



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

14/16 Ahmadu Bello Way, Victoria Island Lagos

CREDIT TRANSFER AND ARTICULATION POLICY FOR NEW STUDENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) is an educational institution established on the basic principles and good practices of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system. Thus NOUN, in line with the ODL mode of learning, is a learner-centred educational system, which advocates openness, accessibility, quality and equity. It equally embraces the operational procedure of granting opportunities to various groups of potential students with various levels of formal prior learning towards pursuing any of its academic programmes.

The need therefore arises to put in place guidelines for the benefit of the public and potential students towards making informed decisions in their choices of NOUN programmes.

1.1 Credit Transfer in an Open & Distance Learning System

As with other Open Universities around the world, it is the policy of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) to grant to its potential students, credit exemption or studies-in-lieu on the basis of Prior Learning from formal studies.

A credit system is a systematic way of describing an educational programme by attaching credits to its components. The definition of credits in higher education systems may be

based on different parameters, such as student workload, learning outcomes, and contact hours.

The Credit Transfer System (CTS), wherever it operates, facilitates mobility and academic recognition of periods of study elsewhere. Furthermore, it enhances the quality and volume of student mobility both within and across international educational borders.

In view of the necessity to always compare courses and programmes offered in other institutions during the period of processing Credit Transfer applications, the CTS helps Open and Distance Learning Institutions to regularise the revision of their study programmes. Moreover, the system can be used across a variety of programmes and modes of delivery.

The Credit Transfer and Articulation System are based on the workload required to achieve the objectives of a programme, preferably specified in terms of the learning outcomes and competences to be acquired.

1.2 Basic Definitions Associated with Credit Transfer

In this policy on Credit Transfer, the following terminologies are common expressions. Their meanings are as in most conventional and other Open and Distance Learning Institutions.

Credit Transfer (CT)

Credit Transfer is the process by which recognition is granted by NOUN to applicants on the basis of previous studies undertaken in another institution, and also on the basis of prior learning. Credit Transfer may be approved when a course previously passed in another institution is assessed as being equivalent to a course in NOUN.

Credit

This is recognition granted towards meeting the requirements of an award programme either on the basis of prior study, which can be assessed as equivalent in content and level to the course(s) for which credit is sought.

Exemption

This is the release taken from specified components of a course. It may be exemption from lectures, practical, tutorials, projects or any other component of a course including elements of assessment.

Studies-in-Lieu (SiL)

This refers to work specified or allowed whereby a student undertakes alternative work in place of a course scheduled in the programme.

Block Credit (BC)

This refers to exemption from a period of study, expressed in units, as recognition of successfully completed periods of equivalent study. Such credit is particularly applicable to programmes which are highly structured and have few or no electives, as in many professional divisions where programmes are fairly uniform.

Specified Credit (SC)

Credit granted for a particular programme component when the student has completed a part of a programme in which the curriculum is substantially the same. This is expected to constitute at least the same proportion of full-time study. Also the standard attained should be substantially the standard required for a pass in the specified programme component being offered in the receiving institution.

Unspecified Credit (U,C)

Credit is granted when the work completed elsewhere has been a component of a programme for which there is no equivalent component in the receiving institution's programme. This is usually granted as credit towards meeting the broad general education or elective requirements of a programme.

Articulation

This refers to specific design of education and training programmes in ways which facilitate and maximise opportunities for credit transfer, and /or for potential students to proceed from one level of education/training to the next (not necessarily with credit).

2. GENERAL POLICY ON CREDIT TRANSFER

The policy of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) on Credit Transfer in form of granting credit, exemption and studies-in-lieu on the basis of prior learning from formal studies is in pursuance of the University's mission and vision as an ODL institution.

Consequently, NOUN shall make provision to admit potential students on transfer into its programmes from accredited national and international institutions. For other conditions requiring a collaborative effort between NOUN and any other educational institution/body, the University shall work out the details of the agreement along the broad guidelines enunciated herein in this policy, taking due cognisance of the prevailing economic situation and course delivery costs.

