



Colleges and Universities- Questions and Answers

July 2011

Here are the answers to the most common questions asked about taking college courses and getting degrees.

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Am I ready for college courses?

If you have not taken college courses before, talk with people who recently have. Ask them how they organized their time, where they got help when they needed it, how much reading and writing was involved and other questions. The Community College of Vermont has a number of programs to help the first time college student, as do other colleges. Advisors are available at every college to help you, and there is no charge for their services.

Two organizations across Vermont that can help prepare you for college are:

- Learning Works, Vermont’s education and literacy services provides support across Vermont to adults. To find a Learning Works center in your community Click on this link:
http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_adulted/locations.html
- Vermont Student Assistance Center (VSAC) helps Vermonters who want to go to college or other training after high school. Click on this link:
<http://services.vsac.org/wps/wcm/connect/VSAC/vsac/home>

Will classes from this college or university “count”?

It is important that you take classes from a college or university with recognized accreditation. The side bar has information about accreditation of institutions of higher education (colleges and universities). *Northern Lights Career Development Center will only approve higher education credits, credentials and diplomas from institutions with recognized accreditation.*

Request a transcript from the college or university where you completed the courses or earned your degree. You will need to submit a transcript to Northern Lights when you apply for a Level certificate, credential or if you apply to the Instructor Registry. Northern Lights can also scan transcripts into your BFIS Credential account so you don’t have to continue to send copies. The transcript you send may be official or unofficial, but it must be issued by the college. A diploma can also be used to verify a degree, but it does not include the major or area of concentration, so a transcript will also be needed.

How do I fit in time to go to class?

Even colleges that are campus-based often offer classes online. Many colleges offer classes in the evening and some on weekends. Many colleges offer hybrid classes that meet a few times in person, and the rest online. There are also colleges that offer *low residency* – where the classes meet one

weekend a month or less.. Online or intensive courses are not for everyone. Talk with the staff of the college or university about your readiness to take these types of courses, before you sign up.

Will the courses I have taken transfer into another college?

Talk with the advisor at the college where you are applying to transfer the coursework. The Vermont state college system has worked to streamline this process among the state colleges and with many private colleges in Vermont. Before you take more courses, check to see that they can “count” toward your degree or credential plan. Ask about *transfer credit* – when a college accepts coursework and credits from another institution. Check if there is a limit on the number of transfer credits accepted. Also ask about *waived credit* – when the content of the coursework, certificate or credential counts toward your degree but you will still need to take the required credits at the college or university.

How will I pay for college?

The advisor at the College or University has information to help you. There are many different financial resources available in Vermont for college credit and non college credit professional development activities. Many professional development workshops and classes are free of charge or low cost to participants. Check with the sponsor of the activity. Some but not all of the resources below require the applicant to be working in regulated child care.

1. [Vermont Student Assistance Corporation](#) (VSAC). This statewide organization has advisors with the latest information on college loans, grants and scholarships and college planning. They are also the source for:
 - *non-degree grants* to pay for courses that will improve employability or encourage further study
 - *Vermont Incentive grants* for Vermonters who are accepted or enrolled in an undergraduate degree or certificate program, will be attending college full-time, and don't already have a bachelor's degree
 - *Scholarships* — information on more than 150 scholarships for Vermont residents
 - *Private education loans* for further assistance if grants, scholarships, and federal loans don't cover all education costs or if a student's family does not qualify for a federal PLUS loan.
2. **College course work and degrees: other Financial Support**

[Vermont Child Development Division](#) This division of state government provides grants to Vermont residents taking a college course related to working with children or youth. Applicants must be working in or consulting to regulated child care programs in Vermont. The Application is on their website.

[Vermont Child Care Industry and Careers Council](#) (VCCICC) This not for profit organization contracts six undergraduate courses from the Community College of Vermont. These six courses are tuition- free to staff working in regulated child care, and are offered in different regions of Vermont. The six courses are:

- Communication in the Early Childhood Workplace
- Infant Toddler Development
- Development of the Young Child ages three to eight
- Curriculum Development in the early childhood classroom
- Program Management in early childhood education
- Leadership, Mentoring and Supervision in early childhood and afterschool programs

Community-based Scholarships

Civic organizations, churches, businesses, and other community based groups offer scholarships for degree programs. Ask in your local community or see the scholarship booklet from VSAC (resource above)

[Federal tax credit](#)

The IRS offers credits for your federal taxes called the Hope and Life Time Learning Educational Credits. You may be able to deduct certain expenses related to tuition and fees.

