

BUFFALO STATE UNIVERSITY

DIRECTORY OF POLICY STATEMENTS

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Subject: Alternate Methods of Earning College Credit

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I. General Guidance

For Undergraduates, up to 45 credit hours may be accepted from the following sources:

Source	Maximum Credit Hours
Published Examinations	30
<i>No more than 18 credit hours may be in general examinations</i>	
Course Challenge	30
Military Service Courses	15
Non-Collegiate Institutions	15
Proprietary Institutions	15
Experiential Learning	30

a. **Courses from Non-Collegiate Organizations**

For credits to be granted, the institution must be approved by the State Education Department and listed in its Guide to Educational Programs in Non-collegiate Organizations. Non-collegiate organizations, such as the American Institute of Banking, are those whose primary function is not education. Such credit applies primarily to the major and is determined by the appropriate department.

b. **Proprietary Institutions**

The institution must be approved by the State Education Department and listed in its official publication of approved institutions. Proprietary institutions are privately owned and for-profit, such as Bryant & Stratton Business Institute. Such credit is applied primarily to the major and is determined by the appropriate department.

II. Credit from Published Examinations

Credit may be granted for acceptable scores in approved Advanced Placement examinations, provided the subjects meet the curricular requirements of the specialized units of the college.

a. **Approved examinations**

- New York State College Proficiency Examinations (CPEP)
- College Entrance Examination Board Advanced Placement Examinations (AP)
- International Baccalaureate (IB)
- College Entrance Examination Board College Level Examinations (CLEP)
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)

Students receiving the lowest passing grade may be admitted to an advanced course but will receive no credit for the exempted beginning course. All other passing grades carry college credit.

Before taking such an examination for credit, students already enrolled at the college must receive advance approval from the appropriate department chair. No new credit will be granted when the examination subject is the same as or overlaps with a college course already credited.

b. International Baccalaureate (IB) Credits

Credit may be granted for standard-level IB courses or high-level IB courses for which a score of 4 or better was earned on exams. The credit awarded may range from 3-4 credits and varies per course/ level. Students may be awarded NO MORE THAN 30 credits total through IB published examinations.

III. Credit from Specialized Coursework

a. Lower-division Project (295 – Undergraduate)

To facilitate lower-level undergraduate credit-bearing project courses, special provisions must be made to ensure adequate planning and approval.

Undergraduate students may undertake a project related to a required course for up to three credit hours per project. No more than six credit hours of academic project work is allowed. Application forms are available in the academic department and the Registrar's Office and must be filed with that office by the deadline date published in the class schedule each semester.

b. Internship (Undergraduate)

Internship programs provide students with guided and supervised field experiences (experiential learning) as part of their degree programs. Students who wish to participate in the program must have a minimum GPA of 2.0 and a background of courses or experience within the area of interest. Approval for experiential learning situations must be obtained from either the student's advisor or the chair of the department within which the student is a major. In addition, approval is required from the supervising faculty member and the chair of the department, within which credit will be granted. An individual student can apply a maximum of 15 internship credit hours toward their baccalaureate degree.

c. Upper-division Project (495 – Undergraduate)

Upper-division students may undertake a project related to a required course for up to three credit hours per project. No more than six credit hours of academic project work is allowed. Application forms are available from the academic department or the Registrar's Office. The forms must be filed with the Registrar by the deadline date published in the class schedule each semester.

d. Independent Study (499 – Undergraduate)

Independent study allows students to pursue a topic that may be covered only briefly or not at all in regular course offerings. Students may choose a faculty sponsor who is an expert in the selected topic and together determine all aspects of the study, including the evaluation method. The chair of the sponsoring department must approve the description of the study.

Students electing to do independent study should have a degree of knowledge in the area they have chosen, in addition to a strong motivation to work alone much of the time. An independent study should not be used to replace a course already being offered during that term.

Specific requirements for undergraduate independent study are:

1. Sophomores, juniors, and seniors who have completed basic courses or their equivalent in the chosen area of study are eligible to participate.
 - a. They need a minimum GPA of 2.0 and a minimum GPA of 2.0 the previous semester.
 - b. Plus, a minimum GPA of 2.0 in work completed in the selected area.
 - c. Freshmen who have successfully advanced preparation in the selected area may also be allowed this option.
2. The study must be relevant to the student's total program, and the student must derive special benefits from supervision by the college staff. The study must meet standards established for such programs by the department or program.
3. No single independent study for fewer than three credit hours may be undertaken. A student may take a maximum of 30 credit hours as independent studies. No more than two independent studies may be taken in one semester.

