

	Policy Level:	Academic Senate ▾
	Responsible Department:	Academic Affairs ▾
	Effective Date:	05/04/2026
Credit from American Council on Education (ACE)-Recommended Online Providers		

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish the conditions under which Niagara University will consider awarding transfer credit for coursework completed through American Council on Education (ACE) -recommended non-accredited providers, such as StraighterLine, Sophia Learning, and other online alternative learning platforms. This procedure ensures that students receive appropriate recognition for prior learning while maintaining the academic integrity and accreditation standards of Niagara University.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all undergraduate and graduate students seeking to transfer credit toward a degree program at Niagara University prior to matriculation into their program.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS:

1. *Non-Accredited Coursework:* Courses taken through online platforms not provided by a college or university but recommended by the ACE for transfer credit.
2. *Online Providers:* Third-party alternative learning platforms that are not accredited by one of the seven regional accrediting bodies but have a credit recommendation by the ACE.

MAIN PROVISIONS:

Post Matriculation Exceptions

- Students looking for additional non-accredited coursework post-matriculation must seek approval in writing, from the Dean, before enrolling in the non-accredited course as the credits may not be accepted without this approval.

Recognition Standard

- Non-accredited coursework must be recommended for credit by the ACE.
- Providers not recommended by ACE will not be considered for transfer.

Course Equivalency Review

- Credit recommendations will be evaluated by the Office of the Registrar in consultation with the appropriate academic departments.

- Transfer credit will be awarded only when coursework is determined by the Office of the Registrar and appropriate academic departments to be equivalent in content, level, and rigor to courses offered by Niagara University.

Credit Limits

- A maximum of 12 credits from ACE-recommended non-accredited sources may be applied toward a degree.
- Non-accredited transfer credit may not exceed 10% of total degree requirements. Certain programs may impose stricter limits on what is accepted.

Grades and Transcript Notation

- Credit will be awarded on a credit/no credit basis only; no grade or quality points will be assigned.
- Approved transfer credit will be noted on the student's transcript.

Exclusions and Program-Specific Considerations

- Science lecture courses recommended by ACE may be considered for transfer; however, laboratory components taught in an online format will not be considered for acceptance. Students must complete labs in an in-person setting unless specifically approved by the Dean or program coordinator.
- Non-accredited coursework will not be awarded credit at the graduate level unless explicitly recommended by ACE and approved by the Dean of the individual graduate program.
- Credit may not be awarded for coursework that duplicates credit already earned. Developmental, remedial, or continuing education courses are not eligible for transfer.
- Professional and externally accredited programs (e.g., Education, Social Work, Business) may impose additional restrictions on what courses are accepted.
 - **Social Work / CSWE:** Core social work courses and field education are not eligible for ACE-recommended transfer credit. Only ACE-recommended credits compliant with CSWE standards may be considered.
 - **Business / AACSB:** Major business requirements, including upper-division and graduate coursework, are generally not eligible for ACE-recommended transfer credit.
 - **Education / CAEP:** Core education courses, student teaching, and field experiences are not eligible for ACE-recommended transfer credit.
 - **Nursing / CCNE:** Core nursing courses, labs, and clinical practicums are not eligible for ACE-recommended transfer credit.
- Professional and externally accredited programs (e.g., Nursing, Education, Social Work, Business) may impose additional restrictions on the applicability of ACE-recommended coursework to major requirements. In such programs, acceptance of this credit toward the major, particularly for upper-level coursework, shall be subject to departmental review and dean approval.

PROCEDURES:

1. Students must submit official ACE transcripts or ACE credit recommendations.

2. The Office of the Registrar will evaluate submissions against existing transfer credit guidelines. Eligible credits will be applied to the student's record and toward degree requirements where appropriate.
3. The Office of the Registrar will reach out to the chair of the appropriate department(s) regarding the eligibility of any courses that are not clearly comparable to the courses listed in the current University catalog and will notify the department when new courses are counted toward the major.
4. The decision not to award ACE-recommended transfer credit is not subject to appeal.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

None

REFERENCED POLICIES:

None

STATUTES AND REGULATIONS:

None

POLICY HISTORY:

- Originated: 05/04/2026
- Current Effective Date: 05/04/2026
- Next Review Date: 05/04/2029
- Revision/Renewal Log:
 - None