

# Alternative Credit Opportunities

Students at Idaho State University have the opportunity to earn undergraduate credit for prior learning through a wide variety of means:

## Credit by Examination

- College Entrance Examination Board Advanced Placement Program (AP)
- College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
- Credit through the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES)
- Credit by Challenge Examination

## Other Alternative Credit Opportunities

- Credit for Military Service (JST)
- Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)
- Study Abroad
- National Student Exchange (NSE)

Credits earned through any of the above means affect total credits toward a particular degree but generally do not impact the student's grade point average. Grades for all said credits, except challenge, are recorded as Satisfactory (S). The student is responsible for providing Idaho State University with an official copy of grades/scores from the appropriate educational, testing, or reporting agency.

When the credit awarded is dependent upon evaluation by Idaho State University faculty, such as Experiential Learning Assessment and Challenge, credit will be counted as resident credit; that which is standardized or not evaluated by Idaho State University faculty will be counted as non-resident credit.

## College Entrance Examination Board Advanced Placement Program (AP)

Idaho State University affirms the principle of advanced placement and acknowledges the accomplishments of students who have taken college-level courses in high school. The university encourages participation in the College Entrance Examination Board Advanced Placement Program.

Advanced Placement Examination credit will not be posted on an official Idaho State University transcript to other agencies or institutions until the student is accepted to Idaho State University. Credit from Advanced Placement is classified as non-resident credit.

## Advanced Placement Scores Required for Credit

Idaho State University will grant credit for approved AP exams and scores. An "S" grade is entered on the student's record for credit earned in this way. Credit is granted for AP examinations when an official score report from the College Board is received. Please see <https://isu.edu/registrar/credit-by-exam/> for information regarding what course credit will be awarded for each AP score accepted by ISU.

## College Level Examination Program (CLEP)

Elective credit only is granted toward graduation for achievement of satisfactory scores on any of the four CLEP general examinations: humanities, natural science, mathematics, and social science/history.

Subject-area CLEP examinations may satisfy specific objectives in the General Education Requirements at the discretion of the departments whose courses satisfy those objectives. Similarly, at the discretion of the department, credits

earned on the CLEP subject-area examinations may be allowed toward that department's major program.

An "S" grade is entered on a student's record for credit hours earned through CLEP examinations. Transfer students need to submit official CLEP score reports for Idaho State University evaluation. CLEP credits cannot be granted for college courses previously taken. Credit from CLEP is classified as non-resident credit. Please see <https://isu.edu/registrar/credit-by-exam/> for information regarding what course credit will be awarded for each CLEP score accepted by ISU.

Information including costs may be obtained from the website <http://www.isu.edu/ctc/> or by contacting the Counseling and Testing Center at Idaho State University at (208)-282-2130.

Counseling and Testing Center  
Graveley Hall, 3rd Floor South  
921 S 8th Ave Stop 8027  
Pocatello, ID 83209-8027

## Credit by Challenge Examination

Enrolled Idaho State University students may obtain credit by course-specific examinations only with permission of the department and the college. Other relevant policies are as follows:

- Students may challenge a course through examination by 1) **obtaining approval** through petition, and 2) **passing** the challenge examination.
- Both stages of this process, the petition and the examination, must be completed according to the following timeline: petitions must be filed in September or October and the exam administered by the end of November, or they must be filed in February or March and the exam administered by the end of April. Petitions are not reviewed and exams are not administered in the summer term. If a student neglects to take a challenge exam for which the student has petitioned, a new petition must be submitted during a subsequent spring or fall semester.
- Students should be aware that the petition approval process can take up to one month.
- Students must procure the petition from the office of the dean of the college of their major.
- In the petition, students should explain why they believe they already have a command of the course subject matter.
- Students may sit for a challenge examination only in a course in which they do not have a recorded attempt on an academic record. Students may not receive credit by challenge examination either for courses already completed or for courses that are prerequisite to courses already completed.
- Only one challenge examination for the course in question is allowed. When a challenge examination is taken, whatever grade is earned is recorded. Should the grade from a challenge examination be undesirable to the student, the student may take the course for credit to exclude the challenge grade.
- Credits obtained by challenge examination are not used in determining a semester's credit load or for financial aid purposes in the semester in which the examination is taken.
- Grades obtained by challenge examination are not used in determining grade point average for that semester, but are used in calculating the cumulative grade point average.

- The cost of each credit earned by challenge examination is 33% of the current cost per credit hour, payable to the Idaho State University Cashier's Office *prior to the examination*.
- Credits earned by passing a challenge examination are considered resident credit.

