



in partnership with
Beyond Transfer

A Joint Statement on Credit Evaluation and Learning Mobility

May 2026

Introduction

Americans are increasingly completing learning in classrooms, on job sites, in the military, through dual enrollment, online, and via industry credentials. While the avenues for learning continue to expand and evolve, long-standing practices for evaluating, documenting, and applying credit—leading to the recognition of learning—have not kept pace.

This gap is not a technicality. For millions of learners, an outdated credit evaluation process means lost time, lost money, and too often a lost pathway to a degree. The cost of inaction is not abstract. It is borne by real people whose hard-earned learning goes unrecognized.

The numbers underscore the urgency. A recent national [survey](#) found that 4 in 10 adult Americans have sought to transfer credit toward a credential. Those who tried were more likely to feel that higher education cares more about making money than education.

That perception is a warning. And it is one that we have both the obligation and the capacity to address.

Against this backdrop, the [Learning Evaluation and Recognition for the Next Generation \(LEARN\) Commission](#), convened by American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers ([AACRAO](#)) and [Sova](#) as part of the Beyond Transfer initiative, and composed of institutional leaders, accreditors, researchers, and policy experts from across the country—conducted a rigorous examination of how learning evaluation actually works, and where it falls short. Their conclusion was unambiguous:

One thing is abundantly clear about the learning evaluation process: It was never set up to handle the volume or complexity of learner mobility trends and learning evaluation needs that higher education is now facing.

Indeed, the LEARN Commission further noted that the learning evaluation process can either:

Bring more learners into higher education and accelerate their progress to a credential and the promise of economic mobility

Or

Create undue roadblocks that push them out of higher education altogether.

The LEARN Commission's response to this challenge begins not with a policy fix, but with a foundational **shift in mindset**: "Institutions and systems—and all involved constituents—should seek to maximize credential applicability and embrace the assumption that a learner is prepared for additional education, ***unless proven otherwise.***"

This inversion matters. For too long, the default in credit evaluation has been skepticism - toward the learning, toward the learner, toward the institution where learning took place. The LEARN Commission calls on the field to reverse that presumption. **Start from yes.**

From the evidence available, the Commission sees a unique triple-value proposition that we endorse: **Improving the learning evaluation process can and should benefit learners, the institutions that serve them, and the states and regional economies that retain their skilled labor.** This is not a zero-sum proposition. Done right, reform serves everyone.

The question before us is not whether the learning evaluation process needs to change. The evidence is clear that it does. The question is whether we will lead that change or wait for it to be imposed on us.

Choosing to Lead: A Joint Statement to the Field

The organizations signing this statement choose to lead. We call on our members, our peer institutions, and the broader higher education community to take an honest look at their own policies and practices, ask whether the status quo is serving learners, and act on what they find.

Every learner who earns credit deserves to have it recognized. Every credential within reach should be within reach. That is the future the LEARN Commission has charted. We are committed to helping build it. **Start from yes.**

Signatories

The following organizations have reviewed the LEARN Commission's final report and recommendations and add their names in support of this statement and the vision it represents.

List of Signing Organizations, with CEO/President signatures