Further information is available from the department chair and program coordinator. Application forms are available in the academic department and the Registrar's Office and must be filed with the Registrar by the deadline date published in the class schedule each semester.

e. Independent Study (590 – Graduate)

Independent study allows a graduate student to pursue a topic that may be covered only briefly or not at all in a regular course offering. Independent study is never a substitute for a regular course.

Independent study may be offered by any university graduate faculty member. All independent studies are listed by the appropriate content area prefix and the number 590 (e.g., EDF 590). A maximum of 6 credit hours of independent study may be included in a Master's degree program.

Students must register for graduate-level independent study by:

1. Completing the Individual Graduate Study Application is available from academic departments; in-person or online.

2. The application must include a written paragraph describing:
3. The proposed course- including the purpose, objectives, method of instruction (e.g., readings, individual consultations with instructor, etc.), and method of evaluation (e.g., research paper, examination, etc.).
4. The instructor, the department chair, and the school dean must approve and sign the Individual Study Application by its deadline, which may be found on the Academic Calendar.

f. Cross - Registration

Undergraduate (sophomore level or higher) and graduate students may take courses for degree credit at any public or private college in Western New York with which Buffalo State University has a cross-registration relationship.

There is no cross-registration during the summer or inter-semester.

Undergraduate students:

1. Must maintain a 12-credit-hour courseload at Buffalo State.
2. May enroll for no more than one course elsewhere in any semester.
3. Falling below a 12-credit-hour courseload at the institution will forfeit any credit hours earned at another institution that semester under the cross-registration procedure.

Graduate students:

1. Courses are taken on a space-available basis during Fall/Spring semesters only.
2. Must be registered for at least one course at Buffalo State to cross-register at another institution.
3. International students must be registered for a minimum of nine credit hours at Buffalo State to participate.

Students who wish to take a course on another campus (that will apply toward a major):

1. Must receive permission from Buffalo State
 - a. Undergraduates must obtain permission from the department chair
 - b. Graduates must obtain permission from their advisor.

Cross-registration approval forms are available in the Registrar's Office. First, the student's advisor should sign it. Next, it should be returned to the Registrar's Office for signature. Finally, students must take the signed cross-registration approval to the appropriate campus partner, where they must register according to the procedures of that campus.

Transcripts are forwarded automatically to Buffalo State University at the end of the semester. Courses taken through cross-registration are recorded as if they had been taken at Buffalo State (credit hours and grades are included in the student's cumulative GPA).

g. Off-Campus Study

Courses may be taken at other institutions for transfer credit as long as prior approval from the department chair is obtained, and the Study Off-Campus Form from the Registrar's Office is completed and returned to that office. Students are urged to have transcripts of all coursework completed elsewhere forwarded to the Registrar's Office as soon as possible.

Coursework undertaken elsewhere, other than by cross-registration, will be recorded as transfer credit on the college transcript.

h. Course by Contract

Taking a course by contract is one form of independent study open to students who have reached sophomore level and are in good academic standing. Graduate students who have been accepted to a degree program and are in good standing may request to take a course by contract by contacting the department offering the course. For a graduate course by contract, the instructor must be a member of the college's graduate faculty. The course must be among those already approved by the college. Courses may be taken by contract only if they are not offered in the regular schedule during the semester involved or if all course sections are completely filled and the student needs the course in order to graduate.

Under this option, a faculty member (graduate faculty member for a graduate course) provides the student with a course outline, bibliography, and a statement of responsibilities and dates by which these are to be met.

The number of student-instructor conferences, the type of evaluation, and the culminating activity are determined by the faculty member and the student before registration for the course. These requirements must be filed with the department chair.

Before initiating a course by contract, the student must register using the Individual Course by Contract Application form obtained from the department office, the Registrar's Office website, or on the Registrar's website. The instructor, the department chair, and the school dean must approve the contract by the deadline for Individual Study Applications.

(Consult the academic calendar online at <http://suny.buffalostate.edu/academic-calendar>.)

First-year students are also eligible to take courses by contract under special circumstances. They may do so if:

1. They are in their second semester of a one-year course and have a grade of A or B in the first semester part of the course.
2. They have successfully challenged the preceding course in the sequence.
3. They have entered the university with excellent high school records or have done honors work in pertinent fields in high school.

i. Topics Courses (189 and 389 – Undergraduate)

The topics format provides the opportunity for in-depth study and examination of rapidly and significantly changing disciplinary issues, topics, or practices and may be used to accommodate requests of external agencies or the specialized resources of visiting faculty members. Students may accumulate a maximum of nine credit hours in one discipline.

j. Topics Courses (587 and 687 – Graduate)

Lower-Division Option for Graduate-Level Topics Courses: (Prefix will indicate department) Topics (587 – Graduate)

To facilitate lower-division graduate-level, credit-bearing topics courses, special provisions must be made to ensure adequate planning and approval.

