

National PONSI

National Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction

GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH YOUR NATIONAL PONSI MEMBERSHIP

WELCOME! You have joined the esteemed ranks of member organizations that have had their learning experiences evaluated and recommended for college credit by National PONSI. This flyer is intended to provide valuable information regarding your membership, your credit recommendations, and your partnership with National PONSI.

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Further information on many of these points can be found throughout our website.

ACCESSING YOUR LISTING ON THE NATIONAL PONSI WEBSITE

You may wish to add the following webpage addresses to your *Favorites* listings to share with colleagues, instructors, students, and agencies.

National PONSI Homepage - www.nationalponsi.org - From here, you can navigate to all the remaining pages.

College Credit Recommendation (CCR) Online Directory - www.nationalponsi.org/ccr/ccr_online_listings.htm - This is the Table of Contents page of the Directory and contains a list of member organizations linked to their college credit recommendations.

You will find your organization's name on this page. Click on the name and then add your section of the Directory as another *Favorite*.

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MORE ABOUT NATIONAL PONSI

The National Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction (National PONSI) is conducted by the [Board of Regents of The University of the State of New York](#) (not to be confused with SUNY, the State University system), the most comprehensive educational organization in the nation. USNY encompasses and has responsibility for all educational concerns in the State, including public and private institutions of higher learning, elementary and secondary schools, museums, libraries, historical societies, and other agencies whose primary function is education.

The Board of Regents established National PONSI in keeping with its aim of increasing access to higher education for working adults. National PONSI reviews learning experiences and proficiency examination programs sponsored by noncollegiate organizations, makes appropriate college-level credit recommendations for the courses and programs evaluated, and promotes academic recognition of these learning experiences by the nation's colleges and universities.

MORE ABOUT NATIONAL PONSI ~ CONTINUED

National PONSI is based on the premise that it is sound educational practice to grant college credit for high quality educational programs conducted by noncollegiate organizations, provided that these experiences are at the college level, and that the credit is appropriate to an individual's degree program. Moreover, experience has shown that the awarding of credit for prior learning will in many cases motivate students to enroll in formal postsecondary programs of study, a primary mission of the Board of Regents and National PONSI. Many college officials use the National PONSI online Directory, *College Credit Recommendations (CCR) Online*, to identify and actively recruit nontraditional students who have completed these evaluated learning experiences.

National PONSI serves noncollegiate organizations throughout the country and overseas. These include corporations, labor unions, professional and voluntary associations, religious institutions, government agencies, hospitals, proprietary vocational schools, and other nondegree granting organizations. The courses and programs that have been evaluated cover a wide variety of subject areas, including accounting, acting, art, banking, botany, business administration, computer science, counseling, criminal justice, early childhood education, electrical engineering, finance, health services administration, insurance, information technology, Judaic studies, management, mathematics, nuclear engineering technology, nursing, office information systems, psychology, and social science.

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WHAT IS A CREDIT RECOMMENDATION?

A college credit recommendation is an academic advisement about the comparability of a learning experience to college-level instruction, such as undergraduate or graduate course work, the amount of credit that may be awarded, and areas where credit could apply. The credit recommendations are intended to guide college officials as they consider awarding credit to persons who have successfully completed National PONSI evaluated learning experiences.

College credit recommendations are not actual college credit because the New York State Board of Regents does not award college credit. Through the results of National PONSI's evaluations, however, the Board of Regents encourages colleges and universities to consider doing so.

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ACCEPTANCE OF THE COLLEGE CREDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the national reputation of the Board of Regents, National PONSI enjoys a wide acceptance by the academic community. More than 1,500 colleges and universities from across the U.S. have indicated a willingness to consider awarding credit based on National PONSI credit recommendations. A list of these institutions can be found at www.nationalponsi.org/colleges/list_of_colleges.htm.

This is not to say that the colleges and universities on this list or every department within these academic institutions will award credit for every credit recommendation. They do so on a case-by-case basis; credit recommendations are assessed according to how they fit within an individual's degree program. Academic institutions may accept, reject, or modify the credit recommendations according to their policies. When a college is willing to consider awarding credit, it may be constrained by the requirements within individual degree programs, particularly at the two-year college level, where many degree programs are prescribed, affording few course slots for transfer or elective credit. In these instances, credit recommendations may be reserved for later use at the four-year college level, when more course slots may be available that could be satisfied by the National PONSI evaluated learning experiences.

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PROMOTING THE COLLEGE CREDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

When developing promotional materials or referencing National PONSI and your wonderful achievements, please note that our full name is National Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction and our acronym is National PONSI. Do not state or imply that your courses have received college credit or that your organization, the NYS Board of Regents, or National PONSI awards credit. The credit recommendations become college credit when a specific college or university grants the credit.

Please also do not use the word accredited, since we do not accredit. More appropriately, we establish college credit recommendations or recommend noncollegiate courses for college credit. Therefore, please use the verb recommend or noun recommendation when mentioning the college credit recommendations. We ask that you submit any promotional materials you develop to our office for review and approval.

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CONTACTING COLLEGES

The best way to assist participants to receive college credit at colleges and universities is for your office to undertake the initial contact. Be prepared that the work of establishing relationships with colleges can initially be somewhat labor intensive. For ongoing tracking, it might help to compile a master list of those individuals who request a transcript. You can then try to follow-up on whether credit was awarded and the particulars of that situation, i.e., degree program, amount of credit, etc. You may wish to include the student college ID number on the master list, if relevant, which can serve as precedence when a future graduate applies to that college. The names and particulars can be proffered to the college should delays ensue or a course is denied credit when it was previously awarded credit.

