



National Open University of Nigeria

Policy Title	Policy on Credit Transfer and Articulation for New Students
Policy No:	NQSA/POL/TEL/011
Owner:	National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)
Approved By:	The University Senate
Manager/Driver:	Academic Registry
Date of Approval:	7 th October, 2024
Date of Next Review:	October, 2027

1.0 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 on their choices of NOUN programmes.

1.1 Credit Transfer in National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)

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 based on 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 systems 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.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide admission process of students transferring from other universities to NOUN or transferring from one programme to another within NOUN.

3.0 Scope

This policy shall apply to all programmes and levels of study in National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). This includes certificate courses, diploma programmes, undergraduate degree programmes, master degree programmes, and doctoral degree programmes.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 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.

4.2 Credit

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

4.3 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.

4.4 Studies-in-Lieu (SiL)

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

4.5 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 uniform.

4.6 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.

4.7 Unspecified Credit (UsC)

Credit is granted when the course 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.

4.8 Articulation

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

5.0 Principles

- 5.1 In meeting the vision and mission of NOUN, credit exemption is granted in-lieu of the basis of prior learning from recognised formal studies.
- 5.2 NOUN admits potential students on transfer into its programmes from accredited national and international institutions.

6.0 Policy Statements

For credit transfer and articulation in NOUN, the following shall apply:

- 6.1 For 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.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 To claim credit and to facilitate transfer of the same, applicants must provide an academic record (transcripts) 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.
- 6.4 The NOUN policy’s recognition of prior learning shall be based on the following broad principles:
 - 6.4.1 Granting maximum credit for prior learning.
 - 6.4.2 Granting block credit or specified credit to minimise the time taken to complete a programme.
 - 6.4.3 Recognising knowledge that applicants already have that fulfil the learning outcomes of NOUN’s programmes.
 - 6.4.4 Ensuring that Credit Transfer provisions are available to the public and open to scrutiny.
 - 6.4.5 Ensuring a consistent approach to the granting of credit.
 - 6.4.6 Supporting the articulation of credit transfer with other tertiary education providers.
- 6.5 Decisions on the level of credit to be granted in a particular programme shall be determined by the relevant Academic Unit (i.e. Faculty/Centre) in NOUN in accordance with this policy and the procedures. This is inclusive of the frameworks established and maintained by the Faculty’s Academic Boards and the University Senate.
- 6.6 Academic staff involved in the assessment of prior learning based on 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.
- 6.7 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 Faculties Academic Boards and Senate.
- 6.8 Regardless of the nature or amount of credit granted, all specific requirements of an award must be fulfilled under the following conditions:

- 6.8.1 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.
- 6.8.2 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.
- 6.8.3 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.
- 6.8.4 Unspecified credit, appropriate to the award, may be granted where no comparable course exists in National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN).
- 6.8.5 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.
- 6.8.6 The faculty responsible for offering the relevant programme(s), in consultation with the appropriate academic staff, will determine the type of assessment.
- 6.8.7 Where exemption has been granted in a programme, there will be no student contribution for that course.
- 6.9 Maximum credit allowed.
- 6.9.1 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. For instance, a four-year programme needs a total of 120 credits to graduate, in this case, the student can only transfer a maximum of 60 credit units.
- 6.9.2 There shall be no transfer of credits for certificate courses.
- 6.9.3 For diploma programmes, a student shall be awarded a maximum of one third of the total credits required for the completion of the programme.
- 6.9.4 For 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.
- 6.9.5 Although certain qualifications require credits obtained at 300 level, any award of credit transfer shall be made for 100 or 200 level only.

6.9.6 The policy for individual programmes may change from time to time. As such, applications will be assessed according to the policy in force.

6.9.7 No transfer of credit shall be allowed for postgraduate diploma programmes.

6.9.8 Under normal circumstances, a student in a master degree programme 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.

6.9.9 In Doctorate Degree Programme, no formal credit for work done elsewhere shall be allowed for these programmes.

6.10 Transition Credit:

6.10.1 Where a programme is to be discontinued, significantly amended, or replaced, the appropriate Academic Unit (Faculty/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.