Generally however, NOUN shall work with recognised and approved Universities and institutions to establish formal agreements known as "Credit Transfer Agreements", for the award of credit for comparable successful studies.

In order to claim credit and to facilitate transfer of the same, applicants must provide an academic record of their previous studies issued by the appropriate institution. They should also be aware that being eligible for credit does not guarantee being offered a place in the programme to which it applies.

The NOUN policy's recognition of prior learning shall be based on the following broad principles:

- granting maximum credit for prior learning;
- granting block credit or specified credit to minimise the time taken to complete a programme;
- recognising knowledge that applicants already have that fulfill the learning outcomes of NOUN's programmes.
- ensuring that Credit Transfer provisions are available to the public and open to scrutiny;
- ensuring a consistent approach to the granting of credit.
- Supporting the articulation of credit transfer with other tertiary education providers.

2.1 Decisions on the level of credit to be granted in a particular programme shall be determined by the relevant Academic Unit (i.e. School/Centre) in NOUN in accordance with this policy and the procedures. This is inclusive of the frameworks established and maintained by the Schools' Academic Boards and the University Senate.

2.2 Academic staff involved in the assessment of prior learning on the basis of formal learning shall ensure that they have a detailed knowledge of the course(s) for which credit is sought and expertise in or access to advice on prior learning assessment methods. (Appendix A: Section 4)

2.3 Formal credit transfer agreements may be concluded with recognised Universities and other tertiary education providers in Nigeria and other countries. Such agreements shall require the consideration and approval of the Schools' Academic Boards and Senate.

2.4 Regardless of the nature or amount of credit granted, all specific requirements of an award must be fulfilled.

- 2.5 Where a student applies for credit transfer from one programme in one institution to a new programme in NOUN, the factors outlined above shall apply but only the relevant shall be considered.
- 2.6 If a student transfers from one programme to a new programme in NOUN, credit approved for the original programme will be assessed on its merit and relevance.
- 2.7 Credit will not normally be granted for courses completed more than five (5) years prior to application except where there is evidence of substantial relevant experience during the intervening period.
- 2.8 Unspecified credit, appropriate to the award, may be granted where no comparable course exists in National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN).
- 2.9 In special circumstances, for example where the applicant is unable to present sufficient documentary evidence to allow for the normal determination of credit, the student may be subjected to an assessment process which may be written.
The School responsible for offering the relevant programme(s), in consultation with the appropriate academic staff, will determine the type of assessment.
- 2.10 Where exemption has been granted in a programme, there will be no student contribution for that course.
- 2.11 The framework under which the University recognises courses for credit shall be as in Appendix B.

3. MAXIMUM CREDIT ALLOWED

The maximum credit allowed will vary depending on the structure of the University's requirements for the transfer being sought. However, it shall not exceed the equivalent of half of the credits for a programme of study.

3.1 Non-Degree and Undergraduate Programmes

(a) Certificate Programmes

No transfer of credits shall be allowed for these programmes.

(b) Diploma Programmes

A student shall be awarded a maximum of one third of the total credits for the completion of the programme.

(c) Undergraduate Degree Programmes

The maximum credit allowed shall be determined by what a student is expected to complete, within a maximum period of four (4) semesters and not more than 200 level of study of the National Open University of Nigeria.

3.2 Postgraduate Diploma Programmes

No transfer of credit shall be allowed for these programmes.

3.3 Master's Degree Programmes

Under normal circumstances a student may be awarded a maximum of one third of the total credits for the completion of the programme. Additional credit(s) may be granted for relevant programmes offered by the National Open University of Nigeria.

3.3 Doctorate Degree Programmes

Under normal circumstance, no formal credit for work done elsewhere shall be allowed for these programmes.

4. TRANSITION CREDIT

Where a programme is to be discontinued, significantly amended or replaced, the appropriate Academic Unit (School/Centre) shall provide all potential students enrolled in the programme with a transition statement. They shall be required to identify those applicants who in the transition arrangements fall short of the scheduled programme's credit requirements.