3. **Financial Assistance for specific college courses leading to a Credential**

Program Director Credential Courses: [Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center](#)

There are 7 courses (or equivalent) required to meet the education requirement for this credential. These courses may have been completed at any time. Four of the courses are offered by the VCCICC (see above) including:

- Child or youth development
- Curriculum
- Program Management
- Leadership Mentoring and Supervision

Scholarships from Northern Lights Career Development Center are available for program director applicants, for the other three required courses:

- Human Resources
- Legal and Financial Issues in early childhood and afterschool programs
- Culminating Seminar of the Program Director Credential

Afterschool Professional Credential: [Child Development Division](#)

Contact the afterschool coordinator at the Child Development Division.

There are two on-line contracted Community College of Vermont courses offered for free or low cost to those seeking this credential and working in regulated child care.

- Introduction to Afterschool Education & Care
- Special Topics in Education: Development of the School Age Child, Ages 5-12

[Vermont Higher Education Collaborative](#) (VT-HEC)

VT-HEC is a network of graduate programs that can lead to endorsement or degrees for educators, administrators, and specialists. Coursework can lead to educator licensure with an endorsement in early childhood or early childhood special education and other areas. Courses are offered at a reduced rate and some scholarships are available. You do not have to be seeking educator licensure to access this coursework.

In addition to the resources listed above, specific options such as Assessment of Prior Learning, Course Challenge, CLEP tests and transfer credit options provide college credit to the successful applicant for less than it would cost to enroll in traditional college courses.

Can I get college credit for the learning I have gained from experience?

Three ways in which the learning you have gained from life experience may transfer to college credit are Assessment of Prior Learning, Course Challenge and taking a CLEP exam.

Assessment of Prior Learning is a good option if you have gained knowledge and skills through life experience, through training or workshops that were not for college credit, or from earning a credential or certificate. You should be ready to document and organize the learning you have gained.. A number of colleges offer this option; ask them about this option when you consider applying. Also, Vermont State Colleges provides an *Assessment of Prior Learning* process that includes: documenting the learning you have gained from experience; evaluation of those documents by a committee that may recommend many college credits; and ultimately acceptance of those credits by a college or university registrar. An Assessment of Prior Learning Course can help you prepare your documents for review; it is offered all over the state, twice a year. If you have diverse and also in-depth experiences, accumulated over time, this might be the option for you. The Vermont State Colleges regularly offers free orientations to this Assessment of Prior Learning process. Please note: the credits awarded by the VSC Assessment of Prior Learning process are accepted by all Vermont State Colleges (this does not include UVM) but may or may not be accepted by other colleges, universities or departments. If they are accepted by the college, the registrar of the college determines how they count: as elective credits or in your area of concentration. That is up to the college and the registrar there. Check with the institution you plan to transfer into, before you decide to begin the APL process.

Second, if you are already in a degree or credential program, you can apply for Course Challenge through Vermont State College. In this process, you identify a course, for which you think you already have met the learning objectives through experience and self-study. Once you identify the course, apply for Course Challenge from Vermont State Colleges. Once accepted, an assessor will determine if you have met the course objectives and will recommend whether you should get college credit for that course. For more information about both *Assessment of Prior Learning and Course Challenge* through the Vermont State College system Office of External Programs call 802-828-4064 or [click here](#).

A third option is to take a national exam. The College-Level Examination Program® ([CLEP](#)) gives you the opportunity to receive college credit for what you already know by earning qualifying scores on any of 33 examinations. You can earn credit for knowledge you've acquired through independent study, prior course work, on-the-job training, professional development, cultural pursuits, or internships. In Vermont, the CLEP exams are offered on a computer at the CCV offices in Montpelier in the Office of External Programs. Passing scores on the tests are accepted at virtually all college and universities. Tests cost \$200 and there is \$10. Study guide available. Exam topics include human growth and development, college composition (English), math, business courses and 30 more.