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

6.10.3 Master and Doctorate Programmes: Where potential students fall short of the scheduled programme credits (graduation) requirements by up to 1 credit, the faculty shall award transition credit of up to 1 credit to make up the short fall.

6.11 Contextual Factors:

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

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

6.11.2 Curriculum Content: The equivalence of the curriculum content of the particular programme.

6.11.3 Admissions Requirements: Admission requirements to the programme.

6.11.4 Programme Duration: The duration of the programme.

- 6.11.5 Postgraduate Programme: The procedure for approval or research projects for postgraduate programmes.
- 6.11.6 Minimum Acceptable Grades: Minimum acceptable grades not lower than a "C" grade.
- 6.11.7 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.

7.0 Policy Implementation

7.1 Procedure for applying for credits:

- 7.1.1 Applications for credit exemption and studies-in-lieu must be made to the Registrar.
- 7.1.2 Applications must be made by completing the appropriate form and accompanied by sufficient documentary evidence.
- 7.1.3 Application for credit must be made prior to enrolment to ensure that decisions about credit are made and reflected on time.
- 7.1.4 The Academic Registry shall forward applications for credit to the relevant Deans of Faculty for consideration, assessment, and recommendations by the respective Faculty Boards.
- 7.1.5 Recommendations from the Deans/Faculty Boards shall be forwarded to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for approval through the Academic Registry.
- 7.1.6 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.
- 7.1.7 Each faculty shall maintain comprehensive and detailed record of specific credit transfer arrangements for each programme in the university.
- 7.1.8 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.
- 7.1.9 Applications should be submitted early enough to allow processing to be completed before commencement of the course.
- 7.1.10 Admission shall be subject to decisions made on the transfer.

7.2 Recording Credit:

Credit from other institutions may be recorded as specified courses and/or; a specified number of credits within a particular area of the programme and/or transition credit; a qualifying requirement to complete the award.

7.3 Pre-Admission Credit/Advice:

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

7.4 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.

7.5 Making a Claim:

7.5.1 NOUN shall not assess an application for credit without relevant information on previous studies.

7.5.2 For prior study from a university or degree awarding body, the following are required:

7.5.2.1 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-head 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**

7.5.2.2 A copy of the certificate issued would suffice, if the transcript does not specify the qualification obtained.

7.5.2.3 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).

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

7.6 When to Claim:

7.6.1 Applicant can make a claim at any time; however, early applications will allow for timely decisions to allow for a study plan and knowledge of the required credits at each level. For instance, 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.

7.6.2 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.

7.6.3 The total award of credit is required to be within the limits of rules. For example, for the BA/BSc degree, a maximum of 60 credits is required at a maximum level of 200 only.

7.6.4 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).

7.6.5 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.

7.7 Appealing Against an Award:

7.7.1 Complaint(s) about any disagreement with the decision taken on the application should be forwarded to the university through the Registrar for an explanation of the assessment.

7.7.2 A formal appeal may be forwarded to the university enclosing additional information in support of your appeal. The case will be formally re-assessed taking into consideration any new information provided.

7.8 Reassessing an Award for Additional Credit:

7.8.1 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.

7.8.2 Evidence of additional study which had been completed and not included in the documents earlier submitted.

7.8.3 The availability of additional information not provided before the assessment was conducted.

7.8.4 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.

7.9 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 university 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.

8.0 Sanctions on Violating this Policy

Any violation of this policy shall be dealt with in accordance with the extant Rules and Regulations Guiding Staff Conditions of Service (for staff). Relevant rules as set by the Senate will be explored when infractions are by students. This may include but not limited to rustication.

9.0 Policy Alignment

This policy aligns with:

1. NOUN Admission Policy
2. NOUN Policy on Students' Assessment and Evaluation
3. NOUN Open Distance and eLearning Policy

Team of Developers

1. Prof. Eserinune McCarty Mojaye
2. Arc. Sadiq Otu Shuaib
3. Dr. Muyiwa Stephen Akintola
4. Mr. Petu Bola Keji