### Challenge Examination Instructions

A student may sit for a challenge examination only in a course in which s/he has not yet registered. Students may not receive credit by challenge examination either for courses already completed or for courses that are prerequisite to courses already completed. Please review the guidelines set forth in the University Catalog.

**Important:** A student must be registered for at least 1 credit in the semester in which a challenge exam(s) is taken but should NOT register for the class(es) they are challenging.

#### Please follow the challenge procedures as outlined below:

The STUDENT fills out an Undergraduate Petition requesting permission to take the challenge examination. The petition form, in which the students state in fifty to one hundred words their rationale for taking a challenge examination, may be obtained from the Dean's Office in the college of the student's major. Use one petition for each course challenged, unless multiple courses are in the same department

This petition must include the signatures, on the appropriate lines, of the DEPARTMENT CHAIR assigned to the course and the DEAN of the College assigned to the course. Note: The DEPARTMENT CHAIR should check the "Challenge" box in the center section of the petition form and next to that box, write the local account number to which the challenge fee should be posted and ensure a faculty member has agreed to administer the exam.

If the petition has been approved, the student will receive a copy from the Office of the Registrar.

After approval, the student must take the copy of the petition to the Cashier's Office and pay the challenge exam fee. If the exam is administered by ISU faculty, the cost for each credit is 33% of the current cost per credit hour.

The student will need to take the receipt from the Cashier's Office to the test administrator prior to taking the examination.

The test examiner grades the challenge exam and completes a challenge grade form which will then be forwarded to the Office of the Registrar. Once all the above information is received in the Office of the Registrar, the credits will be recorded on the student's transcript.

When a challenge examination is taken, whatever grade is earned is recorded. Should the grade from a challenge examination be undesirable to the student, the student may take the course for credit to exclude the challenge grade.

### Credit through DANTES

The College Level Examination Program (CLEP) general and specific subject-area examinations administered through Defense Activity for Nontraditional Education Support (DANTES) are treated in the same manner as those taken through the traditional CLEP. Please see <https://isu.edu/registrar/credit-by-exam/> for information regarding what course credit will be awarded for each CLEP score accepted by ISU.

### Credit for Military Service and Joint Service Transcript (JST)

The application for admission to Idaho State University states that transcripts and training from all previous institutions must be reported as part of the admission process. Examples of military training institutions that fall under the requirement may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The United State Military Academy (USMA)
- The United States Naval Academy (USNA)
- The United States Coast Guard Academy (USCGA)
- The United States Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA)
- The United States Air Force Academic (USAFA)
- The Community College of the Air Force (CCAF)

Students who have earned Military Service credit through a regionally accredited Military school such as those listed above must provide ISU with an official transcript during the admission process.

The Joint Service Transcript (JST) is the official method of reporting all other military training, and falls under the same requirements listed above. Additionally, the Department of Veterans Affairs requires all prior coursework or training to be evaluated for students utilizing any chapter of education benefits under the G.I.Bill®, including training recorded on the JST. Students who received military training, recorded on their Joint Service Transcript (JST), must provide ISU with an official JST during the application process. Students may ask to have these training modules evaluated for college-bearing credit using ISU's PLA policy.

GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government Web site at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>. (<https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/>)

### Prior Learning Assessment

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is an avenue by which a student may be awarded undergraduate credit for work, volunteer, or lived experiences outside of the university curriculum. The program assists in the process for requesting academic credit through the portfolio method. In a portfolio, a student thoroughly describes and documents knowledge gained experientially and also demonstrates how knowledge gained outside the classroom is related to college-level learning.

#### Eligibility

- Credit by PLA is awarded only for experiential learning in subject areas and curricula offered at ISU.
- Student must be currently enrolled at ISU as a degree-seeking student in good academic standing to be considered for PLA credit in a given semester.
- Each college and department may determine which courses, if any, in their curricula may be met through experiential learning portfolios.
- Students must submit petitions and portfolios by the deadlines published on the PLA website.

#### Application of Credits

- Credit by PLA may be used to meet a maximum of 35% of credits required for an associate or bachelor's degree or an undergraduate certificate.
- Up to 42 credits by PLA can be used toward meeting the graduation requirement of 120 undergraduate credits for a baccalaureate degree. Up to 21 credits by PLA can be used toward meeting the 60 credits required for an associate degree.