4.1 Undergraduate Programmes

Where potential students fall short of the scheduled programme credits (graduation) requirements by up to three (3) credits, the School shall award transition credit of up to three (3) to make up the short fall.

4.2 Master's and Doctorate Programmes

Where potential students fall short of the scheduled programme credits (graduation) requirements by up to 1 credit, the School shall award transition credit of up to 1 credit to make up the short fall.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1 Application for Credit

- Applications for credit exemption and studies-in-lieu must be made to the Registrar.
- Applications must be made by completing the appropriate form and accompanied by sufficient documentary evidence.
- Application for Credit must be made prior to enrolment to ensure that decisions about credit are made and reflected on time.
- The Academic Registrar shall forward applications for credit to the relevant Deans of Schools for consideration, assessment and recommendations by the respective Schools Boards.
- Recommendations from the Deans/Schools Boards shall be forwarded to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for approval through the Academic Registrar.
- Following the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic's) approval, the applicant will be formally advised of the result of the application and ensure that the decisions are recorded in the student records.

5.2 Each School shall maintain comprehensive and detailed record of specific credit transfer arrangements for each programme in the University.

5.3 Application for credit, exemption and studies-in-lieu shall be considered and recommended within the policies of the University by the Dean/Director in consultation with appropriate staff. This shall be forwarded to the Senate for approval.

- 5.4** Applications should be submitted early enough to allow processing to be completed before commencement of the course.
- 5.5** Admission shall be subject to decisions made on the transfer.

6 RECORDING CREDIT

Credit from other institutions may be recorded as:

- (a) specified courses and/or;
- (b) a specified number of credits within a particular area of the programme and/or;
- (c) transition credit;
- (d) a qualifying requirement to complete the award.

7 PRE-ADMISSION CREDIT/ADVICE

Advice on possible credit to be gained may be provided to potential students on request from the School. However, a final decision on the credit to be awarded is subject to the outcome of the assessment.

8 GUIDELINES FOR CREDIT TRANSFER APPLICATION

- 8.1 Although certain qualifications require credits obtained at 300 level, any award of credit transfer shall be made for 100 or 200 level only.
- 8.2 The policy for individual programmes may change from time to time. As such, applications will be assessed according to the policy in force.

9. IMPLEMENTATION

- 9.1 Academic School Boards shall be required to put in place structures and procedures to guide the assessment of prior learning (formal) in line with this policy. The implementation of the policy shall be monitored and assessed regularly in line with the University's Quality Assurance arrangements.

APPENDIX A

CREDIT TRANSFER FRAMEWORK

Credit Transfer Framework refers to a recognition of formal studies at other tertiary institutions.

1. Credit for Courses from Recognised Higher Institutions

- 1.1** Courses, which are provided and obtained from recognised higher education institutions shall be recognised for credit towards appropriate awards of the National Open University of Nigeria.
- 1.2** Credit may also be granted for non-award programmes offered by recognised higher education institutions.
- 1.3** Credit shall be granted for a course where there is a substantial overlap of content and/or learning outcomes with the relevant course in National Open University of Nigeria.
- 1.4** Schools may approve the following:-
 - ✓ block credit as major within a NOUN degree programme,
 - ✓ major sequences of study undertaken at institutions that are self-accredited higher education providers or their predecessors.Where these major sequences fall short of the NOUN's requirements for the number of credits or level of study, the School shall determine a programme of study to meet these requirements in the minimum time.
- 1.5** Credit obtained in courses from other higher education and professional bodies
- 1.6** Programmes provided by institutions and organisations outside the higher education system including vocational education training providers registered or recognised by the Federal Ministry of Education shall be considered for credit awards of the National Open University of Nigeria.

- 1.7** Block credit towards awards of the National Open University of Nigeria shall be granted for the successful completion of accredited award programmes where these programmes contain course content assessed to be equivalent to an identified programme at NOUN.
- 1.8** Credit(s) may be granted for programmes of Study delivered by recognised professional bodies.
- 1.9** Credit will be granted following evaluation of the extent to which the programme of study conforms to the Federal Ministry of Education Qualifications, Framework, guidelines and the factors listed in Appendix B.