Students may accumulate a maximum of six credit hours of graduate topics courses in a master's degree program. Application forms are available in the academic department and the Registrar's Office and must be filed with the Registrar by the deadline date published in the class schedule each semester.

Title Variable: Yes

Repeatable: Limit 2 times

Credits: Variable 1-3

Course Description: Special Topics Course (Graduate level)

Prerequisite: Instructor permission.

Upper-Division Option for Graduate-Level Topics Courses: (Prefix will indicate department) Topics (687 – Graduate)

To facilitate upper-division graduate-level, credit-bearing topics courses, special provisions must be made to ensure adequate planning and approval.

Students may accumulate a maximum of six credit hours of graduate topics courses in a master's degree program. Application forms are available in the academic department and the Registrar's Office and must be filed with the Registrar by the deadline date published in the class schedule each semester.

Title Variable: Yes

Repeatable: Limit 2 times

Credits: Variable 1-3

Course Description: Special Topics Course (Graduate level)

Prerequisite: Instructor permission.

k. Workshops (594 – Graduate, 596 – Conferences, 598 – Micro-courses)

Workshops, conferences, and micro-courses are graduate courses offered – at variable times and places – on particular themes outside the usual schedule of classes. These courses also carry variable credit. A maximum of

six credit hours of workshops, conferences, and micro-courses may be included in a master's degree program. Workshops emphasize process and implementation of theory, and they involve participants in accomplishing individualized objectives on a specific theme. Conferences emphasize a unique, one-time experience on a given theme. Micro-courses offer intensive instruction with specific, limited objectives.

IV. Credit from Evaluation

a. Course Challenge

A course challenge may be used to request college credit for a Buffalo State course when the course objectives and student learning outcomes have been previously met. Each department determines whether credit for a successful course challenge may be applied to the major or minor.

The following rules apply:

1. A student must be matriculated to challenge a course.
2. The department determines the challenge method, which may include but is not limited to examination, portfolio, performance, or presentation.
3. No credit will be awarded when the challenged course duplicates a course for which credit has already been earned (except in the specific case of a repeatable course), a course for which a grade has already been earned, or a course in which a student is currently enrolled.
4. Credit earned will be recorded as credit (CR) only rather than as a grade.
5. A student may not receive more than 30 undergraduate or six graduate credits through course challenge.
6. Course challenges for awarding micro-credentials are to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the awarding department/school.

b. Credit for Experiential Learning

Credit for college-level experiential learning is available.

1. Matriculated students who consider their previous learning experience as college-level creditable may enroll in a work experience evaluation course such as TTE 100/200 or INS 300 (Educational Assessment and Portfolio Development).
2. During said coursework, they will complete an Individualized Prior Learning Assessment (iPLA) to be reviewed by a faculty/staff auditor. This course is open to matriculated students who must attend an information session to become familiar with the process.
 - a. As part of the iPLA process in these courses, students will conduct a self-appraisal and inventory of all potentially creditable prior learning. The iPLA will be treated as an application to appropriate departments to award college credit.

Within the guidelines, credit for experiential learning follows essentially the same principle as transfer credit; students may receive credit for knowledge gained elsewhere. Students may receive a maximum of 30 credit hours. Credit will be awarded based on its correspondence to existing Buffalo State University courses. Credit earned will be recorded as credit (CR) only rather than by grade.

c. Military Service Educational Experience (Undergraduate)

Up to 15 college credit hours may be awarded for education received through military service, specialty schools, technical training schools, and basic training programs. Request for such credit should be made to the Admissions Office. Documents showing the completion of such courses should accompany all requests.

Evaluation of this experience is based on its relation to college degree requirements and recommendations suggested by the American Council on Education Credit Manual.

V. Fees, Grievances, and Appeals

a. Fees for Evaluating or Awarding Alternative Credit

Fees incurred for each method of evaluating or awarding alternative credit are to be based on the time and resources required by the University and its personnel to complete those tasks, not on the monetary value of the credits awarded. Proposed Assessment Fees for evaluation and assessment activities will be developed and assessed using current Buffalo State processes.

b. Appealing an Unsuccessful Petition for Alternative Credit

A student who wishes to appeal an unsuccessful course challenge can invoke the academic grievance policy via the respective school district available in DOPS I:17:02. (Refer to DOPS policy for grievances)