- Credit by PLA can be used to meet the graduation requirement for 36 upper-division credits if awarded as upper-division credit.
- Credit by PLA is not allowed toward graduation if it is discovered that the PLA credits are duplicated by specific courses taken before or after PLA has been awarded. The Registrar will correct the transcript to show duplicated PLA credits are not counted toward cumulative credits earned.
- Credit by PLA is considered resident credit.
- Credit by PLA may be used to meet general education requirements.

### Process

- Students must submit the PLA Petition form requesting permission to submit a Portfolio to the department and college that house the courses for which the student wants PLA credit, and the petition must be approved prior to preparation and submission of PLA Portfolio. Petition and Portfolio deadlines are posted on the PLA website.
- Each college and department may develop additional policies and procedures to further define their own internal processes for PLA evaluation.
- A single portfolio may include multiple courses from the same department or program, but separate portfolios must be submitted for courses from multiple departments or programs.
- The department and college that house the courses for which the student requests PLA credit determine if the experiential learning demonstrated in the portfolio meets the learning outcomes of those courses.
- If the Portfolio is not approved, the department and college evaluation report must include an explanation.
- A student may request one time only, within 45 business days after PLA credit has been denied, reconsideration of a PLA evaluation by department/college. A revised portfolio addressing the reasons provided for denying credit must be submitted to PLA Coordinator for reconsideration.

### Transcription

- Upon official notification of approval of PLA credit from the Dean of the appropriate college, the Office of the Registrar will record the credit with a note identifying the credit as “Experiential Learning Credit by Portfolio.”
- The grade posted for PLA credit is “S” for satisfactory. If no credit is awarded, nothing will be added to the transcript regarding the PLA request.

For more information about the PLA process please visit this page:

<https://www.isu.edu/academicaffairs/chair--director-resources/-prior-learning-assessment/>

## Vertical Credits

Students who successfully complete a foreign language class at ISU may earn up to eight credits (one year’s worth of classes) for prerequisite courses not taken. For example, students who pass Spanish 2201 with a grade of B- or higher can pay a fee of \$20 and petition the Department of Global Studies and Languages to receive credit as well for Spanish 1101 and 1102. Vertical credits are available only as resident credits, that is, when the initial, higher-level course is completed at ISU. Placement into courses that allow for vertical credits is dependent upon approval from ISU’s Department of Global Studies and Languages.

## Study Abroad

The Idaho State University International Programs Office provides information and assistance to students who wish to augment their education with study outside the United States. Study Abroad is a viable option for students to enhance their curriculum and professional prospects. A study abroad program is an excellent way to develop foreign language skills. An international educational experience also helps students gain a competitive edge in the global marketplace.

And since many programs are taught in English or located in English-speaking countries, students without foreign language skills may also study abroad in a wide range of disciplines.

Idaho State University participates in a wide variety of quality study abroad programs, providing students access to programs in more than 50 countries. Coursework in these programs is recognized as resident credit at Idaho State University and allows students to use financial aid to support their study abroad. Idaho State University also has cooperative agreements with The University of Plymouth in England, Al Akhawayn University in Morocco, The University of Valencia and The Polytechnic University of Valencia in Spain, Paderborn University in Germany, Kansai Gaidai University and KCP International in Japan, Umea University in Sweden, the University of Burgundy in France, ITESO University in Mexico, InHolland University in The Netherlands, and Universidad ORT in Uruguay.

The International Programs Office assists students in identifying appropriate programs, works with academic advisors and departments in preparation for transfer of study abroad credit, and advises students on financial aid and other related matters. For more information on study abroad and related opportunities, contact the Office of International Programs and Services at (208) 282-4320 or at [ipomail@isu.edu](mailto:ipomail@isu.edu).

Students may register for Study Abroad credits after their program is approved by an advisor and the International Programs Office. The course description is as follows.

### Study Abroad Courses

**STUA 2200, STUA 3300, STUA 4400 Study Abroad 12-18 credits each** . Pre-arranged, planned courses of study at selected academic institutions outside of the United States. Student is responsible for resident credit arrangements with department(s) and the Office of International Programs and Services prior to departure. Prefix and course name will be replaced on Idaho State University transcript when study abroad transcript arrives. Graded S/U, F, S, Su

## National Student Exchange

You can study for a semester or a year at one of nearly 200 campuses (<https://nse.org/exchange/find-campus/>) in the United States, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, or Canada. Please contact the Career Center at 208-282-2380 or email [careers@isu.edu](mailto:careers@isu.edu) for more information.