbook). The institution must publish its prior learning assessment policy in its catalog. Institutions maintain official documentation of the evidence of prior learning and the rationale of the instances of awarding credit for prior learning.

ACCREDITOR
POLICIES ON CPL

Guidance on CPL Provided by the
Formerly Regional Accreditors,
Career-Based Accreditors, and
Faith-Related Accreditors

FAITH-RELATED ACCREDITORS

Of the six faith-related accreditors referenced on the CHEA website, three have specific policy references to CPL:

- **Association for Biblical Higher Education Commission on Accreditation** requires transparency, limits CPL (one part mentions no more than 30% of the degree, another part mentions no more than 30 semester hours), restricts the ability to use CPL to satisfy Bible-theology core requirements, and maintains general guidelines that encourage consistency in CPL administration, the use of technology tools and platforms, and CPL's use to facilitate student success.
- **Association of Reformed Theological Seminaries - Commission on Accreditation** has a general statement about the need to publicize any policies related to CPL.
- **Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools Accreditation Commission** has a general statement about the need to publicize any policies related to CPL.

OFFICIAL POLICY LANGUAGE

Association for Biblical Higher Education Commission on Accreditation

2024 Standards and Policy ManualInstitutional Accreditation Standards:Standard 6: Enrollment Management

Essential elements: ...

6. Accurate and fair descriptions of the institution's admissions policies, transfer credit and prior learning policies and criteria, articulation agreements, and effectiveness claims in institutional publications (print and electronic), statements, and advertising.

Programmatic Accreditation Standards:Standard 6: Enrollment Management

Same language as in institutional accreditation standards.

Policy on Adult Degree Completion Programs

15. The institution must specify the total number of credit hours (ordinarily no more than 30%) which may be earned through non-instructional means (e.g., credit-by-examination and credit for prior learning).

16. Whenever appropriate, awarding of credit for prior learning (CPL) [credit for demonstrated competence (CDC)] will follow the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) standards or be based upon recommendations of the College Credit Recommendation Service (formerly American Council on Education/Program on Non-Collegiate Sponsored Instruction, under the auspices of the State University of New York). No more than 30 semester hours of credit for prior learning will be awarded toward a degree.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO BIBLE-THEOLOGY CORE REQUIREMENTS

While significant content in biblical and theological studies is unequivocal in biblical higher education, the methods of engagement, delivery, and evaluation of that content are subject to the unique contexts of individual institutions and programs, and ABHE intentionally seeks to maintain flexibility in how Bible-Theology Core requirements are fulfilled. Alternative approaches include:

1. Interdisciplinary courses in Bible/theology and another content area
2. Competency-based curricula
3. Other means of demonstrating achievement of Bible-Theology Core outcomes at the level required for the designated credential as specified in Standard 7 (e.g., credit by examination, credit for prior learning)

Continued...

ACCREDITOR
POLICIES ON CPL

Guidance on CPL Provided by the
Formerly Regional Accreditors,
Career-Based Accreditors, and
Faith-Related Accreditors

Faith-Related Accreditors continued...

Policy on Transfer and the Award of Academic Credit

..."For many students, sensible transfer and award of credit policies that recognize a student's prior learning are essential to making a college degree accessible and affordable. Failure to award credit for learning already acquired doesn't just increase the cost of a degree in terms of time and money, but it can also end the student's pursuit of postsecondary education entirely, with lifelong ramifications."

Key considerations:

First, the standards for evaluating and awarding credit for prior learning should be the same, regardless of where the prior learning took place. This is true whether the learning was acquired at another institution, as part of a high school dual-enrollment program, during on-the-job training at an employer or in the military, or through experiential learning. The award of credit also needs to be independent of the learning modality by which it was acquired.

Second, credit award decisions must be applied consistently and equitably for all students. The process for evaluating and awarding credit for prior learning should be standardized, to the maximum extent practicable, across the receiving institution. Also, in general, policies for how credit award decisions are made should be consistent across the institution, regardless of the particular school, college, department, or program of study.