NOTE: Credit transfer arrangements between the National Open University of Nigeria and any other institution shall be clearly documented and approved by both institutions' management.

APPENDIX B

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

The credit transfer accreditation process shall involve consideration of the following contextual factors:

1. Recognition

Status of recognition of applicant's institution by the National Universities Commission (NUC) and/or Federal Ministry of Education

2. Curriculum Content

The equivalence of the curriculum content of the particular programme;

3. Admission Requirements

Admission requirements to the programme;

4. Programme Duration

The duration of the programme

5. Postgraduate Programme

The procedure for approval or research projects for post graduate programmes

6. Minimum Acceptable Grades

Minimum acceptable grades not lower than a "C" grade

7. Transfer Arrangements between one Programme and another Programme

Where a student applies for credit transfer from one programme in one institution to a new programme in NOUN, factors outlined above shall apply. However, only relevant courses shall be considered.

CREDIT TRANSFER APPLICATION FORM

GUIDELINES FOR CREDIT TRANSFER IN NOUN

Please read the following guidelines before filling the Credit Transfer Form

WHAT ARE THE KEY FEATURES OF CREDIT TRANSFER SYSTEM (CTS)

- CTS is based on the principle that a specified number of credits measure the workload of a full-time student during one academic year. The student workload of a full time/flexible mode of study in NOUN amounts in most cases to around 15/30 hours respectively for a 1 credit unit course;
- Credit through CTS can only be obtained after successful completion of the course requirements and appropriate assessment of the learning outcomes is achieved. Learning outcomes are sets of knowledge competencies, expressing what the student is expected to know, understand or be able to do after completion of a process of learning, either in a full-time or flexible mode;
- Student workload in CTS consists of the time required to complete all planned learning activities such as attending practical sessions, seminars, independent and private study, preparation of projects, examination as well as the submission of Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs).
- Credits are allocated to all educational components of study programme (such as courses, placements, dissertation work, etc.) and reflect the quantity of work each component requires to achieve its specific objectives or learning outcomes in relation to the total quantity of work necessary to complete a level of study successfully;
- The performance of the student is documented in terms of graded score.

WHAT IS THE KEY DOCUMENT OF CTS

The Academic Transcript documents states the performance of a student by showing the list of courses taken, the CTS credits gained from NOUN or elsewhere, if any. In the case of credit transfer, the Academic Transcript has to be issued by the former institution for

outgoing students before departure and by the host institution for incoming students at the end of their period of study.

WHAT KIND OF STUDY IS ELIGIBLE FOR CREDIT TRANSFER

Credits may be claimed for successful study towards any appropriate qualifications as contained on the list of approved programmes. However, for the study to count towards the course specific components of the degree, it must not be more than 5 years old at the time the claim is made.

WHAT COURSES CAN BE ACCEPTED

Previous studies may serve for credit, in place of the course specific components only if the courses are relevant.

WHAT AWARD OF CREDIT WILL I RECEIVE?

A maximum of 120 credit units is required for graduation from first degree programmes, however only a maximum of 60 credits can be allowed to be transferred from previously completed component of the study. If credits obtained from previous study amounts to more than the 60 credits limit, the Schools will determine and select the credits that would place the student at an advantage.

Course-related credits can be used in place of specified courses within the programme if there is sufficient match with any previous study.

While examining the detailed syllabus or outcome of course followed by an applicant in his previous study, if there is significant overlap with any NOUN course, it will not count towards the degree along with the transferred credit.

Grades obtained from previous studies are not acceptable as awards of transferred credits. The final classification of a degree in NOUN will be based solely on the grades obtained in the courses taken in NOUN.

MAKING A CLAIM

Please read the detailed information on how to fill a Credit Transfer Claim Form and the relevant documents to be submitted. NOUN cannot assess an application for credit without relevant information on previous study.