To begin building relationships, the Admissions Office would be a good first step or the Chairperson of the relevant degree program or related program, where there may be a good fit. The Academic Dean would be another official to contact. If the college of interest has already indicated to us that they are willing to consider awarding credit based on National PONSI's credit recommendations, the [Cooperating Colleges and Universities](#) webpage, mentioned above, will provide a name and contact information for those who have designated themselves as the National PONSI liaison to their institution. These individuals may not be the final arbiters on whether credit is awarded, so when you identify the official who approves the awarding of credit, add that name to your master list.

Whenever possible, an articulation agreement, setting in writing how much credit the college will award your graduates, would be the ideal. Less formal written communication can also serve as precedent for future graduates. Should a college official request more information about National PONSI and its policies and procedures before it will consider awarding credit, we would be happy to write a letter of introduction to the institution.



SENDING TRANSCRIPTS TO COLLEGES

As the sponsor of courses with college credit recommendations, you will be asked by course participants to supply transcripts to colleges. The transcript is an official document that accounts for a student's academic record or history at the organization/institution. We have devised a model transcript to indicate all information that colleges generally require to process requests for credit and make a credit decision. (See the model on our website at <http://www.nationalponsi.org/transcript.htm>). The omission of any of these items could delay processing by colleges. Conversely, we have found that the inclusion of information *not* called for on this model also tends to delay processing; for example, courses that have not been evaluated by National PONSI. (If you do include titles that have not been evaluated, we suggest that they be clearly identified as such.) Therefore, we recommend that you follow this model closely in adapting it for your own use. The addition of an organizational seal or stamp - if available - will further enhance the official appearance of your transcript. You may also wish to attach a copy of the National PONSI homepage and your exhibit(s) that appear in *College Credit Recommendations (CCR) Online* to the transcript.

When developing a transcript form, it is important to include a legend that signifies the passing grade (see online model). If you are only using a P for Pass, you should consider, at minimum, 70% as the passing grade, which is the minimum grade that colleges will generally consider for transfer credit. Indicate in the legend that $P = C \geq 70\%$. If you already assign a letter grade or wish to assign letter grades going forward, you may wish to use the gradations we provide, for instance, A = 90% - 100%, or similar rating.



EXCELSIOR COLLEGE TRANSCRIPT SERVICE

Excelsior College offers a special transcript service in cooperation with National PONSI. Through the Excelsior College Transcript Service, your National PONSI courses will be listed for college credit on an official transcript of Excelsior College. Since colleges more readily award credit for courses listed on another college's transcript, this service has proven very helpful in promoting the acceptance of the credit recommendations. The Transcript Service also relieves you of the record processing necessary to maintain and issue National PONSI course transcripts for your students. Once you submit your course records to Excelsior College, they maintain the transcripts and send them to colleges at each student's request.

You can request a brochure on our website that provides complete details: http://www.forms.nysed.gov/ponsi/resources_request.htm.



INSTRUCTORS MAY BENEFIT FROM COLLEGE CREDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Instructors are eligible to benefit from any credit recommendation established for a course that they teach, provided they are involved in some way in curriculum and examination development and revision and provided they have not taken the actual course and already benefited from the credit recommendation.

When submitting transcripts to colleges on behalf of instructors, you may wish to indicate a grade of P-I for Pass-Instructor. A footnote on the transcript (or through a separate cover letter) should expressly note that this individual is the instructor for the course and that National PONSI vouches that instructors are eligible for the credit recommendations established for the course. It is always helpful when sending transcripts to include a copy of the National PONSI homepage and the webpage for your organization's section in our online Directory.

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ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE (AMF)

The Annual Membership Fee is based on the number of learning experiences posted to the National PONSI website and helps defray costs for those services National PONSI offers other than the evaluation of learning experiences. The Annual Membership Fee is due in January of each year; notices are mailed in November.

For new member organizations, a prorated portion of the Annual Membership Fee is assessed at the same time as the fees that the organization is charged for its initial evaluation. The prorated calculation is made based on the number of full months remaining in the year following the date of the initial evaluation or the date when the credit recommendations go into effect, whichever is more.

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5-YEAR REVALIDATION PREPARATION

National PONSI credit recommendations are revalidated every five years, unless significant changes prompt an earlier review. Preparation for the five-year review is similar to that for the initial evaluation session and involves the same documentation, except that we may wish to look back over the intervening five years.

Recordkeeping is essential to document how each course has been administered during this time. If you are keeping extensive course records for each student and wish to continue doing so, then continue this practice. If you wish to modify your recordkeeping system to minimize the amount of paperwork you retain, our policy does not require as much paperwork. We ask that a representative sample of student completed and graded work for three students from a variety of sections of each course per year, representing a range of grades from acceptable to unacceptable performance, be kept for five years and set aside for the team's review at our five-year revalidation visit. After that next visit, you may purge your files and begin the process over again. With this plan, your files should not become overburdened with National PONSI records and documentation.

We do ask, however, that class rosters and student records, those that show the actual grade each student received for successful completion of a course, be retained indefinitely, and at least during the time that the organization is a member of National PONSI.

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NATIONAL PONSI NEWSLETTER

A bi-monthly electronic newsletter is emailed to college and university officials nationwide, member organization representatives, National PONSI team evaluators, and other interested readers and supporters to share news about those we come into contact with each and every month. The newsletter is designed to recognize the achievements of our member organizations, report on recent site visits, highlight National PONSI evaluators and students, feature colleges and universities and member organizations who have posted logos and/or profiles on our website, and convey information on National PONSI policies and procedures. Each issue will make you better acquainted with National PONSI and our mission.

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