Will this college or university help me get my teaching license? The Vermont Department of Education confers teacher/educator licensure, and they determine which colleges and universities in Vermont can offer approved teacher licensure programs. Colleges that meet the Department of Education criteria can recommend that their graduates receive Vermont Department of Education teacher licensure. Current Vermont teacher licensure requires students to have a liberal arts major in addition to their education major. For a complete list of colleges and programs approved in the state of Vermont for the preparation of teachers/educators click on this [link](#). Graduates of these approved programs may use the Vermont license to apply for an initial regular license/certificate in 47 other states. If you have earned your teacher license from another state, contact the Vermont Department of Education to see if it will be accepted here in Vermont.

Vermont institutions that are approved, recommend licensure with specific endorsements. These define the grade levels/ages you can teach and which subjects. Vermont colleges and universities that

recommend students for educator licensure with an *early childhood education endorsement* (birth to grade three or a limited license within this age range) are:

University of Vermont
Champlain College
Lyndon State College
Goddard College
Union Institute and University

These and many more colleges in Vermont are approved to recommend students for educator licensure with an *elementary or secondary education endorsement*.

For more information on teacher licensure go to:

<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/maincert.html>

For many resources on educator licensure, click on this Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) link: <http://services.vvac.org/wps/wcm/connect/VVAC/vvac/library/pathfinders/vvac+-+library+-+pathfinders+-+teaching+and+teacher+certification>

You may also achieve teacher licensure in early childhood education or early childhood special education, while working toward a Masters degree in education through the *Vermont Higher Education Collaborative Program*. Information is described in the list of colleges and universities below. Click here for more information: <http://www.vthec.org/> and here is the [Higher Education Collaborative information brochure](#)

Peer review is one way to obtain a teaching license if you already have a Bachelor degree, significant work experience and formal training in the field. It can also be used to help you change or add an endorsement. Click here to learn more about the peer review process.

<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/licensing/alternate.html> The Vermont Department of Education regularly offers clinics on the peer review process. The registration and schedule of those clinics are near the bottom of the Department of Education website page, in this paragraph. If you plan to seek teacher licensure through peer review, you must attend a clinic.

There are a number of peer review support programs for Vermonters, which for a fee can prepare you to apply for peer review. They are:

- The Upper Valley Teacher Institute (UVTI) in Lebanon, NH. This is a 1 year, full-time, non-degree licensure program for those with at least a bachelor's degree. Accepted participants commit to class time and work with a mentor. Candidates have 2 full-time internships, one in the first half of the year and a different one in the second half of the year. This program helps individuals seeking elementary education, secondary education or principal licensure. Click here to learn more: <http://www.uvti.org/>
- Teacher Apprentice Program (TAP) program in Essex town (Chittenden County) is an application-based, full time, 8 month program. The program focus is Middle and Secondary Education licensure. Click here for more information: <http://www.ccsvt.org/tap/>
- Norwich University offers a "fifth year program" for students not enrolled at Norwich University or another college. Candidate's course work and experience are evaluated and a program of study is recommended based on the traditionally approved Teacher Education/Licensure Program. Typically the program takes from one and one-half to two years to complete. Learn more by clicking here: <http://www.norwich.edu/academics/socialscience/teacher/>
- Contact Northern Lights Career Development Center to learn more about peer review supports to gain teacher licensure with early childhood endorsement.

There is a significant Peer Review Assessment fee. The Child Development Division (CDD) and Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children (VAEYC) both have funds to partially support and

individual's Peer Review Assessment Fee. The CDD Application for these funds is on their website. Contact VAEYC directly to seek their funds for the Peer Review Assessment fee.

What about Graduate school? There are many different options for achieving a Master Degree, Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAG) or Doctorate.

Options for a Master Degree program in early childhood in Vermont include:

- The University of Vermont: Master Degree in Early Childhood Special Education and in Educational Administration
- Union Institute and University : Master Degree in Education and related fields
- Champlain College: Master Degree in early childhood (does *not* recommend for educator licensure)
- Higher Education Collaborative through Lyndon State College. The collaborative includes the Vermont Department of Education and the Vermont State Colleges. Courses are offered weekends and evenings across the state, and can lead to a Master Degree in Education with an Vermont Department of Education licensure with endorsement in either early childhood or early childhood special education

There are many other options to achieve Master Degree, Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAG) or Doctorate outside of Vermont, including on-line degrees.

Always be sure the college or university is regionally or nationally accredited.

Here are two weblinks that may be useful:

<http://www.graduateschool4you.com>

<http://www.testprepreview.com/gradschool.htm>