For prior study from a University or degree awarding body the following are required:

- An original transcript or academic record (not photocopies) showing the courses completed and confirmation of the credit values and levels of the courses if relevant. This should be a formal transcript, on official letter headed paper and stamped or signed by the institution; and addressed to

The Registrar

National Open University of Nigeria

University Village

Plot 91, Cadastral Zone

Nnamdi Azikiwe Expressway

Jabi, Abuja, FCT

- - A copy of the certificate issued would suffice, if the transcript does not specify the qualification obtained.
 - Information on syllabus or learning outcomes, which describes the academic content of the course at the time of study (this is required only in some cases, Check with the School before making your claim).

Arrangements should be made with applicants' previous institution(s) to ensure that all documents required are forwarded to NOUN.

WHEN TO CLAIM

Applicant can make a claim at any time, however, early applications will allow for timely decisions to enable study plan and knowledge of the required credits at each level. Knowledge of whether there are certain NOUN courses that should not be taken in order not to overlap with previous studies. Delay in submission of claims until a later date may present applicant with changes in the credit transfer policies noting that prior learning will be assessed according to policies in force at the time of claim.

CAN I CLAIM FOR TWO OR MORE SEPARATE PERIODS OF STUDY

Applicants are required to provide evidence of more than one period of study, however, each period will be assessed separately. Awards of credit from different periods of study may be considered as long as the content is not duplicated.

Please note that the total award of credit is required to be within the limits of rules. For example, for the BA/B.Sc. degree, a maximum of 60 credits is required at a maximum level of 200 only.

ACKNOWLEDGING YOUR CLAIM/RETURNING YOUR DOCUMENTS

Applicants shall be informed of the receipt of their documents and claims. The said documents would be returned after use. (This should be streamlined with screening at Registration. Certified softcopies can be uploaded.)

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO ASSESS MY CLAIM

Claims are assessed in order in which they are received. The decision on the assessment should be available within four weeks in respect of cases that have no queries. If the claim requires detailed assessment of the content for overlaps with the content of NOUN courses, it may take longer.

APPEALING AGAINST AN AWARD

Complaint(s) about any disagreement with the decision taken on the application should be forwarded to the School through the Registrar for an explanation of the assessment. A formal appeal may be forwarded to the School enclosing additional information in support of your appeal. The case will be formally re-assessed taking into consideration any new information provided.

REASSESSING AN AWARD FOR ADDITIONAL CREDIT

Following receipt of the results for additional award of credit, applicants may ask for a reassessment of their claims if one or more of the following apply.

- Evidence of additional study which had been completed and not included in the documents earlier submitted;
- The availability of additional information not provided before the assessment was conducted.

The profile of previous study would be assessed. If the prevailing regulations are less favourable an applicant may not get additional credit, but the award will not be reduced.

ABANDONING AN AWARD

An applicant may abandon all or part of an award of transferred credit at any time prior to the award of a qualification/certification by NOUN provided the School is formally informed not later than 2 weeks after the dispatch of the award of transferred credit. Once the qualification has been awarded, transferred credit cannot be abandoned.

RECOGNITION OF YOUR STUDIES FOR OTHER PURPOSES

If a NOUN degree contains certain specified courses, it might likely be used as the basis for membership of a professional body. However, it is always up to the professional body to accept the study for which an award of credit transfer in place of NOUN courses was made. More information in this regard may be obtained from the professional body concerned.

YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS

These guidelines are helpful to ascertain eligibility for a credit transfer award toward a chosen qualification.

If you have decided to claim, please do so immediately. If however, you are still not sure whether you might be eligible for an award, please consult the list of approved courses of study for the programme or contact the Registrar.

Credit transfer awards are made in line with the policy set out in these guidelines and based upon a formal assessment of the documentation accompanying your claim.

Please note that the University's policy towards individual courses may change from time to time. Claims received will be assessed under the policy in force at the time it was received.

COMMITMENT TO POTENTIAL STUDENTS

One of the objectives of this University is to provide a high quality of service to all our potential students. Please contact the Registrar, National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) for problems that may arise with claims for credit transfer.

*****Approved at the 87th Regular Meeting of Senate held on Tuesday, 10th May, 2016**