Third, policies should aim to maximize the amount of credit applied to fulfill requirements on the path to a student's chosen degree or credential. Awarding credit for students' prior learning to fulfill electives or even to simply acknowledge their success with prior college-level learning, while sometimes helpful, must not be the focus of our efforts. Credit for prior learning is most beneficial when it is applied to fulfill a specific degree or credential requirement.

... **Finally**, institutions should leverage innovative technologies to facilitate the review, awarding, and application of credit to the educational credential sought in order to provide greater consistency across credit award determinations and to maximize efficiency, transparency, and the timeliness of the process. These technologies include the sending and receiving of machine-readable digital transcripts; the consistent use of a trusted degree-audit system; a platform for prospective students to determine how their prior learning would be applied toward a credential; and technology that supports the efficient, timely, and consistent evaluation of prior learning that has not previously been reviewed by the institution.

Association of Advanced Rabbinical and Talmudic Schools, Accreditation Commission

Standards not available on the public website, <https://aarts.org/>.

[Annual monitoring documents instructions](#) (2024) contain no mention of credit for prior learning, prior learning assessment, or experiential learning.

Association of Institutions of Jewish Studies

[AIJS website](#), <https://theaijs.com>, and [Accreditation Standards](#) (2023) contain no mention of credit for prior learning, prior learning assessment, or experiential learning.

Association of Reformed Theological Seminaries - Commission on Accreditation

[ARTS Commission of Accreditation Standards of Accreditation](#)

Standard 10: Enrollment Services

Essential Standard #3:

The institution has published policies and procedures relating to transfer credits, prior learning, life experiences, and competency-based education, including public disclosure of criteria used to evaluate credits, and minimum (if campus based education is used) residency requirements for graduation.

Continued...

ACCREDITOR
POLICIES ON CPL

Guidance on CPL Provided by the
Formerly Regional Accreditors,
Career-Based Accreditors, and
Faith-Related Accreditors

Faith-Related Accreditors continued...

Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools

Neither the [Standards of Accreditation](#) (2020) nor the [Policies and Procedures](#) (2020) contain reference to credit for prior learning, prior learning assessment, or experiential learning.

Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools Accreditation Commission

[2024 Accreditation Manual](#)

[Federal Requirements](#)

17.4 Transfer of Credit Policies: The institution has published policies and procedures for accepting transfer of credits. Published policies include criteria for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit transfer, credit by examination, experiential learning, prior learning assessment, advanced placement, and professional certificates. Policies and practices must ensure that course work is at the collegiate level. The institution is responsible for the quality of course work and credit given on the transcript.

The policies and procedures must be published and communicated to those who administer the policies. Articulation agreements must be disclosed and the institution listed with which the agreement is made. (IER) - §602.24(e)

[2024 Compliance Resource Manual](#)

Regarding 17.4 Transfer of Credit Policies:

[Evaluative Criteria:](#) The Accreditation Commission will utilize the following evaluative criteria when determining institutional compliance in this area:

- The institution has adopted and published a transfer of credit policy
- The institution discloses articulation agreements

[Narrative Considerations:](#) When writing compliance narratives within an Application Compliance Checklist, Self-Study Report, Interim Fifth-Year Review Report, or Compliance Report, institutions should consider the following:

- Summarize the transfer of credit policy including processes for evaluating nonstandard credit transfer request.
- Present a description of any articulation agreements.



Link Learning and Work

Contact us at
cael@cael.org or (312) 499-2600

10 W. Market Street, Suite 1100
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Recognizing that adult learners are the backbone of the U.S. economy, CAEL helps forge a clear, viable connection between education and career success, providing solutions that promote sustainable and equitable economic growth. CAEL opens doors to opportunity in collaboration with workforce and economic developers; postsecondary educators; employers and industry groups; and foundations and other mission-aligned organizations. By engaging with these stakeholders, CAEL fosters a culture of innovative, lifelong learning that helps individuals and their communities thrive. A national membership organization established in 1974, CAEL is part of Strada Collaborative, a mission-driven nonprofit. Learn more at [cael.org](#) and [strada.org](#).

© 2025 CAEL. All rights reserved.